

Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)

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**Department for
Research Cooperation**

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Sida Evaluation 2008:06

**Department for
Research Cooperation**

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Executive Summary

This timely evaluation of the Addis Ababa-based Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) is jointly commissioned by Sida and NORAD, for the period 2000–2006. The Terms of Reference (ToR) and the specific objectives of the evaluation focuses on the research and transfer of knowledge activities, training and capacity building, and policy-relevant impact including the relevance, quality and impact of the research programmes; the effectiveness of dissemination and transparency of the research systems; the effectiveness of communication and dissemination of research results; capacity building and institutional strengthening; and the organisational and financial sustainability of the organisation.

The evaluation is based on a review of OSSREA's documents, i.e. constitution, by-laws, strategic plans, publications, and previous internal and external evaluations. A major and critical component of the evaluation is extensive interviews with main stakeholders including OSSREA's management and staff at the Secretariat, academics and beneficiaries of OSSREA's research grants and training programmes, members of national chapters, liaison officers, policy practitioners, university officers, students, inter-governmental institutions, government ministers and civil society. To achieve the objectives of the ToR, the External Evaluation Team (EET) visited the OSSREA Secretariat in Ethiopia and other evaluation case studies countries including Rwanda, Kenya, Mauritius and South Africa.

Though the evaluation is commissioned by the key donors, its remit also covers the general activities undertaken by the organisation during this period, the wider context of the crisis of African development and the challenges of neo-liberal globalisation on the continent, and how all these impact on the viability of OSSREA and its potential to meaningfully affect the production of social science research in Africa.

OSSREA itself is a product of a particular context, i.e. the era of international neglect of the higher education sector and social science research in Africa starting in the late 1970s through to the 1980s, and in particular, the 'African crises' of this period manifested by continent-wide economic crisis and declining economic productivity, depressing socio-economic and development indicators, and general political instability due to military coups and dictatorships, civilian one-party authoritarian regimes,

political repressions, rampant corruptions, inter-state and civil wars and armed conflicts. The establishment of OSSREA was therefore an attempt to encourage the development of a 'distinctive African scholarship', an alternative scholarship markedly different from the unequal and repressive intellectual relationship with the north.

In evaluating the thematic issues the team focused on the relevance and quality of the research and transfer of knowledge activities of OSSREA. In reviewing the effectiveness of the dissemination and transparency of research system the team assessed the peer review mechanism of the research grant making process including the patterns of distribution of grantees between 2000–2006, the publication challenges and opportunities in the form of co-publication with international commercial publishers, and the roles, management and co-ordination of OSSREA National Chapters. In assessing the impact of the organisation in the areas of capacity building and institutional strengthening, the team focused on national universities, national governments, and regional (East, Horn and Southern Africa) and continental impact. The case studies of Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa and Mauritius were used as the basis to examine the impact of OSSREA at national level, i.e. government and state agencies, including development co-operation partners and global governance institutions operating in these countries.

By all indications, OSSREA is currently in a secure financial position, but the organisation is 90% donor dependent and has made little or no meaningful effort to diversify its income generation strategy as a means to ensure predictability and stability. This raises the important issue of organisational and financial sustainability of the organisation. The evaluation found that the current crisis faced by the organisation had to do with the failure of the Executive Management (i.e. Executive Secretariat and Executive Committee) to ensure not only the implementation of, but also the oversight of governance reforms and organisational management recommendations made by eight previous external evaluations and reviews of OSSREA. In addition, the evaluation team is of the view that the good intentions and implementation of the proposed organisational structure developed Ernst & Young consulting firm and approved by the OSSREA Executive Committee will be potentially undermined because of the perception of lack of ownership and participation by staff of the new governance structure, the current organisational culture of over-centralisation and horizontal line management interactions and lack of involvement of staff in decisions and issues that affect the workforce.

Based on the above the team concludes that the evaluation of OSSREA is timely and would potentially facilitate and strengthen the organisation's impact on its key stakeholders, bearing in mind the following critical findings:

- Recognition that OSSREA is in a state of crisis, a situation similar to the 1990s crisis faced by CODESRIA. The crisis is partly due to the failure of, and inappropriate management systems, over-centralisation, constitutional deficiencies, lack of participation of staff and democratic deficit at the local level.
- However, and despite the current crisis, the EET found that OSSREA has continued to be relevant to African Scholars, universities and the production of social science knowledge and scholarship in Africa. This conclusion is based on the fact that the primary objective of the scientific evaluation of OSSREA was to ascertain the relevance, quality, institutional strengthening, impact and sustainability of the organisation –the *raison d'être* for establishment and donor funding of the organisation.
- The EET found that the two broad categorisations of OSSREA's research programmes do not represent a coherent organisational strategy to develop and promote a 'distinctive' intellectual and scholarly research agenda. Rather, the research scholarship is fragmented along donor-driven agendas, geographic (i.e. East, Horn and Southern Africa), national, linguistic (Anglophone, Francophone, Arabic and Swahili), and narrow disciplinary boundaries.

- On the relevance of research programmes and systems, the EET identified two primary areas of research relevance, i.e., specialised projects and research undertaken by scholars funded by OSSREA. Based on the review of the seven ‘Specialised Projects’ it is apparent that the research agendas are set by the donors with OSSREA ‘invited’ as a joint partner in the implementation of the projects. In other words, these ‘Specialised Projects’ are funded and driven by the research interests, policy and programmatic priorities of the donors. This raises the important issue of ownership of the research agenda and the extent to which OSSREA is able to consistently promote a ‘distinctive African research tradition based on African academic freedom’. The underlying philosophy of the ‘Specialised Projects’ tendentially perpetuates the marginalisation of African scholarship in its ability to set and shape the production of social science knowledge.
- Notwithstanding this limitation, the EET found that in the actual implementation of the ‘Specialised Projects’, OSSREA secretariat and its Scientific Committees are given a free hand by the funding partners in the selection of thematic topics of relevance to each of the Specialised Projects. Based on findings from the evaluation missions it is argued that through the ‘Specialised Projects’ African scholars are not only able to set local research agenda but also to undertake research on issues that are of local and context-specific relevance to the researchers and local communities. Furthermore, a review of the themes of research projects organised from 2000 to 2006 indicates that OSSREA has addressed some of the major issues affecting Africa in general and of the eastern and southern regions in particular.
- The second area of research relevance is through the framework of OSSREA-funded research grants such as the *Social Science Research Grants* (SSRG) and the *Gender Issues Research Grants* (GIRG) programmes. Within this framework OSSREA is freely able to formulate and set the research agenda. It has done so by centrally identifying and specifying, after consultations with scholars, researchers and National Chapter members, including the OSSREA Congress and Executive Committee, the main research themes around which call for applications are made and grants are approved. It is evident that the themes and selected topics of both the SSRG and GIRG illustrate local, indigenous and context-specific research agenda setting. Within this framework, the research funded and promoted by OSSREA are not only relevant but also provide the opportunity for African academics, often marginalised in the global production of knowledge, to ‘tell their’ own stories based on their own worldviews and the appreciation of the African conditions.
- On quality of the research programmes and systems, the EET focused not only on bibliometric methods like the index of citations, etc., but other methods to assess the quality of research and publications. Other methods used include review of selected sample of OSSREA publications including books and journal articles, academic peer review mechanisms and processes provided by western-based co-publishers such as Pluto Press and International Books. Selected sample of published articles in the OSSREA journal – *Eastern African Social Science Research Review* from 2005–2007 and a total of five books all indicate a varying degree of quality but at the same time, they cannot be faulted on the relevance of thematic focus and choice of topics, i.e. relevant to the major problems facing the continent and of concern to stakeholders. Though there is a degree of very good academic quality in terms of critical analysis and theoretical conceptualisation of the issues, the EET found a general lack of consistent academic and intellectual rigour in the selected samples.
- The academic quality and international reputation of the *Eastern African Review* is demonstrated not only by the contents of the reviewed samples, but also by submission of referred articles by western-based academics for publication in the journal. In addition, the reputation of the journal is relatively high not only from citation indexes but also among several Africanists at western-based universities and research institutes who extensively utilise the journal for teaching and research purposes. Notwithstanding the difficulties of accessing OSSREA publications at western-based university libraries and bookshops, some undergraduate and postgraduate course programmes in the UK have

extensive list of key publications from OSSREA and CODESRIA and listed as either 'Essential' or 'Supplementary' texts.

- With regards to the transparency and effectiveness of OSSREA research systems, the organisation has established a credible, transparent and rigorous research grant making system. Priority is given to the transparency of the grant making process and the number of awards is determined by the quality of the applications as approved by the Scientific Committee. There is a robust peer review mechanism in the form of an independent Scientific Committee that focuses on quality and academic excellence and the regional spread of applicants. However, the distribution of grants among OSSREA's member-states is dominated by the four 'big winners' including Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.
- On the impact on OSSREA, the case studies demonstrate the extent of the organisation's impact on capacity building and institutional strengthening of universities and the higher education sector. A significant area of impact is on human resource development and capacity building in that scholars in the regions have benefited from competitive research grants, against the background of scarce research grants and non-existent public funds to undertake research. OSSREA research grants have become the only alternative funding framework for African researchers surviving in a difficult higher education environment. Through this opportunity, scholars are able to undertake academic publications, add value for career progression and the internationalisation of their academic output.

Section I: Introduction

‘OSSREA is doing well but it can do more’

Interlocutor

This evaluation, jointly commissioned by Sida and NORAD, reviews the research and transfer of knowledge activities, training capacity building, policy-relevant impact and sustainability of the Addis Ababa-based Organisation for Social Science Research in East and Southern Africa (OSSREA) over the period 2000–2006. As outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR), the specific objectives are to assess the relevance, quality and impact of the research programmes; the effectiveness of dissemination and transparency of the research systems; the effectiveness of communication and dissemination of research results; capacity building and institutional strengthening; and the organisational and financial sustainability of OSSREA. Though this evaluation is commissioned by the key donors, its remit also covers the general activities undertaken by the organisation during this period, the wider context of the crisis of African development and the traumas of rapid and uneven globalisation on the continent, and how all these impact on the viability of the organisation and its potential to meaningfully affect the production of social science research in Africa.

The evaluation is based on a review of OSSREA’s documents, i.e. constitution, by-laws, strategic plans, publications, previous internal and external evaluations. A major and critical component of the evaluation is extensive interviews with main stakeholders including OSSREA’s management and staff at the Secretariat, academics and beneficiaries of OSSREA’s research grants and training programmes, members of national chapters, liaison officers, policy practitioners, university officers, students, inter-governmental institutions, government ministers and civil society. To achieve these objectives, evaluation visits took the External Evaluation Team (EET) to Ethiopia, Rwanda (David Francis), Kenya (James Manor), Mauritius and South Africa (Jim Bjorkman). The criteria for the selection of these countries included, amongst others, the need to reflect the geographical spread of OSSREA’s mandate and coverage of stakeholders; comparing and contrasting countries where OSSREA is relatively well established, level of membership and strength of applications for OSSREA grants, and consideration for individual competence and country-expertise of evaluation team members.

The evaluation ToR, process, selection of case studies and logistical aspects were discussed and finalised at a methodological workshop in Stockholm, 2–3 April 2007. At this meeting, the OSSREA President, Prof. Rosali Kapata and the Executive Secretary, Dr. Alfred Nhema were present. This provided a unique opportunity to agree on dates for visits to the OSSREA Secretariat in Ethiopia, preparatory planning for evaluation case study visits by individual members of the team, and preliminary identification of some key OSSREA documents. The Stockholm meeting also provided the opportunity for the EET members to agree on the division of labour in terms of individual responsibilities and specific areas to cover during the evaluation visits.

However, an important consideration was that the ToR were to serve only as a ‘methodological guide’ as various EET members have different understandings and appreciations of the notion of ‘methodology’. It was therefore agreed that the EET develop a flexible methodological framework that suited the particular context of the evaluation exercise, but that the primary emphasis should be on getting a very good picture of the focus of OSSREA’s research agenda, the ownership of the research and how the research systems are organised in terms of effectiveness and transparency including potential impact both nationally and internationally, and sustainability of the organisation.

It is important to note that whilst in Addis Ababa, the EET did not get the impression at the OSSREA Secretariat that this external evaluation was seen as a unique opportunity for the organisation to learn

lessons and strengthen its future direction. The distinct impression was of a sense of lack of partnership and ownership of the evaluation exercise, not of wanting to make the best of the external evaluation. For example, some critical reports requested by the EET took a rather long time to submit, even whilst at the Secretariat in Addis Ababa. Notwithstanding, we were impressed by the openness of some of the staff who clearly saw the external evaluation process as an opportunity for the organisation to reinvent itself because ‘OSSREA is doing well but it can do more’, according to one interlocutor. Despite this impression, the OSSREA management team and staff were very supportive in organising and facilitating our evaluation missions not only to Ethiopia but to all the other evaluation case study countries. The facilitatory role of the OSSREA Secretariat therefore reinforces the view that it is important for this kind of evaluation exercise to consider the evaluated organisation as a joint partner rather than merely an ‘object of evaluation’.

The report is divided into four sections, starting with an Executive Summary. Section I sets the context of the evaluation exercise and the methodological process including the specific Terms of Reference and the evaluation case studies. Section II outlines the historical context and background for the creation of OSSREA, its programmatic activities, the nature and substance of the previous internal and external evaluations of the organisation, and the potential impact of global challenges and opportunities for OSSREA. Section III summaries the thematic issues and key findings of the evaluation focusing on the following: research and transfer of knowledge in terms of relevance and quality; effectiveness of dissemination and transparency of research; capacity building and institutional strengthening focusing on the impact of OSSREA on national universities, continental and regional impact, and a preliminary survey of national impact on selected case studies of Mauritius, South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and Rwanda. In addition, this section also evaluates the important aspect of the financial and organisational sustainability of OSSREA. Section IV concludes that this is a timely evaluation that would potentially strengthen the impact of the organisation based on nine key recommendations.

The EET found considerable evidence to justify that OSSREA has and still continues to contribute to capacity building and institutional strengthening of African universities and academics, against the background of negligible support for the majority of African universities and the higher education sector.

Recipients of OSSREA grants and beneficiaries of the organisation’s research and publications have consistently expressed the view that the major, if not singular impact of OSSREA is the simple fact that an African institution provides grants to African scholars. One interlocutor described this as ‘a phenomenal impact’.

Section II: Background, OSSREA and the New Global Challenges and Opportunities

History and Programmatic Activities

The Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern & Southern Africa (OSSREA) is a research and capacity-building organization based in Addis Ababa. It was founded in April 1980 in Nazareth, Ethiopia by a group of social scientists from Eastern Africa. According to the former Executive Secretary, Dr. Abdel Ghaffar, the evolution of OSSREA dates back to 1976/77 when a small group of social scientists from Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya, funded by the Ford Foundation, met at Addis Ababa University to build a strategic network of social scientists in the region. Based on the expansion of the memberships and regional research networks into southern Africa, the organisation was renamed in 1993 as the Organisation for Social Science Research in East and Southern African. Its constituency is based on membership drawn from social scientists and institutions engaged in teaching and/or research in the social sciences in Eastern, Horn and Southern Africa. Currently, OSSREA has 21 member countries with 18 Liaison Officers since the “island chapter” in Mauritius also includes Madagascar, the Seychelles and the Comoros. According to its constitution, social scientists in Angola, Burundi and Djibouti may become members too. OSSREA has been granted diplomatic status in 2006 by the Government of Ethiopia.

The mission and strategic vision of OSSREA since its creation has been to develop and promote the emergence of a culture of excellence in the study, research and training in the social sciences based on the emergence of a distinctive African tradition’, i.e. ‘an African academic sovereignty’.¹ The major objectives of OSSREA are to:

1. encourage and promote interest in the study of /and research in the social sciences in Eastern and Southern Africa;
2. promote collaborative research and facilities for scholarly exchange of ideas and publications between individuals and institutions engaged in the study of and research in the social sciences;
3. promote the training of African scholars in the study of and research in the social sciences and encourage the establishment of institutions dedicated to this goal;
4. work in close cooperation with other individuals and institutions in Africa and elsewhere in the world engaged in the study of the social sciences;
5. establish a special fund to be used for the purposes of providing such research grants and training fellowships as are consistent with its objectives; and
6. promote dialogue and interaction between social scientists and policy-makers in Eastern and Southern Africa with a view to enhancing the impact of social science research on policy-making and development planning.

Based on the outlined objectives, the organisation developed comprehensive Strategic Plans in 1996 and 2006 with core strategic objectives to guide the delivery and achievement of its mission. The 1996 Strategic Plan outlined the following objectives including; creation of an African research tradition; creation of an effective policy-research community interface; and, the reform of governance structures to meet future challenges. Building on this, the 2006 Strategic Plan was positively framed as challenges and opportunities, with strategic objectives including; creation of a culture of research excellence;

¹ OSSREA, Strategic Plan:1996–2000 Addis Ababa, p. 13

creation of effective policy-research interface; and consolidation of governance structures.² It is evident that both strategic plans are essentially the same. This gives the impression that, after a decade, limited progress was made in achieving the core objectives of OSSREA's strategic plan.

Since its creation, OSSREA has undertaken a range of research and capacity building programmes. The core and expanded programmatic activities of OSSREA include a Grant Awards Building Capacity in the Social Sciences; Research Methodology and Gender Training Programmes; and eight Specialised Projects. These specialist projects are largely described as donor-driven research and capacity building activities because the research agendas are set and prioritised by the funding and network partners. The specialised projects constitute the expansion of OSSREA's programme activities and despite its donor-driven focus there is an attempt to encourage the development of indigenous or distinctive African research themes and agenda. The organisation has developed a Publication and Documentation unit, with a computerised OSSREA Documentation Centre to support the publication, dissemination of research output, distribution and sale of publications (See Appendix 2 for List of OSSREA Programme Activities)

In addition, OSSREA has developed extensive network and collaborative partnerships with strategic individuals and institutions in both the North and Southern hemisphere. As a membership-based organisation and since 2000, it has organised a total of 35 national workshops in 13 member countries focusing on thematic issues of interest to the chapters.

International Context of OSSREA's Creation

To understand and appreciate the relevance and impact of OSSREA since its creation, we have to establish why it was created and funded by key donors such as Sida and NORAD and, in particular, the context or environment that led to the formation of such a social science research organisation with a regional mandate. Briefly, OSSREA was established during the so-called era of international neglect of the higher education sector and social science research in Africa starting in the late 1970s through to the 1980s. In particular, the 'African crises' of this period manifested by continent-wide economic crisis and declining economic productivity, depressing socio-economic and development indicators, and general political instability orchestrated by military coups and dictatorships, civilian one-party authoritarian regimes, political repressions, rampant corruptions, inter-state and civil wars and armed conflicts. In addition, public universities and the higher education sector were systematically starved of funding whilst academic freedom was either stamped on or academics were co-opted into the neo-patrimonial systems of governance. This 'Africa crisis' not only undermined the willingness and capacity of African scholars to undertake meaningful social science research, but also led to a massive brain drain of the continent's most productive intellectual capital. The internal context and international conditions such as the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) on African economies effectively eroded the viability and contribution of African universities, and further weakened the production of social science research in the continent.³ OSSREA, like other similar social science research organisations such as CODESRIA, was therefore established not only to arrest the tide of socio-economic and political decline of the continent but also to lead the development rebirth of Africa, with social science knowledge playing a critical role. According to Paul Zeleza, the establishment of 'an intellectually vibrant and autonomous academic NGO sector composed of continental, sub-regional and national

² OSSREA: Strategic Plan 2006–2010, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2005.

³ The circumstances leading to the creation of OSSREA and other similar social science research organisations have been documented by scholars and they include; Paul Zeleza & Adebayo Olukoshi (eds.) *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century: Liberalization and Internationalization*, Volume 1, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2004; Thadika Mkandawire (ed.) *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development*, London: Zed, 2005.

research networks and organisations was one of the most exciting developments on the African intellectual scene in the 1980s and 1990s'.⁴

The establishment of these social science organisations in Africa was made possible because of the funding support and commitment of some donor countries. In the case of OSSREA, Sida was the main funding source and has done so generously for the past two decades. Sida support and commitment to the establishment of OSSREA was primarily in pursuit of Sweden's development co-operation overall goal to support poverty reduction and socio-economic development and capacity building for research centres and network institutions that focus on research that best suits the needs and challenges of developing countries. To this end, Sida supported the creation of OSSREA because of its belief in the relevance and role of research for development⁵.

To a very large extent therefore, Sida-SAREC's support for the creation of OSSREA was an attempt to encourage the development of African scholarship, an alternative scholarship markedly different from the unequal and repressive intellectual relationship with the north. Without overstating the significance of the establishment of organisations such as OSSREA, it is reasonable to argue that the creation of these new centres for social science knowledge production was an emancipatory project against the background of the African crises and the global marginalisation of African scholarship. It is an acknowledged fact that Africa has been at the periphery of the production of social science knowledge globally. Therefore, the establishment of organisations such as OSSREA was an attempt to facilitate the emergence of a counter-hegemonic discourse and capacity building strategy that would potentially reduce the dominant power-relations and the marginalisation of African scholarship and social science research knowledge production. The evaluation therefore has to take into consideration these patterns of dominant and unequal power relations that have shaped the conditions and circumstance for the emergence of OSSREA, and how this fact may call for different patterns and modes of evaluation based on the realities of the African conditions and the unequal power-relations that have structured and conditioned OSSREA's relations with its partners.

Against this background, the EET is of the view that the Sida/NORAD evaluation is timely. It has happened against the background of recent global events, in particular, the revival of international interest and commitment to support African universities, the higher education sector and social science research and knowledge production after more than two decades of neglect.⁶ However, the international renewal of interest in Africa raises several issues of relevance to the ToR of the Sida/NORAD evaluation. Firstly, this renewed interest largely focuses on the dominant patterns of north-south relations, hence tendentially re-inforcing the traditional patterns of unequal relationship between Africa and the north. Secondly, in all the reports and initiatives advanced by the revival of international interest in Africa, not much effort or strategic planning is invested into supporting intra-African collaborations and building of networking and strategic partnerships amongst African institutions. Thirdly, the international renewal primarily focuses on science and technology in terms of institutional capacity building and funding. Social science, despite its obvious and often acknowledged importance, is still struggling to

⁴ Paul Zeleza, 'The Politics of Historical and Social Science Research in Africa' *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 28, No. 1, 2002, pp. 9–23.

⁵ Sida's principle on the relevance of research for development is based on the view that 'increased knowledge and its application have been acknowledged as the most important tools for development. Knowledge, its production and use, is critical for promoting economic growth, safeguarding biodiversity, increasing food production, and controlling malaria among many other things.' See: Sida Evaluation 06/40: SAREC Support to International and Regional Thematic Research Programmes: 2000–2005, Department for Evaluation & Internal Audit, p.21. Research is therefore crucial to Sweden's development co-operation policy and practice.

⁶ These international initiatives include: Former Prime Minister Tony Blair's Commission for Africa and the UK-DFID's £3.5 million funding pledge to support the Association of African Universities (AAU) programme on 'Mobilising regional capacity for revitalizing Higher Education in Africa' in 2006; the 2005 G8 Gleneagles commitment to support Africa's development; the World Bank initiative on higher education in Africa and the African Union's higher education 'Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education in Africa (2006).

gain prominence and to secure sustained funding beyond the usual donor-driven short-term, quick fix and exit strategy-oriented funding opportunities. Fourthly, the revival has led to increasing international higher education links and partnerships but not increased levels of donor funding or external support. Fifthly, there is a noticeable lack of investment in critically understanding the existing context, constraints and capacity gaps that hinder research in African universities and the higher education sector. Based on the above analysis, the EET takes into consideration the extent to which Sida/SAREC is part of the international revival of interest in Africa and its associated problems, and in particular, the extent to which the evaluation of OSSREA will be used as an opportunity to respond to the core concerns at the heart of challenges for capacity building at the level of the higher education sector and the production of social science research knowledge in Africa.

Previous evaluations: Lessons not learned?

Since its establishment, OSSREA and its key funding partners have commissioned a total of eight evaluations and reviews of the activities and impact of the organisation.⁷ At the Stockholm meeting in April 2007, the EET raised specific questions with the Sida-SAREC team as to how different is the current evaluation from previous evaluations and, in particular, what have been the lessons learned by Sida from these previous evaluations? The Stockholm meeting confirmed that this current evaluation is important because it will assist in developing a new strategic partnership with its partners in Africa, i.e. OSSREA and CODESRIA. Importantly, it was considered an appropriate exercise to evaluate the relevance of social science research in Africa within the framework of Sida research and development co-operation. Additionally, routine evaluation of Sida funded agencies is part of Sida-SAREC's wider public accountability to Swedish tax payers. The view is that this evaluation will assist in reviewing Sida/NORAD funding framework and long-term partnership with OSSREA.

The EET studied all the previous evaluation recommendations and based on findings from the evaluation mission in Ethiopia and the OSSREA secretariat, we found that some of the core issues identified by the reports as constraints and suggested remedies still have not been addressed and thus remain prevalent within the organisational framework of OSSREA. They include; over-centralised structure of OSSREA with democratic deficit at the local levels; limited visibility of OSSREA at national and international levels; inadequate information flow and communication channels; excessive donor dependence and non-diversification of income generation; inadequate efforts to facilitate sustained interaction between the research community and policy practitioners; and inadequate dissemination of research findings. In simple terms, no serious action was taken by the OSSREA management on the core recommendations made by the previous evaluations. This issue is further discussed in detail under Section III on the theme of 'organisational sustainability'.

⁷ The previous evaluations of OSSREA include the following: J.J. Okumu & M. A. Salih, 'Evaluation of OSSREA: A Report Submitted to International Development and Research Centre (IDRC), Nairobi, Kenya, 1994; M. Marope, A. Makolomme & A. Talle, OSSREA: An Evaluation of SAREC's Women's Research Programme in Africa' 1995; Sida, 'A Review of Research Undertaken by the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa' 1997; G. M. Sorbo, 'Reviewing OSSREA and its Future' September 2001; NORAD, 'Building Research Capacity in Africa: A Review of NORAD's Assistance to Regional Organisation' 1998; A. S. Mambo, 'Inventory of the role of Regional Research Organisations – CODESRIA, OSSREA & AAPS: Report on the role of OSSREA with Zimbabwe and Mozambique as case studies' September 2002; J. Shiundu, 'Inventory of the role of Regional Organisations in Africa: OSSREA activities in Kenya and Uganda' November 2002; K. Berhanu, 'Promoting Knowledge Production through research: role of OSSREA' 2000

Section III: OSSREA Evaluation, Thematic Issues & Key Findings

This section critically examines the thematic issues mandated by the ToR and the key findings of the evaluation exercise, focusing on four core areas namely: research and transfer of knowledge; effectiveness of dissemination and transparency of research systems; capacity building and institutional strengthening; and sustainability.

OSSREA's research programme is categorised in two broad headings namely: i. Research Grant Awards in the Social Sciences, and, ii. Specialised Research Projects. The research grants in the social sciences programme has five core projects including:

1. Social Science Research Grant Competition. There have been seven rounds of annual competition. Between 2000–2006, a total of 117 grants were awarded.
2. Gender Issues Research Grant Competition (GIRGC). Seven rounds of annual competition have been held since 2000, with a total of 118 grants awarded.
3. Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grant Programme. This project was initiated in 2004 and three rounds have been held with a total of 18 grants awarded, out of 78 total applicants.
4. Sabbatical Research Grant Programme. This was launched in 2004 and three rounds of annual competition have been held, with 16 grants awarded, out of a total of 57 applications.
5. Senior Scholar Research Grant Programme. This was initiated in 2001 with the specific objective to 'retain the academic capacity built in the region and to re-direct contribution of senior scholars from consultancy work to high quality research activities that are of policy-relevance and academic significance'⁸. Six rounds of competition have been held with a total of 23 research grants awarded.

The Specialised Projects include seven projects including:

1. African Conflicts: Management, Resolution, Post-Conflict Recovery and Development Programme. This was launched in 2001 with eight case studies including Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Lesotho. In December 2004, the project organised a major international conference on African conflicts.
2. HIV/AIDS Challenge in Africa: Impact and Response Assessment Research Programme. This project was launched in 2003 with the following case studies; Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia. Two rounds of annual competition were held in 2003 and 2004, with 24 grants awarded out of a total of 98 applicants. In September and December 2005, project output dissemination workshops were organised in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Additionally, an international conference on the 'Social Sciences and HIV/AIDS in Africa' was organised in November 2006. This conference was jointly organised with CODESRIA, the Social Science and Medicine Africa Network (SOMA-Net) and the Union of African Population Studies (UAPS).
3. Integrating Gender Issues in Multidisciplinary Research in Eastern and Southern African. This project was launched in 2004.
4. Assessment of Poverty Reduction Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa: Case Study of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. This six country-focused project was launched in 2004 with

⁸ Executive Secretary's Report to the External Evaluation Team 10 July 2007, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

the objective of analysing the on-going poverty reduction strategy processes with a view to provide policy guidance for governments and civil society organisations. The project led to the development and implementation of action plans and the organisation of national dissemination workshops by the National Chapters.

5. Capacity Building for Social and Gender Analysis in Natural Resource Management (NRM) Research for Development. This project was initiated in 2003 and funded by ICDR with six grants awarded to individuals and institutions.
6. Dryland Husbandry Project (DHP) launched in 1996 is a regional-focused project with activities in the Eastern and Horn of African countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. The project was concluded in 2004.
7. Development of a Strategy for Smallholder Market Integration in Africa in Collaboration with the International Development Enterprises (IDE). The project was initiated in 2003 and focused on the regions of Horn of Africa, Southern Africa and Sahel. This project is funded and driven by the research interest of IDE.

These two broad categorisations of OSSREA's research programme do not represent a coherent organisational strategy to develop and promote a 'distinctive' intellectual and scholarly research agenda. Rather, the research scholarship is fragmented along donor-driven agendas, geographic (i.e. East, Horn and Southern Africa), national, linguistic (Anglophone, Francophone and Swahili), and narrow disciplinary boundaries. One would struggle to find a distinctive research theme or body of themes that distinctively describe the intellectual and academic agenda or project of OSSREA. Despite this limitation, the organisation has attempted to promote and develop indigenous social science research knowledge production, with relevant input on public policy and dialogue in the OSSREA region. However, it is important to point out that the fragmentation of research scholarship in the OSSREA region is not unique because it is a generic problem faced by the majority of social science research institutes in Africa and other parts of the world. Therefore, it is against this background that the relevance and quality of OSSREA's research and transfer of knowledge are evaluated.

1. Research and Transfer of Knowledge: Relevance and Quality

Relevance

The EET identified two primary areas of research relevance, i.e., specialised projects and research undertaken by scholars funded by OSSREA.

Specialised Projects

Based on the outline of the seven 'Specialised Projects' it is apparent that the research agendas are set by the donors with OSSREA 'invited' as a joint partner in the implementation of the projects.⁹ In other words, these 'Specialised Projects' are funded and driven by the research interests, policy and programmatic priorities of the funders. Illustrative examples include: the African conflict: management, resolution, post-conflict recovery and development programme; HIV/AIDS Challenge in Africa: Impact and Response Assessment Research Programme; Assessment of Poverty Reduction Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa; Capacity Building for Social and Gender Analysis in Natural Resource Management Research for Development; Dryland husbandry Project, and, the Development of a Strategy for Smallholder Market in Africa. It is therefore not surprising that the OSSREA Executive Secretary is of the view that OSSREA and Africa cannot set their own research agendas because of the dominance of the western hegemonic influence and the donor-driven research agendas foisted on Africa and African research

⁹ See Rachel Mesfin, Programme Officer Report of Five Programmes of OSSREA 2000–2006.

institutes. This perspective, though not shared by the majority of the African scholars and researchers that we interviewed, raises not only the fundamental issue of 'who' sets the research agenda and to what extent OSSREA has consistently promoted a 'distinctive African research tradition based on African academic freedom', but also the important issue of local ownership of the research. This issue is not addressed in a meaningful way by the OSSREA Secretariat and its research community. Income generation opportunity in terms of research funding and consultancy services is what drives the participation of both OSSREA as an organisation and its research community in the National Chapters, and not serious consideration for ownership of the research agenda and the priority to influence and shape the intellectual and academic agenda of social science research and knowledge production. Evidently, the underlying philosophy of the 'Specialised Projects' including the approach of OSSREA and its research community, tendentially undermine local ownership of the research agenda and further perpetuates the marginalisation of African scholarship in its ability to set and shape the production of social science knowledge.

Notwithstanding this limitation, we found that in the actual implementation of the 'Specialised Projects' OSSREA secretariat and its Scientific Committees are given a free hand by the funding partners in the selection of thematic topics of relevance to each of the Specialised Projects. For example, the research topics and grants approved for the 2003 *African Conflicts Programme* included; 'conflict and conflict resolution between the Pastoralists and Agricultural/Sedentary Communities: the case of the Maasai and Kisii in Gucha/Transmara Districts and Pokomo Wagalla and Wardei in Tanaa River District in Kenya', 'Conflict Management and Prevention in Lesotho: focusing on Election-centred conflict', 'Peace and Democratisation in Mozambique', 'Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone and Liberia', 'Role of Traditional Institutions in Peacemaking and Governance in Somalia', 'Evaluating Uganda's success in fostering Post-conflict reconstruction'. Two book volumes on *Management and Resolution of African Conflict* are forthcoming in 2007 with the London-based Zed Books. Similarly, the 2004 HIV/AIDS Challenge in Africa approved research grants included innovative and cutting-edge themes such as: 'Socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on rural small-scale industrial sector in selected villages in Botswana; 'Understanding the impact of HIV/AIDS on orphaned children in selected regions of Tanzania', 'Needs and Coping strategies of female-headed families affected by HIV/AIDS in Masaka District in Uganda', 'Impact of HIV/AIDS on marriage patterns, customs and practises in Mansa District in Zambia, 'HIV/AIDS in Armed Conflict situation in Northern Uganda'.

Based on findings from our evaluation missions, available evidence suggest that the funding partners do not have any control or involvement in the selection of topics nor in the Scientific Committee's review and approval of research grants. The same relative freedom of selection of research topics by African scholars and the independent role of the Scientific Committee applies to all the other 'Specialised Research Projects'. It is therefore reasonable to argue that through OSSREA's 'Specialised Projects' African scholars are not only able to set local research agenda but also to undertake research on issues that are of local and context-specific relevance to the researchers and local communities. It is important to point out that the research topics and themes undertaken by the African scholars within the framework of OSSREA 'Specialised Projects' are not the usual mainstream and traditional research focus often funded by the main research councils and key development co-operation partners. Without overstating this relevance, African scholars and academics in the region are provided the opportunity to set their own distinctive and indigenous research agendas and writing their own stories, based on their own local needs and development aspirations or priorities.

Furthermore, a review of the themes of research projects organized during the six years from 2000 to 2006 indicates that OSSREA has addressed some of the major issues affecting Africa in general and of the eastern and southern regions in particular. In effect, the Specialised Projects' have made some contribution in not only providing a serious intellectual and academic understanding of these major issues but also the research seem to make some meaningful input on public policy and dialogue on these

issues. For example a primary theme has been ‘dryland husbandry’ which addressed economic, social, cultural and even political problems of arid areas, and which is complemented by a theme on ‘management of wetlands in the Nile Basin’.

OSSREA-funded Research

The second area of research relevance is through the framework of OSSREA-funded research grants such as the *Social Science Research Grants* (SSRG) and the *Gender Issues Research Grants* (GIRG) programmes. Within this framework OSSREA is freely able to formulate and set the research agenda. It has done so by centrally identifying and specifying, after consultations with scholars, researchers and National Chapter members, including the OSSREA Congress and Executive Committee, the main research themes around which call for applications are made and grants are approved. For example, the SSRG which was launched in 1988 had focused on the following research themes: environment, ethnic conflict and resolution, indigenous knowledge systems, regional economic co-operation, and structural adjustment programmes. A selection of the research topics and grants approved include; ‘Dynamic role of women petty traders in Urban-rural socio-economic interaction in Ethiopia’, ‘Gender and socio-economic impact of drought on the residents of Turkana District in Kenya’, ‘Policy aspect of reproductive health rights in Sudan: a gender perspective’, ‘Causes and consequences of lowering the defilement age: a comparative study of Kampala and Arua Districts in Uganda’, ‘Food security strategies of Urban Women: urban agriculture in Harare’, ‘Women and government health policy in Swaziland’, ‘Probability of Female Farmers benefiting from public agriculture sector expenditure’, ‘Consumerism and women’s role in cultural development in Mozambique’. Similarly, the GIRG launched in 1989 specifically focused on the following themes; agriculture industry and services sector, entrepreneurship, food security and resource management, framework and policy for integration of women in development, informal sector, political mobilisation and good governance, sexuality and reproductive health, women’s movements.

It is evident that the themes and selected topics of both the SSRG and GIRG illustrate local, indigenous and context-specific research agenda setting. The OSSREA research grants focuses on capacitating African scholars to look at neglected aspects in the academic debates and understanding of contemporary Africa, such as the focus on indigenous knowledge systems and the informal sector. Within this framework the research funded and promoted by OSSREA are not only relevant but also provide the opportunity for African academics, often marginalised in the global production of knowledge, to ‘tell their’ own stories based on their own worldviews and the appreciation of the African conditions.

Of the 46 books published by OSSREA during 2000–2006,¹⁰ approximately one-quarter deal with the first two subjects. Other major themes among these books include gender, health, conflict management and social science methodologies.

Eleven publications are forthcoming (in press and already assigned ISBN numbers) so altogether 57 volumes will have appeared from 2000 through 2007, which is an average of eight books per year. In addition there are six final reports submitted by scholars in the Senior Scholars Research Grant Program and eight final reports submitted in the special research grant program on the HIV/AIDS Challenge in Africa. While none of these 14 final reports is yet published, all of the eight HIV/AIDS reports have been assigned ISBN numbers.

In terms of relevance for policymaking, OSSREA has organized several major workshops on HIV/AIDS poverty reduction strategies and on conflict management during the past three years which were well publicized and attended by various government officials as well as representatives of civil society. These policy themes are also reflected among articles in OSSREA’s journal, the *Eastern Africa Social*

¹⁰ OSSREA PUBLICATIONS 2000–2006, a 38-page report prepared in June 2007 by headquarters staff for Sida/SAREC evaluation

While the impact of OSSREA research and publications cannot be assumed, there is decent evidence about the relevance of its undertakings. However, we also observed that the subject-matter is supply-driven by scholars themselves (with some prompting by OSSREA staff) rather than demand-driven by governments or regional organisations. In fact, an observation based on interviews in Addis Ababa suggests that OSSREA, despite its long existence, is not well known in policy circles.

Quality

At the Stockholm meeting in April, it had been agreed that our assessment would not be expected to use bibliometric methods like the index of citations, etc. The EET therefore focused on the following methods to assess the quality of research and publication. The team reviewed a selected sample of OSSREA publications and they include the following: *African Pastoralism: Conflict, Institutions and Government* edited by Salih, Dietz and Ahmed (2001). This is co-published book with the London-based Pluto Press, comprising 12 chapters, provides a conceptual, analytical and empirical understanding of the problems and challenges of pastoralism in Africa and the link with conflict, institutions and governmental interventions. This is a seminal book that focuses on the often neglected, but important dimension of local and African traditional responses to government reforms and the challenges of globalisation. The book critically engages with the problems, challenges and resilience of 19 pastoralist communities in the Horn, Great lakes and Southern Africa regions, within the context of the dominant power relations between governments and pastoralist communities, decreasing environmental space and ever-increasing land appropriation and the propensity for conflict over resources. This is a scholarly and intellectually engaging book on a relevant topic that most western academics hardly bother to write about, and even when they do, it is often from a western-centric perspective. A publication by Muhereza & Otim, *Pastoral Resource Competition in Uganda: Case Studies into Commercial Livestock Ranching and Pastoral Institutions* (2002) analytically explores the national level resource competition and conflicts between two pastoralist communities in Uganda, i.e. Abkole and Karamajo. This is a co-published book with the Utrecht-based International Books. The book sets the context of the pastoral resource conflict against the background of the neo-liberal market policies implemented by the government of Uganda and the effects on the emerging pastoral and ranching institutions often at the mercy of environmental conditions. The Salih et al and Muhereza et al publications are the product of OSSREA research grants and conference papers.

Two other books edited Salih are worthy of review in terms of quality assessment and they include: *African Political Parties: Evolution, Institutionalisation and Governance* (2002) co-publish with Pluto Press, and, *Local Environmental Change and Society in Africa 2nd Edition* (2001) co-published with the Dordrecht-based Kluwer Publishers. The *African Political Parties* edited book is the first major academic publication that exclusively focus on and high-profile the intellectual and academic understanding of a familiar, but rather under-researched topic in Africa. The 14 chapter book, bringing together notable African scholars and Africanists, critically examines the birth pains, joys, trials and woes of African democratisation and party politics in 8 countries with thematic chapters on sub-Saharan African in general. This is not only a scholarly publication but also, but also a qualitative collection of impressive essays of relevance to policy practitioners. The *Local Environmental Change* publication focuses on the consequences of local environmental change on the local communities in the Horn, East and Southern African within the context of the socio-economic, development, political and security problems created by neo-liberal globalisation. The 9 chapter book focuses on themes that are at the heart of the effects of environmental change and sustainable development in contemporary Africa. The themes include human health and irrigation development, rural water systems, technological change and gender, land management, food security, structural adjustment programmes, air pollution and climate change. These themes, no doubt, reflect the relevant issues facing contemporary Africa. *The Quest for Peace in Africa: Transformations, Democracy and Public Policy* (2004), edited by Alfred Nhembe and co-published with International Books

make an important academic and intellectual contribution to the debates on peace and conflict research in Africa by focusing on 4 under-researched themes including; the rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers (Chapter 6), Truth Commissions and Transitional justice (Chapter 9), women in civil war peace settlement (Chapter 10), and HIV/AIDS and Subsistence Agriculture in Swaziland (Chapter 16). All these publications are the product of OSSREA research grants and conference papers.

In addition to the academic and intellectual quality of the contents of these publications, another major indication of quality is the academic peer review mechanisms and processes provided by these western-based co-publishers, i.e. Pluto Press and International Books. Anyone familiar with the rigorous peer review and quality assurance processes of these western-based publishing firms will agree that all the above mentioned OSSREA publications must have met the quality standard of these publishers before accepting to publish. In fact, the EET was informed by staff at the OSSREA Publications Unit that the delay in co-publication, sometimes up to two years, primarily has to do with the rigorous and strict quality assurance demands made by these co-publishing firms.

Furthermore, the EET reviewed a selected sample of published articles in the OSSREA journal – *Eastern African Social Science Research Review* from 2005–2007. Two-thirds of all the articles in the selected years of publication are by OSSREA members and the research output of the organisation's funded research. The reviewed articles demonstrate a varying degree of quality but at the same time cannot be faulted on the relevance of thematic focus and choice of topics, i.e. relevant to the major problems facing the continent and of concern to stakeholders. The reviewed articles include the following. Woldeamlak Bewket's 'Biofuel Consumption, Household Level Tree Planting and its implications for Environmental Management in the Northern Highlands of Ethiopia' Vol. XXI, No. 1, January 2005, critically examines the dependence on biofuels in rural Ethiopia and the impact on environmental degradation and food security. The study indicates that fuelwood and cattle dung account for 100% of domestic energy consumption, with cattle dung contributing 34% of the total. The relevance of this study is that it suggests policy options and appropriate strategies for the development of the energy sector in rural Ethiopia. Moses Esilaba's, 'Household Production and Risk Management among Pastoral Communities in Samburu District of Kenya' Vol. XXI, No. 2, June 2005, evaluates how rangeland resources contribute to productive activities and sustainability of livelihood among pastoralist communities and how potential impact on risk management factors such as conflict, poor service delivery, inequitable resource utilisation and limited asset diversification affect the lives of these communities. The study is relevant because of the focus on household production and the ability of pastoralist communities to manage risk, both environmental and human. Patricia Makepe's, 'The Evolution of Institutions and Rules Governing Communal Grazing lands in Botswana' Vol. XXII, No. 1, Jan. 2006, analytically focus on how the problem of resource overuse is partly the problem of the dismantling and de-legitimisation of traditional resource management institutions during colonial rule and reinforced in the post-independence era with the stress on market liberalisation and privatisation. The study argues that only collective communal management and action can address the problem of resource overuse rather than privatisation policies prescribed by government and donor partners. Benedict Mongula's 'The Dependent Character of Development Planning in Tanzania' Vol. XXII, No. 2, June 2006, article challenges the dominant and western-centric development planning imposed on the Global South by focusing on the specific case study of Tanzania. Based on the perspective of Tanzania, the article argues that the country's rapid economic growth had to do with the shift from following the mantra of the Washington Consensus developing planning model to a decentralised and sectoral planning based on domestic conditions. Merera Gudina's 'Ethnicity, Democratization and Decentralisation in Ethiopia: the case of Oromia' Vol. XIII, No. 1, 2007, article critically explores the relationship between democratisation and decentralisation within the framework of ethnic federalism in modern Ethiopia. The Oromo case study illustrates the problems and challenges of the experiment with ethnic federalism and the propensity for 'ethnic-based conflicts.

The EET is of the view that the academic merit and policy relevance of the themes and topics covered in the selected sample is beyond question. In terms of academic quality, though there is an appreciable level of critical analysis and theoretical conceptualisation of the issues, we found a general lack of consistent academic and intellectual rigour in the selected samples. Notwithstanding, another important indicator of quality is the publication by western-based academics in the *Eastern African Review*. For the selected journal issues from 2005–2007, four western-based academics have published in the OSSREA journal and they include: James Oloo at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver (Vol. XXI, No. 2, June 2005); Andersson, Crone, Stage and Stage at Umea University in Sweden (Vol. XXI, No. 1, January 2005); Adugna Lemi at the University of Massachusetts in Boston (Vol. XXI, No. 1, January 2005); Bertil Egero at Lund University (Vol. XXII, No. 2, June 2006). The choice of the OSSREA journal for publication by these western-based academics is a significant indication of quality and recognition of international status because anyone familiar with the demand for academic rigour within the ‘publish or perish’ mentality at western universities will agree that no right-thinking and serious academic will select a second range and poor quality outlet for publication. However, we were reminded by the Head of the OSSREA Publications Unit that some western-based academics often submit their sub-standard academic papers for publication consideration to the OSSREA journal, i.e. papers that are not of the same academic rigour and intellectual excellence that are often submitted to Western-based journals. Whilst this may be the experience of the Head of the Publications Unit, based on the selected samples that we reviewed, the articles published by Western-based academics in the journal are of relatively high academic and intellectual quality, hence the comment can not be generalised.

The EET also found that the reputation of the OSSREA journal is relatively high not only from citation indexes but also according to several Africanist colleagues at western-based universities and research institutes who extensively utilise the journal for teaching and research purposes. The international editorial board is made up of prominent African scholars including Paul Zeleza who has played a leading academic role in the development of cutting-edge publications and research themes at CODESRIA. The journal indicates a fairly solid format, with a rigorous academic peer review process and the issues range across the research themes mentioned above. We concur with the assessment by the Head of OSSREA Research & Publications (Dr Owen Sichone who joined OSSREA in January 2007) that while the contents of the journal contains little provocative theory, its products display consistency in terms of the familiar triad (introduction, results, discussion). However, though some African universities extensively rely on and utilise OSSREA publications we have not found qualitative and consistent reviews of the organisations publications in northern journals.

Another method of assessment of quality is the academic utilisation for teaching of OSSREA’s publications and research. Notwithstanding the difficulties of accessing of OSSREA publications in major western-based university libraries and bookshops, some undergraduate and postgraduate course programmes in the UK have extensive list of key publications from OSSREA and CODESRIA and listed as either ‘Essential’ or ‘Supplementary’ texts. For example, 4 course modules of the Master of Art/Postgraduate Diploma programme in *African Peace and Conflict Studies* in the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford all have as indicative ‘Essential’ or ‘Supplementary’ texts some key OSSREA and CODESRIA publications. Similarly, the MA programmes at on *African Politics* at Leeds University the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and the *Post-war Re-construction* programme at York University have selected OSSREA and CODESRIA publications on the reading list of the course programmes. In addition, some UK-based universities subscribe to selected OSSREA and CODESRIA journals such as the *Eastern Africa Social Science Review* and *African Development*. The books published by OSSREA and its journal are not only in demand by students, but also by

Africanist colleagues who often comment that they ‘want something different and ‘real’ about Africa’.¹¹ Drawing from the small example of 4 UK universities, and in particular, the University of Bradford, there is convincing evidence to justify that OSSREA publications are extensively utilised for teaching and research –this in itself, is a measure of the quality of the organisation’s research systems.

What about the situation of African universities? Our evaluation case study visits found that OSSREA publications are extensively utilised for teaching and research. In fact, at the National University of Rwanda in Butera and Addis Ababa Universities, both social science students and staff extensively rely on OSSREA publications for teaching and research. This is understandable, given the fact that most of the university libraries in the region have little or no annual library budgetary allocations, and even when they do, they can not afford the high price of the western-published books.

2. Effectiveness of Dissemination and Transparency of Research System

OSSREA has established a credible, transparent and rigorous research grant making system. Priority is given to the transparency of the grant making process and the number of awards is determined by the quality of the applications as approved by the Scientific Committee. There is a robust peer review mechanism in the form of an independent Scientific Committee that focuses on quality and academic excellence and the regional spread of applicants. There is a true ‘double-blind’ process of review of applications by independent assessors. The independent assessors that comprise the Scientific Committee are changed from year to year. Given the positive comments by almost everyone about the jury system of reviewing applications for research grants, the peer review mechanism appears to be effective, transparent and well liked.

The awarding and administration of grants are more problematic for several reasons. First, the awards across all categories of grants display a skewed distribution in which five countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe – get a lion’s share, sometimes up to 75% of all grants available (see Appendix 3: Distribution of Grantees in OSSREA Programmes 2000–2006). Perhaps this pattern is not surprising as the organization originally began as a product of the first four countries (plus Sudan) in 1980 so its local members are experienced in submitting good quality applications. Second, however, if the distribution of grants among OSSREA’s member-states is compared to their population size, a fascinating re-distribution becomes evident. Although this comparison is statistically crude and subject to flaws (such as not having considered the years in which recent member states such as Mauritius and Namibia were not eligible), it does indicate that Zimbabwe and Kenya are ‘big winners’ in terms of the ratio of grants to population, and that Ethiopia is actually a ‘small loser’ in the distribution. Therefore, any claims about geographic bias in grant-awards should be normalized by relative size of population. Yet another unknown factor is the relative number of social scientists in each of OSSREA’s member countries, but we suspect that the pattern would not change dramatically.

Based on analysis of the geographic spread and distribution of grantees involving all OSSREA research and training grants, between 2000–2006, the dominance of five countries is illustrated in the following observations.

1. Young Scholars Research Grant Programme for Social Science: 2000–2006. Observation: 4 countries received two-thirds (67.5%) of grants – with Zimbabwe, almost four-fifths (78.6%) of all grants to young scholars in social science went to five countries.

¹¹ I have been told by a number of students that they like and are academically keen on books published by African institutions such as OSSREA because they provides an alternative interpretation and perceptive on Africa issues –i.e. different from the dominant western-based and mainstream academic and intellectual presentation of Africa. Most students allude to the fact that the research surveys and topics that are covered in most of the journals are ‘authentic’. In fact, my office library in constantly under siege by students often looking for publications on non-traditional, non-mainstream publications on Africa such as pastoralism, dryland husbandry, indigenous /endogenous approaches to conflict management and peacebuilding, development and environmental change, including female genital mutilation (FGM).

2. Young Scholars Research Grants for Gender Issues Programme: 2000–2006. Observation: 4 countries received two-thirds (68.1%) of grants – with Zimbabwe, over three-quarters (77.3%) of grants to young scholars in gender issues went to five countries
3. Sabbatical Research Grants: 2004–2006. Observation: skewed – the four countries account for over half (56.3%) of sabbatical grants – and, when Zimbabwe is included, three-quarters (75%) go to only five countries.
4. Research Methodology Training Grants programme: 2000–2006. Observation: the four countries have just under half (47.6%) of grants for methodology training – with Zimbabwe just over half (55.9%) ... slightly more equitable distribution.
5. Senior Scholars Research Grants programme: 2001–2006. Observation: 4 countries got three-quarters (74.3%) of research grants to senior scholars – with Zimbabwe, five-sixths (83.8%) of all senior scholar grants went to five countries
6. Post-Doctoral Fellowship programme: 2004–2006. Observation: over three-quarters (77.7%) of all post-doctoral fellowships were awarded to the four countries ... but this time Zimbabwe did not receive a single one.
7. Integrating Gender Grants – Training on Gender Mainstreaming: 2004–2006. Observation: more equitable distribution as almost half (48.4%) of gender-training grants went to the four countries with only a marginal increase (to 54.9%) when Zimbabwe is added
8. HIV/AIDs Research Grants: 2003–2006. Observation: a limited/focused experiment in two phases, each aimed at target cases (2003 sponsored by Sida/SAREC – Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa & Zimbabwe; then in 2004 sponsored by NORAD – Botswana, Tanzania, Uganda & Zambia. Therefore, this could not be averaged into the other distributional patterns for OSSREA grants across the regions).
9. African Conflicts Research Grants: 2001–2004. Observation: two rounds of studies on “African Conflicts” in 2001 & 2003; the first round included Ethiopia, Somalia & the Sudan. The second round involved six more countries: Kenya, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Lesotho and Uganda.

Based on the above outline, the distribution across all categories of grants (except for ‘African conflict’ grants and ‘HIV/AIDS’ grants) is restricted to selected countries rather than the whole region. This also gives an indication of the decentralisation of the research framework. Based on our analysis of ‘free-range’ or autonomous-driven research undertaken by scholars and that of commissioned research, it is evident that programmatic or thematic distribution of research grants supercedes that of geographical or territorial spread of research grants (See Appendix 3: Pattern of programmatic distribution of research grants). Therefore, only 4 countries, (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda) obtain well over half – indeed 63% or over three-fifths – of grants available across all categories whereas nine countries (Botswana, Eritrea, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia & Swaziland) get only eight percent of all grants. In rank-order in percent of grants and fellowships, OSSREA countries are: Kenya (24%), Ethiopia (18.8%), Tanzania (11.5%), Zimbabwe (9.1%), Uganda (8.5%), South Africa (8.0%), Malawi (3.9%), Sudan & Zambia (tied at 3.7%), Lesotho (2.8%), Swaziland (1.6%), Botswana (1.5%), Rwanda (1.1%); the remaining five countries – Eritrea, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia – have under 0.5% each.

Furthermore, and in comparison, by millions of population¹² the rank-order of OSSREA members from largest to smallest is: Ethiopia (74.8), South Africa (44.2), Sudan (41.2), Tanzania (37.4), Kenya

¹² *The Economist* (mid-2006 estimates)

(34.7), Uganda (28.2), Mozambique (19.7), Malawi (13.0), Zimbabwe (12.2), Zambia (11.5), Somalia (8.8), Rwanda (8.6), Eritrea (4.8), Lesotho (2.0), Namibia (2.0), Botswana (1.6), Mauritius (1.2), Swaziland (1.1). Based on this proportionate population, one could assume a ‘standard’ distribution of grants among these 18 OSSREA members – then ‘normalize’¹³ by average receipt of grants to show ‘winners’ and ‘losers’. It becomes evident that in rank-order in percent of grants and fellowships, OSSREA countries are: Kenya (24%), Ethiopia (18.8%), Tanzania (11.5%), Zimbabwe (9.1%), Uganda (8.5%), South Africa (8.0%), Malawi (3.9%), Sudan & Zambia (tied at 3.7%), Lesotho (2.8%), Swaziland (1.6%), Botswana (1.5%), Rwanda (1.1%).

The distribution of research grants also highlight the pervasive gender imbalance in the application for and award of grants. Male scholars still dominate the application and award of grants process. The Senior Scholars Research Grant and the Research Methodology Training are two illustrative examples of the gender disparity.

Gender Profile of Applicants for the Senior Scholars Research Grant Programme: 2001–2006

Year	Male	Female
2001	31	9
2002	21	5
2003	62	14
2004	39	3
2005	36	11
2006	23	12

Gender Profile of Applicants for Research Methodology Training: 2002–2006.¹⁴

Year	Male	Female
2002	82	82
2003	155	63
2004	155	86
2005	120	65
2006	113	56

It is important to recognise that the gender disparity is not the same across all programmes. Though there is a noticeable imbalance in the gender application for the Senior Scholars Research Grant, the Research Methodology Training Programme illustrates a strong female participation in the application process. However, the gender imbalance is partly a function of the tradition of African Universities and research institutes that have predominantly male academics. But this gender imbalance is a global phenomenon and not simply an African problem.

A new strategy for the dissemination of research results is the publication of research reports in local languages. To ensure efficient communication and reach a wider audience, the Policy briefs of the six poverty reduction case studies of the ‘Assessment of Poverty Reduction Strategy in Sub-Saharan Africa’ project was also published in local languages. This is the first ever such initiative to disseminate OSSREA report finding at the local level. Though it is difficult to ascertain the impact of this strategy of dissemination we are of the view that the initiative of publishing OSSREA’s reports and policy briefings in local languages should be encouraged and supported on a sustainable basis because it is an

¹³ normalize = divide the 2000–2006 average share of grants by proportionate share of total population

¹⁴ Sources: OSSREA, Profile of the OSSREA Research Methodology Applicant & Trainees: 2002–2006; Rachel Mesfin, Programme Officer, Report on Five Programmes of OSSREA: 2000–2006.

effective means of reaching out to the wider populace through indigenous languages such as Swahili in East Africa (100 million) and Amharic in Ethiopia (70 million).

The inclusion of Sierra Leone into the 'Africa Conflict' project in 2003 was a positive attempt to expand the pan-African focus of OSSREA but the EET found that this was a one-off attempt and not a policy shift by the organisation. Also the funding of a research study on child soldiers was the first such research topic to be funded by the organisation. The EET found convincing evidence to demonstrate that OSSREA's research system is transparent. For example, at the level of the national chapters and in the case of Kenya, OSSREA awards for research go to a wide array of Kenyan universities – no single institution predominates, so a diversity of universities and disciplines benefit. This is another indicator of a reasonably effective system. And since there is little in the way of a hierarchy among Kenyan universities – the existence of a hierarchy had not even occurred to many informants – this creates a widespread perception that the system operates in a broadly fair manner, which is not unrelated to effectiveness.

However, Kenyan members of OSSREA, like most national chapters visited, whose submissions of manuscripts for publication and applications for grants have been unsuccessful complained about poor (or no) communication from headquarters in Addis Ababa. Their main concerns were (a) that the receipt of submissions/applications is not always acknowledged; (b) that when they do not succeed, they sometimes hear nothing at all; and (c) when grant applications are unsuccessful, applicants are not told why. Relatively modest efforts at headquarters could solve the first two problems – and recent improvements in that office's operations may be achieving that. Kenyan scholars who are familiar with the heavy burden on the OSSREA headquarters explained that the failure to explain rejections is the result of inadequate time and resources to perform this task. But if the evaluators of applications could provide even a paragraph outlining the reasons for rejection, this would have a significant impact on members' morale. It would also advance two key OSSREA objectives – making the research system more transparent, and instructing members on how to design and set out research proposals.

Other concerns raised by social scientists and national chapter members could probably be addressed without great difficulty by OSSREA. First, some have found that after they sign formal grant agreements which state that a specified amount of money will be provided, they discover that lesser amount is actually delivered. (One experienced OSSREA activist described this as something of "a tradition".) The result is disappointment. This could be tackled by providing grantees with a clear statement at the beginning of the process of the actual amount to expect, with an explanation for the reasons (a shortfall on external funding, administrative changes on the grant, or whatever).

Second, OSSREA funds now reach grantees through their universities, and the latter take a share of the grants to cover administrative costs. It has often been impossible, however, for grantees to learn the actual amounts that have been transferred to their universities. If OSSREA clearly stated this, grantees' exasperation would be eased. Third, publicly available OSSREA accounts indicate that each year, there are significant unspent amounts under certain budget headings. It would ease perplexity among members if these could be explained, and if some of these unspent funds could be committed to purposes that would benefit members. But this may not be possible because of funding agreements with donors and in particular, the recent recommendation by auditors from Ernst and Young that OSSREA develop a policy on the return of 'unspent funds' to donors. There is an on-going debate as to whether these 'unspent funds' should be utilised by OSSREA as it deems necessary or it should have to return these funds to donors.

In assessing the effectiveness of dissemination of the research system, we need to bear in mind the serious shortage of resources (human and financial) available to support dissemination. Given those realities, the quantity and quality of the material that we reviewed in all the case studies visited were reasonably encouraging. In the case of Kenya, for example, we need to consider publications/dissemi-

nation at two different levels – at the national level within Kenya, and at headquarters level from Addis Ababa. OSSREA's Kenya chapter has lately published a great deal of quite solid material – one book has emerged, and two sizeable volumes of collected research papers from national conferences are about to be published. These publications are overseen by a Kenyan editorial board. Its composition is approved by headquarters in Addis Ababa but, thereafter, it operates autonomously – and effectively.

The *Research Review* and the *OSSREA Bulletin* produced out of Addis Ababa are also regarded by Kenyan members (and this writer) as of quite good quality. The Kenyans were concerned at the price of the printed versions, but they noted that these materials are also available free on the OSSREA website. Headquarters also funds the publication of book-length manuscripts at national level, and one recent example from Kenya on land use was of admirable quality. In discussions with OSSREA members in Kenya, the same puzzlement and frustration that members voiced during our case study visits to other countries over publication/dissemination delays from headquarters in Addis Ababa again surfaced. Kenya's Liaison Officer – a committed, dynamic woman – has had to telephone headquarters on several occasions to get things moving. But she stresses (a) that the programme officers there are good, and they respond when asked, and (b) a new programme officer was brought in recently and since then, information flows and action have quickened and improved – so that fewer calls are necessary.

A general view is that OSSREA could increase the impact of its dissemination activities – but inexpensively by making video recordings of its workshops on methodology freely available on its website. There is an immense appetite for such training among Kenyan social scientists, and only a tiny number of scholars from any member country can attend these workshops each year. There is also a serious incapacity within Kenyan universities for instruction on methodology. If video recordings could be made available, the impact would be enormous, and very valuable. One very well informed person in a grant making agency also suggested that OSSREA might provide modest funds to persuade eminent social scientists to give public lectures on major themes and debates within their disciplines – and to record these and make them available on the website. He believed (rightly or wrongly) that social scientists in OSSREA's region apart from the South Africans – had lost touch with many of the major international debates and trends. Public lectures of this kind would raise the profile of OSSREA in the countries where they were given, and recordings of them could reach researchers right across Eastern and Southern Africa – and beyond.

In considering the 'effectiveness' of dissemination, it is worth stressing a dimension that might go unnoticed if we only consider the speed and quantity of outputs at headquarters level. Many of the scholars producing studies for publication through the OSSREA system – especially younger scholars – are doing so for the first time. And however slow the process may be, we can report – on the basis of heartfelt testimony from a number of these authors – that the experience which they gain in preparing material for publication has made a potent impact. The impact is at two levels, in terms of (a) the skills and (b) the confidence that they develop. Having gone through it once, these young scholars no longer see the process as an intimidating 'unknown' and – judging by our conversations – they are quite likely to try again in future. It is thus possible to say that the investment which OSSREA (and Sida/SAREC) have made in such first timers is likely, in many cases, to have a multiplier effect on research and publication over the longer term.

Publication Backlog: OSSREA trapped in the 1980's mindset

Outsourcing of our publications should be automatic and it may cost something but then OSSREA isn't exactly poor... What was right for the 1980s may not be right now. So we have to fundamentally review some of the core issues on research and publication.

Head of Research and Publication Unit.

Publication, documentation and dissemination of research output are central to the mandate of OSSREA. As such, publication and dissemination of research output have become a major activity of OSSREA. The organisation's research outputs are published and disseminated in the following forms; 57 books (single/co-authored and edited), 22 issues of the journal of Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review, 2 Development Research Report Series, 4 Environmental Forum Publications Series, 11 Gender Issues Research Reports; 13 Social Science Research Reports; 4 Dryland Husbandry Project Publications, 18 Bulletins; 4 Environmental Forum publications; 8 official reports, various posters and brochures. There is also the OSSREA Documentation Centre (ODC), a computerised centre equipped with modern audiovisual aids which serves as the main database and documentation centre. It is evident that it is in its formative stages with potential for improvement.

The above outline on relevance (Section III, 1) has partially addressed the effectiveness of the dissemination of research results, where it was observed that OSSREA distributes results of its research programmes through publications, workshops and conferences. Interviews revealed, however, a series of problems with procedures and outputs. Procedurally, other than the timely issue of the *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review*, there have been bottlenecks in the publication of books based on research grants and on conferences. Part of the problem may lie with the inherent difficulties of working with international publishers that, due to quality control, move slowly – a point made by both the Executive Secretary and the Head of Research & Publications. For example, London's James Currey has taken several years to produce just two books that will appear later in 2007; and the same argument was made about Lexington Books, Pluto Press and Zed Press. However, much of the problem lies at OSSREA headquarters itself, and specifically in its publications unit. The latter has been understaffed, and only recently (in January 2007) a new Head was appointed after a gap of three years. Furthermore, in-house capacity of the publications unit appears to be limited. There is only one Publications Assistant and several Senior Secretaries in the unit who are obviously overwhelmed. During his interview with the evaluation team, the Senior Program Officer shared photocopies of a letter dated 15 December 2006 from the Publications Assistant to the Executive Secretary in which the burden of tasks was made painfully evident. The letter observed (p.2) that over one hundred research reports under the Young Scholars Programme “are collecting dust” – some of them “dating as far back as two decades ago ... [and] reports from these and other programmes keep coming in and adding to the already overflowing pile of reports”.

Perhaps there are ‘penalties for success’ but OSSREA appears to have generated many more research reports than it can handle with in-house staff. A major problem at the heart of this publication difficulty is whether OSSREA is a publishing house or simply a facilitator of publications derived from the research it funds. The option of outsourcing would seem to be obvious but discussions reveal contradictory information about it. Some, like the Executive Secretary, assert that it has been tried and found wanting so the Executive Committee had decided to augment in-house capacity. Others, specifically the new Head of Publications, argue that outsourcing should be an automatic resort as there are sufficient funds to underwrite the costs. According to him ‘outsourcing should be automatic and it may cost something, but then OSSREA isn’t exactly poor’. In any case, there is clearly a very large backlog of manuscripts awaiting editing and there is a procedural ‘wrinkle’ in that an author of a research report does not receive the final ten percent of his/her grant until the manuscript has been published. Needless to say, there is a large constituency of scholars who are awaiting final payment and, as a consequence, are highly dissatisfied.

The publication difficulties also highlight a critical problem in that the organisation seems to be trapped in the 1980s mind-set of its creation. It is argued by some that OSSREA's rules were established over 25 years ago at a time when publication of each and every manuscript was important; but, as times have changed, so too should the rules. Therefore, it should not be expected that everyone gets his/her research report published. Others make the case that this electronic age is capable of putting all of

these reports on-line, after light copy-editing, rather than waiting for them to be published as hardcopy. In either case, however, the in-house capacity of the publications unit remains under-resourced while policy about outsourcing remains muddled.

As explained, OSSREA publications are increasingly being published with international commercial publishers, but the organisation is struggling to meet the rigorous international publication standards of these publishing firms. Since outsourcing of publications is evidently more cost-effective than employing full-time staff to do this we recommend outsourcing of editing of research monographs to specialist copy-editors and desktop publishers, including outsourcing of 2/3 of unpublished manuscripts between 2000–2006 to commercial publishers because OSSREA is not a publishing house. The fundamental issue, in the view of the EET, is for the membership of the organisation at Congress level to fully discuss and buy-into the fact that OSSREA now operates within a changed international environment underpinned by economic globalisation. This ‘change of mindset’ by OSSREA membership would require a rethink of the fact that awarding competitive grants does not imply an obligation to publish research output, irrespective of quality.

Speaking of an electronic age, OSSREA has a relatively competent website (www.ossrea.net) that includes full texts of in-house documents produced since the early 1990s – newsletters, national workshop reports, abstracts and tables of contents for online publications plus a register of social scientists in member countries. The latter claim is not strictly correct – ‘register’ means not a list of members but only an application form to become a member.

National Chapters: roles, management and co-ordination

The role and function of OSSREA chapters and their Liaison Officers vary greatly from allegedly moribund to evidently active. Interviews in Addis Ababa and case-study visits indicate that OSSREA's chapters in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Mauritius are well-grounded and successful whereas the formerly active chapter in South Africa is in the process of trying to reconstitute itself and the chapter in Namibia is largely a ‘one-man show’. However, several OSSREA chapters are ‘in name only’ and apparently exist only through the liaison officer appointed by the Executive Committee. The reasons for the variation include the following. First, the relative number of social scientists in a specific country must be considered. While the potential ‘universe’ in a given country is unknown, Ethiopia's chapter claims approximately 300 members of whom about 100 have paid their annual dues of US\$10; Mauritius has 34 members of whom 22 have paid their dues; in 2003 South Africa had 76 members (more recent data are not available and no mention of dues-payers); Namibia claims 70 members but without a list of them nor information on their financial status, and Rwanda 127 members¹⁵.

Second, the relative size of a country is important in terms of communications – perhaps compounded by the relative concentration or dispersion of universities and institutes of higher education. For example Mauritius, where an hour's drive can reach any part of the island – and there is only one university (although a second has just begun: University of Technology, Mauritius). Therefore people find it relatively easy to get together. The same is true of Rwanda. In Ethiopia, a large country in both population and area, institutions of higher learning and research are relatively concentrated in Addis Ababa – although again there are plans for extensive diversification of the higher education sector. Currently, however, the local chapter has had many members over a long period of time so it could be properly characterized as having become ‘institutionalized’. In contrast, South Africa, also relatively large in area and population, has a wider distribution of universities and research centers. Therefore, although transport is more well developed than in Ethiopia, the OSSREA chapter finds it difficult to convene members.

¹⁵ See OSSREA Membership List May 2007

Third, visits to OSSREA headquarters and to OSSREA chapters reveal that information about members is incomplete. A brief inspection of the files in the office of OSSREA's Senior Programme Officer found them to be a shambles, which he explained was due to inadequate reporting by liaison officers as well as lack of computerization of both membership lists and finances. According to the OSSREA Financial and Administrative Manager, no audits of chapter finances have ever been conducted. In short, information is available but incomplete and not regularly updated. Even in Mauritius, despite requests, no financial data could be provided. In the case of Rwanda, however, an up-to-date list of membership and a financial statement was available to the evaluation team. (See report on Rwanda Case Study Visit.)

The conclusion we have drawn from these experiences is that OSSREA itself is not sure whether it is an academic NGO (reasonably well-funded by external donors) that distributes grants for social science research within the region, or if it is a membership organization of social scientists who are organized in chapters and govern the organization through the triennial congress and, in the interim, its Executive Committee and Executive Secretary. In contemporary parlance, there is a tension in OSSREA between top-down and bottom-up approaches. Given its extreme dependence on funds from external donors and given the paltry amounts generated by memberships dues and other sources (such as sale of publications), there is a pronounced bias toward top-down activities but there are also signs of a restive membership that believes there should be more bottom-up control of the organization, i.e. democratic deficit at the local level. The puzzle for the immediate future is how to synthesize this tension into a more productive outcome.

In relation to the management and coordination of local chapters of OSSREA, as mentioned above, problems are evident in the lack of information reported to headquarters about each chapter – and also problems on the ground of each chapter as well. First, in terms of legalities, Article XII of the *OSSREA Constitution* concerns 'Chapters of the Organization'. A national chapter is to be established in each member country to 'assist' the OSSREA Secretariat in disseminating information, promoting membership, conducting country-specific activities and collecting membership fees. Each chapter is to be run by a National Executive Committee elected by members of the national chapter and comprised of at least three members, one of whom shall be the Liaison Officer. A muddle exists about the status of a Liaison Officer since constitutionally she/he is to be elected whereas Paragraph 4 of the By-laws for OSSREA chapters, which were adopted in 2000, states: "The day-to-day activities of chapters shall be carried out by liaison officers each of whom shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of OSSREA in accordance with the provision of Article 12(2) of the revised OSSREA Constitution. The immediate accountability of liaison officers shall be to the Executive Secretary of OSSREA." Paragraphs 5 & 6 then add that liaison officers shall also be responsible to the general assemblies of their respective chapters that may, for good causes, remove a liaison officer. In the formation of country-chapters, the OSSREA Executive Committee initially appoints a Liaison Officer who then becomes locally elected. Thus far the chapter in Mauritius, founded in 2003, has not held an election and has only a Liaison Officer but no National Executive Committee. In South Africa, where the chapter was founded in 2000, there have been elections for a National Executive Committee and three changes of Liaison Officer

Second, in addition to problems of communications linked with the number of members in a national chapter and their geographical distribution, the issue of institutionalization of a chapter is problematic. However, the relative success of OSSREA's national chapter in Ethiopia and Rwanda suggests some 'pointers' that could enhance and entrench the activities of its chapters elsewhere. When asked to identify the 'secrets' of long-term continuity and success, members of the Ethiopia and Rwanda National Executive Committee listed: (a) democratic elections, (b) regular meetings, (c) high quality leadership, (d) mechanisms to control the Liaison Officer, such as a term limited to three years, (e) demand-driven research activities, (f) affirmative action to include women, and (g) contact-persons at

university and college campuses outside Addis Ababa. The current Ethiopian Liaison Officer (Habtamu Wondimu) said that he and the Liaison Officers of Namibia & Lesotho have been trying to re-draft the constitution and the by-laws in order to eliminate loopholes and thereby strengthen national chapters.

Third, as far as one can detect, national chapters are extensions of OSSREA's Executive Committee rather than legal entities registered in their own right. The Ethiopian chapter has tried to seek legal independence but was instructed by the Executive Secretary not to register at the Ministry of Justice because there would be (allegedly) confusion between names of the national chapter and the international headquarters and (more likely) competition for resources. In neither Mauritius nor South Africa has the national chapter registered with its appropriate authority.

Fourth, national chapters of OSSREA appear vulnerable to the 'banyan tree' problem – namely the activities of a strong, competent Liaison Officer prevent the emergence of other local agents. With the evident exception of the Rwandan and Ethiopian chapters, the tendency is for a single individual (in case of Mauritius, a pair of closely linked individuals) to dominate the local scene and to do his/her tasks almost too well as no one else comes forward to help, much less to volunteer to serve as a replacement. As the old adage has it, 'the best drives out the good', not because the best wants to do so but because there are no opportunities for others to attempt to do something. Of course, it may also be observed that all organizations are comprised of individuals and "an organization is but the shadow of a man/woman". Given that OSSREA is a peripheral activity for almost all of members of its local chapters, perhaps the pattern of 'banyan' dominance should not be unexpected.

3. Capacity Building & Institutional Strengthening: Impact of OSSREA

The EET was informed at the April meeting in Stockholm that the impact of OSSREA research is the subject of a series of case studies commissioned by NORAD so our objective was to assess (to 'appreciate') impacts on universities, scholars and continental organizations like the African Union & NEPAD and on regional organizations such as EAC, IGAD & SADC.

i. Impact on National Universities

For 18 years I have been teaching at the University but never involved in research. It was OSSREA's involvement that provided the opportunity for research, publication and international exposure.

Senior Academic; Rwanda National Chapter

The EET found considerable evidence to justify that OSSREA has and still continues to contribute to capacity building and institutional strengthening of African universities and academics, against the background of negligible support for the majority of African universities and the higher education sector. Certainly OSSREA's strongest link is with its host – Addis Ababa University – which provides rent-free premises as well as power and water supplies without charge; only costs of telecommunications are paid by OSSREA. Addis Ababa University, with a student population of 40,000 and estimated 1,200 faculty staff, has been a net beneficiary of the presence of OSSREA on its university campus. According to the President of AAU, 'Addis Ababa University benefits a great deal from presence of OSSREA on campus through research and training capacity building provisions for faculty members'. A notable impact is that during the period of military dictatorship and political repression in the 1970s and 1980s, OSSREA kept social science research alive not only at the university but in the whole country as well. OSSREA's research and publications have fed into teaching programmes at the university whereby staff and students extensively utilise ODC resources. In fact, all OSSREA publications are not only available in the library but also on sale in the University bookshop. The collaboration with OSSREA has no doubt enriched the teaching and other core business of the university. In fact, some research projects at the university, especially indigenous and innovative research, have been promoted by OSSREA, for example at the departments of History, and Political Science and IR. There is a

university-wide expectation that OSSREA will play a lead role in two new university initiatives i.e. the proposal to establish an African Studies Centre, and, AAU-UNESCO regional initiative on a peace and research network for the IGAD region. However, OSSREA's visibility at the university will be considerably enhanced and strengthened with the introduction of the *OSSREA Lecture Series* that attracts high profile speakers. In addition, the AAU President expressed keen interest in reviving the dormant OSSREA Chair in Anthropology. AAU is currently developing its core business with a focus on post-graduate education and training. This is identified as a new opportunity for the expansion of OSSREA social science research and capacity building service provision. There is an expectation of reciprocal benefits for both AAU and OSSREA.

The case studies also demonstrate the extent of OSSREA's impact on capacity building and institutional strengthening of universities and the higher education sector. The case of Rwanda is instructive in that the university (NUR) has been a major beneficiary of the activities of the national chapter. The university administration and the executive of the national chapter not only have an amicable relationship, but this has led to increasing research and academic collaborations whereby 11 university faculty staff, who are also members of OSSREA, have directly benefited from the research training and capacity building programmes provided by OSSREA in Addis Ababa. The national chapter has made significant contributions in building the research and publication capacity of NUR in the post-war period. In the January 2001 journal *Etudes Rwandaises* 3, published by NUR, six out of the seven articles were published by OSSREA members. To commemorate the 25th anniversary of OSSREA in Africa, the national chapter published selected workshop papers and reports as an edited book entitled *Facing the Challenges of Development in a Post-conflict Transition* (2005). According to the former Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs Dr. Jean Bosco Butera (now UPEACE Africa Programme Director), the OSSREA national chapter was instrumental in the immediate post-genocide period in reviving and generating university-wide interest in research and publication. This directly led to the establishment of the University Commission for Research.

OSSREA's visibility in Rwanda is evident throughout the campus of NUR in the form of flyers and publicity documents from both the national chapter and OSSREA HQs. The strong and positive relationship between the chapter and the university was established by the first Liaison Officer, who used his position as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) at NUR to develop meaningful networks and contacts with government ministers, INGOs and development co-operations agencies as a means to facilitate the interface between OSSREA researchers and the policy community. The human capacity development of faculty members is evident and recognised by NUR management. One senior staff member opined that 'For 18 years I have been teaching at the University but never involved in research. It was OSSREA's involvement that provided the opportunity for research, publication and international exposure'. On the whole, the reputation of the university has been enhanced because of the work of the national chapter, faculty staff are promoted due to OSSREA's research and publication, students capacity is built through participation in data survey and basic research activities in the field and OSSREA research outputs also feed into teaching and learning activities of the university. As Prof. Rama Roa puts it 'I got my full professorship on the back of OSSREA research and publications.' In fact, those faculty members currently doing their PhD programme of study have extensively used OSSREA research and publication materials. The current Rector of NUR is keen to strengthen the partnership with OSSREA to play a major role in ensuring that research and the higher education sector are at the heart of national development and post-war reconstruction.

A significant area of impact is on human resource development and capacity building is that scholars in the regions have benefited from competitive research grants, against the background of scarce research grants and non-existent public funds to undertake research. OSSREA research grants have become the only alternative funding framework for African researchers surviving in a difficult higher education environment. Through this opportunity, scholars are able to undertake academic publications, add

value for career progression and the internationalisation of their academic output. Several academics at AAU owe their career development and promotions to OSSREA opportunities for research and publications, thus indirectly contributing to the human resource development of the university and the country in general. The participation of African scholars, in particular, young and middle-level career academics, in OSSREA's international conferences and workshops provides opportunities for international exposure and possibilities for networking and collaborative research and publication endeavours. OSSREA has provided several training and capacity building opportunities for young scholars, who otherwise would not have these opportunities. At AAU, academics teaching Research Methods have benefited from the capacity building provided by the Research Methodology training programme. One further feature of OSSREA's methodology workshop is worth stressing. It throws scholars together with their peers from other African countries, and that has two important benefits. First, they immediately see that those from other countries come at research issues in ways that differ from theirs. The result is a good deal of valuable cross-fertilisation. Second, many of these cross-border dialogues are sustained over subsequent years. Several scholars who have had this experience told us that they continue to exchange ideas and papers with colleagues whom they encountered in OSSREA workshops. So this very productive cross-fertilisation is an enduring reality. Dr. Awdore Kambuzi, Secretary to the AU Peace and Security Commission, confirmed that 'OSSREA was popular in Zimbabwe because it supported research on the ground. The funds were used not only to do research but also identify problems and respond to the problems faced by local communities.'

In addition, our case study visits to Kenya, South Africa and Mauritius indicate that the national chapters of OSSREA are based in the dominant university of a particular country – although, in the case of South Africa, the complexity of its academic system has undermined the viability of a sustained membership. With regards to building capacity in countries with weaker research environments, it appears that the reverse is true. That is to say, countries with stronger universities have reaped more grants than those with weak academic systems (Somalia, Mozambique, the Sudan, Eritrea). But perhaps there are enough exceptions to 'prove the rule'. The only evidence that indicates how OSSREA has contributed to building local capacity is the remark by the Senior Programme Officer/Research that 13 member-countries have carried out 35 national workshops under OSSREA auspices in which over 300 papers were presented and about 1,300 participants were registered. While the time-period is unclear, the statistics (if correct) are commendable.

However, training activities by OSSREA have been confined to the all-important area of social science methodologies. During the 2000–2006 period on which data were collected, the largest single programme was Research Methodology Training in which 290 participants from 17 countries took part. All but two of these sessions were conducted in Addis Ababa and, in 2003, additional regional sessions were conducted in Nairobi and Cape Town. What is not yet clear is how many of those who received training in methodologies went on to apply for (and, indeed, to obtain) research grants in the Young Scholars Programme (whether for social science or for gender issues). We have heard about several anecdotal cases but cannot establish a pattern. A hypothesis for future research would be: the greater the follow-up between OSSREA grants, the greater the capacity-building in a particular country – and, by inference, the greater the retention rate of skilled social scientists. In Rwanda, we found demonstrable evidence of training capacity building and institutional strengthening of NUR.

Recipients of OSSREA grants and beneficiaries of the organisation's research and publications have consistently expressed the view that the major, if not singular impact of OSSREA is the simple fact that an African institution provides grants to African scholars. One interlocutor described this as 'a phenomenal impact'. In effect, OSSREA seems to be fulfilling the very mandate for its establishment. However, there is no verifiable evidence or indication to assess the impact of OSSREA, after years of awarding research grants to African Scholars. This would be a worthy assessment exercise for the organisation to undertake.

ii. **OSSREA's Continental and Regional Impact**

As long as OSSREA can show its relevance to the AU, then the AU and its member states will continue to utilise its services, with some resources to support this initiative.

Dr. Naison Ngoma. African Union

OSSREA has not sufficiently engaged with intergovernmental institutions based in Addis Ababa, nor has it aggressively tried to pursue policy agendas with a view to setting the agendas. At national level, OSSREA has contributed to some Ethiopian government policies such as the PRSP policy strategy and implementation. In this instance, OSSREA directly involved government officers with responsibility for PRSP in the research and policy dialogues on poverty reduction. The implementation of specialised projects has also led to increased collaboration and strengthening of network partnerships with other African research institutions, for example the joint HIV/AIDS conference.

Though some high level government ministers have participated in different OSSREA activities in the case of Ethiopia and some case study countries, it is difficult to ascertain impact on national policy or increased interaction between the research community and policy practitioners. Notwithstanding, the Ethiopian State Minister of Foreign Affairs envisages a positive role for OSSREA and social science research in facilitating policy dialogue and policy-relevant research to help develop peaceful inter-state relations between Ethiopia and its immediate neighbours such as Eritrea and Somalia, and within the IGAD region in general. According to the Minister, 'The research work done by OSSREA on African conflicts is very encouraging. I don't think there is another institution that can replace what OSSREA is doing'. The strategic plan developed by the Ministry will allow new and young staff to participate in the OSSREA Young Scholars programme. The Minister of Health has also participated in two international conferences organised by OSSREA on HIV/AIDS. The outputs of these conferences have been used to support Ethiopian Government policies on HIV/AIDS. The ministry intends to approach OSSREA for expertise and research support in the establishment of the new Ministry of Health's Research Unit as the forum to drive the ministry's basic, applied and policy-relevant research activities. In addition, the Minister of Education expressed the view that research institutes and government agencies often operate in isolation with limited interaction. He however sees a more meaningful role for research to feed into government policy formulation and implementation on national issues. The minister highlighted the following as possible areas of OSSREA's impact; HIV/AIDS intervention and research programmes, gender issues and national educational framework. However, the minister expressed the view that OSSREA needs more visibility in terms of dissemination of its research work and publicity for what it is doing. This will create opportunities for policy makers and practitioners to engage with the research community through the auspices of OSSREA.

If OSSREA's national visibility and policy impact in Ethiopia is limited, it is not surprising that its visibility and impact on the international policy community is negligible. Only recently has OSSREA established strategic partnership with the African Union through the newly created Post-conflict Reconstruction Unit. AU's post-conflict reconstruction and development unit within the Peace and Security Division jointly organised with OSSREA, a major conference on post-conflict reconstruction and development in July 2007 in Lusaka, Zambia. Because of limited expertise within this newly created unit, the AU literally 'went in search' of OSSREA to assist the capacity building of this unit. According to Dr. Naison Ngoma, the head of the unit, 'What really attracted me to OSSREA was the fact that it had organised a workshop on post-conflict reconstruction in Africa. Therefore, OSSREA became a natural partner because of its comparative advantage'. Dr. Ngoma outlined the following as potential impacts of OSSREA: it has provided a forum to engage with civil society thereby making it possible to engage civil society participation in the activities of the Peace and Security Commission; the Unit has utilised a range of OSSREA researchers and network institutions to conduct capacity building activities in workshops, reports, research publications and policy-relevant input. Working with OSSREA

has provided the opportunity for the AU to reach out to other NGOs, research centres and HE institutions; and extensive utilisation of OSSREA's post-conflict documentation and research materials. Furthermore, the Unit is currently working with OSSREA to assist in transforming its post-conflict reconstruction conference report into a policy brief for dissemination and to attract the attention of policy practitioners. This joint international conference with the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit may well serve as a foundation to promote, on a sustainable basis, the international visibility of OSSREA.

OSSREA has also collaborated with other partner institutions to facilitate and/or support capacity building and institutional strengthening, for example CODESRIA¹⁶ and the University for Peace Africa Programme. A relatively large number of OSSREA members indicated not only knowledge of CODESRIA but also research interactions with the organisation in the form of access to research and publication materials, recipients of competitive grants, participation in workshops and conferences and other joint OSSREA-CODESRIA activities. In the case of Ethiopia, during the Mengistu military dictatorship, CODESRIA became the only academic and intellectual outlet for AAU scholars for research and publication. CODESRIA's visibility and capacity building impact on scholars in some countries visited is impressive as in the case of Kenya. It is worth noting that a constructive division of labour has developed between OSSREA and CODESRIA in Kenya. The latter tends to fund scholars doing Masters and Doctoral theses. By contrast, OSSREA supports only non-thesis work – both by younger researchers who have not yet completed theses (provided that the topic is different from the thesis topic), and senior, post-doctoral researchers. OSSREA and CODESRIA thus play complementary roles, which leads us to the conclusion that if a decision were ever made to fund one but not both of these organisations, it would do significant damage in Kenya.

OSSREA and the UPEACE Africa programme have signed a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on collaborative partnership. Both organisations jointly organised a peace research methodology workshop in Addis in April 2007. OSSREA's national chapters and liaison officers facilitated the extensive reach of UPEACE application for the peace research methodology workshop. UPEACE is a net beneficiary of the partnership with OSSREA because it is a newly established programme in Africa and relies extensively on the established networks and communication channels of OSSREA to reach partners in the East, Horn and Southern regions. It is expected that OSSREA will play a key role in the newly established joint UPEACE-AAU-Institute for Peace and Security Studies funded by the DFID-British Council DelpHE programme.

iii. Case Studies and National Impact

Mauritius

The Mauritian chapter of OSSREA has convened three major conferences since its establishment in May 2004, the themes of all of which are directly relevant to major problems of the island nation in particular and to the African continent in general. These were 'Media and Democracy in an Age of Transition' (2004), 'Electoral Reform – Moving Towards an Including Democracy' (2006), and 'Rights and Development in Mauritius' (2007). From these, two edited books have been published *Media and Democracy in an Age of Transition*, edited by Roukaya Kasenally and Sheila Bunwaree, in 2005; and *Rights and Development in Mauritius: A Reader*, edited by Sheila Bunwaree and Roukaya Kasenally, in 2007. The national chapter has clearly involved stakeholders throughout Mauritius ranging from policy makers in government through to civil society organizations and university academics. The quality of publications is generally high and they are written in both English and French. The same can be said of two other books provided by the editors that are not within the OSSREA ambit – *The Politics of Party*

¹⁶ At the Stockholm methodological meeting, the evaluation teams were specifically required to explore, as a secondary issue, the synergy between both OSSREA and CODESRIA, and in particular, the extent to which scholars from the East, Horn and Southern African regions participate in CODESRIA's activities.

Coalitions in Africa (2006) and *Mauritian Education in a Global Economy* (1994) – as well as the proceedings of the 2000 workshop on electoral reform.

The impact of OSSREA is not only limited to academics in that given the broadly based membership of the chapter – that is, only half of the members are from the University of Mauritius while the others hail from a range of professions and occupations in civil society, including businessmen and politicians (a Member of Parliament) and several from neighbouring islands in the Indian Ocean (Seychelles & Comoros) – there is evident receptivity to its activities and outputs.

In terms of capacity building and institutional strengthening, strong efforts are being made but the chapter is quite new so patterns of development are not yet clear. However, during the past three years, Mauritians have been awarded four OSSREA grants (two for training in the methodology of the social sciences; two in the young scholars research programme on gender issues). Given its small population, the island nation has done very well in overall competition for grants.

Based on field visits, it is reasonable to conclude that the sustainability of the chapter is relatively secure. The track record of OSSREA's national chapter in Mauritius is impressive. Its Liaison Officer – Dr Roukaya Kasenally – is a veritable 'live-wire', and is ably supported by her colleague in the Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, Dr Sheila Bunwaree. Together they have solicited sufficient financial support for the conferences listed above, and they display impressive energy and commitment. Therein, however, may lie a future problem because the chapter does not yet have a National Executive Committee (as required by OSSREA's Constitution). Rather, the membership seems to work together as a whole under the leadership of Kasenally and Bunwaree. Four key recommendations made during the debriefing with members of the chapter included: need to diversify the assignment of responsibilities; elect members to an Executive Committee to support the work of the Liaison Officer; continue to recruit members from civil society, from the government (administrative as well as political) and from research institutes elsewhere on the islands; and, to convene meetings more regularly – not just around conferences and workshops. For example, grantees could report back to their chapter about experiences and what they had learned; by so doing, others may be encouraged to apply for research grants and training in methodology. All these suggestions were well received, and all of them are based on the experiences of OSSREA's national chapter in Ethiopia. In summary, the future of the Mauritian national chapter is secure as long as complacency is avoided and its circle of activists is expanded.

South Africa

OSSREA's South Africa chapter has approximately 100 members, although no list of the current members was available. Membership has increased from 30 in 2002 to 50 in 2003 and 2004 to 80 in 2005 to about 100 today. Its annual budget is 90,000 Rand (estimated US \$12,000). The chapter held national workshops during 29–30 September 2005 in Cape Town at the University of the Western Cape on 'Housing and Sustainable Development' and during 19–20 September 2006 at the University of Johannesburg on 'Youth in Transforming Societies: A Research Agenda'. Edited volumes are still in process for both workshops.

A key focus of the 2007 plan of action of the chapter is the priority to revive the membership and recruit extensively across the country. In recognition of the problems and challenges of expanding membership, the national chapter has agreed that an academic post is essential to be a Liaison Officer in order to network with researchers as well as having an appropriate mind-set for the task. The Liaison Officer is now focusing on a 'two-pronged approach':

- 1) consolidate the chapter in order to allow researchers to liaise with each other
- 2) promote academic ties within Africa as well as to Europe

The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) is moving from vocational training to a more research-based university and upgrading its quality; it therefore admires the OSSREA model as reaching outside the traditional ‘academic’ university. The potential contribution of OSSREA to the transformation is considered to be pivotal.

Kenya¹⁷

In Kenya OSSREA’s programme activities through its national chapter have had some positive impact in the areas of capacity building and institutional strengthening. Its provision of training in methodology has substantial value, for two reasons. At present, most departments in Kenyan universities are short of teachers who are able to acquaint research students with methodological training – and the onerous teaching burdens faced by all university academics reduce the time which those who possess this capacity have to commit to such instruction.¹⁸ We were repeatedly told that OSSREA’s training programmes expose scholars to academics who clearly do have that capacity. They are thus seen to have great value.

One feature of Kenya’s university system (which is not shared by most African and Asian universities) is that research and publications matter when it comes to promotion. They do not guarantee it, but – alongside conferences attended and service to the university (more than teaching) – from a core determinant. In recent years, Kenya’s university teachers have been compelled to take on exceedingly heavy – and increasing – burdens of teaching and marking. Their problem is not as excruciating as that of their counterparts in, for example, Ghana,¹⁹ but it is acute. The upshot is that it is immensely difficult for academics to do research and to publish without at least modest external support – against the background of the fact that the number of sources other than OSSREA, and the amounts of funds available, are shrinking. However, the key point is that those who receive research support from OSSREA tend to gain promotions eventually, so that scholars with a proven capacity for, and a commitment to research tend to rise to senior positions in universities. That helps to ensure that the capacity for research is strengthened in Kenyan universities as a result of OSSREA’s programmes.

Scholars who have received grants from OSSREA repeatedly stressed one aspect of the process that has enhanced their capacities. Before proposals are finally approved, applicants receive valuable constructive criticism on their research plans from chapter members which has enriched both their projects and their understanding of how to do good research.

OSSREA might consider one simple rule change. It currently restricts universities with multiple campuses to just one OSSREA chapter, and one campus representative. Consider, in this connection, Egerton University which has the largest chapter in Kenya. It has several campuses, one of which is 600 kilometres from the main site. It would be eminently sensible to permit that distant branch campus to have its own chapter and representative. The current rule is unnecessarily damaging OSSREA’s ability to strengthen institutions.

¹⁷ This report on Kenya is prepared by James Manor and is based on many discussions with social scientists in Kenya between 13 and 18 August 2007. I had numerous meetings with individuals, but two group meetings were especially informative. The first was organised at Kenyatta University just outside Nairobi by Dr. Ruth Muthei, the OSSREA representative on that campus – and included OSSREA members and “beneficiaries” from the greater Nairobi area. The second was at Egerton University in Njoro (four hours upcountry from Nairobi), organised by OSSREA’s national Liaison Officer, Professor Helen Mondoh, who teaches there. She drew together campus representatives of OSSREA (including her predecessor as Liaison Officer) and others connected to the organisation at universities *outside* Nairobi. On these campuses, I also had individual meetings with academics – including two Deputy Vice Chancellors at Egerton. (I had also met Dr. Muthei and Prof. Mondoh on my first day in Nairobi, to plan the two group meetings and to discuss OSSREA issues.) In addition, I had individual discussions with people from ‘think tanks’, other policy studies centres, civil society organisations, funding agencies, and the University of Nairobi.

¹⁸ Teaching is even more strongly stressed in the new private universities that are springing up, and research there gets less emphasis than in the state universities.

¹⁹ This writer paid a research visit to the University of Ghana at Legon earlier this year.

The above demonstrates that OSSREA has made significant impact on national universities and capacity building of scholars in Kenya. OSSREA's founders wanted the organisation to concentrate on empirical studies, on applied social science which would be relevant to 'real world' concerns. They were reacting against CODESRIA's emphasis in those days on more theoretical studies.²⁰ It is clear that the themes being analysed by OSSREA members in Kenya today conform to the intentions of its founders. They address concrete development issues of importance, by way of empirical studies.

OSSREA members in universities have not found Kenyan government officials or Kenya's 'think tanks' very receptive to their findings²¹ – although officials at middle levels sometimes take careful note of studies which focus on their specific topic or geographical area. The disinterest of senior government officials is to be regretted. Social scientists in Kenyan universities often find that the in-house policy documents on which ministries base their decisions are drafted by their former students with no post-graduate training. Meanwhile, government officials remain largely unaware of the often solid research by university academics.

A few academics are consulted by senior government actors, but this tends to happen unsystematically, on the basis of personal connections between these individuals. Government officials also tend more often to turn to social scientists in Kenyan 'think tanks' which receive state funds, or in civil society organisations. The latter are often selected because they have made themselves very visible, and because those organisations have become more adept at providing quick answers to government. OSSREA has begun to help to bridge the gulf between social scientists in the universities and in civil society organisations, but academics argued that more in this vein would be helpful.²²

However, it became apparent that while the social sciences in Kenya are comparatively strong, there is still an acute need for support from OSSREA. Time and again, well informed academics stressed the immense value of OSSREA's initiatives, especially for younger scholars. There is serious, widespread concern about sustaining social science (through, it was stressed, the programme on methodology and other provisions for junior researchers) as older scholars move towards retirement – especially in the majority of Kenyan universities where most academics have not had the benefit of study in other countries. But how sustainable, in material terms, is the OSSREA programme in Kenya?

It is clear that there are few other sources for research funding to which either junior or senior scholars can turn. Kenya's government provides very little support for research in the social sciences or in other fields. The main sources named by informants were CODESRIA, Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. But Ford Foundation has had to curtail grant making in recent years as a result both of a (global) decision in New York to husband resources, and of the decline in the value of the U.S. dollar. Rockefeller has also been affected by the dollar's decline, but more worryingly, it is increasingly shifting support to the natural sciences and medicine. So social scientists in (and, no doubt, beyond) Kenya are beginning to experience a decline in opportunities other than those provided by OSSREA. This combination of things – high promise (and achievements) among Kenyan social scientists on the one hand, and diminishing funds for the social sciences on the other – adds up to a strong argument in favour of sustained support from Sida/SAREC for OSSREA (and presumably CODESRIA).

Finally, a word is in order about transparency within the Kenyan national chapter of OSSREA (which has roughly 300 paid up members, of whom between 100 and 150 are very active²³). The chapter's finances are vetted annually in two ways. First, when Liaison Officers meet each year in Addis Ababa, the finance officer from OSSREA headquarters minutely examines each chapter's accounts for the

²⁰ Interview with one of the founders, Professor Njuguna Ng'ethe, Nairobi, 15 August 2007.

²¹ Those in 'think tanks' tend to "look down on" colleagues in the universities.

²² CODESRIA funds faculty seminars that are open to the public, and which therefore have the potential for bridging this gap. Similar efforts by OSSREA were suggested by some academics.

²³ Figures are approximate because some campus representatives have not submitted precise numbers.

previous year. Second, since the national chapter is registered with the Kenyan government as a legal entity, full financial reports must be submitted to the government each year. That entails detailed financial reporting which comes close to a formal audit. These processes appear, to this writer at least, to be sufficient.

In conclusion, the general consensus is that OSSREA's national chapter in Kenya is operating appropriately and effectively. Annual conferences occur according to expectations, with all campus representatives (plus many other members) present. The national executive is elected regularly, according to the OSSREA constitution, as is the Liaison Officer, every third year. The current Liaison Officer is, like her predecessor, widely regarded as an effective, energetic and fair leader. OSSREA support has reached scholars in a very broad array of social science disciplines. No single discipline predominates, which is encouraging and welcomed by OSSREA members there. This appears to have been facilitated by the fact that awards have usually gone to academics who are working on themes of contemporary concern which often cut across disciplines – education, social issues, HIV/AIDS, conflict and governance. As a result, we did not detect any resentment among scholars about a lack of opportunities for their disciplines.

Some scholars voiced doubts about OSSREA's willingness to fund researchers who did not (or did not entirely) work within disciplines conventionally seen to fall within the 'social sciences'. But senior national chapter members argued persuasively that it was important to familiarise scholars from these adjacent disciplines with the social sciences. An environmental scientist, a civil engineer or even a chemist who is working on a local development project needs to know about the sociological or economic dimensions and implications of what s/he is doing if such projects are to produce optimal outcomes. In addition, the chapter welcomes applications for grants and other opportunities from members and non-members of the organisation. Some of the latter – including scholars from outside the universities, at civil society organisations and research institutes which have no OSSREA link – have been successful. When they succeed, they tend to join OSSREA, but only for the short period in which they receive funding. This leaves many in universities who maintain their memberships year after year feeling unhappy – since they conclude that their membership yields no advantage and is not respected. OSSREA members in Kenya – apart from those who join for the single year of their awards – come overwhelmingly from universities. A small number of members work in civil society organisations, but efforts to attract members from outside the universities have been hampered by the widespread knowledge that non-members are free to apply for OSSREA support. They therefore see little reason to join.

Statistics on OSSREA activities in different countries indicate that Kenya obtains a greater proportion of fellowships, scholarships, etc., than any other country. Kenya is among the four dominant recipients of OSSREA grants and has surpassed all other countries in obtaining support for research methodology training, for young scholars, for senior scholars and post-doctoral fellowships – and it has performed strongly in sabbatical grants. These successes are explained in part by the comparative strength of Kenya's universities, and of the social sciences within them. But they also owe much to the hard, committed work of the national executive and the national Liaison Officers.

But these successes have not been without difficulties. Problems with information flows from OSSREA headquarters have been a major concern. OSSREA leaders in Kenya hope for a "streamlining" of communications and other procedures to overcome other recent problems. For example, on one occasion, the national executive submitted a list of possible activities and a budget to Addis Ababa for approval and funding. Headquarters replied by informing them of a cut in the budget and a release of funds, but neglected to specify what the reduced funds were intended for. The Kenyan chapter also experienced a delay of one year in the release of funds from Addis Ababa for a programme on which headquarters insisted. Delays have also occurred in the disbursement of funds for beneficiaries – from December to February or March – and yet before the funds had arrived, headquarters requested details of how the unreleased money was spent. The national executive in Kenya stressed that very recent

changes at programme officer level in Addis Ababa have improved operations, and they hope that this will help to overcome these problems. It is apparently assumed at OSSREA headquarters that any national Liaison Officer will be given a free office and perhaps other support from his/her university. This has not in fact happened in Kenya. The Liaison Officer therefore has to pay her university for office space and other things out of the very limited funds of the national chapter of OSSREA.

Ethiopia

‘Its good that an evaluation of OSSREA takes place. OSSREA is doing well but this is an organisation that can do more’.

Ethiopian LO.

Ethiopian chapter operates as an inclusive multi-disciplinary membership and research network. Though there are nine public universities and an estimated 20 private universities, the fully paid up membership of 100, is largely drawn from AAU and Addis Ababa, with an estimated 300 nominal members. Chapter members have extensively benefited from award of various OSSREA grants. In addition chapter members are involved in research, publication, training and policy-related activities. Despite this tremendous work, the membership is uncertain about the impact of OSSREA.

There is a perception of a gap between researchers and the policy community in that ‘Politicians don’t listen to researchers and researchers don’t listen to politicians’. Notwithstanding, the national chapter members have been involved in substantive national policy research issues such as poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS and conflict. These are research areas relevant to the socio-political development of Ethiopia.

The national chapter requested from OSSREA HQ, the status of an independent legal entity, but approval has not been granted. There are also sensitivities relating to the presence of the national chapter in Addis Ababa where the OSSREA secretariat is based. There are concerns about limited input from OSSREA HQs in national chapter activities, for example the Executive Secretary has not attended any of the national chapter conferences.

Rwanda

The Rwanda National Chapter was established by a group of researchers at the National University of Rwanda (NUR) in April 1999, with the support of the OSSREA Secretariat and Executive Committee. The National Chapter is currently made up of more than 120 members drawn from a multi-disciplinary field of social science, humanities and natural sciences. 90% of the membership is drawn from NUR, but it is anticipated that there will be increased membership with the participation of the newly established private universities in Kigali. The OSSREA secretariat is hosted by NUR and its offices are based in the newly built Mamba Building. The impressive offices are relatively well equipped with ICT facilities and serve as a resource centre for the members, university-wide faculty staff and students.

The creation of the national chapter had to do with the immediate problems and challenges of the post-genocide period in Rwanda and in particular, the challenges faced by NUR in organisation and delivery of its core business of teaching, learning, transfer of knowledge, research and publication. In the immediate post-genocide period, though the priority in the higher education sector was not research because of the acute lack of basic services, capacity and institutional organisation, some efforts were made to develop the research capacity of NUR because of the demand by international agencies and government institutions for consultancy services and basic and policy-relevant research work. But the problems and challenges of the immediate post-war conditions also created an environment conducive to the establishment of a national chapter because the difficult circumstances that the researchers found themselves in created a spirit of collegiality and a focus on post-war peacebuilding, reconstruction and development issues.

As directed by the ToR, our extensive interviews focused on key stakeholders including a cross section of national chapter memberships, academics, beneficiaries of OSSREA grants, senior university officers and students. In addition, key documents and publications by the national chapters were also reviewed.

Though a predominantly Francophone country and despite its recent establishment, the national chapter was a beneficiary of a total of 11 OSSREA research grants between 2000–2006 (10 Research Methodology Training and 1 Gender Competition Grant). Since its creation, the national chapter has been well organised, competent and proactive organisation that has made visible and verifiable impacts on the post-war development and re-construction challenges of Rwanda. OSSREA national Chapter is courted by both government and international agencies for the provision of consultancy services, policy advisory input and facilitation of basic research relevant to the development and peacebuilding imperatives of the country. This is evident in the following areas:

Research and Transfer of Knowledge Impact

Between 2000 and 2006 the national chapter has organised impressive studies and workshops for the government of Rwanda and key intergovernmental institutions and development co-operation agencies. They include the following:

- a) Poverty Relevance Test (PRT) for the I-PRSP poverty reduction policies for the Government of Rwanda in 2001. The study was in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance with the objective to formulate the Rwanda Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The results also provided the first formal link with the Ministry of Finance in studies related to development.²⁴
- b) Governance and Poverty Reduction National Workshop. This joint UNDP national workshop in 2002 produced the policy framework on Governance and Poverty Reduction in post-war Rwanda.
- c) Citizen Report Card on Registration Services (2004) and Community Score Card (2005). These studies were commissioned by the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Finance and the World Bank to assess citizens appreciation of delivery of government services. Out of the Citizen Report Card study in 2004 developed a Community Score Card programme of assessment of delivery and efficacy of government services.
- d) Edited Rwanda African Peer Review Mechanism Report (2004). The national chapter edited the report of the Rwanda African Peer Review Mechanism self-evaluation Report for NEPAD.
- e) Poverty Reduction Strategy Assessment of Rwanda in 2005. This six volume case study on poverty reduction policies and relevance tests which was jointly undertaken with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, brought together OSSREA national Chapter researchers and government policy makers and practitioners. The publication covered the following themes; background framework, methodology, policy review pilot study, national survey findings, and report of the study. The result of the study was presented at a national dissemination workshop in Kigali in November 2005 and a regional workshop in April 2006.
- f) EDPRS Poverty Analysis of UBUDEHE (2006) and IMHIGO-Rapid and Comprehensive Assessment of Performance Contracts Management (2006). UNDP commissioned OSSREA to carry out a study of the EDPRS process through the local *Ubugdehe* framework.²⁵ The results from 9000 *Ubugdehe*

²⁴ OSSREA Rwanda National Chapter, Sida-SAREC Evaluation of OSSREA Rwanda Chapter 2000–2006, Butate, July 2007.

²⁵ *Ubugdehe* is an indigenous Rwandan concept based on traditional practice of collective work. The economic justification is primarily based on the advantages of economies of scale and the maximization or efficient utilization of time. For example, where the cultivation of a piece of land by an individual would take several weeks, the cultivation of the same piece of land by the community and group of people will take a single day. It is a form of collectivization of labour resources and social capital that is based on trust, reciprocity, collective action, participatory development, grassroots empowerment, social cohesion and decentralisation. For more details see, OSSREA National Chapter, *EDPRS Poverty Analysis of Ubugdehe* November 2006. Similarly, *Imihigo* is an indigenous approach to modern performance contract management.

case studies are utilised by UNDP to inform and facilitate the work of other sector working groups and the EDPRS methodology. Additionally, the Ministry of Local Government and World Bank commissioned the national chapter to undertake a comprehensive assessment of performance management contracts signed between the District Mayors and the President of Rwanda. The results of the study were presented at the annual national dialogue forum –a ‘constitutionally’ mandated ‘forum chaired by the president of the republic.

- g) Community Participation (2006). The national chapter in 2006 was commissioned by World Bank HQs to undertake a comprehensive review of its participatory activities in Rwanda with a view to determining how they affect major service delivery sectors such as the economy, health, education, etc.
- h) ICT and Poverty Reduction (2006–2009). This IDCR (Canada) four country regional case study focuses on assessing the potential impact of ICT on poverty reduction in Rwanda.
- i) National Workshops (2001–2006). The national chapter has organised or facilitated, in collaboration with key stakeholders, a range of national thematic workshops including; workshop on poverty alleviation (2001); seminar on poverty and gender (2001); seminars on research methodology (2002, 2003); national workshop on NEPAD (2002); workshop on multi-disciplinary approach to development (2005); workshop on PRS Assessment of Sub-Saharan Africa: case of Rwanda.

Based on the above, it is evident that the Rwanda national chapter is at the forefront of institutional capacity building and human resource development in post-war Rwanda. Despite its ‘newness’ and relatively limited pool of researchers, it has developed a strong, credible and sustainable strategic partnership with key stakeholders such as the Government of Rwanda, international agencies, development co-operations partners and intergovernmental institutions. The quality of its research (both policy-relevant and basic research) and consultancy services is nationally and internationally acknowledged by its end-users and principals.

All this is made possible because of the credible and outstanding leadership of the national chapter executive whereby provision of service for relevant stakeholders is based on quality and national relevance rather than income generation opportunities. Also, the executive of the national chapter confirmed that their achievements are partly due to the support and empowerment of the OSSREA HQs. This credibility has led to close collaboration between OSSREA research community and government policy-makers and practitioners. For example, the government of Rwanda Director of Planning in charge of Poverty Reduction was one of the three principal researchers for the Rwanda-wide Poverty Reduction Strategy Assessment sponsored by OSSREA HQs. What is emerging is a strategic partnership between the government and the research community led by the OSSREA national chapter, though this has not constrained the ability and willingness of the chapter to forcefully express independent views on its research findings. As the Liaison Officer Dr. Herman Musahara puts it ‘Through OSSREA chapter we have managed to remain on friendly terms with government and policy makers, not as alternative power centre but as partners in peacebuilding’. Though the OSSREA chapter is at the forefront of policy dialogue and input, it has managed to operate as an independent evaluator of government policies. OSSREA chapter is constantly invited to participate in high profile government and international workshops and seminars, including the appointment of some chapter members to lead government ad hoc commissions and serving as judge of the Gacaca courts. Some chapter members participated in the government initiative to set up a new Rwanda Science and Research Council.

The national chapter executive has developed an effective strategy of dissemination of its publications through the strategic use of ICT facilities. Key chapter publications and research findings are posted on

all the websites of its partners including government ministries and donor agencies.²⁶ An important aspect of the Rwanda national chapter's impact is in the area of involvement of the private sector and civil society. Its 2001 poverty reduction strategy paper workshop secured the participation of the managers of the both commercial banks and the Central Bank. In addition, its 2004 multi-disciplinary research seminar also involved the participation of the Institute for Scientific Research and Rwanda Information Technology, thus bringing together critical disciplines such as energy technology and environmental science. It is evident that the impact of the OSSREA national chapter is not limited to the university but extends to government and international agencies. But there is limited private sector involvement in OSSREA's activities primarily because the sector is still very small and has not tapped into the opportunities of market liberalisation in both Rwanda and the East African Community.

A unique feature of the national chapter is its strategy of encouraging student membership and participation in its field studies and basic research activities. Senior students at undergraduate level are recruited as members of the national chapter and are utilised, on a remuneration basis, to participate in OSSREA field surveys and basic research activities. This involvement of students as Associate OSSREA members not only provides opportunities for financial support for cash-strapped students, but also creates a stepping stone for intellectual interest in research activities. The involvement of students in field research and surveys is cost-effective for the chapter and has also led to the development of local knowledge of their communities, exposure to new research skills and the building of multi-disciplinary networks. These research skills and data are also utilised in the write up of dissertations. Based on extensive interviews with student members of the OSSREA chapter, there is overwhelming confirmation that the involvement of students has been a great learning and capacity building experience for young scholars and junior researchers and, for many, it has been the pathway for entry into academic employment, research and publication. The OSSREA student members also have competitive advantage in the labour market in that they are often given preference in employment after graduation. This unique entry point for students has further motivated and developed academic and research interest in poverty and development issues. There is also an awareness amongst these student members that they are contributing to national policy processes and development through OSSREA research opportunities. The case of Mrs. Sharon Haba, Deputy Liaison Officer and Lecturer in the Faculty of Social, Political and Administrative Sciences, is instructive because she joined the chapter as a student and through active involvement in OSSREA activities secured a scholarship for postgraduate studies in America, later University employment and is now a senior member of OSSREA's national executive. Sharon Haba is seen as a positive role model and a source of inspiration for student members and junior researchers who, in turn, has been untiring in her efforts to encourage student membership of the chapter.

Sustainability

Based on the above analysis, it is evident that the organisational and financial sustainability of the national chapter is not in question. As at May 2007, the chapter has generated a total of US \$108, 231, from its consultancy services.²⁷ In effect, the national chapter does not depend on the annual budgetary support of US \$10,000 from OSSREA HQs. In fact, due to the pressures of consultancy service activities, the national chapter did not submit its 2006 annual report, hence the annual budgetary payment to the national chapter was not made by the OSSREA in Addis Ababa. But these impressive achievements are not without problems and challenges. The national chapter is constantly challenged by the tensions between its senior and junior researchers, Anglophone and Francophone language difficulties, and identity differentiations.

By all indications, the chapter leadership has made constructive efforts to turn these problems and

²⁶ Key donors can be assessed online at <http://www.devpartners.gov.rw/docs/EDPRS>

²⁷ OSSREA Rwanda National Chapter, Summary Financial Statement as of 30th May 2007.

challenges into opportunities by focusing on the comparative advantages of OSSREA and its diverse membership. To this end, the chapter executive has implemented proper and transparent governance and accountable structures based on the Rwanda proverb ‘an exposed stone cannot hurt the hoe’, and the ‘rainbow approach’ to unity. However, the chapter is still struggling to meet the demand for more researchers to service its consultancy and policy advisory activities. The executive is currently exploring the potential of setting up a research consortium to service its consultancy activities and would like to draw from other OSSREA national chapters with relevant expertise. Despite its impressive progress and achievements, the national chapter has not translated these advantages into securing more competitive grants from OSSREA in Addis Ababa. Additionally, the primary focus on consultancy services also limited the academic rigor and intellectual focus of research and scholarly publications. Not much effort is made to transform these policy-relevant reports into serious academic publications or journal articles. However, these are problems that the chapter executive is aware of but, as one interlocutor puts it, the ‘chapter is evolving with the country and as the university grows we will also grow’.

4. Beyond Donor Funding: Financial and Organisational Sustainability

‘We have had generous funders who pampered us a lot and made us forget that we have to develop alternative sources of funding. This should not continue because we sometimes behave like a child that has inherited money from a rich parent’

Prof. Berhanu. OSSREA Resident Vice-President

The issue of sustainability is central to the future of the organisation. But the organisation should address the two important elements of its sustainability, i.e. organisational and financial. To what extent is the present governance structure adequate and relevant to fulfilling the core mandate and strategic vision of OSSREA within the changing environment of social science research in Africa and the impact of neo-liberal globalisation on the higher education sector? Additionally, to what extent has the organisation developed or put into place viable strategies to limit its 90% donor dependence and to ensure predictability, stability and diversification of funding and income generation?

Organisational Sustainability

In an attempt to address the issue of organisational sustainability, the previous evaluations confirmed that OSSREA, since its creation in the 1980s, had operated and has been operationally managed as an informal network of researchers and scholars. In the words of the Executive Secretary, Dr. Alfred Nhema ‘At the time I took over in 2003, OSSREA was run merely as an informal network without formalised management structures’. This led to the commissioning of an ad hoc Structural Review Committee (SRC) in 2003 with the specific ToR to: review existing organisational structure of the secretariat; assess staff deployment within units with a view to determining adjustment and improvements to ensure optimal utilisation of personnel; and, based on findings, recommend a new formal governance structure with job specifications. The report of the SRC presented in March 2003 identified several management and structure-related problems.²⁸ The report recommended several areas for improvements and the proposed governance structure recommended the establishment of the following department and units: Research and Consultancy Department; Publication and Documentation; Capacity Building and Networking; Administration and Finance Office; and, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Unit.

The establishment of the ad hoc SRC and its comprehensive report was the first attempt in the history of OSSREA to develop formal governance structures as a strategy to strengthen the day-to-day operational management of the organisation. The Executive Secretary should be commended for the

²⁸ OSSREA, Review of OSSREA’s Organisational Structure and Human Resource Requirements Addis Ababa, March 2003.

strategic vision and leadership demonstrated in formalising governance structures of the Secretariat, based on the advice of international consultants on the SRC team. However, the organisational review was partly a recognition of the phenomenal expansion of OSSREA from a small unit with two rooms to a purpose-built OSSREA building, with expanded programme areas and an estimated 20 core staff. The March 2003 report specifically stated that ‘The SRC finds the constraints identified and the recommendations made by the international evaluators relevant and worth serious consideration by OSSREA’. The EET however found that nearly half of the key recommendations made in the March 2003 report are yet to be implemented, i.e. four years after the recommendations were made to the Executive Secretariat for immediate implementation. Some of the un-implemented recommendations are responsible for the current state of affairs at the secretariat and the organisation in 2007. The SRC recommendations include:

- Lack of clear division of responsibilities between Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary (DES), in particular, the recommendation that the DES be ‘entrusted with the responsibility of managing the operational programmes and projects of OSSREA. . . Such an arrangement would help to relieve the Executive Secretary from routine day-to-day activities so that he/she can concentrate on higher-level issues’.
- That implementation of governance structure must adhere to professionalism and institution building based on merit, transparency, efficiency and teamwork.
- Need to establish a consultancy service unit as a ‘natural extension of OSSREA’s duties and responsibilities’ staffed by ‘highly qualified senior professionals’ and as a strategy to significantly increase the annual revenue base of OSSREA.
- Need to encourage and develop sense of ownership by all stakeholders, i.e. staff and Executive Committee, based on ‘transparent and participatory approach of implementation’ of structural changes.

The EET found that some core recommendations on personnel recruitment have been implemented with the creation of new departments as suggested by the SRC report. However, the post of DES was never advertised nor any attempt made to fill the post since 2003. The post was only advertised in July 2007 and we are informed by the Executive Secretary that since the organisation has not been able to secure external funding for the post, OSSREA is now utilising its internal funds to underwrite the serving of this post. One wonders why this has not been done since 2003. It is evident that the SRC recommendations were selectively implemented based on strategic preferences, and in particular, the proposed governance structure was not fully implemented. The ‘Finance and Administrative Manager’ post was split into two with a new Finance Officer and the ‘Senior Secretary and Executive Assistant’ to the Executive Secretariat has served as the *de facto* Administrative Manager since December 2005. Evidently, two different or parallel and contradictory governance structures currently operate, i.e. one proposed by SRC and one improvised.

The half-hearted implementation of the SRC recommended governance structure and the ensuing challenges led to the commissioning of a new comprehensive review of the organisational structure of OSSREA by a private firm, Ernst and Young in December 2006. The specific mandate included: i. to review the current staff development within the organisational units and prepare an organisational structure that matches OSSREA’s strategy and future challenges; ii. prepare organisational structure, work specifications, staffing plan and qualification requirements.²⁹ The report categorically states that ‘The current organisational structure does not support OSSREA’s strategic objectives’ because it lacks

²⁹ Ernst & Young, OSSREA: Organisational Structure Work Specifications, Staffing Plan, Qualification Requirements: Final Draft June 2007.

co-ordination and transparent line management structures, and shows over-centralisation of power in the Executive Secretariat, confusion in roles and responsibilities and lack of demarcation between research and publication functions, administrative and finance management, and constitutional loopholes that limit the authority of the Executive Secretary.

The governance structure proposed by Ernst & Young is a simple and transparent structure based on best practice standards and one that would potentially enable the organisation to effectively and efficiently deliver its strategic objectives. The proposed new governance structure includes:

1. OSSREA Congress and Executive Committee, as stipulated by the constitution.
2. Proposed Executive Director, rather than Executive Secretary, as chief executive of OSSREA.
3. Proposed Deputy Executive Director with responsibility for grants, training and capacity building.
4. Creation of two specialist units namely:
 - a) Research Unit with a Director of Research, assisted by two Research Co-ordinators, who report directly to the Director of Research.
 - b) Publication and Dissemination Unit with a Director of Publications and Dissemination, assisted by six specialists including Publications Co-ordinator, ICT Specialist, Documentation Assistant, Events Organiser/Dissemination Assistant, and Editor.
5. Finance and Administrative Unit headed by a Finance and Administrative Manager who reports directly to the Executive Director, assisted by an Accountant and Administration Officer.
6. National Chapters, as stipulated in the constitution, will continue to serve as 'bridge between the OSSREA secretariat and social scientists in the region'.

The proposed organisational structure together with the Human Resources and Finance Policy and Procedure Manuals³⁰ form the basis for the comprehensive organisational review of OSSREA.

The proposed governance structure was approved and finalised by the Executive Committee in April 2007. Despite the many advantages of the proposed governance structure, the EET found that the prevailing 'organisational culture' will potentially undermine the ownership of the organisational reform. Based on interviews, we found that though secretariat staff were interviewed by Ernst and Young, the governance structure was developed without meaningful participation of staff. In addition, the proposed governance structure recommended by a private firm was approved by the Executive Committee without consultation with staff. There is a general perception amongst staff of lack of participation and ownership of the new governance structure 'imposed' on them, and the Executive Secretariat did not provide any meaningful opportunity to facilitate the participation of staff before the formal approval of the proposed structure by the Executive Committee. This only reinforces the perception of over-centralisation, horizontal line management interaction and lack of involvement of staff in decisions and issues that affect the workforce.

Furthermore, the good intentions of this new governance structure are in danger of being undermined by the impression of some disquiet amongst secretariat staff and some liaison officers about the current state of affairs of the organisation.³¹ To all intents and purposes, the implementation of the new governance structure would only be achievable if it is based on collective ownership and participation, with the sustained support of staff, Executive Secretariat and Executive Committee. At the moment this

³⁰ These two documents, prepared by the Secretariat, were approved by the Executive Committee in April 2007.

³¹ Anonymous e-mails and letters, replete with allegations of impropriety against the Executive Secretariat were widely circulated at the 2005 Congress. See also: Memorandum from Prof. Katapa, OSSREA President on the 'OSSREA's Executive Committee's response to the issues raised in the undated anonymous e-mail of 2005 dated 28th April 2006.

is not the case. The old governance structure is too centralised with excessive powers in the hands of the Executive Secretariat. There is a predominant horizontal relationship and management attitude pervading the governance structure and culture of the organisation. It became evident to the EET that there is a lack of input and participation of staff in decisions and operational management of secretariat, with no senior management team, nor any weekly or monthly operational management meeting of the Executive Secretariat. For example, some Programme Officers do not even know the budgetary allocation or financial aspects of projects they have supervisory and management responsibilities for. In addition, there is an impression that the Executive Secretary has 'too much say' on the financial and budgetary management of the specialised project grants rather than the Programme Officers. The Finance Officer confirmed that he gives budgetary and financial outlines of projects to the Executive Secretary and not to project officers. Some staff, in critical situations, have even informally contacted members of the Executive Committee in an effort to influence the outcome of the decision. According to one interlocutor 'the structure is a mess.' This also conveys the impression of a 'culture of fear' where, according to a senior staff, 'everyone is not free to do their jobs'. Some staff refused to or are reluctant to take decisions even in areas of core responsibilities, for 'fear' of offending management.

The Resident Vice-President is critical of the Executive Committee because he is of the view that it has not consistently delivered on its duty of monitoring and oversight of the Executive Secretariat. In effect, there is the impression that the Executive Committee has been part of the current problems faced by OSSREA because it has not proactively supported the development of institutional rules and regulations to facilitate meaningful and transparent operational management of the Executive Secretariat. For example, OSSREA human resource and financial procedures and manuals, including by-laws, were only updated and ratified in 2006. As one interlocutor puts it, the 'Executive Committee is more of a 'client' of the executive secretariat because not much has been done to question the personalised management of OSSREA's logistics, until recently'. To substantiate this impression, the Executive Committee was divided on the auditors' report which identified some irregularities. This impasse led to the intervention of Sida/NORAD and the call for a comprehensive external evaluation.

However, the EET is of the view that this could be an unfair characterisation of the Executive Committee because some of the members interviewed have expressed critical views on the management of OSSREA. In recognition of some of the problems and challenges faced by the organisation, the Executive Committee commissioned in December 2006 a re-structuring of OSSREA to make it fit for purpose in the 21st century, the outcome is the Ernst and Young Report of June 2007. But the new governance structure proposed by Ernst and Young and approved by Executive Committee implies constitutional amendment which can only be ratified at the next OSSREA congress. In effect, the new governance structure will only come into effect after the next Congress.

To compound the problems, there is no formal organisational training programme and procedure for OSSREA Secretariat staff. The EET found that though the Executive Secretariat has provided further training opportunities, at degree levels, for some of its staff, there is not formal policy or process for specialist training of staff or even approval for staff to participate in training capacity building and human resource programmes that are externally funded. However, this is not to suggest that no staff have been given the opportunity for specialist capacity building training and participation in international conferences. The EET found certificates of local staff who had participated in international conferences and specialist training programmes such as Misrak Kinfemichael (The Netherlands) and Rachel Mesfin (Costa Rica and Addis Ababa). Notwithstanding this indication of ad hoc staff development opportunities, the real issue is the lack of a formal institutional approach to staff development and specialist capacity building. Based on the above, we suggest a fundamental transformation of governance structure and organisational culture based on decentralisation of power and responsibilities, and a positive sense of ownership.

Based on the above, the EET established the fact that some of these problems and difficulties relate to the attempt by the Executive Secretary to transform OSSREA from an informal network whereby some staff have been recruited without formal and open competitive processes to a professional, formal and publicly accountable institution. In addition, the attempt to internationalise the staff composition of OSSREA, to make it a truly regional and international organisation has led to threat to job security and perception of animosity amongst some local staff. Furthermore, some local staff have conflated the role and responsibility of the Resident Vice-President with that of primarily Secretariat administrative and management functions. In effect, some local staff, have by default, converted the position of the Resident Vice-President into a 'rival/alternative informal Executive Secretary of OSSREA'. This situation potentially undermines the professional and efficient operational management and administration of the organisation. Whilst it may seem that the Executive Secretary is the primary source of the current management problems and difficulties faced by OSSREA, the organisation's constitution has actually created this problem in that Article XI, 2, e and f deliberately constrain the effectiveness of the post holder. Item 'f' is categorical in that 'Without prejudice to applicable laws of the country where the Organisation has its Headquarters and having due regard to the general policies set by Congress, hire, administer, promote, suspend or dismiss the employees of the Organisation PROVIDED that such power shall be exercised subject to approval of the President acting in consultation with the Resident Vice-President'. In simple terms, the OSSREA Executive Secretary as chief executive of the organisation cannot hire, administer, promote, suspend or dismiss without consulting with the Resident Vice-President and Executive Board members. Herein lies the principal problem for some of OSSREA's current difficulties and challenges. The EET recommend that the OSSREA Congress, Executive Committee and key donors make the effort to address this problem.

Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability is key to the future of OSSREA because the organisation's core funding includes 90% external grants in the form of donor funding, negligible membership fees and sale of publications. The key donors include NORAD, Sida/SAREC, Ford Foundation, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IDRC, African Development Bank, IDE, and African Capacity Building Foundation. Between 2000–2006 OSSREA operated a total income of US \$14,527,492, of which the core expenditure areas included research grants, publication and capacity building; salaries and benefits, and budgetary support to national chapters. As at July 2007, OSSREA has a credit of more than US \$3.1 million.

By all indications, the organisation is in a healthy financial situation. But OSSREA has not diversified its sources of income generation nor developed any alternative sources of fund raising to secure its financial sustainability. The excessive external dependence on donor funding is a cause for serious concern. According to Prof. Berhanu, 'We have had generous funders who pampered us a lot and made us forget that we have to develop alternative sources of funding. This should not continue because we sometimes behave like a child that has inherited money from a rich parent'. In addition, the Auditor's report of December 2006 on OSSREA's system of internal control identified weaknesses and recommended strategies for improvement. The identified areas include; lack of complete fixed asset register of organisation and the risk of loss and /or misappropriation, lack of a per-diem policy and procedure and the risk of misappropriation of funds, and lack of budgetary control system and consequent weak control over utilisation of funds.³²

³² Tafesse Freminators & Co, OSSREA: Accounts and Audit Report Addis Ababa, 31 December 2006. The Ernst & Young Special Audit Report of 15th September 2006 was commissioned by one of the principal donors, and was prompted by anonymous allegations against the management of OSSREA. But this special audit, was in part, in fulfillment of the formal partnership agreement between OSSREA and NORAD, which permits NORAD to appoint independent auditors as part of the routine review of the organization.

The lack of financial sustainability is an obvious concern. The amounts raised by sales of publications and by membership dues are negligible and appear to be declining. The ‘good news’ is that several national chapters have demonstrated a credible track-record of raising local funds for workshops and for publishing books. Certainly Mauritius, having conducted three conferences and published two edited volumes within the past four years, has a well-deserved reputation – but, as noted above, it was founded only three years ago and has a dynamic Liaison Officer. Similarly, the Rwanda chapter has demonstrated potential for financial sustainability through its consultancy services, to the extent that it does not depend on the annual budgetary support from OSSREA HQ. But the OSSREA Secretariat itself has not indicated an interest in the financial accountability of national chapters for the annual budgetary support. As the Finance Officer bluntly puts it, ‘We just send them money and we have never audited them’, except in the case of Kenya.

Section IV: Timely Evaluation to Strengthen Impact, Concluding Recommendations

1. OSSREA in State of Crisis

The EET found that OSSREA is at a crossroad, a make or break period for the organization, a situation similar to the 1990s crisis faced by CODESRIA. This report confirms that the organization is in a state of crisis that urgently needs to be addressed by all key stakeholders. The crisis is partly due to the failure of, and inappropriate management systems, overcentralisation, constitutional deficiencies, lack of participation of staff and democratic deficit at the local level. We recommend that OSSREA’s leadership and its key donors learn the lessons from CODESRIA’s revival and consolidation after the 1990s crisis.

2. Lack of Ownership of Evaluation

The EET did not get the impression that OSSREA’s management was keen to use this external evaluation as an opportunity for the organization to learn lessons and strengthen its future direction. The impression was one of lack of ownership and partnership in the evaluation exercise. The perception at the Secretariat was that this was an imposed evaluation and as such OSSREA was merely an object of evaluation. We therefore recommend that for any future evaluation of OSSREA, the principal donors should engage with partner organisations to facilitate the evaluation process, including joint nomination of external evaluators. This would confirm the ownership of the evaluation exercise, strengthen the credibility of the partnership and authenticate the outcomes of the evaluation process. To all intents and purposes, this will help to reduce the perception of marginalisation and the powerlessness of African institutions, the very reason for Sida-SAREC and NORAD’s support for OSSREA.

3. Recommend full implementation of new Governance Structure Proposed by Ernst & Young Consulting Firm in June 2007

In our view the full implementation of the new governance structure proposed by Ernst & Young in June 2007 will go a long way in addressing the current management and governance crisis faced by OSSREA. But the implementation has to involve the full participation of the OSSREA Congress, Executive Committee, Executive Secretary, Secretariat staff in Addis and national Chapters. In other words, there must be a constituency for change to drive through the implementation of new management and governance structures.

4. Sida/SAREC & Donors Oversight Responsibility: implementation of recommendations of independent Auditors and Reviewers

The Ernst & Young Special Audit Report of 15 September 2006; the External Auditors reports of 2004 and 2005; and the Ernst & Young Organisational review-report of June 2007, all identified the lack of implementation of recommendations as part of the main problem at the heart of the current crisis at OSSREA. It is the view of the EET that the principal donors have a responsibility and should have an oversight of implementation of the recommendations by the independent auditors and reviewers. This would involve assisting the Executive Secretariat to put into place structures and procedures that would facilitate the implementation of recommendations made by independent auditors and external evaluators and approved by the OSSREA Executive Committee.

A suggested interim strategy could possibly link the implementation of such approved recommendations with the release of tranches of donor funding. However, caution should be exercised by the principal donors not to use this strategy and oversight function as an opportunity to interfere unduly in the daily operational management of OSSREA, manipulate the leadership or force through unpopular decisions.

5. Urgent Need for OSSREA Constitutional Review

We are of the view that there is an urgent need for an OSSREA constitutional review to make the governing principles of the organisation relevant to the challenges of the 21st century. We found that the current crisis and, in particular the management problems, are partly due to constitutional loopholes and some outdated provisions that have led to: over concentration and excessive powers in the office of the Executive Secretariat; culture of fear and organizational culture based on non-participation of staff; a rather lame-duck Executive Committee; and democratic deficits at the congress and local levels. We therefore recommend the setting up of a new Constitutional Review Committee at the next OSSREA Congress with the mandate to produce a new and relevant constitution for the organization.

6. Visibility of OSSREA

We found that OSSREA's visibility to the international policy community is a major cause for concern. Even in Ethiopia, with a large presence of international community and policy practitioners, OSSREA is not a major player. If OSSREA is to facilitate meaningful interaction between policy makers and the research community, and to generate income through provision of consultancy services, then the organization has to be visible and be 'out there' with the major players in Addis Ababa and the region.

It is evident that OSSREA has not effectively capitalized on its comparative advantage and 'economies of scale,' (i.e. 21 member countries in three regions of Africa, with a total population of 347 million people). We therefore recommend the development of a simple but effective strategy that would ensure the international visibility of the organization.

7. Urgent Need for Diversification of Funding Source

As indicated earlier, OSSREA is 90% donor funded. In simple terms without donor funding, the organization will collapse. Hence the urgent need for the diversification of funding as a priority through:

- a) Setting up of a Consultancy Unit at the secretariat with income generation incentives for staff and researchers. This is a recommendation that has earlier been advanced by external auditors. It will also involve the setting up of either national or regional-based research consortia to promote demand-driven consultancy services. However, care should be exercised to ensure that income

generation does not become an end in itself, but, rather a means to an end, the end being the production of social science research knowledge with policy relevance.

- b) Set up of an ‘OSSREA Endowment Fund’ by utilising ‘unspent project funds’. This is a controversial suggestion because of the funding agreement between donors and the organization. There is currently no policy on the use of ‘unspent project funds’. But endowment is critical to the financial sustainability of the organisation.

8. Confirmation Of OSSREA's Continued Relevance: future beyond crisis

Despite the current crisis, we have found that OSSREA has continued to be relevant to African Scholars, universities and the production of social science knowledge and scholarship in Africa. OSSREA's research and training grants and fellowships demonstrate relevance, quality, effectiveness and transparency. In effect, the organization has continued to deliver on capacity building and institutional strengthening of African universities and scholars. However, the ‘ownership’ of capacity building of OSSREA to set a ‘distinctive’ African research agenda is questionable. Though OSSREA has emerged as the key facilitator of academic freedom in some countries visited, the organization is noticeably silent on some major African issues e.g. Zimbabwe and the regional disputes in the IGAD.

9. ‘Don’t throw away your baby with the bath water: way forward for OSSREA

On the future of OSSREA, we are of the view that if the current crisis is managed and resolved, starting with: the implementation of the new governance structure and the Human and Financial procedures manuals; a constitutional review; and, the appointment of a new leadership³³ (a process that is currently underway with the proposed appointment of a new Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director) – OSSREA will reinvent itself, consolidate and expand.

We therefore recommend continued support to OSSREA based on the condition that the current crisis is resolved. We draw attention to the fact that CODESRIA's renewal and consolidation after the crisis of the 1990s is an example to justify continued support to OSSREA. It is important to bear in mind that all institutions go through crisis from time to time and Sida/NORAD are no exception, but that should not mean an end of support to such institutions.

³³ The current Executive Secretary's term of office ended in December 2008 and the Executive Committee is in the process of recruiting a new Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director of OSSREA.

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Appendix 1. Terms of Reference

for the evaluation of the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)

OSSREA is a sub-regional social science research organisation established in 1980 with its Head Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The main objectives of OSSREA include:

- Promote collaborative research and facilitate exchange of ideas among scholars in the Eastern and Southern Africa region
- Promote the training of African scholars in the social sciences
- Promote dialogue and interaction between social science researchers and policy makers

OSSREA's activity is organised through local Chapters in 21 countries in the sub-region. To achieve its goals OSSREA awards grants to social science researchers, conducts various types of supportive training programmes and organises seminars and conferences.

This evaluation is a joint Sida/NORAD undertaking commissioned by Sida. As both Sida and NORAD provide/provided core support to OSSREA, the evaluation should cover OSSREA's research and research support and capacity building activities in general and not confined to Sida/NORAD funded activities alone. This evaluation is expected to cover the activities of OSSREA over the period 2000–2006.

Overall objective of the evaluation

The evaluation should assess the relevance, quality and impact of OSSREA's research, adequacy and appropriateness of the system and structures in place to facilitate the research process, the effectiveness of dissemination of research results to key stakeholders and users and its impact, the scope and impact of OSSREA's contribution to institutional strengthening of social science research in Africa.

The evaluation should also assess the participation and influence of members of OSSREA in shaping the research agenda. Last but not least the evaluation should assess the organisational and financial sustainability of OSSREA.

Specific objectives

1. Relevance of the research programmes: Relevance of the research programmes and the prioritisation within research programmes should be analysed in relation to the major problems facing the African continent in general and the Eastern and Southern Africa region in particular, to concerns of major stakeholders like policymakers in government, regional organisations and civil society. The extent of participation of major stakeholders in the process of research agenda setting in the organisation should also be investigated.

2. Quality of OSSREA publications: Quality of OSSREA's publication should be assessed using bibliometric methods like citations' index, publication in international journals of research supported by OSSREA, internationally acknowledged/reviewed books and publications. Academic utilisation for teaching and research is also another measure of quality. Since one of the rationale for the creation of African research networks was to give publication outlet for African scholars facing selection bias by international journals, the quality assessment should not be confined to bibliometric methods. It should be complemented by the team's own assessment of carefully selected sample of OSSREA publications which have not been internationally reviewed.

3. *The effectiveness and transparency of the research system:* The effectiveness and transparency of the peer review mechanism, the granting and administration of grants, the role, functions of the OSSREA Chapters and Liaison Officers, the management and coordination of Local Chapters, the support structures and resources should be assessed.

4. *The effectiveness of dissemination of research results:* The extent and type of dissemination of research results and their effectiveness: conferences, seminars, policy-briefs, electronic mail systems, web-visits, bookstores, bookfairs, etc.

5. *Impact of OSSREA research:* A separate evaluation of impact based on country case studies will be undertaken by NORAD. However, this evaluation should concentrate on the impact of OSSREA's work on the work of continental organisations like AU and NEPAD or sub-regional organisations like EAC and SADC, NGOs and civil society organisations. Impact could be assessed for example through OSSREA's direct input in the policy process, utilisation of OSSREA publications as input into policy preparation, demand for training by institutions entrusted with policymaking

6. *Capacity building and institutional strengthening:* The collaboration between OSSREA and National Universities and OSSREA's contribution to strengthening such institutions should be assessed. Particular focus in countries with weaker research environments (the choice of countries will be made in consultation with Sida and OSSREA). What is the role of local institutions in various OSSREA activities (organising seminars, conducting training, participating in OSSREA research). The impact of OSSREA's training activities like the various institutes and methodology workshops should also be analysed.

7. *Sustainability:* The sustainability of OSSREA should be addressed 1) with respect to sustainability of the organisation in its present form in the changing environment for social science research in Africa: 2) with respect to its financial sources and method of finance: predictability, stability and diversification.

The evaluation

The evaluation should pay adequate attention to the evolution of the general environment of higher education and that of social science research in Africa and OSSREA's mission. The evaluation should be based on OSSREA documents (the constitution, strategic plans, work plans, internal and external assessments and evaluations, etc.), OSSREA publications, interviews with OSSREA management bodies and staff, interviews with carefully selected member organisations, Chapter members, beneficiaries of OSSREA research grants and/or training as well as interviews with various stakeholders. A combination of face to face, mail or telephone contacts can be used as appropriate (with regard to time, cost and response effectiveness).

In its first meeting the evaluation team will work out an appropriate methodology and approach, workplan and decide on the distribution of tasks among team members.

The evaluation team will consist of Professor David Francis (Team Leader), Professor James Manor and Professor Jim Björkman.

The evaluation is estimated to require a total of 12 man-weeks and is expected to be completed by August 2007. A planning meeting will be held 2–3 April 2007 in Stockholm. The team will travel to Ethiopia to visit OSSREA in Addis Ababa at the end of April to gather information and interview staff and management of OSSREA. While in Addis Ababa the team, jointly and/or individually, will visit institutions (universities, research institutes, regional organisations, relevant government Ministries, the Swedish Embassy, the Norwegian Embassy and other relevant agencies). In May each team member will visit one or two countries in Eastern and Southern Africa which will be decided during the team's visit to Addis Ababa.

Reporting

Team members submit their reports to the Team Leader as will be specified in their individual contracts.

The Team Leader should submit draft report to the Project Leader Professor Björn Beckman 15 August 2007. The main report must be in English and should not exceed 50 pages together with an Executive summary of three to five pages and should follow the “Format for Sida Evaluations”. The report should specifically respond to the issues outlined in the Terms of Reference.

A meeting will be held at Sida the first week of September 2007 where the Team Leader will present the team’s findings.

Sida and Norad will provide comments latest by 15 September 2007. The Team leader should submit final report to Sida latest by 30 September 2007.

Appendix 2. List of OSSREA Programme Activities

A. Grant Awards Building Capacity in the Social Sciences. This programme has five core projects including;

1. Social Science Research Grant Competition. There have been seven rounds of annual competition. Between 2000–2006, a total of 117 grants were awarded.
2. Gender Issues Research Grant Competition (GIRGC). Seven rounds of annual competition have been held since 2000, with a total of 118 grants awarded.
3. Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grant Programme. This project was initiated in 2004 and three rounds have been held with a total of 18 grants awarded, out of 78 total applicants.
4. Sabbatical Research Grant Programme. This was launched in 2004 and three rounds of annual competition have been held, with 16 grants awarded, out of a total of 57 applications.
5. Senior Scholar Research Grant Programme. This was initiated in 2001 with the specific objective to ‘retain the academic capacity built in the region and to re-direct contribution of senior scholars from consultancy work to high quality research activities that are of policy-relevance and academic significance’³⁴. Six rounds of competition have been held with a total of 23 research grants awarded.

B. Training Programmes. There are two core project activities;

1. Research Methodology Training. Seven annual rounds of competition have been held with a total of 249 individuals trained since 2000. This demand-driven project has been expanded to include sub-regional Social Science Research Methodology Training in Kenya and South Africa in 2003.
2. Gender Training Institute was launched in 2005. Two rounds of annual competition have been organised with 22 grants awarded out of a total of 143 applications.

C. Specialised Projects. There are eight specialist projects largely described as donor-driven research and capacity building activities. The specialised projects constitute the expansion of OSSREA’s programme activities and in particular, the attempt to encourage the development of indigenous or distinctive African research themes and agenda. The seven projects include;

1. African Conflicts: Management, Resolution, Post-Conflict Recovery and Development Programme. This was launched in 2001 with eight case studies including Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Lesotho. In December 2004, the project organised a major international conference on African conflicts.
2. HIV/AIDS Challenge in Africa: Impact and Response Assessment Research Programme. This project was launched in 2003 with the following case studies; Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia. Two rounds of annual competition were held in 2003 and 2004, with 24 grants awarded out of a total of 98 applicants. In September and December 2005, project output dissemination workshops were organised in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Additionally, an international conference on the ‘Social Sciences and HIV/AIDS in Africa’ was organised in November 2006. This conference was jointly organised with CODESRIA, the Social Science and Medicine Africa Network (SOMA-Net) and the Union of African Population Studies (UAPS).
3. Integrating Gender Issues in Multidisciplinary Research in Eastern and Southern African. This project was launched in 2004.

³⁴ Executive Secretary’s Report to the External Evaluation Team 10 July 2007, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

4. Assessment of Poverty Reduction Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa: Case Study of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. This six country-focused project was launched in 2004 with the objective of analysing the on-going poverty reduction strategy processes with a view to provide policy guidance for governments and civil society organisations. The project led to the development and implementation of action plans and the organisation of national dissemination workshops by the National Chapters.
 5. Capacity Building for Social and Gender Analysis in Natural Resource Management (NRM) Research for Development. This project was initiated in 2003 and funded by ICDR with six grants awarded to individuals and institutions.
 6. Dryland Husbandry Project (DHP) launched in 1996 is a regional-focused project with activities in the Eastern and Horn of African countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. The project was concluded in 2004.
 7. Development of a Strategy for Smallholder Market Integration in Africa in Collaboration with the International Development Enterprises (IDE). The project was initiated in 2003 and focused on the regions of Horn of Africa, Southern Africa and Sahel. This project is funded and driven by the research interest of IDE.
 8. The policy Dialogue Series is a forum for dialogue, interaction, co-ordination and dissemination of research findings of OSSREA projects and programmes for use by policy-makers, conflict and development interveners, development co-operation partners, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and international organisations.
- D. Networking and Collaboration. OSSREA has developed an extensive network and collaborative partnerships with strategic individuals and institutions in both the North and Southern hemisphere. Collaborative partners in the South include: the African Union; UNECA; IGAD; CODESRIA; African Political Science Association (APSA); Addis Ababa-based Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF); Cairo-based Arab Research Centre; the Argentina-based Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO); UNDP, Dakar-based Inter-regional Co-ordinating Committee of Development Associations (ICCDA) and the Costa Rica-based United Nations University for Peace (UPEACE). In addition to key donors, OSSREA has developed strategic partnerships with the following institutions in the North including; US-based African Studies Association; University of Wisconsin's BASIS-CRSP programme; the Bergen-based Centre for Development Studies; Norway-based Christian Michelson Institute; University of Linköping-based Environmental Policy Society in Sweden; German-based European Association of Development Research Institute (EADI); London-based Institute of Commonwealth Studies; US-based Institute of Development Anthropology (IDA); The Hague-based Institute of Social Studies (ISS); International Foundation for Science in Sweden; UNESCO; US-based International Studies Association; Bruges-based United Nations University-Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS)
- E. National Chapter Activities. There are currently 21 OSSREA National Chapters and, since 2000, OSSREA has organised a total of 35 national workshops in 13 member countries focusing on thematic issues of interest to the chapters.
- F. Publication and Documentation. Publication and dissemination of research output is a major activity of OSSREA and it comprises three core areas namely: publications, distribution and sale of publications, and OSSREA documentation centre.
1. Publications. Since 2000, OSSREA has published the following: 40 books; 11 Gender Issues Research Reports; 13 Social Science Research Reports; 4 Dryland Husbandry Project Publications; 2 OSSREA Development Series; 10 issues of Journal of Eastern African Social Science Review; 18 Bulletins; 4 Environmental Forum publications; 8 official reports, various posters and brochures.

2. Distribution and Sale of Publications at international and regional conferences and book fairs, and by the National Chapters.
3. OSSREA Documentation Centre (ODC). This is a computerised centre equipped with modern audiovisual aids which serves as the main database and documentation centre for social science research.

Appendix 3. Distribution of grantees in OSSREA programme 2000–2006

Geographic spread and distribution of grantees skewed towards four countries, namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The following illustrates this observation.

10. Young Scholars Research Grant Programme for Social Science: 2000–2006. Observation: 4 countries received two-thirds (67.5%) of grants – with Zimbabwe, almost four-fifths (78.6%) of all grants to young scholars in social science went to five countries.
11. Young Scholars Research Grants for Gender Issues Programme: 2000–2006. Observation: 4 countries received two-thirds (68.1%) of grants – with Zimbabwe, over three-quarters (77.3%) of grants to young scholars in gender issues went to five countries
12. Sabbatical Research Grants: 2004–2006. Observation: skewed – the four countries account for over half (56.3%) of sabbatical grants – and, when Zimbabwe is included, three-quarters (75%) go to only five countries.
13. Research Methodology Training Grants programme: 2000–2006. Observation: the four countries have just under half (47.6%) of grants for methodology training – with Zimbabwe just over half (55.9%) ... slightly more equitable distribution.
14. Senior Scholars Research Grants programme: 2001–2006. Observation: 4 countries got three-quarters (74.3%) of research grants to senior scholars – with Zimbabwe, five-sixths (83.8%) of all senior scholar grants went to five countries
15. Post-Doctoral Fellowship programme: 2004–2006. Observation: over three-quarters (77.7%) of all post-doctoral fellowships were awarded to the four countries ... but this time Zimbabwe did not receive a single one.
16. Integrating Gender Grants – Training on Gender Mainstreaming: 2004–2006. Observation: more equitable distribution as almost half (48.4%) of gender-training grants went to the four countries with only a marginal increase (to 54.9%) when Zimbabwe is added
17. HIV/AIDS Research Grants: 2003–2006. Observation: a limited/focused experiment in two phases, each aimed at target cases (2003 sponsored by Sida/SAREC – Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa & Zimbabwe; then in 2004 sponsored by NORAD – Botswana, Tanzania, Uganda & Zambia. Therefore, this could not be averaged into the other distributional patterns for OSSREA grants across the regions). Furthermore, during 20–22 November 2006 an international conference on the “Social Sciences & HIV/AIDS in Africa: New Insights & Policy Perspectives” was held in Addis Ababa; it evidently drew upon the two phases of research described above. OSSREA collaborators included CODESRIA (Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa), SOMA-Net (Social Science and Medicine Africa Network) and UAPS (Union of African Population Studies).
18. African Conflicts Research Grants: 2001–2004. Observation: two rounds of studies on “African Conflicts” in 2001 & 2003; the first round included Ethiopia, Somalia & the Sudan. The second round involved six more countries: Kenya, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Lesotho & Uganda.

Partner of Programmatic Distribution of Research Grants

Country	ysss	ysgi	srg	rmt	Ssrg	pdf	iggm	Sum	Percent Average
Botswana	0.9	0.8	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	6.5	10.3	1.47
Ethiopia	22.2	21.0	25.00	18.3	14.9	11.1	19.4	131.9	18.84
Eritrea	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.39
Kenya	23.1	28.6	12.50	14.1	32.4	44.4	12.9	168.0	24.0
Lesotho	1.7	1.7	6.25	4.1	0.0	5.6	0.0	19.35	2.76
Malawi	4.3	3.4	0.0	6.2	4.1	0.0	9.6	27.6	3.94
Mauritius³⁵	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.34
Mozambique	0.9	0.8	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.49
Namibia³⁶	0.9	0.8	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.44
Rwanda	0.0	0.8	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	3.2	7.4	1.06
Somalia	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.14
South Africa	3.4	2.5	18.75	9.7	4.1	11.1	6.5	56.05	8.01
Sudan	6.0	5.9	0.0	7.6	0.0	0.0	6.5	26.0	3.71
Swaziland	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	6.5	11.1	1.59
Tanzania	8.5	6.7	12.50	7.6	24.3	11.1	9.6	80.3	11.47
Uganda	13.7	11.8	6.25	7.6	2.7	11.1	6.5	59.65	8.52
Zambia	2.6	1.7	0.0	4.2	5.4	5.6	6.5	26.0	3.71
Zimbabwe	11.1	9.2	18.75	8.3	9.5	0.0	6.5	63.35	9.05
Total	99.3	99.9	100.0	100.1	100.1	100.0	100.2	699.6	99.93

(Averages of percentages per category of grants – unweighted by number of years)

ysss = young scholars social science

ysgi = young scholars gender issues

srg = sabbatical research grants

rmt = research methodology training

ssrg = senior scholar research grants

pdf = post-doctoral fellowships

iggm = integrated gender – gender mainstreaming

³⁵ chapter launched 17–18 May 2004

³⁶ chapter launched 24 June 2004

Net 'winners' and 'Losers' in Distribution of Grants per Country

	population (millions/%) grants			grants/population	
'Winners'					
Swaziland	(1.1) –	0.3%	vs	1.6% =	5.30
Lesotho	(2.0) –	0.6%	vs	2.8% =	4.67
Botswana	(1.6) –	0.5%	vs	1.5% =	3.00
Zimbabwe	(12.2) –	3.5%	vs	9.1% =	2.60
Kenya	(34.7) –	10.0%	vs	24.0% =	2.40
Mauritius	(1.2) –	0.3%	vs	0.5% =	1.67
Zambia	(11.5) –	3.3%	vs	3.7% =	1.12
Tanzania	(37.4) –	10.8%	vs	11.5% =	1.06
Malawi	(13.0) –	3.7%	vs	3.9% =	1.05
Uganda	(28.2) –	8.1%	vs	8.5% =	1.05
'Losers'					
Ethiopia	(74.8) –	21.6%	vs	18.8% =	0.87
Namibia	(2.0) –	0.6%	vs	0.4% =	0.67
South Africa	(44.2) –	12.7%	vs	8.0% =	0.63
Rwanda	(8.6) –	2.5%	vs	1.1% =	0.44
Sudan	(41.2) –	11.9%	vs	3.7% =	0.31
Eritrea	(4.8) –	1.4%	vs	0.4% =	0.29
Mozambique	(19.7) –	5.7%	vs	0.5% =	0.09
Somalia	(8.8) –	2.5%	vs	0.1% =	0.04
sum = million 347 (100%)					

Appendix 4. List of Conference, Seminars and Workshops: 2000–2007

Research Workshops for the Young Scholars Programmes

1. Workshop for winners of the 20th Social Science and the 18th Gender issues Research Competition, 13–14 September 2006, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
2. Workshop for winners of the 19th Social Science and the 17th Gender issues Research Competition, 7–8 September 2005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
3. Workshop for winners of the 18th Social Science and the 16th Gender issues Research Competition, 26–28 July 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
4. Workshop for winners of the 17th Social Science and the 15th Gender issues Research Competition, 20–22 October 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
5. Workshop for winners of the 16th Social Science and the 14th Gender Issues Research Competition, 25–28 September 2002, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
6. Workshop for winners of the 15th Social Science and the 13th Gender Issues Research Competition, 30 May 2001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
7. Workshop for winners of the 14th social Science and the 12th Gender Issues Research Competition, 31st October–3rd November 2000, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Research Methodology Training Workshops

1. Social Science Research Methodology Training Workshop, 9–20 October 2006, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
2. Social Science Research Methodology Training Workshop, 11–22 October 2005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
3. Social Science Research Methodology Training Workshop, 11–22 October 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
4. Social Science Research Methodology Training Workshop, 15–26 September 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
5. Social Science Research Methodology Training Workshop, 17–30 November 2003, Nairobi, Kenya.
6. Social Science Research Methodology Training Workshop, 8–19 December 2003, Cape Town, South Africa.
7. Social Science Research Methodology Training Workshop, 7–18 October 2002, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
8. Social Science Research Methodology Training Workshop, 17–28 September 2001, Nairobi, Kenya.
9. Social Science Research Methodology Training Workshop, 28th August–8 September 2000, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Sabbatical Research Grant workshops

1. 1st Sabbatical Research Grant Winners' workshop,
20th December 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2. 2nd Sabbatical Research Grant Winners' workshop,
12th December 2005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
3. 3rd Sabbatical Research Grant Winners' workshop,
30 November–1 December 2006, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Assessment of Poverty Reduction Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa (PRSP) Dissemination Workshops

Dissemination Workshop.

The Workshop was held on 30th September 2005 at Silver Springs Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya.

Dissemination workshop on

3rd October 2005 at Ghion Hotel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

A one-day dissemination Workshop on

13th October, 2005 at Novotel Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda.

Dissemination Workshop on

20th November, 2005 at the Cresta Golfview Hotel, Lusaka.

A one-day dissemination Workshop on

4th November, 2005 at Capital Hotel in Lilongwe, Malawi.

Dissemination Workshop on

30th November, 2005 at the Grand Imperial Hotel, Kampala, Uganda.

African Conflicts: Management, Resolution and Post Conflict Recovery and Development

Planning Meeting on African Conflicts: Management, Resolution and Post Conflict Recovery and Development, 15–16 October 2001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The African Conflicts: Management, Resolution, Post-Conflict Recovery and Development Programme, 16th–17th June 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Workshop on CODESRIA/OSSREA Inventory of the Role of Regional Research Organizations in Africa, 7 December 2001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Senior Scholars Research Grant Programme

Workshop for 2001 Winners of the Senior Scholars Research Grant Programme,
10–11 December 2001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Workshop for the 2002 Senior Scholars Research Grant Winners,
19–20 May 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Workshop for the 2003 Senior Scholars Research Grant Winners,
11–12 December 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Workshop for the 2004 Senior Scholars Research Grant Winners,
6 December 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Workshop for the 2005 Senior Scholars Research Grant Winners,
12–13 December 2005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Workshop for the 2006 Senior Scholars Research Grant Winners,
30 November–1 December 2006, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Senior Scholars Research dissemination workshop, on Regional Integration in Africa: the case of COMESA,
1 April 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

*Senior Scholars Research dissemination workshop, on Development of Social Capital in Micro and Small Enterprises
as a Strategy for Poverty Alleviation in East Africa and Female Imagination:
A Biographical Dictionary of East African Women Literary Artists, 2 May 2003, Nairobi, Kenya.*

Senior Scholars Research Dissemination Workshop On Informal Cross-Boarder Trade and Regional
Integration in SADC Region: Zimbabwe Women's Urban Survival,
25 April 2003, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grant

Workshop for the 2004 Winners of the Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grant,
20–21 December 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Workshop for the 2005 Winners of the Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grant,
12–13 December 2005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Workshop for the 2006 Winners of the Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grant,
30 November–1 December 2006, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Integrating Gender in Multidisciplinary Research in Eastern and Southern Africa

A planning meeting to launch the programme Integrating Gender in Multidisciplinary Research
in Eastern and Southern Africa,
13–14 September 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Training on Gender Mainstreaming,
13–17 December 2005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Training on Gender Mainstreaming,
23–27 October 2006, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The HIV and AIDS Challenge in Africa Programme

Planning Workshop HIV and AIDS Challenge in Africa Programme,
14–15 April 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Workshop for the 2004 Winners of the HIV and AIDS Challenge in Africa Programme, 20–21 December 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Research Dissemination Workshop on the studies conducted under the HIV and AIDS Challenge
in Africa Programme – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 31 December 2005.

Research Dissemination Workshop on the studies conducted under the HIV and AIDS Challenge
in Africa Programme – Nairobi, Kenya, 19 December 2005.

Research Dissemination Workshop on the studies conducted under the HIV and AIDS Challenge
in Africa Programme – Durban, South Africa, 5 October 2005.

Research Dissemination Workshop on the studies conducted under the HIV and AIDS Challenge
in Africa Programme – Harare, Zimbabwe 7 October 2005.

International Conferences

International Conference on The Social Sciences and HIV/AIDS in Africa:

New Insights and Policy Perspectives,
20–22 November 2006, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Regional Conference on The Assessment of Poverty Reduction Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa:

The Cases of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda And Zambia,
28 February–1 March 2006, Grand Regency Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

International Conference on African Conflicts:

Management, Resolution, Post-Conflict Recovery and Development,
29 November–1 December 2004.

The Third East African History Workshop,

29–31 October 2001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Regional Conference on Promoting Good Governance and Wider Civil Society Participation in
Eastern and Southern Africa,

6th–8th November 2000, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

OSSREA Congress 2000–2006

6th Congress

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (24–28 April 2000).

Globalization, democracy and development in Africa: Future prospects.

7th Congress

Khartoum, Sudan (15–19 December 2002).

The Quest for Social Peace in Africa: Transformations, Democracy and Public Policy.

8th Congress

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (21–23 November 2005).

International Aid, Trade and Development in Africa: The Search for a New Development Paradigm.

Appendix 5. List of Publications Reviewed by Evaluation Team

- Salih, Dietz and Ahmed (eds.) *African Pastoralism: Conflict, Institutions and Government* London: Pluto Press, 2001.
- Muhereza & Otim, *Pastoral Resource Competition in Uganda: Case Studies into Commercial Livestock Ranching and Pastoral Institutions*, 2002.
- Mohamed Salih (ed.), *African Political Parties: Evolution, Institutionalisation and Governance*, Pluto Press, 2002.
- Mohamed Salih (ed.), *Local Environmental Change and Society in Africa 2nd Edition* Dordrecht: Kluwer Publishers, 2001.
- Alfred Nheme (ed.) *The Quest for Peace in Africa: Transformations, Democracy and Public Policy*, International Books, 2004
- Reviewed Articles in Eastern African Social Science Research Review: 2005–2007*
- Woldeamlak Bewket,
‘Biofuel Consumption, Household Level Tree Planting and its implications for Environmental Management in the Northern Highlands of Ethiopia’ Vol. XXI, No. 1, January 2005
- Moses Esilaba,
‘Household Production and Risk Management among Pastoral Communities in Samburu District of Kenya’ Vol. XXI, No. 2, June 2005
- Patricia Makepe,
‘The Evolution of Institutions and Rules Governing Communal Grazing lands in Botswana’ Vol. XXII, No. 1, Jan. 2006
- Benedict Mongula,
‘The Dependent Character of Development Planning in Tanzania’ Vol. XXII, No. 2, June 2006
- Merera Gudina,
‘Ethnicity, Democratiation and Decentralisation in Ethiopia: the case of Oromia’ Vol. XIII, No. 1, 2007

Appendix 6. List of Participants

Name	Institution
Rwanda	
Dr. Ndagijimana Uzziel	Economics – SFB, Former DVC – Admin
Prof. Rama Rao	Management – NUR
Dr. Jose A. M	Economics – NUR
Mr Kabenga Innocent	Economics – NUR
Dr Kambanda Deo	Education – NUR
Prof. Silas Lwakabamba	Rector – NUR
Mr Mugisha Innocent	Education – NUR
Mr Mugisha Fred	Management – NUR
Mr Ntirushwa Jean Baptiste	ICT – NUR
Mr Mugunga Canisius	Agriculture – NUR
Dr Gasarasi Charles	Political Science – NUR
Mr Olive Mukangarambe	Pharmacy – NUR
Dr Usengumukiza Felicien	HOD Economics
Gaudelia Kurujiyejuru	Associate – NUR
Olive Ngarambe	Associate – NUR
Jacques Prevet	Associate –NUR
Ishimwe Dorts	Associate – NUR
Kurujiyejuru Gaudelia	Associate – NUR
Rwabukumba Charles	Agriculture – NUR
Kalinganire Charles	Sociology – NUR
Dr Herman Musahara	Economics – NUR
Mme Sharon Haba	Social Science – NUR, Liaison Officer
Mr. Joseph Hahirwa	Social Science – NUR, Deputy Liaison Officer
Mr Bernard Rutikanga	Arts/Humanities – NUR
Mme Marie Therese Kampire	Social, Political, Administrative Sciences – NUR

Name	Institution
Ethiopia	
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