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Think Tank-University Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa:

A Synthesis Report on 10 Country Studies

Partnership for African Social & Governance Research

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Key Concepts

Competition	Rivalry between two or more independent parties pursuing the same or similar objective. This can be positive or negative.
Consultancy	Advice on a specific policy or programme issue provided by an external specialist through a fee-for-service contract or sub-contract.
Education/Training	Delivery of structured learning in the form of courses, workshops and instructional materials. The terms education and training are used interchangeably.
Policy dialogue	Sharing of information with policy actors through conferences, workshops, seminars, reports, media and various events.
Relationship	Collaboration between think tanks and universities in the use of each other's human, financial and/or infrastructural resources. The terms relationship and collaboration are used interchangeably.
Research	Investigation using scientific or empirical methodologies where data and findings are not subject to modifications by the funder.
Think Tank	An organisation that generates policy-oriented research in social sciences with the aim of enabling public policy actors to make informed decisions.
University	An institution of higher learning providing facilities for social science graduate teaching and research among others, and authorised to grant academic degrees.

Abbreviations

AAU	Association of African Universities
ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ACODE	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
CREA	Centre de Recherches Economiques Appliquées
DfID	Department for International Development
EEA	Ethiopian Economics Association
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Centre
ESRF	Economic and Social Research Foundation
FGD	focus group discussion
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
MISR	Makerere Institute for Social Research
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSSREA	Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa
PASGR	Partnership for African Social and Governance Research
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SIDA	Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation
REPOA	Research on Poverty Alleviation
TTI	Think Tank Initiative
ZEPARU	Zimbabwe Policy Analysis and Research Unit

Executive Summary

Knowledge has become the driving force in the current economy and the essential source of competitive advantage. Since the post-colonial period, universities have played a key role in leading and providing training and research in many sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. However, the rapid increase in the number of think tanks and their prominence on the global scene is changing the dynamics within which knowledge is generated at national, regional, and international levels. The politics of power, economic circumstances and external influences have shaped the emergence, growth and operations of both universities and think tanks.

Literature reveals diverse relationships between think tanks and universities. However, the relationship between think tanks and universities in SSA's context is not fully explored. Universities and think tanks are thought to have both negative (competitive or displacing) and positive (collaborative and complementary) relationships. The interaction of these two institutions in the knowledge landscape to connect research and teaching and inform policy necessitates a deeper analysis of opportunities for more structured collaborations and complementarities. This paper details how think tanks and universities in SSA inter-relate and the factors that influence these relationships.

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) and the Think Tank Initiative (TTI) undertook a 10-country study to address the gap in literature and analysis by asking two overarching questions:

- What is the nature of relationships between think tanks and universities?
- What is the influence of partner or funding organisations on these relationships?

Based on these two questions the study examines the types of relationships at formal and informal levels in research, training/education, policy dialogue and consultancy; the main drivers of the relationships; influence of key players in the relationships; key barriers to more effective relationships and how these can be overcome; and, actions to foster better relationships.

The study used common survey tools and specific interview questions that involved a selected group of universities, think tanks and third-party organisations in 10 African countries: Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Findings of the study show that universities and think tanks bring different but complementary skills and resources, and need to understand their comparative advantages in a mutually beneficial agenda. The relationships between think tanks and universities are complex, involving diverse social, economic, cultural, and political dimensions. Collaborations appear to complement each other in research and training, but to a lesser extent in policy dialogue and consultancy. The distinction of whether collaboration is formal (institutional) or informal (individual) is often blurred. Even where initial arrangements are institutional, they are nourished and sustained by individuals researching and training together. A quest to optimise collaboration needs to embrace these connections.

Motivations for collaboration by individuals range from the need to improve effectiveness and efficiency to the pursuit of individual interests such as taking on an extra job to boost personal earnings/status. Personal relationships are a catalyst for institutional trust.

There is great interest in collaboration between universities and think tanks not only among the institutions themselves and the individuals working in them, but also among organisations that use and fund policy research, training, policy dialogue and consultancy. Potentially useful synergies include improved quality of research outputs and training, networking, increased visibility, monetary gains, and capacity enhancement.

Collaborations are sustainable when those involved have common and clear goals. Differences were seen in operational modes, work ethics, ideologies, and management styles between universities and think tanks. Bureaucracy in universities and the desire by the two types of institutions to influence the research agenda in their own favour can derail collaborative opportunities. This is because of the knowledge generation–policy influence nexus. University staff look at generating knowledge and publishing as key since these are

what matter for their promotion at universities while think tanks look at informing policy as more important. Many times reaching a balance between knowledge generation and policy influence is a challenge that can affect potential collaboration.

Universities and think tanks need good communication strategies, transparency and good leadership to mutually benefit each other. Conspicuous gaps include lack of skilled human resource to facilitate relationships; platforms that create spaces, opportunities and innovations around which relationships can be fostered; and financial and technological resources for tools to support collaborations.

There are mixed responses across the countries assessed on the role donors play in supporting think tank–university relations with some reporting that only a few donors make collaboration a pre-condition for funding. Considering that collaboration depends on stable funding, suggestions were made for donors to include promotion of think tank–university collaboration in their call-for-proposals and in other funding streams, and to facilitate meeting opportunities for universities and think tanks. There is need to support technical exchange of information through journals containing research evidence of think tanks and universities. Donors, while paying attention to country-specific contexts, can convene meetings that would help the two institutions explore the typology of different forms of research and build consensus on how to integrate policy and knowledge research.

This study underscores the need for strong collaboration between universities and think tanks as evidenced by lessons from the 10 study countries.

1 Introduction

There is no doubt that knowledge is an important instrument in Africa's development. Recent regional and global developments show that knowledge capacity is the greatest determinant of a country's entry to and effective participation in global competitiveness (Jegede, 2012). However, leveraging existing and new knowledge for development demands the presence of local teaching, research and innovative capacities as well as willingness to absorb and use policy-relevant research within governments. The research landscape is interdisciplinary, complex and sometimes requires collaborations between institutions as well as individuals. In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), policy-relevant research is undertaken in a variety of institutional settings including in universities, think tanks, non-governmental organisations, government bodies, and pan-African and international research institutes.

Although the range of institutions where research takes place is extensive, most policy-relevant research by Africans is conducted in universities and think tanks. As key players in knowledge generation and shaping Africa's future, it is important to understand how these two institutions relate and the extent to which their relationships[1] incentivise or impede their role and contribution, separately or together. This paper explores the nature and drivers of relationships between universities and think tanks in SSA.

For a good understanding of the relationship between universities and think tanks, this paper first focuses on how the political context and the introduction of structural adjustment programmes influenced the contribution of universities to policy-relevant research and the establishment of think tanks (Kimenyi and Datta, 2011; Mkandawire, 2000).

1.1 Higher education in Africa

Africa's higher education has undergone four major phases. These phases have influenced the development and current status of universities. Although we use the term 'phases' to describe evolutionary trajectory, it should be noted that they did not occur simultaneously across various countries. In addition, some countries have experienced political reversals such as transitions to autocratic rule after democratic reforms.

African universities in the colonial period (post-World War II)

By 1900 much of Africa had been colonised. Some literature suggests that there were universities in Africa before colonial rule, mainly focusing on religious issues such as Sankore in Mali and Qarawiyyin in Fez, Morocco (Mthembu, 2004; Sawyerr, 2004; Teferra and Altbach, 2004), with a number of them like Fourah Bay College (1827) and University of Khartoum (1902) existing as technical colleges. Some of these became university colleges affiliated to Western universities during the colonial period. Education was limited for African populations and was oriented towards inculcating obedience and conformity to the tenets of colonial administration, as well as to meeting the labour demands of the colonial system (Mhishi, 2012).

By 1960, only 18 out of 48 countries of SSA had universities and colleges (Sawyerr, 2004). In many African countries, universities were established either immediately before or within a decade after attaining political independence. As Mamdani (2011b) advances:

> When most colonies became independent, just as sure as the national anthem, the national flag, and the national currency, a national university too became an obligatory sign of independence.

Post-independence period

The immediate post-independent era, the 1960s and early 1970s, saw higher education as a 'public good' offering access to knowledge resources as well as a broad range of skills and capabilities through research to accelerate the continent's development (Sawyerr, 2004).

[1] The terms relationship and collaboration are used interchangeably in this report. The assumption is that a relationship or collaboration exists when think tanks and universities make use of each other's resources including human, financial and infrastructure.

During the post-colonial regime, universities were entirely state-driven. More local universities were established. For instance, on 1 July 1970, the University of East Africa was split into three independent universities: Makerere University in Uganda, the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and the University of Nairobi in Kenya. The steady expansion in universities was facilitated by governments sponsoring the entire cost of establishing and developing facilities as well as running costs (Sawyerr, 2004) including students' tuition and in some cases students' stipend.

Kariwo (2007) points out that after independence, African states perceived higher education as a vehicle for churning out post-colonial civil servants in the service of the developmental state. In the early years of post-colonialism, the relationship between the state and intellectuals was good. This was a remarkable period of general unity and agreement about goals and means (Bujra, 1994).

The good relationship between the state and intellectuals was short-lived. The primary interest of government leaders was to consolidate power to maximise economic gains. Leaders did not encourage the development of an intellectual class as they feared this would someday oppose their rule. Some governments argued that the research by Africans was not immediately usable in policy. Academics insisted on standards and governments insisted on relevance. Kimenyi and Datta (2011) observed:

> Immediately after independence, African politicians often sought the advice of academics. This situation changed shortly after independence. Political space for academics soon disappeared. Funding for tertiary education and state- and university-affiliated research institutes was cut massively. Professors on occasion set up their own (foreign-funded) research organisations.

Rashid (1994) and Kimenyi and Datta (2011) allude to governments resisting research input because it made policy measurable; an idea not popular in political power. Given their underutilisation in the public sector, African intellectuals turned to civil society organisations for the use of their research. However, policy-makers still needed knowledge input that was not public, hence the establishment of regime-sponsored think tanks and reliance on foreign mentors. For example, Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah surrounded himself with pan-Africanists such as George Padmore and W.E.B. Dubois (Mkandawire, 2000).

African universities in the military rule

During the period 1970s to the late 1980s, approximately 40 of the 53 independent Africa states had been affected by the 'coup d'etat epidemic' (Kieh, 2000). The military leader and military councils made policy decisions singularly. This eliminated avenues for civic input into policy-making (Anene, 1997). Funding to many universities was curtailed, leaving higher education systems in ruin. Consequently, universities increasingly relied on external support from foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller Foundations as well as agencies such as Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the World Bank.

Political and economic liberation

The 1980s and 1990s saw many African countries fall into economic recession leading to heavy dependence on foreign aid. As a result, there were adjustments in lending terms and debt forgiveness attached to neoliberal economic reforms commonly known as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). With SAPs deemed a failure in the early 1990s, donor policy demands focused on political reforms and improving efficiency, transparency and accountability of bureaucracies (Kimenyi and Datta, 2011).

The numerous social and economic challenges and the subsequent structural adjustments reforms led to gross underfunding of higher education (Mkandawire, 2000) leading to freezing of staff salaries and recruitment in universities, eliminating expenditure on books and equipment, foregoing basic maintenance, and reducing students' scholarships (World Bank, 2010). Low staff morale, brain drain and under-financed research activities resulted in minimal contribution of intellectuals to the policy-making process in Africa.

Public spending on higher education was worsened by claims by the World Bank that higher education in Africa had lower returns than secondary and primary levels, signalling to donors to cut support for university education. This motivated intellectuals at universities to set up their own donor-funded research centres. Examples include the Development Policy Centre in Nigeria and the Centre for Policy Studies in South Africa.

In the face of continuing dwindling government provisions of funds to universities, a number of changes started. Mamdani (2011a) observed that a 'market-driven model' currently dominates African universities. This has led to increased enrolments without necessarily adjusting the facilities to fit the big numbers. Privatisation of higher education has been ongoing. Public universities have introduced cost-sharing schemes. Partnerships and organisations that support higher education have been established. As of 2012, there were an estimated 800 universities and more than 1,500 institutions of higher learning in Africa in which the percentage of private universities was on the increase. For example, by 1960, Nigeria had only one federal university (University College of Ibadan) but currently has 129 universities with the first private university established in 1998. Table 1 shows the number of universities by country covered in this study.

Table 1: Number of universities in 10 sub-Saharan African countries

Country	Public universities	Private universities	Total
Benin	3	7	10
Ethiopia	34	13	47
Kenya	31	36	67
Mozambique	14	12	26
Nigeria	42 Federal, 35 State	52	129
Uganda	7	30	37
Senegal	5	7	12
South Africa	23	1	24[2]
Tanzania	9	15	24
Zimbabwe	9	6	15

Source: Information from the country reports that informed this synthesis paper

The indication is that by 2017 Africa could have more for-profit private universities than those established by government (World Bank, 2010). The student population in African universities was 9.3 million in 2006 and could be 20 million by 2015 (World Bank, 2010).

The proliferation of private universities in Africa has created human resource challenges for both private and public universities. The competition for the time of teaching staff compromises the quality of content delivery and research; the latter also noted as a low priority in private universities.

1.2 The history and development of think tanks in sub-Saharan Africa

Just like universities, the politics of power and external influences have shaped the emergence, development and decline of think tanks in Africa. Think tanks were first invented by governments in the 18th century as brain trusts to solve policy problems (see Annex 1 for background on the origins and colloquial uses of the term 'think tank'). In some countries, colonial administrators set up research institutions usually concentrating on the needs of the settler populations (Rathgeber, 1988). These were mainly located within technical colleges or universities.

During the early years of independence, former colonial research institutes were reconfigured to promote growth and development while new governments invested a considerable amount of money to expand research and development. In the 1970s and

[2] Kaplan (2008) states that there are 24 well-known universities and 15 technical colleges in South Africa. However, Jegede (2012) reported that there are 23 public universities and 87 private institutions in South Africa with no mention of the actual number of private universities.

1980s, SAPs across SSA made financial support to research institutes difficult to obtain from government sources. This led to either the scaling down or shutting down of government research institutes, which led to the proliferation of foreign-funded independent think tanks as well as a significant brain drain that compromised policy-making.

Kimenyi and Datta (2011) indicate that economic and political liberalisation had considerable effects on the think tank landscape in SSA including:

- Proliferation of new think tanks in response to increased donor funding and a perception of an expanded space for civil society.
- Initially, a tendency by think tanks to prioritise policy issues related to political and economic liberalisation.
- Many think tanks received funding from the same donors lending to African governments to monitor and help improve government policy implementation, thus providing a mechanism for donors to hold recipient governments accountable.
- Think tanks had to consider how their research findings interacted with overlapping and sometimes contradicting regional and international agreements and treaties.
- African think tanks were always competing for government influence with international institutions such as the World Bank and their research units.

The first think tank in SSA was the South African Institute of Race Relations established in 1929. By 2008, there were 424 think tanks in sub-Saharan Africa and 554 in 2012.

McGann (2006) asserts that the growth in the number of think tanks has been driven by the transformative power of the information technology revolution; the increasing complexity of policy problems; the increasing size of government; a crisis of confidence towards governments; globalisation and the growth of state and non-state actors; and the need for information and analysis 'in the right form at the right time and in the right hands'. K.Y Amoako, the founder and president of the African Center for Economic Transformation, identifies three phases in think tanks development in Africa.

First, as African countries gained independence in the late 1950s and 1960s, think tanks were established to help the nascent governments build strong foundations of governance. During the 1970s, there was growing marginalisation of think tanks and the fear that their growth might lead to agitation for regime change. Second, the SAPs of the 1980s spurred the establishment of research institutions to measure the impact of African economies and propose policy responses. The final phase was driven by localised sources of evidence that motivated African governments to seek information from locally based and locally run think tanks.

McGann and Johnson (2005) estimate that two-thirds of all existing think tanks globally were established after 1980, and in Africa most have emerged since the mid-1990s. The 2012 Global Go to Think Tank Index[3] (McGann, 2013) undertook a review of more than 6,600 think tanks in 182 countries, of which 554 are located in SSA and 339 in the Middle East and North Africa. South Africa, with 84 think tanks, is ranked 12th globally. The percentage of the world's think tanks located within the African region increased from 11.8 percent in 2008 to 16.5 percent in 2013. Table 2 shows the number of think tanks by country covered in this study.

The number of think tanks varies, as reported in the country studies that informed this thesis and the Global Go to Think Tank Index, with a huge variation in Kenya and no exact figure in Benin (Table 2). This could be as a result of the differences in the definition of think tanks. The definition of a think tank provided to researchers for this study was an organisation that generates policy-oriented research in social sciences with the aim of enabling public policy actors to make informed decisions, whereas the Global Go to Think Tanks uses a self-reporting approach to generate the number of think tanks in a country. For the case of Kenya, the difference could be as a result of the high number of civil society

[3] It should be noted that there are limitations with the approach of the Global Go to Think Tanks that might influence the data and findings. Personal, regional, ideological and discipline biases may influence representation and the responses of those consulted for the Global Go to Think Tanks studies.

organisations that might have participated in the Global Go to Think Tank study but not necessarily qualifying as think tanks as per this study's definition.

Table 2: Number of think tanks in 10 sub-Saharan Africa countries

	Number of think tanks	
Country	As per 2013 Global Go to Think Tanks Index report	As per country reports
Benin	15	≥14
Ethiopia	25	23
Kenya	57	12
Mozambique	4	13
Nigeria	51	53
Uganda	29	28
Senegal	19	15
South Africa	88	84
Tanzania	16	15
Zimbabwe	31	10

Source: Information from country reports that informed this synthesis paper and Global Go to Think Tanks Index report (2013)

1.3 Categories of think tanks

It is not the intention of this paper to compare numerous definitions of think tanks, but it is important to understand how different individuals and organisations perceive policy-focused research institutions. The Think Tank Initiative (2009) describes think tanks as independent non-governmental research organisations doing policy-relevant research. McGann (2012:22) argues that think tanks are:

> Public policy research, analysis, and engagement institutions that generate policy-oriented research, analysis and advice on domestic and international issues that enable both policy makers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy issues.

Policy-oriented research is common in definitions of a think tank. For the purposes of this study, think tanks are defined as "research organisations that generate policy-oriented research in social sciences with the aim of enabling public policy actors to make informed decisions.

While the work of think tanks and universities substantially overlaps, especially in research, think tanks differ substantially in their operating styles, aspirations to academic standards of objectivity and completeness in research, and in their engagement of policy makers, the press and the public (McGann, 2009a). Abelson (2002) observes that think tanks vary in terms of "specialisation, research output and ideological orientation", which may have an impact on the nature of their relationship with universities and other institutions. Abelson (2002) proposes a typology by which think tanks can be defined as: (1) universities without students, (2) government contractors, (3) advocacy think tanks, (4) legacy-based think tanks, and (5) policy clubs. McGann and Weaver (2000) use the first three categories and add party think tanks, which Elliott et al. (2005) argue adequately encompasses Abelson's legacy-based think tanks and policy clubs. McGann (2009a) suggests six categories of think tanks (Table 3).

There is no standard categorisation of think tanks either globally or within Africa, and this study is not meant to suggest otherwise. However, the typologies are based on their affiliations and the reasons for their establishment. In the article "Not all think tanks are created equal", Mendizabal (2008) observed that many think tanks are set up directly by donors, some are developed out of large and long-term donor-funded programmes, and others emerge around charismatic and influential personalities.[4] This study recognises the differentiations, but fuses those with notable similarities to rationalise four categories.

[4] See: http://www.odi.org.uk/opinion/2467-not-all-think-tanks-created-equal

Table 3: Categories of think tanks

Category	Definition
Autonomous and independent	Independent from any one interest group or donor and autonomous in its operations irrespective of possible funding from government
Quasi independent	Autonomous from government but primarily funded by an interest group (union, religious group, etc.), donor or contracting agency which has significant influence over the operations of the think tank
University affiliated	A policy research centre at a university
Political party affiliated	Formally affiliated with a political party
Government affiliated	A part of the structure of government
Quasi government	Funded exclusively by government grants and contracts but not a part of the formal structure of government

Source: McGann (2009a)

University-affiliated think tanks: These are policy research centres located at universities that function like universities and have a principal mission to promote greater understanding of important social, economic and political issues (Abelson, 2002:18). They are more tuned to academia and less to policy issues. They tend to hire PhDs from universities – hence collaborating on human resource acquisition. Their researchers are rarely required to teach. There are exceptions like the Makerere Institute for Social Research (MISR) where think tank personnel both teach and do research.

Government-affiliated think tanks: Government exclusively funds them. They report to the funding agency rather than the public. Their work is driven by what advice government wants. As policy makers usually commission them, uptake of their research findings tends to be swifter, but the closed loop might compromise objectivity and performance. This might make collaboration uncomfortable for rigorously objective universities, and trust might be further undermined by competition for similar resources. Examples of government-affiliated think tanks include Uganda's Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) and the Ethiopian Development Research Institute.

Independent think tanks: These include what Abelson (2002) refers to as 'advocacy think tanks'. They tend to focus on short-term research they can quickly distribute to policy-makers and the media to influence a current policy debate, with very limited investment in looking for alternative research paths. Not unexpectedly, their relationship with universities is limited by this less 'objective and balanced' study ethos (Abelson, 2002: 21). Examples of independent think tanks include the Institute of Economic Affairs in Kenya and the Ethiopian Economics Association (EEA).

Other affiliated think tanks: These include think tanks operating as subsidiaries or associates of a national, regional or non-African body other than a university. They also include what McGann and Weaver (2000) refer to as party think tanks.

1.4 Importance of understanding the relationship between universities and think tanks

Although universities have traditionally played a primary role in leading and undertaking research, the emergence of think tanks on the global scene is changing the dynamics within which knowledge is generated at national, regional, and international levels. As universities and think tanks proliferate in number and type, it becomes more difficult, and yet ever-more necessary, to understand the relationships between them that are mediated by diverse social, economic, cultural, and political dimensions.

Universities and think tanks have emerged with differences in functions and in their roles, goals and capabilities. What emerges as an overlap in the establishment of universities and think tanks is the idea of informing policy processes. Whether this and other factors lead to synergistic, competitive or uncooperative relationships between universities and think tanks remains unclear in the SSA context. The available literature is skewed

towards think tank–university relations in North America and Europe, masking many possible experiences in Africa.

Better understanding of the relationship between universities and think tanks will help in capacity building in Africa, and in developing effective interventions. It will also encourage collaboration that can result in more policy-relevant research and better-trained researchers. It is expected that the findings of this study will help to improve mutual understanding and encourage dialogue on new or better ways for collaboration.

This paper addresses two overarching issues: the nature of relationships between think tanks and universities, and the influence of partner or funding organisations on this relationship. These questions were of particular concern to PASGR[5] and TTI[6] that support capacity development and institutional strengthening in the SSA knowledge system.

PASGR and TTI designed and undertook the study to ascertain:

- The type of relationships (both at institutional and individual levels) found between think tanks and universities in research, training/education, policy dialogue and consultancy;
- The main drivers, motivations or underlying reasons for the relationships, and how these are mediated by objectives, operating contexts and individual circumstances;
- Characteristics of the key players in the relationships, and their influence;
- Key barriers to more effective relationships between think tanks and universities, and how these could be overcome; and,
- Improvements needed to foster better relationships between universities and think tanks with a view to achieving better capacity and policy outcomes.

This paper is structured in seven sections. Following this introduction is a brief conceptual framework. Section 3 summarises the approach to the study and section 4 presents the big picture. Section 5 discusses the collaborative terrain for universities and think tanks while section 6 focuses on the levels and trends of collaborations. The paper ends with conclusions and recommendations in section 7.

[5] PASGR is a not-for-profit pan-African organisation based in Nairobi, Kenya, that seeks to increase the capacity of African academic institutions and researchers to produce research that can inform social policy and governance. For more information about PASGR, refer to www.pasgr.org

[6] TTI is a multi-donor programme dedicated to strengthening the capacity of independent policy research organisations in the developing world and managed by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). For more information about TTI, refer to http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/

2 Conceptual Framework

A common view is that the relationship between universities and think tanks in Africa is competitive and that think tanks have displaced universities as the locus of research activity. Another common perception is of a one-way relationship: that universities provide graduate teaching staff for employment or commissioned research to think tanks. Given the drivers of the development of think tanks and universities discussed earlier, their relationship may not be as simplistic as this.

Experience suggests that many relationships between think tanks and universities are complementary and can lead to positive outcomes including enhancing the function of the overall knowledge landscape. In SSA, there is an increasing recognition of think tanks as providing a solution to the paucity of critical research capacity (Mbadlanyana et al., 2011). An effective collaboration will improve the quality of outputs, capacity development, credibility of either organisation, and wider scope of research undertaken. However, the extent to which such collaboration can be realised in SSA countries may be affected by the kind of relations that exist between these important institutions.

Najam (2002) developed a model to explain different forms of relationships between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government within the policy arena similar to universities and think tanks relationships. Borrowing from Najam's (2002) 4-Cs model, the likely relationship between think tanks and universities at both institutional and individual levels is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Possible relationships between think tanks and universities

Possible combinations of goals (ends) and means (strategies)	Possible relationship	Explanation of the relationships at both institutional and individual levels
Similar ends with similar means	Cooperation	A cooperative relationship is likely when think tanks and universities not only share similar goals but also prefer similar strategies for achieving them (a convergence of preferred ends as well as means).
Dissimilar ends with dissimilar means	Confrontation	A confrontational relationship is likely when think tanks and universities consider each other's goals and strategies to be antithetical to their own (total divergence of preferred ends as well as means).
Similar ends but dissimilar means	Complementary	A complementary relationship is likely when think tanks and universities share similar goals but prefer different strategies (divergent strategies but convergent goals).
Dissimilar ends but similar means	Co-optation	A co-optive relationship is likely when think tanks and universities share similar strategies but have different goals (divergent goals but convergent strategies). These kind of relationships are unstable and often transitory.

Source: Adapted from Najam (2002)

Just like the assumption made by Najam (2002), neither think tanks nor universities are monolithic. One think tank can nurture different types of relations with a given university and vice versa. Similarly, the same think tank can have a cooperative relationship with one university and a confrontational one with another. Relationships are unlikely to be a pure dichotomy of positive and negative. Regrettably, most of the literature neither gives a detailed analysis of the relationships nor suggests implications. This study categorises

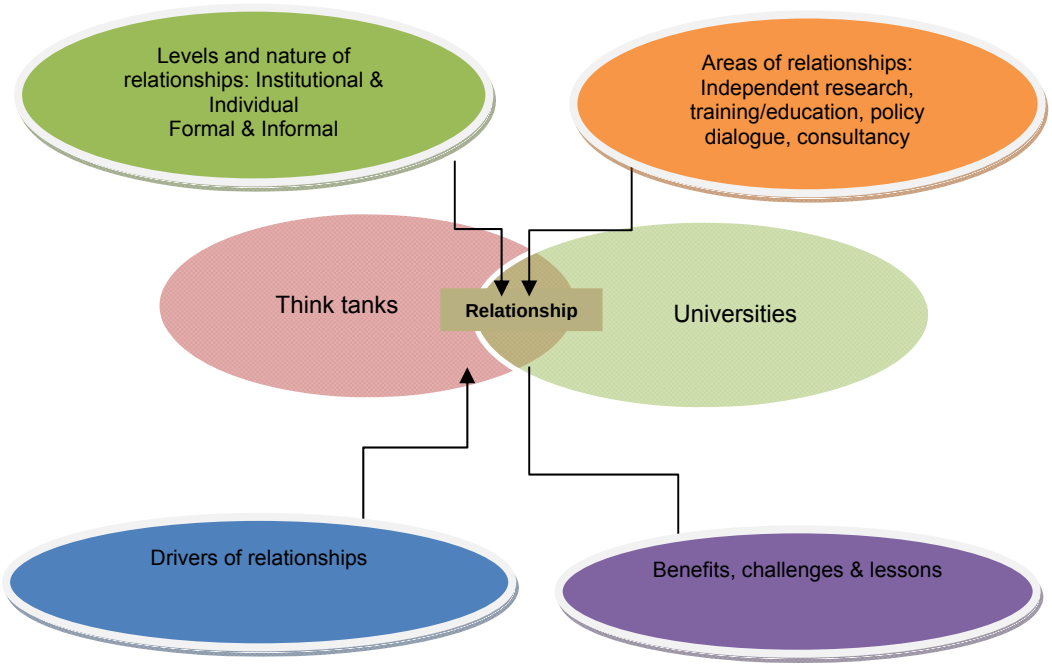
collaborative activities between universities and think tanks in four areas: independent research,[7] training,[8] policy dialogue[9] and consultancy.[10]

There may only be a few instances where the relations between think tanks and universities are guided by defined processes as might be the case with university-affiliated think tanks. In Medvetz's (2007:2) specific reference to American think tanks, using arguments that could reasonably be applied to the African think tank-university landscape, Medvetz observes that:

> ... the social space of think tanks is marked by a multi-level structural hybridity that extends from the individual policy expert to the organisation, and from the organisation to the broader system of relations in which think tanks are embedded.

Figure 1 provides a framework for understanding university–think tank relationships. It shows the nature and extent of relationships that may exist, and the enabling factors. The assumption is that a relationship exists when think tanks and universities make use of each other's human, financial and or infrastructural resources.

Figure 1: A framework for University–Think Tank relationship



Source: Author

The figure shows that relationships may exist at institutional and individual levels, and may be formal or informal. Relationships may be in any of the four main collaboration areas. There are many drivers of relationships including availability of funds, type of organisation and ideological alignment, need for recognition and expected benefits. In the process of the relationships, both universities and think tanks get benefits, encounter challenges as well as learn lessons. This study was not intended to evaluate think tanks and

[7] Investigation using scientific or empirical methodologies where data and findings are not subject to modifications by the funder.
[8] The terms training and education are used interchangeably in this report. This is the delivery of structured learning in the form of courses, workshops and instructional materials.
[9] Sharing of information with policy actors through conferences, workshops, seminars, media events, briefing papers and various other publications.
[10] Advice on a specific policy or programme issue or subject typically provided in the form of a report to a client through a fee-for-service contract or sub-contract.

universities in what they do but rather to understand the nature, extent and drivers of relationships.

3 Study Approach

This study used country case studies, literature review, and qualitative and quantitative methods. The study was framed around common survey tools and specific interview questions to selected universities and think tanks in 10 African countries: Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. A four-stage process was used:

- First, a review of documents from formal and grey literature provided information on the context, nature, and potential relationships between think tanks and universities to deepen the understanding of existing relationships and to identify any patterns or key issues for follow-up during interviews.
- Second, the design of survey tools by country researchers and PASGR staff at a preparatory meeting in Nairobi in February 2013. There were five questionnaires for heads of departments/research units at universities and heads of think tanks who provided an institutional view on the relations and drivers, individuals working at universities, individuals working at think tanks, and country-based organisations (third party organisations that fund or use the outputs of universities and think tanks such as government ministries, NGOs, media and locally-based donors). The four questionnaires (third party organisations questionnaire not included) for think tanks and universities were pre-tested in two universities and two think tanks in Nairobi. A common data entry template for all the questionnaires was designed to analyse country-specific data.
- Third, interviews were held in selected think tanks and universities with individuals and institutional representatives. A total of 64 third party organisations were interviewed across the 10 countries (Annex 2). There were focus group discussions (FGDs) with 18 senior staff drawn from 12 universities and 6 think tanks in 8 African countries following the post-MDG forum that was organised by PASGR in March 2013 in Nairobi (Annex 3).
- The fourth stage of the study sought perspectives on think tank–university relations from selected third party organisations, regional and international organisations that support capacity building of universities and/or think tanks in Africa. This was originally planned to be a survey monkey questionnaire but there was low response and as a result researchers arranged face-to-face interviews. A meeting on 18 March 2014 in Nairobi involving nine participants from eight donor organisations and government bodies was organised (see list of donors that participated in the meeting in Annex 4). This was followed by a findings sharing/validation workshop that involved 65 senior staff from universities and think tanks on 31 March and 1 April 2014 (Annex 5). Lastly, IDRC organised a think tank–university event on 21–22 May 2014 that involved over 80 participants from think tanks, universities, development partners and government to find synergies between Africa, Latin America and South Asia studies on the relationship between think tanks and universities.

3.1 Sampling

Selection of study participants was based on a sample summarised in Table 5. University departments offering social science courses such as political science, economics, sociology and public policy were used as units of analysis. For comparability, think tanks selected are those involved in social science areas. A total of 65 universities and 90 think tanks were sampled in the 10 countries. The data was merged for further analysis and writing of this synthesis report. Annex 2 provides a list of think tanks, universities and third party organisations covered by each country.

Table 5: Sampling criteria of institutions and individual respondents

Institution	Criteria for selection of institutions	Criteria for selecting individual respondents
Universities	Must be legally established as a university and have accreditation	Head of department/research unit to respond to the institutional interviews
	Must be substantially engaged in social science and/or humanities research	Individual respondents must be lecturers or higher status
	Must be involved in policy engagement to some extent	Individual respondents must not be just administrators (however senior); they should also be actively involved in teaching and research
Think tanks	Must be actively engaged in policy research	Head of organisation to respond to the institutional interviews
	Must be participating in policy engagement activities	Individual respondents must be senior staff members involved in programme work such as research and policy engagement
	Involved in social sciences disciplines	Individual respondents must not be just administrators (however senior); they should also be actively involved in research and policy engagement

3.2 Descriptive statistics

There was a high representation of public universities (72%) of the total sample from the 10 countries (Table 6). This is not surprising given that postgraduate programmes in social science were a sampling requirement, and not many private universities in Africa currently offer post-graduate programmes. The private universities include those with and without religious affiliation. There is one local campus of a foreign university based in South Africa. A total of 223 university employees ranging from lecturer to professor were interviewed in their individual capacity. About 18 percent of university staff interviewed were women.

Table 6: Sampling of universities by country

Country	No. of universities[11]	No. of universities covered			No. of institutional interviews	No. of individual interviews
		Total	Public	Private		
Nigeria	129	11	10	1	16	30
Kenya	67	9	5	4	5	16
Ethiopia	47	8	6	2	15	30
Uganda	37	6	4	2	9	24
South Africa	24	11	10	1	20	26
Tanzania	24	5	4	1	9	20
Senegal	12	3	3	0	15	30
Mozambique	11	5	2	3	5	5
Benin	10	4	2	2	8	19
Zimbabwe	9	3	1	2	5	23
Total	370	65	47	18	107	223

Source: Information from country reports that informed this synthesis paper

90 think tanks were sampled (Table 7) of which a total of 133 employees were interviewed in their individual capacity. 21 percent of the interviewees were women. The low percentage of female interviewees in both think tanks and universities might be an indication of the low

[11] These numbers were provided by country researchers.

number of women in senior positions in both institutions. However, the study did not explore the gender aspect and therefore is not able to make such a conclusion.

Table 7: Sampling of think tanks by country

Country	No. of think tanks[12]	No. of think tanks covered	No. of institutional interviews	No. of individual interviews
South Africa	84	13	13	9
Nigeria	53	13	12	20
Uganda	28	9	9	14
Ethiopia	23	10	10	20
Senegal	15	10	10	20
Tanzania	15	5	5	9
Benin	14	6	6	15
Mozambique	13	9	8	13
Kenya	12	6	6	7
Zimbabwe	10	9	9	6
Total	267	90	88	133

Source: Information from country reports that informed this synthesis paper

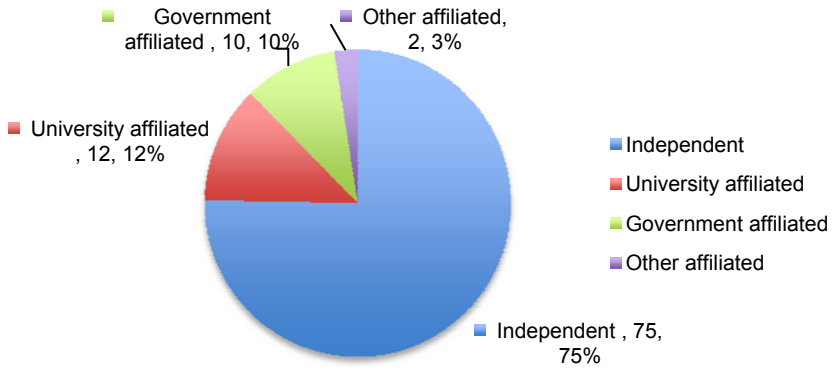
About 21 percent of the universities and 3 percent of think tanks covered in this study were established before 1960 (see Table 8) compared with 36 percent of the universities and 45 percent of the think tanks that have been established since 2001. Of the entire think tanks in this study, 75 percent are independent (Figure 2) of which 70 percent are national and the rest regional.

Table 8: Year of establishment of think tanks and universities

Year	% of Think Tanks	% of universities
<1960	3	21
1960–1980	9	14
1981–2000	43	29
2001–2012	45	36
Total	100	100

Source: Country data

Figure 2: Organisational status of think tanks



Source: Information from country reports that informed this synthesis paper

[12]The actual number of think tanks in most countries is not known as most register differently as NGOs, trusts, consultancies, or simply as not-for-profit organisations. This is mainly a definitional issue as highlighted earlier.

About 28 percent of all the university departments/units covered in this study focus on economic-related issues as compared with 32 percent of think tanks (Table 9). A higher percentage of think tanks, 17 percent and 16 percent, focus on governance and public policy respectively as compared with 9 percent and 1 percent of the departments sampled from universities.

Table 9: Subject focus of think tanks and departments in universities (%)

Organisation/ status	Economics	Political science	Sociology	Anthropology	Governance	Public policy	Other
Universities (all)	28	17	15	3	9	1	27
Public	27	17	15	3	9	1	27
Private	39	11	11	0	6	0	33
Think Tanks (all)	32	7	7	1	17	16	20
Independent	33	7	5	0	20	21	15
University affiliated	30	10	10	0	0	0	50
Government affiliated	38	13	13	0	13	0	25
Other affiliated	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Think Tank–University relations study in Africa – country data

4 The Big Picture

The evolution, character and role of think tanks and universities in the countries of study are influenced by three major factors: the political history and contemporary political environment, the availability of funds and interests of funders/donors, and the space(s) available for policy engagement.

The different funding constraints in the two institutions have implications for the nature of interaction that is engendered. Specifically for think tanks, not only does accountability shift away from local constituents to donors, but the high dependence on foreign funds also implies that domestic interests rarely inspire the think tanks' research and policy agenda.

When it comes to interaction in the policy arena, the political environment defines the issues on which think tanks and universities can interact. The sensitivity of the issue/s that a think tank may be pursuing tends to determine the kind of policy space in which to engage, and hence, the interaction between think tanks and universities.

4.1 Country differences and similarities

The effect of colonisation on the functioning of universities and establishment of think tanks seems to follow the same trend across the countries that were colonised. In addition, the effects of political and economic liberalisation on funding universities and think tanks are also similar in the different countries.

In Zimbabwe, the economic decline meant drastic cuts in national budget allocations and donor spending for public universities. Some think tanks closed while others downsized and started outsourcing some of their activities; some universities and think tanks pooled resources to survive. The polarised political environment resulted in relations and collaborations being restructured and realigned along political orientation and agenda.

In sharp contrast to the pre-1986 period, considerable improvements were made in people and institutional freedoms in the 1990s in Uganda. In line with the dominant political ideology, think tanks and CSOs that were committed to promoting liberal democracy and economic liberalism were the most popular with donors. However, since 2001, the freedom of the 1990s has been replaced with restricted political and civil rights, and space(s) within which think tanks, CSOs and universities interact to influence policy have progressively been restricted. Think tanks are constrained when they want to hold policy events that may be considered non-supportive of the political regime. This affects the way they collaborate, especially with universities funded by government and individuals in universities who may not wish to get in the ruling party's bad books by working with the 'wrong' think tanks.

While the apartheid/isolation era had significant negative impact on research and development, today the government of South Africa provides subsidies to universities and think tanks and has changed its policy to create research-intensive universities and strengthen science councils such as the Human Sciences Research Council. The reforms, incentives and extra research funding have opened more opportunities for collaboration between universities and think tanks.

In Mozambique, the University of Eduardo Mondlane was dedicated to teaching while think tanks focused on research. There was little collaboration between the two. However, soon after independence in 1975, the Scientific Research Institute of Mozambique was integrated into Eduardo Mondlane University. However, despite a number of think tanks emerging in the 1990s, the relationship between think tanks and other institutions is not clear. Low wages at universities have driven staff to spend most of their time on consultancies run mainly by donor-supported think tanks, and less time on academic research and publications.

The history of think tanks in Kenya indicates that these institutions proliferated after independence in response to increased donor funding and a perception that space for civil society had expanded. There are indications that CSOs were the pioneers of the think tank idea in Kenya. Think tanks provided the needed technocrats to fill crucial positions in government. After a collaborative decade with academic work and research, government initially tightened regulation of outspoken intellectuals critical of its systems, and formally

criminalised competitive politics. Today, with multi-party politics restored, the Kenya government provides funding to some think tanks and universities. To some extent, like in South Africa, the government of Kenya works closely with think tanks and universities on policy-related research issues.

In Tanzania, politicians often sought the advice of academics on policy in the period immediately after independence. The situation changed from late 1960s and 1970 as the political space for voices of dissent disappeared. Structural adjustments further constrained already limited government funding. Many researchers either left the country or became inactive while political patronage set the agenda for policy studies and research. Since the 1990s, things have changed in Tanzania as more think tanks and universities have been opened and the space has been made friendlier.

Ethiopia followed the typical pattern seen in many other African countries, even if it was not colonised. Academics were marginalised. The establishment of think tanks and universities came later in the 1990s when the government system changed from unitary to federal. Ethiopia's think tanks are either government-initiated or affiliated to civil society, which encourages discriminatory control. A recent proclamation on 'charities and civil societies' declared that CSOs are at liberty to carry out any research but must raise 90 percent of their total funds locally. This limits influence, research, and collaboration between think tanks and universities given that funding is key in enhancing collaboration.

Before Senegal's independence in 1960, there was no research centre. To promote research in agronomy, the government in 1960 created the first think tank in Senegal. A number of university-based think tanks emerged in Senegal from 2000 with the Centre de Recherches Economiques Appliquées (CREA) being the first. Economic liberalisation led to establishment of more think tanks and currently there are 16. Collaboration is mainly between universities and university-based think tanks.

In Benin, the first university was created in 1970 (Université d'Abomey Calavi) and today there are three public and seven private universities. The second public university (Université de Parakou) was created in 2001 and the third in 2013. Contrary to the universities, the number of think tanks grew rapidly to 15 in 2013, though there is little information on their relationship with universities. Most research by think tanks in Benin is highly dependent on external funding.

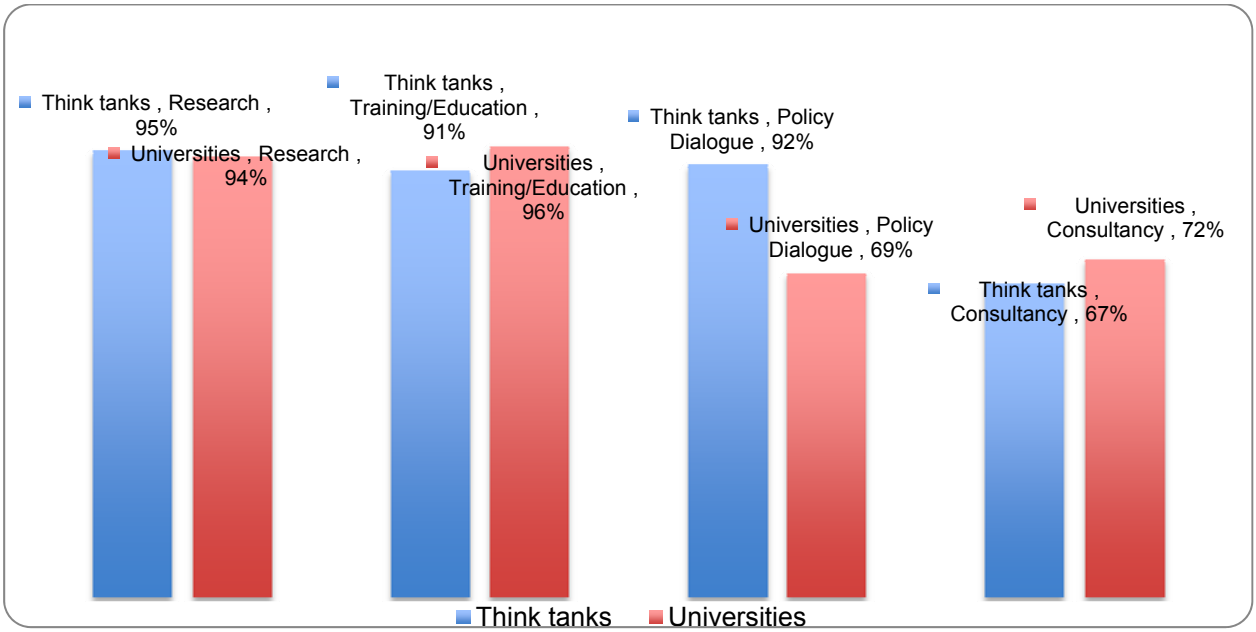
Nigeria's think tanks and universities are linked to the political landscape through four distinct phases. Prior to independence, there was only one university–the University College of Ibadan–and no think tank. Immediately after independence, five institutions of university status and one think tank were established. The number of universities increased to 24 and think tanks to 5 from 1970 to 1989. In the following decade, increasing recognition of democracy led to a transition from military to civilian regimes[13] and full democracy returned in 1999. This phase marked a rapid proliferation of both think tanks and universities. A key feature is that each of the six geopolitical zones into which Nigeria is divided has at least one think tank or university. The period from 1990s to the present has seen strong collaborations between think tanks and universities in Nigeria.

4.2 Commonalities and differences in think tanks and universities

Both universities and think tanks give roughly equal time to training and research, providing a common platform for dialogue and consultancy work (Figure 3). Think tanks gave significantly more attention to policy dialogue. Universities allocated more time (72%) to consultancy than policy dialogue.

[13] For example, the transition period was when the military head of state became the military president, and the legislative arm of the government comprised democratically elected civilians.

Figure 3: Ranking of areas of focus by think tanks and universities



Source: Think tank–university relations study in Africa – country data

There are country variations in the allocation of time by think tanks and universities. Think tanks in South Africa are more involved in research, whereas those in Senegal are mostly engaged in training and education. In South Africa and Ethiopia, think tanks engage more in policy dialogue than those in Zimbabwe where the focus is more on consultancy work to raise resources. Think tanks involved in training concentrate on capacity-building workshops rather than degree programmes, with a few exceptions such as the Makerere Institute of Social Research, which runs a PhD programme.

On another note, universities focus primarily on specialised training at the highest levels in a wide range of disciplines. Think tanks tend to have a specific area of focus, although their staff may be recruited from different disciplines. All are involved in research with differing goals and methodologies. Universities' academic research is perceived as theoretical, but more rigorous in its methodologies, fact-oriented and objective. In social science in particular, the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is criticised as arcane and divorced from real-world issues (Rukobo, 1990).

In contrast, think tank research is associated with the goal to directly inform policy and policy change. Distinction between academic and policy research has reduced prospects for collaboration on the premise that academics are too technically hidebound to contribute to policy issues (Kaseke et al., 1998), and yet most researchers in think tanks are not only university graduates but also individuals who may have taught at universities or even still hold dual positions.

There are observed differences between think tanks and universities in the way they conduct their research activities, but these should be assessed in light of the contributions they make to policy change and a country's advancement. Think tanks' recruitment of university graduates and/or academic staff enables them to engage in scientific research in the same way as universities. Equally, increasing numbers of universities in Africa are moving towards engagement with issues that affect the communities in which they exist (Rhoten and Calhoun, 2011). Rukobo (1990:40) explains the complementarities thus:

> Basic research is the search and attempt to explain the notion and dynamics of the development of society. Policy research usually describes what is there, with the specific purpose of recommending action. There is no contradiction between the two.

Across the countries, university staff try to understand the background of the formation of any think tank, whose agenda is driving its activities and how individual interests fit into this before any collaboration.

Traditionally, universities are highly structured, often organised in specialised faculties, departments or subject units with rigid and bureaucratic hierarchies. This contrasts with the think tank ethos of enterprise, dynamism and flexibility that makes them open to collaboration. The systematic approach of universities and the policy-savviness of think tanks could make collaboration between them challenging but once explored and established can also be very rewarding.

4.3 Supporting organisations

Supporting organisations comprise users of the knowledge generated by think tanks and universities, clients who commission specific research projects, and private foundations and international donors who provide funding for research and other activities. Most donors provide financial support aimed at increasing capacity in research, policy analysis and advocacy, but also in addressing issues of democratisation, accountability, economic reform and the protection of human rights.

Using Uganda as an example, Makerere benefitted from a Swedish bilateral collaborative research programme of approximately USD 34 million during the period 2000–2009. Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Uganda has over the years also collaborated with both local and international partners in areas of research, staff exchange, capacity building and infrastructural development support. Collaborations have specifically been documented with the Federal Republic of Cuba, the Netherlands Government, and the German Academic Exchange Programme, among others.[14] Donor institutions and consortia such as the Democracy and Governance Facility, TTI and the Netherlands Government provide resources to think tanks and other civil society organisations in Uganda.

The financial support to universities and think tanks has been targeted at issues individual donors consider paramount. Donors constitute the most important influence on the character and role of these institutions in research. This is the experience in all countries except South Africa where there is a high level of independence in the way think tanks and universities operate. Collaboration between universities would be beneficial to donors given that they have common interests.

For this study, supporting organisations are characterised as country-based donors, users and clients (third party organisations) or donor organisations (mainly foreign) that support capacity building of the two institutions in different countries. Structured interviews were conducted with 64 third party organisations, of which 48 percent were users only, 32 per cent were both funders and users of research outputs, and 20 percent were donors only (Tables 10 and 11).

Table 10: Type of third party organisation

Type of organisation	Percentage
Government ministry	17.2
Government agency	18.8
Local/national CSO	14.1
Private sector organisation	6.3
Media	6.3
Inter-governmental organisation	14.1
International NGO	15.6
Diplomatic mission	6.3
Other	1.6

Source: Country data

[14] See: http://www.must.ac.ug/research-innovation/our-partners-0

Table 11: Number of third party of organisations, by country

Country	No. of third party organisations
South Africa	10
Benin	7
Ethiopia	7
Kenya	7
Nigeria	7
Senegal	7
Uganda	7
Mozambique	6
Tanzania	5
Zimbabwe	1
Total	64

Table 12 provides a summary of the kind of support provided by third party organisations to think tanks and universities. The highest percentage of funding in both think tanks (44%) and universities (56%) is for policy research.

Table 12: Support provided to think tanks and universities by third party organisations

Type of support	Think tanks	University
Core funding	11%	4%
Funding policy research	44%	56%
Funding degree program	0%	18%
Commissioning of consultants	29%	16%
Infrastructure development	7%	2%
Other	9%	4%

Source: Country data

80 percent of third party organisations advocated for greater collaboration between think tanks and universities in policy research, compared with 69 percent for training/education, 71 percent for policy dialogue and 65 percent for consultancy. This clearly shows that there is need for think tanks and universities to collaborate in almost all the areas, with research and policy dialogue ranked highest by third party organisations.

Most third party organisations preferred research carried out by a team involving both universities and think tanks for a complementary balance of theoretical and practical knowledge. Where mixed teams were not used the majority favoured universities, with the exception of Mozambique. Those who preferred universities sought higher quality research and those who preferred think tanks sought more practical research approaches. The "complementarity" of mixed teams was also preferred for training.

Third party organisations preferred think tanks for policy dialogue, because they felt think tanks play an important role in politics. Think tanks were better at organising policy debates than universities, were better equipped with policy information, and were more current and practical than universities. Think tanks were also preferred for consultancy because most are designed as consultancy institutions and were seen to be dynamic and less bureaucratic.

Third party respondents favoured collaboration between universities and think tanks, but suggested areas for improvement to strengthen collaborations (Table 13).

Table 13: Areas for improvement by think tanks, universities and supporting organisations

Universities	Think tanks	Supporting organisations
Adopt modern analytical technologies Enhance dissemination of research work Increase research funding Reduce research bureaucracy Take more practical-oriented research rather than theoretical Incorporate media aspects for dissemination of research results	Improve dissemination by incorporating a media strategy and publications Increase research funding Provide specialised inputs to public policy Invest more in capacity building through internships and training seminars	Support high impact research work e.g. increase funding to specialised publications, funding to specific programmes of high interest Reduce control of research organisations by simplifying funding bureaucracy Promote collaboration between universities and think tanks

Source: Country data

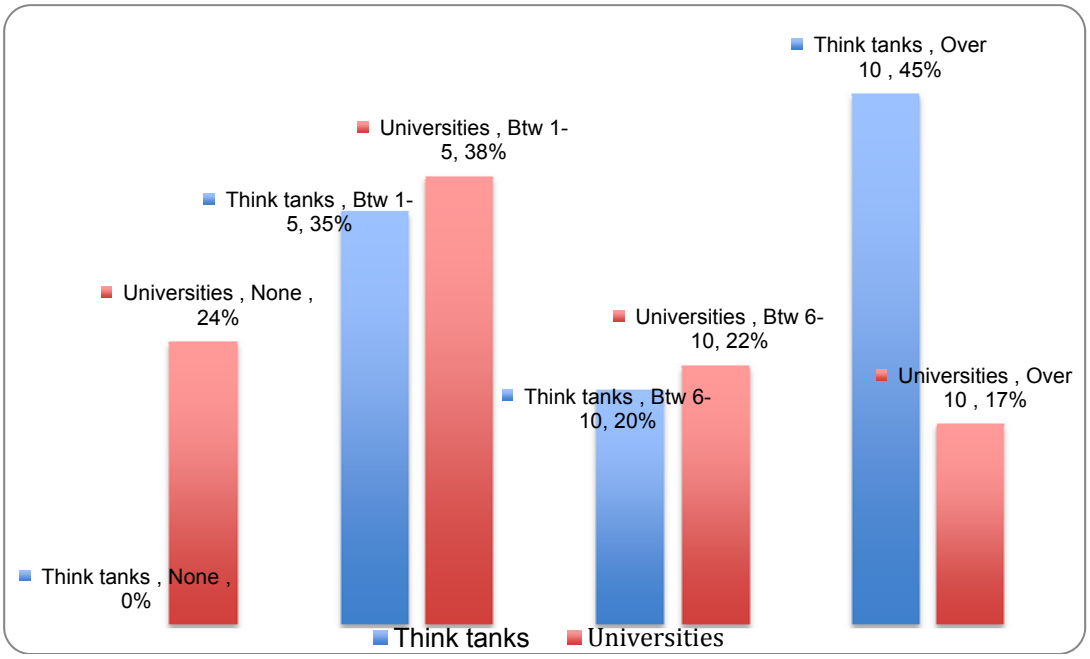
5 Collaborative Terrain for Universities and Think Tanks

5.1 Research

Collaboration in research embraces initiation, methodology development, implementation, and dissemination including publishing and policy dialogue. Collaboration is an expensive and time-consuming venture. Most heads of institutions noted that universities' heavy teaching loads left their academics with little or no time to engage in research, and teaching and consultancy opportunities provided quick returns. One professor in Tanzania attributed this to the "commercialisation of education"[15] following massive reductions in the public funding of universities. Yet all agree that research was the area with most potential for collaboration.

Previously, public universities benefited from generous research grants from governments, which were not tied to specific projects. In the past five years, 24 percent of universities interviewed had not carried out any research due to lack of funds while all think tanks had carried out at least one research project (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Research projects undertaken by university departments and think tanks in the past five years



Source: Country data

Figure 4 however is not representative enough as the analysis does not take into consideration the scale of the reported research projects and the rigour of work involved. Significant differences across countries are summarised in Annex 6 (see Tables C1 and C2). Nigeria had the highest number of universities (81%) that did not undertake any research as institutions, and Senegal had the highest number of universities that undertook more than 10 research projects in the past five years.

As individuals, 92 percent of university staff had carried out research in the past five years in collaboration with government bodies and think tanks. Collaboration with think tanks exposes university staff to new research areas, and provides extra income and opportunities to expand professional networks as well as a channel to publish. Most think tanks and universities used a mixed approach to research staffing (Table 14).

[15] This term was used to refer to the trend in universities in the past two decades where only those subjects that were deemed to be 'attractive to students' or which were considered to be commercially viable were taught.

Table 14: Staff used to conduct research

	Universities	Think tanks
Both internal and external staff	80%	64%
Internal staff only	15%	35%
External staff only	5%	1%

Source: Country data

Universities that used mostly a mixed approach were from South Africa and Senegal. Ethiopian universities and private universities mostly used the internal approach. Think tanks use external employees to fill skills and experience gaps, harness existing collaborations and add credibility. Across the 10 countries, Nigeria led in the think tanks that used mixed approach with Benin last in the list (Annex 6, see Table D1).

The main reasons universities hired external staff was to complement skills especially from think tank staff who better understand applied research. Among universities, the reasons for using internal staff included lower cost, capacity building and quality control. A head of department from the University of Ibadan highlighted the tradition of "preserving the integrity and quality of teaching and research". In contrast, a respondent from the African Centre for Shared Development Capacity Building argued that working with external partners broadened real-life experience and improved quality and policy relevance. This contrast explains the bureaucracies within universities versus the liberalism in think tank organisations.

About 95 percent of think tanks have collaborated with at least one university in the past five years, compared with 70 percent of universities who have collaborated with at least one think tank. Both donor grants and internal institution-generated funds are used to support collaboration in research. About 62 percent of universities felt that think tanks understood policy-oriented research. A higher percentage (55%) of individuals working in think tanks as compared with 10 percent of university staff receive management and financial support for research from their organisations.

From the meetings held in Nairobi that involved senior staff from universities and think tanks to share the initial findings of this study, it was noted that think tanks conducted more policy-relevant research than universities. However, the contribution of university staff in producing policy-relevant research through think tank organisations and on their own is unclear. Think tanks had expertise in some areas but lacked capacity to address certain issues, in which case they approached universities to fill this gap through collaborative research. The drive to undertake policy and issues-based research has led individual teaching staff to undertake research at think tanks while simultaneously maintaining teaching responsibilities at universities. In some cases, the nature of relationships between think tanks and universities was related to the history of the formation of think tanks in relation to the status of universities.

During these meetings to share findings, it was argued that universities' research products do in fact reach policy circles, the difference being approach and time. While universities tended to hold research dissemination meetings with policy actors, think tanks were perceived to carry out advocacy, which was viewed as more confrontational. The other notable difference is that while universities wrote for a wider audience and with intentions to publish in referred journals, think tanks mainly wrote for policy actors with a focus on immediate policy influence. Despite the efforts researchers make to inform policy, it is difficult for actors outside government circles to influence policy. It might be interesting to carry out an evaluation of the influence of universities and think tanks on policy-making processes in Africa using research-based findings.

5.2 Training/Education

Comparative analysis shows that most universities and think tanks used both internal and external trainers (Table 15).

Table 15: Percentage of staff conducting training/education programmes

Category	Universities	Think tanks
Both internal and external	68	71
Internal only	26	20
External only	6	9

Source: Country data

About 75 percent of universities delivered training workshops in collaboration with think tanks, and the relationship was reciprocal. Most universities lack the resources in labour and sometimes skills, especially with the recent phenomenal growth in student numbers, so they outsourced some training to think tank researchers and analysts. University-based think tanks were routinely involved in teaching. They collaborated mainly to improve the quality of training in joint training workshops that are generally funded internally and sometimes with donor support. Governments, inter-governmental organisations and the private sector did not fund collaboration in training.

5.3 Policy dialogue

Policy dialogue is a core purpose of think tanks, though increasingly they collaborate with universities, particularly for dissemination of research or policy analysis findings. According to the executive director of MISR, conventional think tanks tend to have direct relationships with policy-makers, with positive purpose despite the short-term (election cycle) nature of policy-making:

> Policy-making is short-term. Usually, policy-makers want quick answers (or perceptions) to even poorly framed problems. Research formulates questions more thoroughly, but the process can take too long to effectively contribute to policy dialogue.
> Executive Director, MISR.

This is where universities and think tanks need to collaborate to be able to take advantage of each other's strengths in academic rigour and policy engagement focus.

Most universities used the conference/workshop approach to policy dialogue and made minimal use of media events, briefing papers, round-table discussions, and breakfast meetings. Think tanks also used conferences and workshops more than round table discussions and media events. The use of both internal and external staff to carry out policy dialogue is common to both think tanks and universities (Table 16).

Table 16: Percentage of staff carrying out policy dialogue

	Universities	Think tanks
Both internal and external	61	76
Internal only	25	16
External only	14	8

Source: Country data

Donors were the main funders of collaboration on policy dialogue. Universities recognise that think tanks add credibility, understanding and contacts to the policy dialogue process. However, think tanks did not see much value in collaborating with universities on policy dialogue. The head of a think tank in Zimbabwe confirmed the survey findings of limited collaboration between think tanks and universities on policy dialogue:

> My organisation does not engage universities on policy dialogue. We engage retired but highly experienced people from international organisations and government, NGOs and advocacy organisations because they have vast experience in policy-related issues which we do not find in university individuals.

> The Executive Director of ZEPARU pointed out that "by sticking to what they call academic rigour, universities frequently miss the key point that policy making (and hence policy research) is inherently a political process."

The cross-cutting nature of issues handled by think tanks and universities could incentivise collaboration, but while universities in Kenya, South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Senegal report a significant increase in collaboration on policy dialogue in the past five years, Nigerian universities have experienced a significant decrease, and universities in Uganda and Benin say the level of collaboration on policy dialogue has not changed over time. Half the university staff interviewed had collaborated with think tanks on an individual basis on policy dialogue, and found it provided new research and network opportunities.

5.4 Consultancy

More think tanks than universities have delivered consultancies in the past five years. About 62 percent of the universities and 68 percent of think tanks have done at least one consultancy in that period. Of these, only 14 percent of universities and 32 percent of think tanks have had more than 10 consultancies. Both universities and think tanks used internal and external people to carry out consultancies (Table 17).

Table 17: Percentage of staff carrying out consultancies

	Universities	Think tanks
Both internal and external	54	81
Internal only	44	17
External only	2	2

Source: Country data

Both think tanks and universities are confident that collaboration on consultancy improves the quality of reports. Despite this, there has been a decrease in collaboration in consultancy in the past five years. There was no clear explanation for this trend. However, during the findings sharing meeting in Nairobi, it was mentioned that there is a possibility of under-reporting of consultancy especially where it constitutes moonlighting.[16] The increased teaching workload for university staff as well as the increasing research opportunities might explain the decrease in collaboration on consultancy.

5.5 Human resources experiences and mobility

University and think tank researchers and analysts shared wide experiences, formally and informally. Think tank professionals readily acknowledged the collaborations. However, it appears that for university researchers and analysts, participation in think tank activities was not something to be proud of; their primary objective was often additional income. Some said they were very occupied with teaching and if they spent long periods away their subjects or scholar streams would suffer.

The issue of staff mobility between universities and think tanks was not very clear as professional staff engaged in moonlighting. A staff member often has full-time employment in one institution and part-time responsibilities in another, or full-time employment in more than one institution. The expansion of both universities and think tanks in the past two decades was partly to blame for this—a practice some heads of departments blamed for the declining standards of teaching and research. Professional staff are not enough to meet the demand in the two types of institutions.

Potential employees preferred to take on a full-time job with a university and seek part-time employment with a think tank because universities tend to have better-established structures, benefits schemes and entrenched job security. University employees do not want

[16] Working at a secondary or another job in addition to one's full-time job.

to lose their promotion opportunities nor their social security benefits. Further, employment at a university gives ‘status’ that improves the chances of freelance engagement.

There were mixed responses regarding competition between think tanks and universities. Some participants noted competition for human and financial resources in research projects using the ‘call-for-proposals’ approach. Others argued that university employees seconded or contracted by think tanks help universities complete their research and outreach mandates. There was consensus that, in principle, ‘healthy’ competition was beneficial.

6 Levels and Trends of Collaborations

6.1 Types and nature of collaboration

There was a marked difference in opinion on who starts collaborations. Think tanks reckoned they initiated 90 percent of the collaborations in research and training while universities estimated that think tanks initiate 38 percent and university departments 54 percent. In Kenya and Uganda, it was mentioned that universities are increasingly initiating collaboration on training, but not on research. This was discussed during the findings sharing workshop and it was agreed that think tanks initiate most collaborations. Think tanks are enterprising and they pitch to capture the funding, and then look for the people to do the research by initiating collaboration. The Dean of Gulu University asserted that:

> Most times initiatives come from think tanks. We have not done enough to initiate research. We need to open up. The transfer of knowledge is important and sometimes academicians are far from reality.

Some evidence suggests collaborations are mainly initiated at institutional level, but tend to be sustained by individuals. Contrasting sentiments were expressed by a head of department in Nigeria:

> When think tanks search for collaborations, they contact individuals directly and do not inform the university officially. It is possible that collaboration between individuals is preferred because it cuts out the long bureaucracy that the institutions tend to impose.

Collaboration in research has increased in the past five years between independent national think tanks and public universities. Universities believe collaboration has significantly increased in all countries except South Africa. University employees working with think tanks are predominant in Senegal, Benin and Zimbabwe, while institutional collaboration with think tanks is predominant in South Africa.

6.2 Drivers of collaboration

Think tanks preferred to collaborate with university departments and individuals on research and training because universities add credibility and quality. University departments tended to respond quickly and were less expensive than private sector consultants. Think tanks strongly refuted that university departments have financial resources to contribute, or that they are pressured by research users to involve universities.

Universities indicated that they collaborated in research because think tanks understand policy and add to the credibility and quality of research outputs. Think tanks also have financial resources to contribute, and users of research including policy actors preferred research done jointly by both universities and think tanks.

The type of think tank also determined certain collaborations. For example, university-affiliated think tanks tended to interact more on research with autonomous university research centres or faculties/departments. Independent think tanks preferred to interact with university individuals aligned to the advocacy agenda of the think tank.

At the individual level, the drivers for relationships are many and complex. Some university staff seek additional income. Some find the process of publishing in think tanks easier than the rigid and drawn-out processes at universities. For individuals working in think tanks, academic recognition is a much-cherished value driving their relationship with universities. Although not explored explicitly in the survey, findings suggest that think tanks enlisted academics on their boards (formally and informally) to give academic credibility to their institutions. None of the universities in the study mentioned having any individuals from think tanks serving on their councils or faculty boards. This might be because of the university management structure that limits membership of these boards to internal staff.

Multiple beneficiary funding opportunities created by donors, such as those supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, are a secondary avenue for the interaction between universities and think tanks. Similarly, calls-for-proposals that specify the need to have team members from both think tanks and universities encourage collaboration.

6.3 Features of successful collaborations

Five factors were mentioned as key to successful collaborations between think tanks and universities:

- Having a shared and clear agenda or objectives, reconciling differences in interests and mandates;
- Funds to facilitate the process (not just the project) as a number of unanticipated expenditures might arise;
- Commitment to deliver and respect for timelines;
- Mutual respect and recognition of what each party can contribute;
- Organic links (either the think tank was established by university staff or most employees were formerly at the university) correlate with success.

Some examples of successful collaborations between universities and think tanks in Ethiopia, Uganda and Zimbabwe include:

- EEA and several universities in running workshops and conferences jointly. EEA has created a database of economic statistics, which it has made available to these universities.
- In Uganda, ACODE collaborated with Makerere, Nkumba and Gulu Universities to develop a curriculum for teaching peace and conflict resolution funded by the British Council.
- In Zimbabwe, think tanks and universities cooperate to leverage resources including physical facilities, skills and funding opportunities. For example, one think tank executive director stated that they organise seminars for economics master's degree graduates to present their dissertation findings and focus on implications for policy issues. The seminars have helped the graduates to understand the relevance of academic work to policy.

6.4 Barriers to more effective collaborations

The following barriers to more effective collaboration between think tanks and universities were mentioned:

- The absence of a deliberate and formal collaborative culture between the two institutions results in mutual suspicion of motives (often political) and limited understanding of what either has to offer.
- There is a glaring absence of guidelines for collaboration (or funding structures) between universities and think tanks. Both parties need an independent facilitator with a good understanding of partnership-building processes. Formal collaborations established at institutional level are more sustainable and successful but there is a need to sustain individual collaborations and have incentives for both sides.
- Lack of financial resources, and/or different funding or time priorities.
- Lack of established networks. One executive director of a think tank in Zimbabwe asserted that intellectualism was no longer as strong as it was in the 1960s to 1980s because university lecturers focused more on lucrative consultancy and less on research (see also a report by Sall et al., 2004).
- Unpredictable funding affects sustainability. For example, the funding agendas of many bilateral donors have increasingly shifted towards trade and investment. This shift presents new opportunities as well as challenges for universities and think tanks seeking donor funding for collaborative work.

6.5 Challenges and improvements needed to foster better collaborations

The study reveals four overarching enablers, starting with information and communication. Universities need to establish an office that focuses on partnerships and networking to create platforms along which collaborations can be fostered. Internet facilities can allow virtual collaboration for those unable to travel long distances.

The second challenge relates to traditions and attitudes. Studies showed mutual suspicion between universities and think tanks. Think tank professionals believed their approach was driven by real demand. Universities contended that their pursuit of academic rigour was a better approach and they criticised think tanks for skewing results in favour of pre-set positions. Both points are valid, and collaboration with each party applying its comparative advantage should be the solution to, not the victim of, current obstacles.

A third overarching challenge is lack of resources, especially human resources with the required skills to facilitate interactive processes, financial resources and technological tools. Collaboration should come not only when funding has been secured, but in the search for funding itself. Think tanks and universities could partner/share costs to combine strength and reduce risks. One professor at the University of Zimbabwe mentioned that even when funding was available, the whole idea of 'he who pays the piper calls the tune' was detrimental to meaningful collaboration. Obamba and Mwema (2009) refer to power dynamics in research partnerships that are premised on asymmetrical resource flows and geopolitics.

The fourth challenge is maintaining intellectual independence. The challenge for think tanks is to satisfy funders without putting a vested-interest spin on policy analysis. This sometimes pushes away universities from think tanks that are not seen to be intellectually independent. Government-inspired or government-controlled think tanks also have autonomy issues.

6.6 Areas for further assessment

The following key questions emerged as areas for further assessment to clarify issues highlighted in this study:

- What are the intra-institutional relationships among universities and think tanks and how can these be strengthened?
- What is the quality of research in universities and think tanks?
- What is the capacity of universities and think tanks to carry out quality and policy-relevant research?
- To what extent does research inform policy in Africa and what can be done to strengthen this link? How much is basic and applied research supporting policy-making in Africa?
- Does the level of financial resource availability in universities determine the nature and level of collaboration with think tanks?

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

Relationships between think tanks and universities both at the institutional and individual levels are numerous, but they tend to be unstructured, tenuous and ad hoc. For instance, university officials have played key roles in setting up and leading think tanks. Think tank staff teach in universities and think tanks help improve the link between academic research and policy dialogue. Motivations for collaboration range from the need to improve effectiveness and efficiency to the pursuit of individual interests such as boosting personal earnings. However, country-specific political conditions influence how think tanks operate, especially those involved in advocacy, and this deters university involvement. The type of think tank (university affiliated, independent or government affiliated) and university (public or private) also affect the level of collaboration. Despite the challenges, both think tanks and universities recognise that collaboration builds synergies and is likely to produce a win–win situation. The systematic approach of universities and the policy savviness of think tanks could make collaboration especially rewarding.

7.1 Encouraging positive collaboration

Collaboration may be spurred by building teaching partnerships. Graduate schools could incorporate adjunct teachers drawn from think tanks to tap new skills and build linkages. Kenya's Institute of Economic Affairs trains researchers from universities in policy analysis and research. Furthermore, Kenyan policy requires that think tanks must be involved in university curriculum development. Such good practices ought to be shared/considered widely.

Most think tanks and university departments – and individuals in these institutions – have worked together, and the level of collaboration has generally increased over the past five years. Collaborations are easier to start through informal personal relationships. Ultimately, formal arrangements are sustained by person-to-person relationships that act as catalysts in building the necessary trust to nurture collaboration.

Different funding models and priorities inhibit joint action, but there is strong recognition in universities, think tanks, and third party organisations of the benefits of harnessing synergies, exploring opportunities, sharing costs, and improving the quality of research outputs and training.

The most fundamental ingredient for success is formal MoUs to set out goals, clearly define roles, and agree on commitment to delivery and a mutually beneficial agenda. Think tanks and universities need to explore forms of collaboration that need little or no financial support.

7.2 Moving towards sustainability

Sustainability remains a key concern for think tanks. Universities, especially those that are public, enjoy funding support from governments and bring in significant fees from tuition and other services they provide. This is not the case with think tanks. However, it is important to note that while universities enjoy these revenue streams, a larger proportion tends to be used to meet recurrent costs leaving universities with insufficient resources to support research.

Universities should become more entrepreneurial in mobilising surplus resources to carry out research, which tends to be underfunded. Universities could for instance hire out their conference facilities to think tanks in order to generate money and increase collaboration. Joint planning and execution of conferences is another potential area for collaboration that stands to bring in high returns. The two entities ought to also consider how they can develop new, innovative products that raise their profiles and at the same time earn them income.

Because of their weak resource base, think tanks tend to be more dynamic and entrepreneurial to survive. They are flexible and ready to move from one focus to the other fairly quickly.

To ensure sustainability and credibility, universities and think tanks should pay close attention to how they manage resources from funding organisations with the highest levels of accountability and transparency. Heightened demands for accountability and value-for-money are making it harder for universities and think tanks to access donor funding. Donors also prioritise high standards of research and timeliness, which universities and think tanks ought to take into account.

7.3 Removing and reducing constraints and barriers to positive relationships

Certain shortages prevent the development of positive relationships. These include a lack of human resources with the required skills to facilitate partnerships, absence of platforms that create space and innovations around which relationships can be fostered, and limited financial resources for the tools that support collaboration.

Barriers also sometimes arise because of a lack of awareness of the value of collaboration. Additionally, neither universities nor think tanks are fully aware of the other parties' objectives, binding constraints, or strategies. The first remedy must be better information and communication. Challenges of traditions, attitudes and trust deter collaborations. All parties need to seek practical and holistic collaborative opportunities such as jointly working on a research-to-policy process with each party contributing its comparative advantage.

Different countries may need different prescriptions. For instance, Tanzanian universities involved in agricultural research seem to collaborate much more than their Kenyan counterparts. The roots of these variations deserve further study.

While elaborate national strategies exist for universities in much of Africa, there is a complete absence of strategies for think tanks. To attract and sustain interest and buy-in, universities and think tanks need to convince governments, capacity-strengthening institutions and donors of the pay offs. Further study is warranted on where governments, capacity-strengthening institutions and donors already understand and invest in collaborations, and why.

Organic institutional collaboration has not worked so well, perhaps because the financial rewards are not delivered to the individuals who do the work. Institutional collaboration (formal) will collapse if it is in conflict with individual self-interest (informal). A middle ground that presents a win–win environment is needed to encourage both formal and informal approaches. Development assistance can provide much-needed support to nurture positive and complementary relationships, but great care and sensitivity are needed to avoid distorting the complex relations that exist.

Donor agendas may also sometimes distort think tank and university relationships if the two do not manage such a relationship well. There is an erroneous view that most think tanks are 'donor- driven'. Many think tanks have clear mandates, which they pursue in spite of the availability (or lack thereof) of funding from donors. Perhaps the question is more about looking into ways of getting donors to prioritise the issues that affect Africa to better align their funding to the needs of the continent and its institutions. Donor agendas have tended to be anchored on the policy frameworks of specific sectors and the broader national development agenda of both the donor and recipient countries. It is necessary for universities and think tanks to link their plans to these forces without necessarily imagining that this makes their research donor-driven.

These studies have revealed a knowledge gap in ways that the above constraints and barriers have already been addressed and overcome. There would be real value in creating a knowledge platform that harnesses best practices for collaboration between the two institutions, and demonstrates how these relationships can play out in positive ways. African universities and think tanks operate in a globalised world in which there is stiff competition. Indeed, when governments require long-term, complex research projects to be undertaken, they call upon international institutions. Think tanks and universities need to think innovatively about how best they can compete internationally. Collaboration among the two entities as well as with other actors, such as private sector corporations, can help them to better meet the needs of an ever-more demanding market.

7.4 Think tanks and universities in partnership to link quality research-to-policy influence

Though the study did not assess this partnership to link quality research-to-policy influence, the dissemination meeting in Nairobi raised concerns about the need to strengthen the quality of research outputs. Not enough has been done because of lack of capacity, limited resources and heavy teaching responsibilities for academics. This calls for creative thinking to build more sustainable infrastructure for research in African institutions.

Neither basic nor applied social science research seem to be contributing sufficiently to the formulation of public policy in Africa. The challenge, it would appear, is for both institutions to design approaches that will make their influence felt more strongly in policy-making processes. This entails inquiring into the key drivers of policy-making and how policy change actually happens. This could be an area of future research.

Collaboration should not be over-generalised because think tanks have varied conceptual definitions. Some collaboration may be promising, while some simply cannot work. Not all think tanks should necessarily work with universities. There is also need to be careful about generalising that universities tend to be poor at mobilising resources for research because there are examples of university researchers who have been able to attract several large research grants for their institutions.

Universities and think tanks as well as their donors need to understand research processes, protocols and utilisation in order to cultivate sustainable or long-term collaborations, particularly in research. In conclusion, think tanks and universities can collaborate in a number of ways including:

- Joint short-term interactive training programmes in different areas
- Creating knowledge-sharing platforms such as joint journal or book publications as well as periodic conferences to share research findings from both organisations
- Providing student internship in think tanks
- Sabbatical for university staff in think tanks
- Joint customised courses for people in government
- Formalising supervision of students and teaching in universities by think tank staff
- Strategic involvement of think tanks in curriculum design for relevant courses at the universities
- Joint research projects and policy discussions/engagement

7.5 Recommendations for specific roles and contribution that promote effective collaboration

Universities, think tanks as well as funding organisations have a role to play in promoting long term and sustainable collaborations. This report recommends the following:

Universities

1 University–Think Tank collaboration stands to be enhanced where there is a fundamental shift in the mindset of university staff. University leaders ought to encourage frank discussions with their lecturers about their engagement in external collaborative initiatives for mutual recognition of each side's interests. They ought to look into ways of supporting individual-level collaborations to flourish because they are important building blocks of successful formal institutional collaborations.

2 Universities need to provide sabbatical leave to their staff to give them time to do research with think tanks, and reduce the teaching load which is of major concern in many countries given the increasing number of students that does not match with the number of staff. They should increase the autonomy of research units within universities to enable them create more interactions with think tanks.

3 University-based researchers need to be encouraged to compete for research funding. Part of their employment's key accountabilities could be to bid for grants for joint research with think tanks and other external actors. If such incentives exist, what needs to be agreed upon is the revenue-sharing framework between researchers and

universities. Universities in some countries are experiencing difficulties in attracting and keeping academics because think tanks, which tend to offer better terms of pay, poach their staff. Encouraging the involvement of university staff in research with think tanks might help universities to retain senior staff and encourage collaboration.

4 Given that universities are seen to be strong in research methodology issues, they should consider running short-term research skills enhancement courses that will involve both universities and think tanks.
5 Universities should value policy papers and influencing policy in the same way they value academic papers that satisfy scientific publication and promotion.
6 Although it would be difficult to achieve, universities need to critically reflect on the options for addressing the bureaucracy that is associated with their operations, as it tends to hinder collaboration with think tanks.

Think tanks

1 Think tanks should organise events focusing on the areas where they have comparative advantage such as how and when to engage policy actors in the research process as well as how to write short but precise reports, while considering processes for good research. The events could include customised interactive sessions to involve policy actors working in government, private sector and universities.
2 Instead of think tanks bringing in senior staff from universities to work on specific projects as their only focus, they can broaden their responsibilities to include mentoring young researchers in think tanks. This will of course be an additional role that will require more time and resources.

Funding organisations

1 Donors need to understand that the optimal sustainability situation is to see the growth of both universities and think tanks and therefore equal attention needs to be paid to the development of both entities. There is need for donors to pay attention to strengthening human resources in both institutions especially in research skills, creating platforms for the two institutions to interact frequently, sharing information, and providing financial resources required to facilitate collaborations and learning from other regions.
2 There are severe capacity problems in many African universities and think tanks; funding organisations could play a useful role in capacity-building support for emerging researchers as well as for more senior researchers. Donors should support a medium of technical exchange and sharing of ideas between universities and thinks tanks such as a journal containing research evidence of think tanks and universities working together. There is need to support activities such as joint short-term training programmes and conferences where both organisations share research findings and come up with joint reports such as a book, attachments of university staff to think tanks, and student internships in think tanks.
3 There is need to find ways of motivating the private sector and African governments to fund research in think tanks and universities as a way of building capacity. In addition, African governments should create an environment (legal or otherwise) that facilitates collaboration between universities and think tanks. For example, one of the ways the South African government is trying to address the research capacity challenge is by creating research chairs in the different universities through the National Research Foundation where a professor of significant standing joins a research institution and supervises its research activities and in a way mentors other researchers.
4 Funding organisations have to reduce wastage by finding ways of minimising duplication. Much as realising this in practice would be a challenge as donors tend to have different and often changing interests, it would be advantageous if donors tried to align their interests as much as possible in ways that support collaboration between the two entities.
5 Donors can play a significant role by making collaboration a pre-condition for funding. However, funding organisations ought to take into account the fact that there will be

some situations where universities and think tanks will compete for resources, and others where they will prefer to combine and collaborate. Funding structures and conditionality should be flexibly responsive to this dynamic. Donors need to be proactive in identifying areas where alliances between universities and think tanks are beneficial, and tailor their country-specific funding accordingly. Awareness of what each party can offer in terms of knowledge, skills, and resources creates a more conducive environment for collaboration.

6 Donor funding mechanisms ought to be responsive to the fact that self-interest partly drives individual researchers to collaborate with either universities or think tanks. Funding models should carefully look at both individual and institutional direct as well as indirect gains.

7 Longer-term funding with focused priorities and emphasis on accountability, value for money and sustainability should be provided to think tanks and universities. This will help create long-term collaborations between the two institutions.

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Annex 1: Background to the broader concept of think tanks

Origin: The history of universities stretches back a thousand years. Think tanks are relatively recent – first invented by governments in the 18th century specifically as brains trusts to solve particular policy problems only. They were called 'Brain Boxes' before the term 'Think Tank' – which describes so well what they are, what they do, and how – was widely adopted about 70 years ago.

The term 'think tank' is now used colloquially and universally to mean any group of people who gather to brainstorm on a particular issue for a specific purpose. Members are chosen for their know-how – a blend of experience, wisdom, imagination, and technical knowledge. Their task is usually to solve a problem or to come up with ideas. They have a strategic brief on what is wanted, but otherwise a blue sky mandate on how to seek the answer. The name think tank is a clue to the usual and expected methodology: brainstorming, sometimes accompanied by external fact-finding, sometimes followed by cross checks and validation.

The scope of contexts and subjects for think tanks is unlimited, and can range from reviewing the by-laws of a sports club to rebranding a company, or designing a presidential election campaign, or planning a military invasion.

The term 'think tank' in this synthesis is born of that genre but refers only and specifically to **policy-focused research institutions** in the sense used and understood by scholars and policy-makers, and as defined in the list of key concepts at the beginning of this paper. While these are a much evolved and very particular and formalised type of think tanks, also known as policy institutes, in which the perspiration of research is as important as the inspiration of ideas, it is useful to understand their background because the modern versions contain at least some of the original genetic material, which also still influences popular perceptions.

Evolution: Initially, most think tanks were ad hoc assemblies set up to tackle short-term (often military) exigencies, and disbanded when that particular work was done. Early institutional (and therefore long-term) examples include the Fabian Society, the Carnegie Endowment, the Brookings Institution and others – all characterised by their focus on singular political/policy issues. Indeed, despite massive recent proliferation and diversification, they most frequently manifest as 'policy institutes'. Many now undertake or contract research (sometimes in an academic style). Many regard advocacy as their primary purpose. None pursue knowledge for its own sake.

Advanced Dictionary: a body of experts providing advice and ideas on specific political or economic problems.

Colloquial perceptions: For non-academics, the reflex distinctions between universities and the broad spectrum of think tanks might include:

- Universities are academically driven.
- Think tanks are politically and commercially driven.

- Universities teach. They create and nurture expertise.
- Think tanks don't. They identify and harness expertise.

- Universities are research institutions and often much else besides.
- Think tanks are Brains Trusts and often nothing else besides.

- Universities use one method/system – to tackle any issue.
- Think tanks use any method/system – to tackle one issue.

- Universities deal in facts and statistical probabilities, and inform policy with robust scientific evidence.
- Think tanks deal in ideas and blue-sky possibilities, and inform policy with strategic opinions/advice.

- Universities rigorously investigate, usually what is inside the box.
- Think tanks brainstorm, often outside the box.

- Universities measure and are measured by scientific research outputs. Work can be good even if there are no external results.
- Think tanks measure and are measured by policy outcomes. Work is good only if there are some external results.

- Universities often conduct 'push' research on what policy makers should worry about.
- Think tanks only conduct 'pull' research on what policy makers do worry about.

While not all those examples apply or translate to the policy institute type, they do illustrate public perception of the manifold and ostensibly diametric differences between universities and think tanks, and also demonstrate the common ground they stand on and how intrinsically inter-related they are: a classic example of two sides of the same coin.

In the policy institute context, a cynical but not unrealistic view is that 'tame' think tanks are convenient to unenlightened governments, because their findings can be kept confidential or, when those findings are politically agreeable, they can be cited as 'professional', expert' and 'research-based'. If they are politically awkward, they can be dismissed as 'unscientific'.

Collaboration between rigorously scientific universities and policy-savvy and intellectually rebellious think tanks can therefore be complementary to both institutions, but threatening to some political environments.

Annex 2: Universities, think tanks and third party organisations covered by country

Country	University	Think Tank	Third party
Benin	Université d'Abomey Calavi (UAC) Centre d'Etudes, de Formation et de Recherches en Développement (CEFRED) Centre de Recherche d'Economie Appliquée et de Management (CREAM) Centre de Droit Administratif et de l'Administration Territoriale (CEDAT) Centre de Droit Constitutionnel (CDC) Laboratoire de Sociologie, Anthropologie et d'Études Africaines Centre de formation et de recherche en matière de population(CEFORP) Laboratoire de Sociologie et de Vulgarisation Rurales (LVSR) Laboratoire d'Etudes sur la Pauvreté et la performance de l'Agriculture (LEEPA)	Institut de recherche empirique en économie politique (IREEP)	Fraternité (groupe de presse) Office des radios et télévisions du Bénin (ORTB) L'Observatoire pour une Nouvelle Afrique (Ona-Ong) Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement (PNUD) Bénin Direction Générale des Affaires Economiques (Ministère des finances) Handicap International, Programme TOGO-BENIN Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (Campus Numérique Cotonou)
	Université de Parakou (UP) FDSP/UP Faculté de Droit et Science Politique Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines	Laboratoire d'études et de recherches sur les dynamiques sociales et le développement local (LASDEL)	
	Université de Parakou Département : Economie et Sociologie Rurales (ESR)	L'Institut national de recherche agricole du Bénin (INRAB)	
	Université de Sciences Appliquées et de Management (USAM) Institut de Droit, Sciences Politiques et Sociales (IDPS)	Observatoire du Changement Social (OCS)	
	HOUDEGBE North American University Benin (HNAUB) Rév. Dr Léon Sullivan School of Business Administration and Economics	Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education INFREE	
		Cellule d'Analyses Politiques de Développement de l'Assemblée (CAPAN)	
		Centre de Riz pour l'Afrique ADRAO/WARDA	
		Centre International d'Eco-Développement Intégré CECODI	
		Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Economique INSAE	
		Centre Panafricain de Prospective Sociale/Institut Albert TEVOEDJRE	
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa University Political Science and International Relations Department of Economics Public Administration and Development Management	Ethiopian Development Research Institute	Federal Sport Commission Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung Ministry of Education Ministry of Finance & Economic Development Ministry of Women, Children & Youth Affairs Norwegian Church Aid-Ethiopia Public Financial Enterprise Agency
	Ethiopian Civil Service University Institute of Public Management and Development Studies Institute of Federalism and Legal Studies	The Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development	
	Hawassa University School of Governance and Development Studies Department of Economics	Ethiopian Economics Association	
	Adama University	Forum for Social Studies	

	Department of Management Department of Economics		
	Ambo University Department of Economics Department of Management	Association of Ethiopian Micro Finance Institute	
	Debire Birhan University Department of Management Department of Sociology	Inter-Africa Group	
	Unity University Research and Publication Office	Environmental Economic Policy Forum for Ethiopia	
	Saint Mary University College Research and Knowledge Management office	Poverty Action Network Ethiopia	
		Network of Ethiopian Women Association	
		Research Center for Development and Education	
Kenya	Egerton University Economics Agricultural economics	Institute of Development Studies (UoN)	African Research and Resource Forum (ARRF) Kenya Market Trust (KMT) Kisumu Medical and Educational Trust (KMET) National Research, Training and Communications (NARTRAC) PATH Radio Lake Victoria
	Jaramogi Oginga Ondiga University of Science and Technology Board of Postgraduate Studies	Tegemeo Institute	
	Maseno University Literary and Communication Studies School of Development and Strategic Studies	Institute of Regional Integration and Development	
	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology Research	Center for Multi-Party Democracy	
	Kenya Methodist University Health Systems Management and Medicine Education	Institute of Economic Affairs (Kenya)	
	Strathmore University School of Economics	African Centre for Economic Growth	
	Catholic University Research	OSIENALA	
Mozambique	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane Departamento de Antropologia	Centro de EstudosAfricanos (CEA)	Rede Came CESC FórumMulher ADE JustaPaz ConselhoCristao de Mocambique
	Universidade Pedagogica Departamento de Sociologia e Antropologia	Centro de Estudos Estratégicos Internacionais (CEEI)	
	Universidade Sao Tomas de Mocambique (USTM) Departamento Sociologia e Admin Pública	Instituto de Investigaçãosócio-cultural – ARPAC	
	Universidade - A Politecnica – Departamento de CiênciasSociais e da Linguagem	Instituto de EstudosSociais e Economicos (IESE)	
		Centro de IntegridadePublica (CIP)	
		Government and Development Institute GDI	
		Centro de EstudosSociais Aquino de Bragança (CESAB)	
		Associação Centro de Estudos do Ensino Superior e Desenvolvimento (CESD)	
Nigeria	Bayero University Kano Department of Political Science	African Heritage Institution (formerly African institute for Applied Economics)	World Bank (Country Office) National Population Commission Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry National Planning Commission
	University of Ibadan Department of Agric. Economic Department of Political Science	Centre for Population and Environmental Development	
	Obafemi Awolowo University, Department of Economics Department of Demography &	Nigeria Economic Summit Group	

	Statistics Department of Sociology		Centre for International Private Enterprise National Orientation Agency Nigeria Governors Forum
	Ekiti State University Department of Sociology	African Centre for Shared Development Capacity Building	
	University of Nigeria Nsukka Dept of Agric Economics	Nigeria Institute for International Affairs	
	University of Lagos Faculty of Social Science Dept of Political Science	Centre for Research and Documentation	
	Ahmadu Bello University Dept of Political Science	Centre for Democratic Development Research & Training	
	University of Uyo Dept of Economics	Aminu Kano centre for Democratic Research and Training	
	University of Calabar University Research Working Group	Centre for Public Policy Alternative	
	Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida University Faculty of Social Science	Centre for Sustainable Development	
	Covenant University College of Development Studies	Centre for petroleum, energy economics and law	
		Institute for Development, University of Nigeria, Nsukka	
Senegal	University of Dakar (UCAD) Centre de Recherches Economiques Appliquées (CREA) Centre de Recherches et de Formation sur le Développement Economique et Social (CREFDES) Laboratoire de recherche sur les transformations économiques et sociales au Sénégal (LARTES) Laboratoire Genre et Recherche Scientifique Laboratoire de Sociologie, d'Anthropologie et de Psychologie (LASAP) Laboratoire Dynamique Territoriale et Santé (DTS) Institut de Formation et de Recherches en Population, Développement et Santé de la Reproduction (IFRPDSR) Institut de Santé et de Développement (ISD) Centre de Recherches, d'Etudes et de Documentation sur les Institutions et Législations Africaines (CREDILA) Laboratoire de Droit de l'Environnement et de la Santé (LDES) Laboratoire d'Etudes Juridiques et Politiques (LEJPO)	Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR)	Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) United Nations Institute for Economic Development and Planning (UNIDEP) Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) International Food Policy Research Institute West African Research Center (WARC) Fondation Friedrich Ebert/Dakar ONU Femmes
	University of Thiès Centre de Recherches en Economie et Finance Appliquées de Thiès (CREFAT)	Centre d'Etudes de Politiques pour le Développement (CEPOD)	
	University of Saint-Louis (UGB) Laboratoire de Recherches Economiques de Saint-Louis (LARES) Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Etudes et de Recherche de la Vallée	Bureau d'AnalyseMacroéconomique (BAME)	

	(CIERVAL) Equipe de Recherches sur les mutations du Rural Sahélien		
		Consortium pour la Recherche Economique et Sociale (CRES)	
		Centre de Recherches sur les Politiques Sociales (CREPOS)	
		Direction de la Prévision et des Etudes Economiques (DPEE)	
		Centre National de Recherches Agricoles de Bambey(CNRA)	
		Institut de Technologie Alimentaire (ITA)	
		Direction de l'Appui au Secteur Privé (DASP)	
		Centre de Recherches Agricoles de Saint-Louis (CRA)	
Uganda	Makerere University Social Work Social Administration Gender and Women Studies Economics Mass Communication	Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)	National Council for Science and Technology The Secretariat for Social Protection under Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development Uganda Media Centre National Planning Authority Office of the Prime Minister Ministry of Health - Malaria Control Division Ministry of Health - Reproductive Health Division.
	Uganda Martyrs University Faculty of Business Administration and Management	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE)	
	Uganda Christian University Faculty of Social Sciences	African Institute (AISRGD)	
	Kyambogo University	Centre for Basic Research	
	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	Policy Analysis and Development Research Institute (PADRI)	
	Gulu University	Community Development Resource Network (CDRN)	
		HEPS-Uganda	
		Development Research and Training (DRT)	
South Africa	University of the Western Cape Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies Governance	South African Institute for International Affairs	European Union - RSA Office Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Norwegian Embassy in Pretoria Andrew Mellon Foundation - RSA Office UK Department for International Development (DFID) - RSA Office Department of Trade and Industry, South Africa GIZ - RSA Office National Research Foundation (NRF) Department of Environmental Affairs
	University of Cape Town Sociology Economics Social work	Human Sciences Research Council	
	Witwatersrand University Sociology Institute for Social Development Centre for Migration Studies Psychology	Economic Research Southern Africa	
	North West University Public Management Governance studies	Data-First, University of Cape Town	
	Tshwane University of Technology Public Health	Council for Scientific Research of South Africa	
	University of South Stellenbosch Economics Public Administration	Studies in Poverty & Inequality Institute (SPII)	
	University of Johannesburg Political Science Economics	Institute for Global Dialogue	
	Monash University School of Social Sciences	Consultancy Africa	
		Open Society Initiative for	

	Economics	Southern Africa	
		Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa	
		Solidarity Research Institute	
		Peggassys Consultancy (Pvt) Ltd	
		Centre for Education Policy Development	
		Democracy Development Program	
		South African Institute for International Affairs	
		Endangered Wildlife Trust	
		Studies in Poverty & Inequality Institute (SPII)	
Tanzania	***University of Dar es Salaam*** Development Studies Sociology	Policy Research for Development (REPOA)	African Capacity Building Foundation BEST- AC Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology DANIDA –Tanzania SIDA-Tanzania
	University of Dodoma Development Studies	Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)	
	St. John University Development Studies	Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organization (STIPRO)	
	Mzumbe University Administrative Studies	Ifakara Health Institute	
		University of Dar es Salaam Gender Centre	
		Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme (ESAURP)	
Zimbabwe	***University of Zimbabwe Centre for Applied Social Science (CASS)*** Political Science Rural and Urban Planning	Institute of Environmental Studies	Ministry of Local Government
	Funded by the British Council,	Zimbabwe Policy Analysis and Research Unit (ZEPARU)	
	Africa University Faculty of Social Studies and Humanities	Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe (LEDRIZ)	
		Municipal Development Partnership (MDP)	
		Institute of Water and Sanitation Development	
		Trade and Development Studies Centre (TRADES)	
		Urban and Local Authorities	

Annex 3: Universities and think tanks involved in Focus Group Discussions
March 2013

Name of organisation	Country	Type of organisation
Center for the Study of the Economies of Africa	Nigeria	Think Tank
Research on Poverty Alleviation	Tanzania	Think Tank
Centre for Population and Environmental Development	Nigeria	Think Tank
Economic and Social Research Foundation	Tanzania	Think Tank
Ethiopian Economics Association	Ethiopia	Think Tank
Institute of Policy Analysis and Research	Rwanda	Think Tank
University of Ghana	Ghana	University
The Open University of Tanzania	Tanzania	University
Egerton University	Kenya	University
Makerere University	Uganda	University
University of Nairobi	Kenya	University
University of Ibadan	Nigeria	University
Ethiopian Civil Service University	Ethiopia	University
Uganda Martyrs University	Uganda	University
University of Dar es Salaam	Tanzania	University
Uganda Christian University	Uganda	University
University of Jos	Nigeria	University
University of Botswana	Botswana	University

Note: Rwanda and Botswana were not among the ten countries selected for the study but joined the FGDs given that they were present at the post-MDG forum in Nairobi

Annex 4: Donors involved in findings sharing meeting

March, 2014

Name of organisation
German Academic Exchange Service
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
African Economic Research Consortium
The Netherlands Embassy
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations
Australian High Commission
Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)

Note: With the exception of OSSREA, the rest of the organisations are based in Nairobi

Annex 5: Universities and think tanks involved in findings sharing workshop

March, 2014

Country	University	Think Tank
Benin	Université d'Abomey Calavi	Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education (INFREE)
	Université de Parakou	Centre de Droit Administratif et de l''Administration Territoriale (CEDAT)
		Laboratoire d'études et de recherches sur les dynamiques sociales et le développement local (LASDEL)
		Centre for Research in Applied Economics and Management
Ethiopia	Ethiopian Civil Service University	The Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development
		Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute
	Addis Ababa University	
Kenya	Maseno University	Institute of Development Studies
	Moi University	Tegemeo Institute
	Baraton university	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis *(*KIPPRA*)*
	Nairobi University	Institute of Economic Affairs
	Egerton University	OSIENALA (Friends of Lake Victoria)
	Masinde Muliro Universtiy of Science and Technology	
	Eldoret University	
Mozambique	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane	Associação Centro de Estudos do Ensino Superior e Desenvolvimento (CESD)
	Pedagogic University	
	Universidade Sao Tomas de Mocambique (USTM)	
Nigeria	Ekiti State University	The National Institute of Science Education and Research
	University of Uyo	Initiative for Public Policy Analysis
	University of Nigeria	
	University of Ibadan	
	Obafemi Awolowo University	
	Bayero University Kano	
Senegal	University of Dakar	Centre de Recherches en Economie et Finance Appliquées de Thiès (CREFAT)
		Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR)
South Africa	University of Pretoria	South African Institute of International Affairs
	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)
Tanzania	University of Dar es Salaam	Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)
	University of Dodoma	Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organization (STIPRO)
	Sokoine University of Agriculture	
Uganda	Uganda Martyrs University	African Institute for Strategic Research, Governance & Development *(*AISRGD*)*
	Makerere University	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE)

Country	University	Think Tank
	Kabale University Uganda Christian University	Centre for Basic Research Policy Analysis and Development Research Institute (PADRI)
Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe Women's University in Africa	Zimbabwe Democracy Institute Zimbabwe Policy Analysis and Research Unit (ZEPARU) Trade and Development Studies Centre (TRADES)
Total	33 Universities	27 Think Tanks

Annex 6: Country Statistics

Table A1: Subject focus of departments/research units by country

Country	Economics	Political	Sociology	Anthropology	Governance	Public policy	Other
Kenya	40	0	20	0	0	0	40
Uganda	33	11	11	11	0	11	23
Tanzania	11	33	11	0	0	0	45
Ethiopia	29	7	7	0	21	0	36
Senegal	40	13	7	0	0	0	40
Nigeria	19	38	25	13	0	0	5
Benin	63	13	0	0	0	0	24
Mozambique	0	50	50	0	0	0	0
Zimbabwe	25	0	25	0	0	0	50
South Africa	20	15	20	0	30	0	15
Average	28	17	15	3	9	1	27

Table A2: Subject focus of think tanks by country

Country	Economics	Political	Sociology	Anthropology	Governance	Public policy	Other
Kenya	0	0	17	0	50	17	16
Uganda	33	0	33	0	11	11	12
Tanzania	20	0	0	0	0	40	40
Ethiopia	30	10	0	0	10	50	0
Senegal	60	0	0	0	0	0	40
Nigeria	17	25	0	0	0	25	33
Benin	50	17	0	0	0	0	33
Mozambique	25	13	25	0	25	12	0
Zimbabwe	50	0	0	0	25	0	25
South Africa	31	0	0	8	46	8	7
Average	32	7	7	1	17	16	20

Table B: Status of think tanks by country

Country	Independent national	Independent regional	University affiliated	Other affiliates	Private sector	Government body
Kenya	34	33	33	0	0	0
Uganda	67	11	11	0	11	0
Tanzania	60	20	20	0	0	0
Ethiopia	50	10	10	10	0	20
Senegal	40	30	0	10	0	20
Nigeria	59	0	33	0	0	8
Benin	17	66	0	0	17	0
Mozambique	74	13	0	0	0	13
Zimbabwe	50	38	12	0	0	0
South Africa	40	30	10	0	0	20
Average	49	25	13	2	3	8

Table C1: Number of research projects undertaken by university departments/research units by country in the last 5 years

Country	None	1–5	6–10	Over 10
Kenya	20	80	0	0
Uganda	0	23	44	33
Tanzania	45	33	11	11
Ethiopia	14	33	20	33
Senegal	7	40	13	40
Nigeria	81	19	0	0
Benin	25	62	0	13
Mozambique	0	50	50	0
Zimbabwe	14	43	29	14
South Africa	5	40	50	5
Average	23	38	22	17

Table C2: Number of research projects undertaken by think tanks in the last 5 years

Country	1–5	6–10	Over 10
Kenya	33	0	67
Uganda	45	44	11
Tanzania	40	0	60
Ethiopia	20	10	70
Senegal	11	11	78
Nigeria	46	36	18
Benin	50	0	50
Mozambique	50	13	37
Zimbabwe	49	13	38
South Africa	24	38	38
Average	35	20	45

Table D1: Researchers used to carry out research by think tanks by country

Country	Internal	External	Both internal & external
Uganda	11	0	89
Tanzania	20	0	80
Ethiopia	20	10	70
Senegal	25	0	75
Nigeria	0	9	91
Benin	25	25	50
Mozambique	0	14	86
Zimbabwe	13	0	87
South Africa	23	0	77
Average	15	5	80

Table D2: Researchers used to carry out research by universities by country

Country	Internal	External	Both internal & external
Uganda	56	0	44
Tanzania	20	0	80
Ethiopia	71	0	29
Senegal	17	0	83
Nigeria	75	0	25
Benin	0	17	83
Mozambique	50	0	50
Zimbabwe	0	0	100
South Africa	30	0	70
Average	35	1	63

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