

An Egalitarian Growth Strategy is the key to Youth Inclusion for the Sustainable Economic Development of the Southern African Region

INTRODUCING THE CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH AFRICA

The founding principle and intent behind the establishment of the Centre for Policy Research Africa (CPRA), is that **it operates as a think-tank and cutting-edge research institute that will address key continental social and economic development policy issues, that pertain in particular to key segments of the African population; youth.** Its goal is to bring hope to the African child by conducting germane research with regard to policies and programmes that are ultimately intended to facilitate and provide opportunities for youth to actively participate in the economic space. Our geographic focus is Southern Africa, reference to Africa as a whole in the document is for providing context and the magnitude of the problem continentally. In our current and future endeavours we will share and learn from best practices in Africa and elsewhere to improve our research quality and impact.

This is ‘an idea of its time’, a crucial avenue to building the future of Africa by developing the human capital through skills development and training in different sectors of the economy. This concept is neither new nor unfamiliar, but rather ‘an awareness that has not just come to pass, but whose time has finally arrived’. And as such the maximization of efforts in this regard, on the continent itself are a fundamental and crucial avenue to building a future delineated and defined by opportunity and positive outcomes, arrived at by developing Africa’s youth human capital through skills development and training, in all sectors of the economy. Africa is at a critical juncture. The potential of the continent can and must happen now, if African potential is ever truly to be realized.

This initiative is a springboard for solution-oriented individuals, communities, businesses, governments and the international community at large, to ACT and COLLABORATE in accelerating inclusive and sustainable initiatives to “future-proof” the economies of Africa and alleviate the ubiquitous poverty associated with the African condition. We must create employment opportunities that answer the needs of this unique and particular continent, if we are to address the sustainability conundrum. Africa, its peoples, its resources, must answer to and serve the requirements of Africa first and foremost.

Creating sustainable commercial solutions developed and driven by African youth aged 12 to 40 and future(and presently) proofing value chains in sustainable energy, health, sanitation and agri-business can be realized through equitable access to education and mentoring which are embedded in the mandate of the CPRA. CPRA provides an avenue for creating long term solutions to youth marginalization through enlisting expertise and resources from governments, universities, NGOs and the business sector.

Against this backdrop, the CPRA will create partnerships with other research organisations, the private sector, academic institutions, civil society, development partners in Africa and globally, governments, communities, private foundations and the media that will leverage multidisciplinary

expertise to create business and employment opportunities that can lead to employment prospects for young people. It is envisaged that the collaboration eventually will lead to youth in different African countries developing and executing their applied curiosity and commercial awareness to navigate regional, continental and global systems as producers of goods and providers of services. The ultimate goal is to transform African economies in the next decade and create a substantial number of jobs every year. Transforming Southern Africa economies into a hub of export channels to the rest of Africa and the world (refer to the Leadership Transformation Network LinkedIn page). The CPRA is registered with the Registrar of Deeds Office in Botswana as a Trust.

WHAT WE DO

Through its research (both micro and macroeconomic) and other activities, the CPRA will address economic growth disparities that have translated into inclusive growth for young people in some Africa countries but not in others, with a more and better equitable distribution of opportunities, higher youth employment and lower unemployment rates. Youth unemployment, often associated with poverty and inequality, is a pressing economic, social and political problem to most African countries. Young people therefore are an important focus of the institution as they constitute a significant proportion of the African population as well as the most vulnerable and excluded in terms of economic participation. Given the scale of youth unemployment, inequality, corruption and poor governance in some African countries, it is critical to develop evidence-based and innovative approaches to realizing their socio-economic inclusion.

The starting point is to identify what has worked so far in different parts of Africa and elsewhere to develop sustainable solutions and broad-based pro-participation strategies for growing the economy. In making the Centre a truly Africa effort, the governance structure representative all the economic blocks of the continent and the pilot phase will begin with Southern Africa countries before being rolled out to other regions. The key guiding principle here is Sustainable Development Goal 8, which aims to ‘promote full and productive employment’ by 2030. Giving effect to it demands for more context-sensitive evidence and social and economic policies that ensure young people are included in growth strategies.

A comparative policy analysis of some Southern Africa countries has already been conducted by the founder (Yorokee Kapimbua) in 2020 which provided new information into the social, political and economic factors and determinants that are associated with successful and positive outcomes in some contexts and that may be lacking in others, hence creating new insights on further research opportunities to mitigate social exclusion and inequality in Southern Africa.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to be a Centre for context sensitive, research-based solutions to contemporary development challenges with a particular focus on youth unemployment, poverty and inequality.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Centre for Policy Research AFRICA (CPRA) is summarized in five words:

Innovation. Equity. Enterprise. Opportunity. Research.

Innovation: Our work will be new as well as applied. We innovate in research as well as ensure that our application of new knowledge is evidence-based.

Equity: Our research will ordinarily be made available as open source to help increase take-up and capacity in other places.

Enterprise: We will transfer knowledge/research commercialisation to the wider community to enhance quality of life and strengthen both local and national economies through the various activities referred to below.

Opportunity: Our research will make the ‘right to development’ a reality and accessible.

Research: Our research is transdisciplinary, ethical, rigorous and context sensitive to inform policy.

OUR VALUES

Inspiration

We inspire our clients to meet the developmental challenges of their communities in a sustainable way. Africa, its peoples, its resources, must answer to and serve the requirements of Africa first and foremost.

Diversity

We value diversity among our partners, and respect diverse points of view as part of our commitment to professionalism and research integrity.

Transparency

We aspire to be transparent and accountable in our decision-making.

Partnership

We want to work in partnership with our clients (businesses, donors and beneficiaries), our colleagues and collaborators, and with other organisations sharing the same goals.

Service

We have an obligation to our clients and to society to fulfil our mission and, in doing so, to make a positive impact on people’s lives.

Inclusion

We commit to fostering a diverse research community that respectfully embraces and affirms individual perspectives and identities to create an environment that promotes inclusion and equity for all.

OUR OBJECTIVE

The CPRA will focus primarily on the key policy challenges that nations around the world are grappling with, i.e., disparities that exist in economic and social conditions such as youth poverty, unemployment and inequality. We must create employment opportunities that answer the needs of this unique and particular continent, if we are to address the sustainability conundrum. This problem is particularly acute in the Africa context. Graduates constitute 60% of the unemployed population. Good economic growth and positive human development has not translated into improved well-being and tackling barriers to economic participation through job creation.

The market-led economic growth model has not increased economic opportunities and labour market access for youth graduates. Against this backdrop, the CPRA will explore whether ‘scalable’ and ‘inclusive economic opportunities’ community-based initiatives could be an alternative model to mitigate poverty and inequality, compared to the neo-liberal model that essentially leaves the distribution of resources to the ‘invisible hand’ of the market. Whereas there is extensive literature on poverty and inequality in Africa, there is limited research evidence on developing ‘inclusive economic growth and development’ policies and initiatives to promote youth job creation.

The core objective of the CPRA is to address these challenges and, in doing so, to provide multi-level solutions and these outcomes:

1. Integrated markets for products and services with less protectionist trade strategies that create economic opportunities for youth
2. Creation of new occupations and sectors through technological change
3. Create innovation districts across Africa to curb affordability gap for youth in accessing incentives for entrepreneurship

4. Decrease in inequality in terms of middle class squeezing which will drive economic growth through income and expenditure
5. Diversification of the energy sector to make it cheaper to venture into agricbusiness and other new services

Some African governments, despite record levels of economic growth, have failed to achieve social and economic inclusion for young people. Many African countries are ‘fragile states’ characterized by extreme poverty, unemployment, corruption and inequality due to the inability to create employment opportunities for broader participation and inclusion of marginalized groups, such as the youth.

ENVISAGED IMPACT

CPRA aims to build an agile (highly adaptable) cadre of youthful entrepreneurs by 2030 and beyond. Youth will be trained to keep up with trends and think globally to connect their Aspirations, Assets and Market Realities and translate their youthful elan and creativity into business opportunities to help alleviate poverty and unemployment. Provide scalable opportunities and market intelligence to the private sector to grow their business through; high value diversified manufacturing, tech-driven business and creative industries. In pursuit of this the CPRA will collaborate with experts and salient institutions to develop a robust model (with greater global relevance) for youth employment creation in these areas: Technology, Economic Prosperity, Trade and Investment, The Environment, Security and Human Rights. CPRA through partnerships will create a regional ecosystem of rapid growth in the face of risk and uncertainty, hence identify key strategic opportunities in the Sustainable Development Goals to create employment prospects for youth in the region.

CENTRE SOURCES OF FUNDING

The Centre will be funded through research grants solicited from different sources with an interest in the core thematic areas which form its core business: Poverty, Inequality and Youth Unemployment. The Centre will seek 4 noncommercial donors to support its work in the Southern Africa region as it is a vast terrain to cover and need teams of specialist researchers to carry out credible research that creates value for money. In addition to the donor funding, through innovative fundraising the Centre will execute (research commercialization) specialized projects that have commercial value for commercial banks, tech companies, environmental conservation and sustainability, Agricbusiness, mining, procurement companies and ecotourism, contracted research and consultancies, joint research projects and targeted proposals. Through strategic partnerships with institutes and organisations sharing a similar mandate, the Centre will mobilise for joint research ventures to attract pool funding. Partnerships will also provide funding for contract research.

OUR KEY ACTIVITIES:

- ❖ Proposal writing for fundraising
- ❖ Research based on four R’s: Relevant, Responsible, Rigorous, Resilience and Reach using insights from policy theories and/ or critical policy analysis to guide social and economic policy.
- ❖ Critical assessment of contemporary policy problems within a wider policymaking context, to replace wishful thinking with more feasible (but equally ambitious) analysis.
- ❖ Through publications (scientific as well as popular) engage critically with contemporary themes in policy analysis and design, such as how to encourage ‘entrepreneurial’ policy analysis, foster ‘co-creation’ during policy development, analysis and design.

- ❖ Create online training content, e.g., on agility, innovation, enterprise and impact investment.
- ❖ Career coaching for marginalised youth.
- ❖ Mobilise multinational corporations operating in Africa to adopt and fully commit to an SDG and invest in creating jobs.
- ❖ Capacity building; training
- ❖ In the future host dialogues with Heads of State to map sustainable solutions to youth unemployment, inequality and poverty.

HOW WILL THE MODEL WORK IN PRACTICE?

The CPRA will rely primarily on ‘remote convening’ using small working groups to conduct both micro and macroeconomic research on the different thematic areas. Our research will be transdisciplinary to enable diversity and quality of the output and create more impact in policy initiatives aimed at mitigating youth inequality, poverty and unemployment. The work of these groups will be synthesized in main conventions held from time to time (online or in person) leading to publications of the findings arrived at these conventions. The CPRA will be a regional hub assisting the private sector, governments and third sector to grow their organisations and create employment opportunities. For purposes of building a robust model of academic research and operational excellence, the Centre will focus its initial work in the Southern Africa region. The evaluation of the pilot phase will then inform the scaling up of the work to other regions to create impact. The research output will be an input to improve policy development and practice. In the long term our research will be used to advocate for the establishment of the Parliament Knowledge Exchange Unit and Academic and Policy Liaison Office to improve evidence uptake in the policymaking space.

Professionals (including academics, researchers, practitioners, business leaders) will be recruited from both serving and retired experts globally to ensure that the quality of work is world class. Different funding bodies and researchers will be attracted to the Centre because it offers excellent links with relevant policy and practice organisations, opportunities to partner with universities (to ensure that careers within academic settings would continue to progress) and well-funded research positions. Remuneration of the engaged experts will be determined by the Board of Trustees. The Secretariat is based in Botswana and will guide the experts in execution of their mandate administratively. All accounting procedures related to finances, audits, taxation will be overseen by the Board or a sub-committee of the Board.

Prepared by:

Yorokee Kapimbua MSc, BA (Founder and Cheverer)

Senior Policy Researcher and Development Specialist

Political Economist with Regional Expertise on Southern Africa

Research Interests: Inclusive growth, youth employment strategies and social entrepreneurship

Yorokee990@yahoo.com