



TRUST IN OUR NATION: BUILDING EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIP SYSTEMS FOR UGANDA'S DEVELOPMENT

A CONSENSUS STUDY OF
THE UGANDA NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



Sciences for Prosperity

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Acronyms

ACODE	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
ATIA	Access to Information Act
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CBO	Community-Based Organisations
CDP	Consensus Development Panel
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ERP	Economic Recovery Plan
GCIC	Government Citizens Interaction Centre
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPO	Initial Public Offering
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation
JORD	Joint Annual Review on Decentralisation
LC	Local Council
LGCSCI	Local Government Council Scorecard Initiative
MDA	Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
MTP	Mini TASO Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTT	Over-the-Top
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
PLWHIV	People Living with HIV/AIDS

POMA	Public Order Management Act
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
PSO	Public Sector Office
QuAM	Quality Assurance Mechanism
RC	Resistance Council
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TAI	Transparency and Accountability Initiatives
TASO	The AIDS Support Organization
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNAS	Uganda National Academy of Sciences
UNNF	Uganda National NGO Forum
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
VPN	Virtual Private Network

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Foreword

Dear Esteemed Stakeholders,

The Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS), as the lead national science academy in Eastern Africa, made an intentional strategic shift from an honorific entity to a service-oriented one about fifteen years ago. In 2014, UNAS started a series of activities focused on the issue of country ownership for national development. Since then, it has conducted several convening and consensus activities on urbanization, integration of the arts, sciences, and humanities, child protection, domestic financing, and now on governance and partnership systems. As you can tell, UNAS always undertakes forward-thinking work, and this study continues that pattern.

In tackling issues fundamental in forming a contextually relevant development agenda, UNAS seeks to make accessible that which seems elusive or abstract (e.g., trust, mindset shifts, or country ownership). The Academy intentionally chooses these issues because they arguably tend to get ignored or receive cursory attention in the literature on national development. In essence, the Academy examines difficult and contentious issues with the ultimate aim of providing actionable recommendations to citizens, policymakers, business leaders, civil society organizations, and development partners.

Working on this consensus study on governance and partnership systems constitutes an open invitation to all stakeholders to work with Academy in fostering trust across sectors and between fellow citizens. We have an opportunity to chart our path to development when we trust each other, formulate strategies and policies in a genuinely inclusive manner, and execute agreed-upon actions together. While we may not know what the “ultimate” developed Uganda looks like, we can start to make sense of our national situation and affirm each other’s

ability to contribute to and sustain our development. As we build and sustain trust, we will give ourselves a meaningful purpose, which will in turn reinforce confidence in our nation. We can seize this moment of extreme uncertainty due to a pandemic, terrorist attacks on our nation, and dwindling foreign aid budgets to re-examine our approach to development, with an emphasis on trust-building actions.

I wish to thank the Committee on Governance and Partnerships, Co-Chaired by two Fellows of UNAS (Prof. Grace Bantebya and Prof. Samuel Sejjaaka), for this consensus study report. Just as our report on country ownership in 2014 guided our current strategy, so too will this report form the foundation of our next strategic plan.

Sincerely,

Peter N. Mugenyi, FUNAS, FAAS, FTWAS
PRESIDENT

Executive Summary

In the Ugandan development context, it is easy to be suspicious and cynical of one another's motives and behaviours. This situation is not surprising: what we can reasonably expect of one another is uncertain due to a long legacy of broken promises and the easy resort to violence. Yet, within this context, there is the greatest value in changing our mindset because behaviour worthy of trust is in such a scarce supply. By no means is a change in mindset easy. Rather, if we recognise that trust has value, we can change how we treat and perceive one another, and therefore, what we can do together.

We can unleash the development possibilities for Uganda if we consider prioritising trust. Newer, bolder, and riskier development activities rely upon relationships of trust because to operate in the absence of trust requires huge investments of financial, social, and intellectual capital to control uncertainty. Given that such resources are in short supply, the future of development in Uganda will depend on how partnerships and governments survive uncertainty and create an environment for collaboration.

For these reasons, this report focuses on how human beings who live in Uganda perceive and have learned to perceive each other's behaviour. The report's intent is not to make an infallible or irrefutable claim about Ugandans. Instead, it intends to reveal the tensions that pull people apart and bring them together and their particular expression in Uganda. If we learn to understand these dynamics, we can shift our focus from tolerating and suppressing uncertainty to identifying shared problems, finding solutions, and learning together.

What is Trust, and How Can It Be Built in Uganda?

This report defines trust as *the willingness to be vulnerable through the relinquishment of control over vulnerability, based on expectations of another's behaviour*. We suggest two fundamental components of trust: (1) control and (2) vulnerability. While scholars differ in their explanations of how and why we express those two elements, almost all conclude that it is contingent on two inter-related ideas: how we perceive our world (our mindset) and what we have experienced (our reality).

The connection between these two ideas means that our experiences of a given institution or individual have a dual impact: positive and negative experiences can influence how we perceive others and provide evidence to either trust or be cynical about the world around us. When we repeatedly have negative experiences, what emerges is a “low trust” environment, in which it is easier and preferable to frame actions in a negative light. However, this understanding also implies an upside. If we can take a “leap of faith” to trust, even in a context of negative past experiences, we can potentially catalyse a rapid change in mindset because it distinctly challenges our perceptions of the status quo.

What might it take to have these leaps of faith? Mutual vulnerability, or *the degree to which the participants in a relationship put something they perceive as valuable at risk*, is fundamental. This definition focuses on the necessity of participants making sacrifices that they perceive as valuable rather than sacrifices intended to satisfy the other. Part of that sacrifice also implies that the other participants accept its value and do not use it as a point to enforce or impose their perceptions of what is valuable to them. In effect, everyone has a stake that motivates and drives them to behave in ways conducive to the effective functioning of the relationship.

To make such sacrifices starts with having a space in which participants frame the primary focus of their engagement as a process of solving problems together. Spaces or processes that focus participants energies on problem-solving, implementing solutions together, and learning from one another, are critical to incrementally building trust

and confidence in others and, therefore, building shared successes. Such a space does not exclude the value of considering motives and politics but instead places them as secondary to the problem-solving process.

Based on this theory, we conclude that:

1. The social structures that inform our understanding of the world are critical to understanding what is trustworthy and what is not in the Ugandan context;
2. Trusting relationships are built upon a perception of shared vulnerability and success, in which success is a reflection of shared sacrifice, not solely an outcome;
3. Consistency of behaviour is critical to building an experience of trust, in which the expectations of another actor's motives are transparent and more discernable by the person taking a "leap of faith" and
4. Problem-solving processes and their worthiness of trust are fundamental to sustainable development.

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. The National Planning Authority (NPA) and associated district planners should conduct analyses of the locally relevant social structures that shape and influence behaviour across Uganda in conjunction with economic studies to facilitate development planning that is context-specific and targeted;
2. The Office of the President, the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (MoFPED), the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), and the National Planning Authority (NPA) should fund problem-solving platforms as the critical structures for development activity, rather than outcome driven platforms;

3. The Government of Uganda should consider a policy of statements of trust in their contracts. Each party states what is most important to them and why to facilitate a space for mutual understanding.
4. The Office of the Prime Minister should continue to strengthen and financially support inter-agency platforms and relationships through forums that permit shared vulnerability and collective problem-solving rather than execution of their mandate.

A Ugandan Past: Changing Trust

An analysis of Uganda's past can tell us a great deal about what and whom Ugandans find trustworthy. Who we belong to, how we understand ourselves, and our beliefs inform what we think is trustworthy. While certain aspects of those ways of understanding the world have remained constant, their response to change and violence have reflected deep fissures and struggles to reconcile aspects of tradition and modernity. These rapid changes have resulted in a state of general mistrust, in which actors have employed any number of different tactics to survive and thrive.

Tensions and mistrust remain in two areas: our understanding of leadership and our understanding of the young. Leadership in Uganda's past was characterised by how leaders bound together their people. Leadership was expressed in different ways: through wisdom, custodianship, and redistribution. However, the rapid shift to modern bureaucracies introduced by colonial powers and post-colonial governments often acted in overt contradiction to or in parallel to existing leadership and service delivery models. At the same time, a monopoly over the ability to exercise violence by national leaders through a supposedly national army drastically reduced the ways in which everyday citizens could hold their leaders accountable for socially or politically undesirable actions. Combined with the rise of capitalism that permitted the rapid accumulation of financial resources with few incentives for leaders to hold one another accountable for corrupt behaviour, a quick race to extract benefits from the position of public

office for their political and social constituencies took place. Formal leadership became parallel to other forms of social authority, regardless of institutionalised efforts to give leaders legitimacy.

At the same time, years of violent and frequently inter-generational conflict, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the move towards a neo-liberal form of economic development created the conditions for a younger generation grappling with multiple tensions in all areas of their life. Family and kin-based structures that previously provided sustainable forms of social security and a social space where one could take certain behaviours for granted saw rapid collapse or severe stress in response to devastating political violence combined with the HIV/AIDS crisis. Younger generations of Ugandans have had difficulty reconciling the values of traditional social structures with more modern ways of being, belonging, and belief because there is little social space to re-evaluate them. The process of creating or supporting platforms that facilitate an open discussion between the generations is a challenge that will affect the future of development in Uganda for decades to come.

Based on this analysis of Uganda's past, we conclude that:

1. A sense of shared national identity has never fully emerged throughout the history of Uganda because efforts to cultivate it have failed to reconcile national obligation with one's local or traditional ways of being, belonging, and belief.
2. While critical to short-term regime stability, Macroeconomic growth is not sufficient for creating the conditions for sustained structural transformation if driven in isolation from socio-cultural transformations in trust.
3. While redistribution of resources was one way of having legitimacy by leaders in Uganda's past, delivering value in non-financial ways and facilitating social coherence was critical to their long-term credibility.
4. The incentive structures of neoliberal policies and practices have contributed to the use of public office as a tool for

redistributing personal financial benefits to one's "people" in response to widespread poverty and the limited functionality of systems of service delivery.

5. Younger generations face multiple competing tensions regarding how they construct meaning, compounded by urbanisation, capitalism, and globalisation. These tensions contribute to mental health crises, an increase in transactional and unsustainable relationships, and conflicts between generations.

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. Programme managers within the Government of Uganda, business executives, civil society leaders, and international development partners should consider funding problem identification exercises¹ led by implementers and directly affected populations as a separate exercise before project development to produce demand-driven solutions, rather than solution-driven problems.
2. The above stakeholders should ensure that the implementation of their programmes provides avenues for meaningful participation in problem-solving. Participation is not about getting permission or compliance but active buy-in and contributions to the programme's success.
3. Programme interventions should conceptualise leadership as a structure for facilitating communal problem-solving rather than a vehicle for gaining legitimacy, authority, or compliance.
4. The Government of Uganda and associated programme partners should invest financial resources towards strengthening forums for communal participation to encourage collaborative problem-solving.

¹ Problem-identification exercises can also be known as market research (in private sector parlance), community consultation (in civil society parlance), or stakeholder participation (government or international development partner parlance).

5. The Elders Forum of Uganda should receive financial support to facilitate regional dialogues that provide mechanisms for identifying social problems, providing mechanisms for healing social ills, and sustaining ongoing conversations between generations about the way to a violence-free future.

Government as “a” Contract, not “the” Contract

Most theories of government have inadvertently assumed the value or functionality of a democratic system and its functions in the Ugandan context. At the core of democratic theories of governance is a “social contract”, in which leaders and citizens have a reciprocal relationship reflected through taxation. However, the reality is that this contract is just one of many contracts that Ugandans employ in their lives to get access to services and live more prosperously. We deconstructed perceptions of democracy, decentralisation, and taxation to understand better how to cultivate a broader sense of trust in the Ugandan government and see how struggles over their functionality and value are playing out in practice.

The exercise of voting is just one way Ugandans impose certain obligations or forms of accountability on their leaders. While studies indicate that Ugandans find a democratic electoral system desirable, the connection between the exercise of democratic voting, policy, and therefore access to a better future is not as well appreciated. The line between corruption and public virtue fails to correspond well to international norms, where examples of corruption and public virtue are both acceptable and unacceptable in different ways. While there are examples of outright greed and selfishness, leaders constantly navigate seemingly irreconcilable ways of being, belonging, and belief, where international, national, and local interests all shape how they should or should not behave and their rhetoric. The result is a context in which the democratic system, even if its institutions and structures were strong, challenges many assumptions about its intended and ideal practice.

Decentralisation is one way these competing tensions play out daily, and that their processes for problem-solving are out of sync with the needs of their constituents. Local leaders remain limited mainly in what they can and cannot do: most central government disbursements remain conditional, with various caveats limiting its access and function. The separation between the technocrats tasked with implementation and the politicians who seek to take credit for implementation is murky, making efforts to be transparent and accountable intertwined with conflicts of interest. Despite the intent behind decentralisation policies that aim to create a socio-political space in which local communities could influence processes of problem-identification and solution-seeking, the limited resources allocated to do so have reflected the limits of these ideals in practice.

Compounding these deficiencies in service delivery has been how Uganda collects tax revenues. While the evidence is clear that taxpayers are more likely to comply with tax demands from the state if they experience tangible benefits from public spending, local collections have drastically reduced, limiting the financial means for leaders to deliver on their promises. At the same time, the move towards predominantly indirect forms of tax that make the process of redistribution of resources opaque to taxpayers (with the exceptions of those who are interested and have access to the information to understand it) compounds perceptions of tax as parallel rather than complementary to service delivery.

Based on this evidence, we conclude that:

1. While Uganda's constitution outlines a strong commitment to free and democratic political processes, it has operated parallel to other forms of leadership and authority, making it only one of several forms of obligation and accountability meaningful to Ugandans.
2. The proliferation of new districts and the over-involvement of the central government in local decision-making and financing have undermined the gains made through decentralisation in

improving local representation, service delivery, and local accountability.

3. Despite implementing various transparency and accountability measures, limited trust in the mechanisms for accountability and access to services hamper service delivery and tax compliance.
4. While public participation in government programmes is laudable, its effectiveness is contingent on whether it solves or provides evidence of progress towards problems of value to constituents. Participation without influence decreases the willingness of citizens to trust in the absence of success.
5. While the national constitution of 1995 was a laudable attempt to reset the nation's political order, its ability to demonstrate value to local citizens in solving local problems remains poor despite efforts to educate officeholders. This lack of perceived value contributes to the usage of public office as a mechanism to redistribute meagre resources to constituents rather than as an expression of political interest in the development of rules that permit citizens to meet their needs and interests more effectively.

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development should consider creating or strengthening existing platforms for local authorities (clan heads, religious leaders, and other traditional leadership structures) to participate in and influence local development agendas to enhance the value of the national constitution.
2. The Government of Uganda and International Development Partners should invest in implementing the National Monitoring & Evaluation Policy, focusing on long-term and process-focused evaluations. Shifting focus from programme

results to trust in processes can ensure that valuable evidence on how to improve the participation of local communities in programmatic interventions can be found and applied.

3. The Inspector-General of Government (IGG) and the Anti-Corruption Unit in the President's Office should frame integrity and anti-corruption efforts in terms of how to manage competing formal and informal obligations on officeholders in a transparent manner, rather than as a moral failing.
4. The local scorecards initiative by the Advocates Coalition for Development and the Environment (ACODE) should be provided with sustained funds and incorporated into annual exercises for assessing Parliamentary activity in addition to local governments across the country.
5. Government regulators and authorities should be supported with greater resources to improve their local or regional presences across the country combined with efforts to understand better how to adjust the delivery of their mandates to assist problem-solving in local communities.

Civil Society: Problem Solving as Political

In the Ugandan context, the government nor the private sector have had a monopoly over service provision. For decades, civil society organisations (CSOs) have played essential roles in filling gaps in service delivery, advocating for change where desirable, and sharing information on local interests. However, these realities of service delivery (in which no provider has clear superiority) have contributed to circumstances in which providers have positioned themselves in opposition or competition to one another. Projects that are perceived to be operating parallel to market, government, or traditional structures are often subject to more stringent oversight, are treated as havens for political opposition, and frequently collapse when they lose funding. Therefore, the report focuses on understanding how CSOs are perceived, act, and influence the communities in which they operate to consider better how they might build stronger relationships of trust.

Part of the challenge of building trust in the civil society space has been an ongoing contestation of civil society's role in national development. Following independence, cooperatives and trade unions were highly influential and, therefore, seen as a potential source of political opposition. The result was decades of suppression and replacement by government agencies and authorities. While the shift towards market-driven solutions in the 1990s was an opportunity for civic space to expand, the reality was that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) exploded instead of civil society organisations as international development partners looked for alternatives to government and private sector actors. This rapid influx of international development funds hampered the viability of more locally-led civil society organisations such as trade unions and cooperatives to influence development agendas constructively. This rapid shift in funding modality became the new standard, creating suspicions, warranted or not, that non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations who benefitted were more driven by funder interests than the needs of local actors.

While some CSOs today tend to have more diverse funding sources, including from the Ugandan government, the usage of legal provisions and forceful and invasive oversight are sources of deep unease. The stifling CSOs manifests itself in various tactics, including legislated restrictions on certain topics, practices, partners, and gathering places, withholding and redirection of funds, threats of violence, and intimidation. In order to work with the government, there are perceptions that CSOs with adversarial advocacy campaigns must alter them to have softer language and that a CSOs public image and comments must refrain from embarrassing or expressing views that could affect the political fortunes of those they work with. While there are examples of closer ties between CSOs and the Government of Uganda in national budgeting, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which these engagements have contributed to a more functional government. Still, the fact that these dialogues occur indicates that opportunities exist for trust to be built and extend into more contentious matters.

Based on this evidence, we conclude that:

1. While some CSOs focused on service delivery and economic development enjoy support and cooperation from the central government, several pieces of legislation purporting to increase CSO efficacy have limited the space for civil society organising in Uganda, especially for those organisations that seek to hold government and other influential stakeholders accountable.
2. In some cases, a lack of adequate internal accountability structures has left CSOs vulnerable to corruption, leadership capture, and a shift in priorities away from public representation and towards appeasing funders.
3. A lack of consensus on both civil society and its function is creating an adversarial and antagonistic relationship between the state and civil society actors.

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Uganda National NGO Forum should consider supporting an independent arbiter to constitute a dialogue platform. This platform would facilitate discussions between civil society actors and the Government of Uganda to help build consensus on addressing conflicts of interest, particularly around public dissent, accountability, and freedom of speech and thought. The inclusion of the civil society Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM) hosted by DENIVA (Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations) would be critical to such a platform's success.

Private Sector: Understanding the Trusted Entrepreneur and the Corporation

Classical analyses of economic development focusing on the process of “structural transformation” have missed out on what it means to be an entrepreneur in a given context. Entrepreneurs and their economic value cannot be divorced from their social, cultural, and in many ways, personal lives. Uganda’s continued prevalence of a so-called “informal” economy shows that entrepreneurship and success are deeply connected. To better facilitate private sector growth and, by proxy, trust in its ability to deliver services efficiently and profitably nationally and internationally, one must understand the social, cultural, and personal dimensions of entrepreneurs that facilitate and inhibit the accumulation of financial capital.

The dominant narratives of the ideal entrepreneur as an iconoclast, disruptor, and completely independent often disregard how economic behaviours interact with entrepreneurs’ social, personal, and political lives. These tensions play out in the practice of family businesses and business corporations. The proceeds or benefits of a company in the Ugandan context cannot be limited to one’s family or shareholders. Greater demands on the entrepreneur’s time and expressions of social prowess, in which social impositions or calls to give gifts, share profits, or take care of the broader community in which the business operates, are ways that can affect a business’s bottom line. Entrepreneurs are required to set boundaries in how they respect and navigate these tensions between financial accumulation and their place in society, which is far from straightforward.

Ongoing debates express the tensions that continue between so-called “informal” and “formal” sectors. Participation in formal economies requires certain disclosures to provide assurances to investors that information is accurate and valid. In this way, corporate disclosures are a form of vulnerability, but a vulnerability that, at times, does not consider how formality influences perceptions of the business by an entrepreneur’s business networks or community. Indeed, communities in which a business operates can perceive greater formality as a sign of wealth that invites greater demands on the entrepreneur through social

ties, gift-giving, and community needs that demand acquiescence or refusal. The subscription to such formal structures can limit businesses' ability to flexibly cater to these "informal" obligations without inviting greater scrutiny. At the same time, governance codes such as the King IV Code of South Africa have sought to better accommodate these challenges by emphasising a "stakeholder-centred" model of governance, whereby the shareholder is not the primary driver of corporate behaviour. While such governance codes are encouraging signs of the business community's interest and desire to contextualise their businesses in the African context, they remain underutilised by companies in Uganda.

Part and parcel of the entrepreneur in context is the usage of corporate social responsibility (CSR). While CSR has been a long-standing practice by well-established companies, it remains largely unexplored due to concerns over its ability to impact firms' bottom lines. There is no clear consensus on what CSR is or its purpose, both by companies and their intended recipients. In most cases, businesses frame CSR as philanthropy, charity, or social marketing, where consumers view CSR as indicators of their reputation, and therefore the value or worth of their products. While this idea is well-established, the ways to promote both consumer needs and reputation remain unclear. Instead of framing CSR as ad hoc expressions of charity or marketing, the ability of CSR to demonstrate solidarity and serve the needs of their consumer markets may be more powerful ways to build not only consumer loyalty but also brand reputation.

Based on this evidence, we conclude that:

1. In Uganda, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial decision-making are not wholly divorced from local social obligations and impositions from one's family, kin, and community. They play a moderating role both in terms of entrepreneurial participation and success.
2. Local social and cultural considerations can drastically influence the public perceptions of considerable accumulation

by multi-national and trans-national corporations, thereby affecting the extent to which communities either support or resist their economic activity.

3. While the relationship between civil society and the private sector is beginning to develop, there is still much room for increasing dialogue and partnerships between the two sectors.
4. While corporate social responsibility (CSR) is becoming more relevant to business leaders and more frequently used by companies in Uganda, it has little influence on public perceptions. Its impact on company bottom lines has seen little systematic examination.

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. The listing rules for the Uganda Stock Exchange should consider shifting away from a shareholder centred model of corporate disclosures and engage with local business communities to examine how investors and businesses can incorporate non-financial capital into assessments of corporate value.
2. The Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU) should consider drafting recommendations on accounting principles applicable in the Ugandan context, particularly in the areas of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) disclosures and reporting.
3. The business community in Uganda should consider establishing a forum on corporate philanthropy and charity to understand better the added value of social marketing and corporate social responsibility (CSR) to sustainable development.
4. The King IV Code should be introduced as the standard governance code for all publicly listed companies and distributed to newly registered companies to guide their decision-making and long-term strategy development.

International Development Partners: Learning to Fail

The continued supremacy and control of international development scholarship from the Global North has deeply influenced why international development initiatives in the Global South continue to see only limited success. The powerful knowledge ecosystem originating the Global North has a long history of making convincing arguments for the necessity and inevitability of particular development models, at the expense of local and particularised examinations of what development means and how to create it. While more recent efforts such as the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Agreement in 2011 have signalled shifts in development orthodoxy, they remain heavily informed by certain assumptions of how to replicate development and economic success. These assumptions remain rooted in Western experiences of the here and now rather than in a contextual understanding of the places in which development occurs. The result has been an approach to development focusing on conforming local realities to international models, rather than using local realities to inform a functional model that may both disrupt and replace Western orthodoxies of development.

Long-standing tensions that international development funders face between domestic accountability and international functionality drive the hesitancy to use more flexible processes of development and investment. The legacies of an imperialist system shape these tensions that initially came from the idea of extracting value from countries in the Global South for their domestic constituents. Despite more recent scholarship and practice that has sought to deconstruct these systems of thinking and craft programs that are more functional and flexible, orthodox systems remain a large part of the status quo that, despite their narrative flavour, are largely devoid of practical difference.

At the same time, the international development partners are making efforts better to understand the impact of their investments in context. Investments in decolonising knowledge are being made in various areas, although their sustainability remains in doubt. Movements to try and strengthen monitoring & evaluation systems away from linear models of change towards more narrative forms are indications that

attitudes are changing to accept more contextual forms of understanding. While a paradigm shift in practice remains elusive, it is clear that the conditions for such a shift are being supported and led, in some cases, by the international development partners who created the status quo.

Based on this evidence, we conclude that:

1. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners have processes and ways of thinking that profoundly shape what they fund and why, often privileging certain technocratic explanations for what a better world would look like, how it should operate, and how to get there. These ways of thinking often limit what they are prepared to learn and, therefore, processes or outcomes they are willing to trust.
2. While recent commitments to the Paris Agreement and Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Agreement are laudable attempts by the international development community to facilitate greater consistency and predictability in their relations with national governments, their assumptions regarding the functionality of national governments or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) tend to be out of sync with local realities, limiting both what is done and what can be considered successful.
3. While graft and corruption scandals within the Government of Uganda related to the use of international funds harm Uganda's international credibility, international development partners often do not consider the context in which they occur. Missing out on these contextual features can limit then the possibilities or identification of opportunities for social change.
4. The provision of funds by bilateral and multilateral partners inherently alters recipients' functionality and perceptions by both internal and external actors because they change the political and institutional economies of practice.

Based on the above conclusions, we recommend that:

1. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners should consider supporting independent platforms that facilitate deeper discussions of decolonisation of knowledge and the creation of contextualised knowledge.
2. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners should consider shifting their role from funding partner to learning partner, in which implementers design dynamic and adaptive programmes, rather than programmes that execute a rigid plan intended to achieve a particular set of deliverables in accordance with funder driven understandings of change.
3. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners should consider expanding investment in governance programmes that focus on both institutional functionality and space for adaptive programmes that focus on collaborative problem solving with local communities as a way of gaining public trust.
4. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners should communicate to their recipients what they are putting at stake in their investments to communicate what they value and why. Therefore, they should communicate violations of trust even when it does not have financial or contractual implications.

Preface

Any analysis of development in Africa often invites immediate questions regarding who is speaking. In examining something as contentious as trust, standpoint profoundly influences credibility. The value of the examination is at the discretion of the reader, who will inevitably have different points of view, values or careers at stake, interests, or even relationships with the producers of the analysis. For that reason, this study cannot claim to be objective. However, this study argues that it is possible to make coherent, transparent, and valuable judgements based on evidence, regardless of our personal interests.

The primary basis upon which we ask our readers to judge this work is whether it provides new insights into how trust shapes national development and its expression in Uganda. We approached this task by considering how knowledge is constructed and understood in context. We understood that far from being devoid of political content, there is a deep sense of mistrust in the Ugandan context. In general, we tend to perceive no one as acting truly apolitically; we think we cannot take anything for granted, and we tend to reflexively perceive any judgement as an imposition of the expresser's will on others, particularly when it is about matters that we hold dear. Insight, in that regard, is a function of whether the reader sees not only the medium of presentation as trustworthy but also whether the process by which a person reached a particular conclusion is trustworthy.

The Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS) argues that the process of consensus building is one way of addressing these potential critiques and fears. The consensus study process is by no means original: several ideas have influenced its contents, including the Consensus Development Panel (CDP) process pioneered by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the United States. UNAS also

adapted this process: it was not well-suited to deal with the thorny issues of development characterized by arguments over interpretation rather than references to biological, chemical, and physical principles applicable across time and space. The Committee had to grapple with that uncertainty throughout its existence, recognizing that through simple participation in the process of debate, dialogue, and consensus, they could reveal themselves to be potentially uninformed, uninspired, or ignorant. The Committee also realized it could be catalytic, inspiring, and thoughtful in the same way.

For these reasons, the Committee chose not to focus on the comparative validity, import, or moral content of different theories or programs aiming to build trust. All of them, to varying degrees, may or may not work with flaws and strengths in them. Instead, the Committee focused on understanding how Ugandans and their partners participate in change, development, and problem-solving processes. In doing so, we hope to reveal better ways of working together and therefore build a foundation for trust.

These reasons may not convince a reader of our motives. That is understandable, if lamentable. The Committee has also sought to place themselves open to scrutiny in discussing the ideas they have put forth. As part of the policies of UNAS, all Committee members have signed declarations regarding potential conflicts of interest. This declaration is one part of what the Committee believes is necessary to earn our audience's trust. Still, the Committee earnestly believes that having these discussions will help us heal, evolve, and grow towards a more reasoned and compassionate space for development discussions premised on trust.

At stake is our professional reputation. While it may seem old-fashioned to claim that our reputations are of deep and intrinsic value to us and therefore have relevance to our work, to dismiss it would be equally cynical and pessimistic. Our presentation of trust reflects why we see these various aspects as valuable: we believe that we must be willing to put something at stake that we value, in the hope and expectation that others will respect that choice. We thank you for taking the chance to consider these ideas for what they are worth.

Introduction

The centrality of trust to the well-being and prosperity of societies is no surprise and is reflected in development agendas nationally, globally, and continentally. From Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to Aspiration 3 of the African Union's Agenda 2063, and Chapters 18, 19, 21, and 22 in the Uganda National Development Plan III (Mindset Change, Governance, Public Sector Transformation and Development Plan Implementation respectively), the importance of effective human relationships in shaping development is not in doubt. What is in doubt is how trust in the Ugandan context should be understood, conceptualized, and implemented.

The questions asked regarding trust often are functional: What does a trusting society look like? Is there an accurate and effective way of gauging trust in society? These questions intend to help us provide evidence or justification for the actions that we might take in policy or decision-making. An exhaustive examination of every single interpretation of these questions, weighing the pros and cons of each interpretation, while perhaps useful to a particular audience, assumes a clear problem with readily available and applicable solutions already in existence. Unfortunately, the challenge of trust is complex, multi-faceted, and dynamic, in which no interpretation can be truly authoritative or infallible. This reality should not dissuade us from trying to make interpretations. Instead, it is an invitation to try and, as transparently as possible, provide the reasoning for our interpretation to provoke reflection and dialogue. In this regard, the main measure of this report's success should be whether it does that: does it generate new ways of thinking or insight? Does it encourage us to question our methods of operation constructively? And does it open up new possibilities for development?

The organization of the report starts with a presentation of how we conceptualize trust. This conceptual framework seeks to give us a means of interpreting and understanding trust and the circumstances in which trust emerges. Then, we focus on its form, first by examining what Uganda's past could tell us about how we have been socialized to think, behave, and change. Then, we focus on transactional trust or the particular experiences of different sectors: namely, with government, with civil society, with business, and with international development partners. The report's construction seeks to incrementally build-up from the abstract to the more practical, first by understanding the lens we have applied to the issue of trust and then examining the particularities of different sectors and their experiences in trust. The aim is to balance the theoretical and the practical to appreciate the vast body of evidence that has informed this report.

1

Mindset Shifts: A Conceptual Framework for Changing Trust

“Nobody can teach me who I am. You can describe parts of me, but who I am—and what I need—is something I have to find out myself.”

– Chinua Achebe

This section develops a conceptual framework in which to understand trust. It presents the argument that models of change that reveal common humanity, shared stakes, and relinquishment of control present the most compelling way to build trust and development in the Ugandan context. The Committee developed this framework and a working definition of trust based on its interpretation of a vast body of theoretical scholarship on trust and practical models of change that have shown results in Uganda and continentally.

A Working Definition of Trust in Uganda

Much of the academic literature on trust focuses on its definition. Scholars disagree about the scope and function of trust in society and the primary logic driving its development and breakdown (OECD, 2017). Some scholars, for instance, position trust in a broad cognitive category along with knowledge and belief (Hardin, 2004). Others argue that the academic literature on trust too often treats it as monolithic and instead claim that trust is a multidimensional and multifaceted concept (Banerjee et al., 2006). These distinctions in the meaning of trust, while

often seeming semantic, have a significant bearing on how we approach measuring and promoting trust in society.

In the context of this study, the Committee defines trust as:

One's willingness to be vulnerable through the relinquishment of one's ability to control that vulnerability based on expectations of another's behaviour.

This definition of trust encompasses two elements: (1) a willingness to accept vulnerability and (2) certain expectations regarding the intentions or actions of others in the face of that vulnerability. Another way to understand these elements is one's assessment of a person or things "trustworthiness" and our perceptions regarding motives and stakes in a relationship.

Willingness to accept vulnerability stems from relinquishing control when entering an interaction with another person or institution. For instance, there is no realistic way for a passenger to guarantee that the person operating a taxi is capable, competent, and willing to do their job. The passenger must therefore accept some amount of vulnerability when they enter the taxi. There is an element of risk inherent to trust, a possibility of loss involved in all interactions. Trust requires a willingness to accept vulnerability and go through with the action regardless. Without the element of risk, the outcome is deterministic and therefore does not require trust (Möllerling, 2006).

Vulnerability refers to the degree a person or institution is prepared to lose something they perceive as important. In other words, vulnerability refers to what is at stake. By placing a willingness to accept vulnerability at the centre of the definition of trust, the Committee is signalling that social trust requires individuals and institutions prepared to lose something of importance in pursuing their collective goals—namely, sustainable socio-economic development. People of different social classes, backgrounds and genders may perceive what is important to be radically different. A political leader, for instance, might perceive

their social or economic standing as crucial to their sense of self. A rural farmer, by contrast, may place more value on their autonomy. The importance of vulnerability lies in recognizing that while you may not value the same things, their relative importance to each person is understandable and understood.

In that regard, the expectations of whether the other person's behaviours and intentions are good are the second essential aspect of trust. The confidence that both actors' intentions will lead to a positive outcome helps quell the uncertainty of vulnerability. The trusting passenger accepts the risk and has confidence in the driver's good intentions and ability to provide safe transport. The prospective passenger who does not have this confidence has no trust in the conductor and will not board the taxi unless some external force compels them. Without belief in the goodwill of another, there is no basis for entering into a given arrangement.

Two Types of Trust and the Leap of Faith

The existing academic literature on trust outlines two main avenues for individuals and institutions to cultivate a willingness to accept this kind of vulnerability. The first is more mechanistic and particularized, representing the accumulated experiences of interactions in a relationship. We refer to this avenue as "transactional trust." The second avenue through which individuals and institutions develop trust is more socially based and depends on inherited norms. We refer to this avenue as "moral trust."

Transactional Trust

The transactional concept of trust derives mainly from the economics literature and states that actors rationally calculate their exposure to risk and trust accordingly. Under this model, actors follow a logic of "enlightened self-interest" when deciding whether to trust another (Hardin, 2004). The basic premise is straightforward: A trusts B to do X only if A believes that B will act in A's interest. A incentivizes

B to internalize A's interests, deliver on A's expectations, and thereby effectively earn A's trust and continued cooperation. B thus acts following their enlightened self-interest, which in turn strengthens A's trust in the relationship.

An example makes this model clearer. A restaurant-goer (A) trusts that the owner (B) will uphold high standards of hygiene (X) to keep the customer from falling ill. The owner, who wants the repeat business and customer's recommendation, internalizes the importance of the customer's concern for hygiene and fulfils the customer's expectations to benefit themselves. Thinking about trust in this transactional manner has the benefit of making the interaction "particularized," in that each aspect of the exchange is identifiable: the trustor, the trustee, and the outcome of the relationship (Hardin, 2004; Mbatudde, 2013).

Under this approach, A's willingness to accept vulnerability (the risk of becoming ill, in the restaurant example) depends on B's proven track record of producing expected outcomes in previous interactions with A and other actors. A's trust also relies on an assumption of effective laws and oversight institutions to punish indiscretions in the exchange (Hardin, 2004). A customer would not reasonably go to a restaurant with a reputation for making other customers ill, and a customer who does fall ill can call the health inspector to investigate whether the cause was related to poor hygiene and, if so, appropriately sanction the restaurant.

One can also adapt the transactional approach to trust to understand political relationships. Under standard democratic theories, citizens trust their elected leaders to uphold their campaign promises to deliver services. It is in the leaders' interest to deliver these services because if they lose public trust, they lose their support in future elections (Mbatudde, 2013). Leaders thus follow their enlightened self-interest, which results in the provision of promised services. If leaders have a history of renegeing on commitments, it will lower their chances of re-election. And if leaders transgress in more extreme ways, laws and accountability systems are designed to punish them for poor behaviour.

The main criticism of this transactional approach to trust is that it cannot account for the spontaneous, anonymous, one-off exchanges that happen between people all the time whose interests do not necessarily

align and which enlightened self-interest cannot explain. It also leaves the trusting party vulnerable to the possibility that laws and oversight mechanisms may be ineffective or otherwise compromised (Mbatudde, 2013). For instance, if elections are not free and fair (such as when opposition political figures are harassed or jailed), leaders will be able to pursue their interest in maintaining power without delivering on their promises of service delivery.

Social Trust

Understanding trust as a characteristic inherited through socialization rather than employed as a strategy helps explain the existence of this more generalized social trust (Uslaner, 2008). Moral trust still involves risk and expectations about the goodwill of others but is a shared norm rather than a tool to elicit a given result.

Social trust is a function of how we are socialized. Parents, communities, and leaders shape what aspects of our lives we value and ascribe importance to and the conditions in which we are willing to accept vulnerability. In other words, our worldview is constructed by those around us, it tends to be broadly stable over time, and it sets the broad boundaries of where, whom, and why we trust.

In the social-moral framework, trust emerges based on mutual openness and intensive communication and evolves along with the relationship in a self-reinforcing manner (Möllering 2006). This approach differs from transactional approaches to trust that only apply to a single particularized interaction and instead focuses on developing trusting relationships where incentives are not necessarily aligned. This trust model explains why and how strangers engage in trusting interactions without knowing each other's histories and without having to anticipate each other's needs or rely on oversight institutions (OECD, 2017).

For example, suppose social norms dictate that hygiene and customer well-being are important. In that case, a restaurant owner will ensure the good hygiene of their establishment first and foremost because they identify with the community and its norms. The customer, who also identifies with the community and its norms, trusts that the owner does

as well and trusts that their health and safety are of inherent importance to the owner. The adherence of both parties to these social norms—being conscientious of the well-being of others and trusting others to adhere to the social contract—reinforce the validity and efficacy of these norms, thereby strengthening them.

From a social-moral perspective, trust is built slowly, developed in small steps over time. While the initial interaction may require calculating risk and knowledge of another's track record, the actors eventually come to identify with each other as trust develops (Möllering, 2006). In this way, the frame in which actors interact changes over time as trust develops, making the issues faced at an early stage different from those in a long-established, identification-based trusting relationship.

A social-moral understanding of trust can also clarify political interactions. In theory, the shared vision of the population informs the government's mandate. People trust that the government has their best interests in mind because they have a shared vision of a well-functioning society. Both politicians and citizens are committed to the same social contract, and this commitment engenders trust.

The Leap of Faith

Practically speaking, both transactional and moral understandings of trust are closely linked together. At a basic level, the willingness to accept vulnerability built up over repeated interactions under a model of transactional trust may gradually contribute to the formation of social norms that support a more generalized, moral model of trust.

For instance, if a government creates rules that govern our relations and we subscribe to those rules, we may be more inclined to expand the range of interactions that we accept vulnerability in, confident that others understand and accept the same social rules to which we subscribe. Similarly, the more interactions in which we are willing to accept vulnerability may change the conditions in which we perceive society to be trustworthy.

However, neither enlightened self-interest nor shared norms can provide enough incentive for all people to engage in trusting interactions. There will always be selfish actors interested in advancing

their agendas, whether for their benefit or from a conviction that their vision is ultimately in everyone's best interest. At the same time, norms of trust are constructs shaped by our past, sense of self, and ways of understanding the world and are therefore not readily created in isolation.

We might assume that the adoption or strengthening of accountability and oversight mechanisms can encourage interactions under a transactional framework that, in turn, lays the groundwork for norms of social trust. Both models of trust, for instance, rely to a certain extent on judicial and regulatory oversight institutions for shaping and enforcing norms, maintaining transparency, and providing recourse in cases of misconduct (Hardin, 2004; Möllering, 2006). However, a notion of trust contingent on these safeguards creates a paradox in that control systems require their own control system, *ad infinitum* (Möllering, 2006). For example, the health inspection agency investigating the restaurant needs its inspection agency to ensure its propriety, and so on. At a certain point, the chain needs to end in a shared norm of trust.

This paradox points to the importance of the second half of the Committee's working definition of trust: "...*the relinquishment of one's ability to control and regulate that vulnerability.*" While oversight institutions provide some utility in strengthening trusting relationships, there is a certain point at which trust must simply be practised, regardless of the ability to control or sanction violations of that trust. The necessity of *just trusting* points to the final element of the theory of change: the Leap of Faith.

The Leap of Faith requires trusting actors to actively choose to act as if we have already resolved fundamental questions of risk and confidence inherent to trust are already resolved. Trust is, thus, at least partly non-rational; the trusting actor *simply does it*. This leap of faith is the definitive quality of trust and constitutes the essence of its definition as applied in this report (Möllering, 2006). Control also cannot substitute for trust. Instead, control and trust are connected, such that we can only understand each concept relative to the other (Gallivan and Depledge, 2003). Governments or other institutions cannot enact preventive measures for trust to be mechanized and implemented uniformly. Trust, at its core, depends on faith; if it did not, it would be

possible to implement trust as a piece of predictable machinery, making it an essentially meaningless category.

The Leap of Faith is likely to look different under the transactional or social models of trust. In a transactional model, everyday actions reflect Leaps of Faith. They are made at the beginning of a transaction when two actors first engage and proceed with their interaction. In this model, Leaps of Faith are frequent and can involve less vulnerability as less is at stake. For instance, a businessperson might attach importance to a contract, and a degree of vulnerability is required to enter contractual negotiations with another party, as the businessperson must trust that their counterpart is negotiating in good faith. However, the businessperson will not lose their social standing or livelihood if the contract falls apart.

However, Leaps of Faith under the social model of trust are often more consequential, as they require accepting a degree of vulnerability that one's core values and worldview will be challenged, with no guarantee that a counterpart will reciprocate that vulnerability. Under a moral model of trust, a Leap of Faith reflects a willingness to accept vulnerability because one's individual potential for loss is less significant than the potential for collective gain. We can see these Leaps of Faith, for instance, in team sports, where people choose to subsume their vulnerabilities for the collective team and nation. For example, despite their differences and beliefs, a multi-ethnic sports team works together because they understand victory as something valuable to the group worth struggling over together.

The Anatomy of a Mindset Shift: Placing Trust in Context

The Committee argues that to understand the practical importance of trust and the basis upon which one builds trust, one should examine how relationships in the Ugandan context change in content and interpretation. There are many different types of events that can be informative in understanding trust: these include everything from moments of conflict, violence, and social transgression to moments of reconciliation, and jubilation to name but a few. The Committee uses

these examples to encourage a better understanding of our own lives, rather than to provide an exhaustive account of the different ways in which we learn to trust.

Examples of the processes that facilitate mindsets shifts in our understanding of trust and reality are numerous, each with different ways of framing human vulnerability, learning, and development. They are not mutually exclusive: in many ways, they all embrace a certain degree of uncertainty and recognition that not all elements of the change process will be under their control. Text Box 1 provides an overview of one method that has seen success. Other examples include *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1970) or *Immunity to Change* by Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey (2009), to name a few. A successful Ugandan approach to facilitating mindset shifts has been the Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach used at Makerere University's College of Medicine. By focusing on practical ways of solving problems anticipated in a professional context, PBL encourages students to adopt a mentality of life-long learning and dynamic growth in response to their professional circumstances (Kiguli-Malwadde, Kijjambu, Kiguli, Galukande, Mwanika, Luboga, and Sewankambo 2006).

These different processes all tend to share some similar characteristics: 1) a focus on shared exploration over functional purpose, reshaping our outlooks to be adaptive in learning what is possible, what can be known, and what is; 2) feedback mechanisms that permit and encourage change and adaptation, and 3) participation structures that permit varying levels of vulnerability without exclusion. These processes are far from static: they require adaptation by the implementer in response to the other person in the relationship to create the space in which one perceives trust to be desirable. As suggested earlier, context informs the decision to take a leap of faith and actively participate. Therefore, one cannot simply assume or expect that the processes highlighted here are somehow trustworthy already. The ability to accept the possibility that these processes are not perfect and yet still trust them is a hallmark of what makes them not only practical but effective in potentially catalyzing trust.

Even though there may be a great deal of mistrust in Uganda's development context, the Committee's focus on process aims to upend narratives that Ugandans, or Africans, are somehow victims of circumstance. Rather, Ugandans have been employing techniques of struggling, developing, innovating, and manipulating their world that may not have always been conducive to trust. It reveals how the nuances of the Ugandan development context and what they have done to exert some measure of control over their circumstances. The Committee's conclusions and recommendations derived from these observations provide the reader with new ways of revisiting old problems, which will help us devise new ways of making the future a better place for all.

BOX 1
**Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) as a
Process of Change**

Problem driven iterative adaptation or PDIA is an approach to solving complex problems that require teams to accomplish. It has four principles:

- 1. Local solutions for local problems** in which implementers transition from promoting predetermined solutions to allowing the local nomination, articulation, and prioritization of concrete problems.
- 2. Pushing problem-driven positive deviance**, where the implementer creates (and protects) environments within and across organizations that encourage experimentation and positive deviance.
- 3. Try, learn, iterate, and adapt**, in which the implementer promotes active experiential (and experimental) learning with evidence-driven feedback built into regular management that allows for real-time adaptation.
- 4. Scale through diffusion**, where the implementer engages multiple agents across sectors and organizations to ensure viable, legitimate, and relevant reforms.

The Committee considers PDIA as an example of a trust-building process of change because it considers how problem-solving occurs. Problem-solving depends on how problems are identified and responded to. The initial process of understanding the problem is how individuals express vulnerability and behaviours that either demonstrate their trustworthiness or provide sufficient experiences to contradict pre-conceptions. At the same time, the process provides space for learning in which the stakes are not so high as to prevent people from simply refusing to engage. Lastly, PDIA recognizes that success is not the sole indication of growth; instead, it is the process of getting to a functional solution built from failures and weak successes. In this regard, the feedback mechanism is not about the satisfaction of a preset goal: it is about whether it serves the purposes of the problem-solvers, who are assumed to share stakes with their broader communities due to their locality. By no means is PDIA an infallible approach: it depends on the people who participate in it, including those who would otherwise fund it or permit its growth who may have opposing interests. It does, however, provide a basis upon which the actors learn to see barriers as opportunities, partners as people, and success as the road travelled, not the destination.

SOURCE: Andrews, Prichett, and Woolcock 2017.

Conclusions

Based on this theory, we conclude that:

1. The social structures that inform our understanding of the world are critical to understanding what is trustworthy and what is not in the Ugandan context;
2. Trusting relationships are built upon a perception of shared vulnerability and success, in which success is a reflection of shared sacrifice, not solely an outcome;

3. Consistency of behaviour is critical to building an experience of trust, in which the expectations of another actor's motives are transparent and more discernable by the person taking a "leap of faith" and
4. Problem-solving processes and their worthiness of trust are fundamental to sustainable development.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. The National Planning Authority (NPA) and associated district planners should conduct analyses of the locally relevant social structures that shape and influence behaviour across Uganda in conjunction with economic studies to facilitate development planning that is context-specific and targeted;
2. The Office of the President, the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (MoFPED), the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), and the National Planning Authority (NPA) should fund problem-solving platforms as the critical structures for development activity, rather than outcome-driven platforms;
3. The Government of Uganda should consider a policy of statements of trust in their contracts. Each party states what is most important to them and why to facilitate a space for mutual understanding.
4. The Office of the Prime Minister should continue to strengthen and financially support inter-agency platforms and relationships through forums that permit shared vulnerability and collective problem-solving rather than execution of their mandate.

2

Something Torn and Something New: An Examination of Uganda's Past

"The teeth may smile, but the heart does not forget."

– Banyankole Proverb

A Ugandan in Context

The Committee argues in this section that Uganda's past can provide insight into how Ugandans understand trust by examining how behaviours and perceptions have changed over time. This analysis of the past does not suggest that a specific trajectory of development is inevitable for Uganda. Rather, this examination seeks to present a view of the nuances unique to Uganda regarding one's sense of self or being, one's sense of belonging, and one's systems of belief. Two concepts will be examined in depth: leadership and the young. These examples were selected because they present areas of deep contestation and have a wide selection of literature to draw from. The section will also examine moments in Uganda's past that show how these ideas have changed and evolved.

Trust in the Past: Being, Belonging, and Belief

There has been a tendency in scholarly literature to examine social structures based on their economic significance in the international

development space. The result has been a superficial understanding of social constructs such as clan, kin, tribe, ethnicity, and other forms of social behaviour. This lack of inclusion of such constructs in models of economic behaviour has had lasting impacts on what Ugandan communities could take for granted: programs that simply focused on delivering better results in health, wealth, or human rights have sometimes left communities more mistrustful after programs have concluded (Katarabwa, Richards, and Ndyomugenyi 2000, Akello and Beisel 2019). New political dynamics arose as distributions of power, money, and social connections were disrupted, recreated, and transformed.

For that reason, it is instructive to consider how social structures shaped life in Uganda's past for different groups. One aspect of trust is vulnerability, which we have defined as *the degree to which one is prepared to lose something that one perceives as important*. This definition implies that an actor possesses something and that its value is socially constructed. While still tied to material possessions, value in the past tended to be more about access to those institutions or social structures that allowed one to survive and, in some ways, thrive (Stephens 2018, Seligman 2015). In this sense, the lack of trust across Uganda is indicative less of some fundamental and unchangeable characteristics but rather a reflection of the state of rapid change in which social connections are being preserved and altered. What is at stake for many Ugandans is not necessarily financial or monetary, but the traditions and social tools that facilitate access to financial goods.

There are three interrelated elements in the framing of an individual's place in the world: being or the basis upon which you construct your social existence, belonging, the basis upon which your social connections confer upon you various traits, resources, and powers, and belief, how one makes sense of the world. These elements are a subjective classification: there are many ways to categorize or classify different parts of human life. For this study, selecting these elements simply reflects the Committee's assessment of trends and ideas that are remarkably consistent across disciplines.

One's being or existence is often an idea that we take for granted. You are born, you think, therefore you exist, akin to the early claims of

Western philosophy primarily through Descartes. However, Africanist philosophers and development anthropologists have almost complete consensus: this assumption is wrong. Instead, one's existence is less individualistic and embodied through connections to one's ancestors, community, and land (Chuwa 2012, Mbiti 1990, Ngugi wa Thiong'o 2009, Chabal 2009). Numerous practices corroborate this communal ideal in Uganda. For example, certain practices regarding burial are remarkably similar across tribes, ethnicity, and region in Uganda. Ugandans bury their dead almost without fail in their "home" village, regardless of where they may have lived their lives or grown up. Burial remains a way of connecting individuals with others and their ancestors, a long legacy that placed you not simply as an individual but as an individual-in-community.

The implications that an individual's existence is not simply a matter of individual thought disrupts several assumptions used to assess and understand human behaviour. For example, within classical economics, there is an assumption that decision-making is simply a reflection of an individual's utility function. In effect, their decisions reflect a calculation of various tradeoffs regarding things that they value. The idea that what is most valuable to a person is not solely defined by themselves but in relation to other people's value assessments profoundly changes what a person's decision means and why they made it.

Within this context, one begins to see how land wrangles are shaped not simply by economic interests but by tensions between so-called traditions and modern administrative practices that define how one perceives oneself. In various groups across Uganda, the notion of land ownership as an individual's possession across time was not well-established (Kandel 2017, Stephens 2018). Even *mailo* land, in which one leases land from the *Kabaka* (the King of Buganda Kingdom), does not suggest that somehow an individual holds it. Rather, structures of clan and kin are often part and parcel of its economic usage (Goist and Kern 2018, Mutibwa 2008). Historically, there was a general understanding that an individual held land in trust for the clan or kin. Therefore, members of a particular social group expected broad access, circumscribed by structures of obligation and reciprocity, would be permitted. The common connection to the land and one another, combined

with the threat of social exclusion, was how leaders or individuals could mitigate issues of freeloading or matters of the commons.

Belonging affects how individuals derive value from their social relationships. Various moments in Uganda's past show how belonging has circumscribed ways in which one could exercise forms of accountability, impose obligations, and seek reciprocity (Stephens 2018). Contrary to assumptions by early British anthropologists, people lived in lands they were not originally from due to long-standing histories of inter-tribal marriage, migration, or warfare (Reid 2018). One's community was not just a reflection of shared interests, proximity, or even kinship, but rather a social construct whose definition and form was constantly being negotiated and adapted to serve the needs of the people within it.

Within the realm of belief, one must consider how recourse, where social tools of censorship and exclusion fail, could be used in various ways. It is tempting to dismiss all forms of belief as taboo, supernatural, irrational, or even incomprehensible. However, to do so would ignore decades of history in which witchcraft, the occult, and religion have been highly influential in political and social life. Indeed, early forms of precolonial violence to more modern forms of civil unrest have tended to recognize the role of the occult in what is socially possible (Fisher and Leonardi 2020). Many groups blur the lines between the spiritual and the practical, with examples found in judicial restitution (such as *Mato Oput* in Acholiland) (Macdonald 2019), and structures of leadership such as the *Kabaka* (Kasozi 1994).

At the same time, one cannot dismiss matters of spiritual or religious belief under the assumption that they will fade away with economic prosperity or technological advancement. Much to the contrary: the extent to which Ugandans now subscribe to organized religion is per capita greater than at any time in Ugandan history (Baines 2010, Jones 2005). Notions of witchcraft have not disappeared: rather, they have morphed and adapted to reflect their respective leaders' various interests and theological biases. The result has been the creation of new ways for individuals to make sense of the inexplicable or presumably uncontrollable. While it may provide relief to the adherents of these forms of religion, it is to the detriment of development and policy-related actors to somehow dismiss its relevance to people's decision-making.

BOX 2

The Iteso Insurgency and Makura Massacre

The Iteso Insurgency is an insightful example of how conventional conceptions of ethnicity or kin fail to see belonging as more fluid and dynamic. Early analyses of the Iteso Insurgency characterized it as a reflection of political revenge: the area had remained a steadfast supporter of Milton Obote and had shown signs of not being willing to accept the NRM government. Compounding the situation, the National Resistance Army (NRA) removed support to local militias, and soon after, the pilfering of cattle stocks by Karimojong began to take place. Tribalism and ethnic tensions between the Karimojong and the Iteso provided early explanations for opportunistic pillaging, in which the Karimojong and Iteso were competitive and antagonistic groups. Yet, more recent analyses show that these perspectives did not fully reflect the complexities of the situation: the Karimojong and Iteso were not historically hostile and, at various points in time, treated one another with reverence and as forms of kin.

Similarly, the claim that the withdrawal of support to local militias incited the local violence that followed did not appear to correspond to the limited number of central NRA government officials who were killed during the insurgency. Instead, local elders and local leadership seemed to be the major targets of violence, which younger generations perceived as trustees of the cattle for younger generations. Tensions were palpable as cattle stocks rapidly collapsed from a high of almost 500,000 to almost 60,000 following the insurgency (Jones 2007, Kandel 2017), destroying traditions of pastoral and agricultural practice. Cattle were signs of economic prosperity, and locals used them in marriage negotiations and as sources of wealth. Marauding groups of youth accosted local leaders and elders, who performed acts of both brutality and symbolic transgression in response to the catastrophic loss of cattle: elders dug their own graves, often far removed from their ancestral lands. This act was symbolic in addition to its grotesque horror: it not only upset social dynamics in which the elder was revered and seen as the leader, but it also disrupted a connection to the broader community and ancestry that a dead person

would join (Jones 2007). The disruption of these practices contributed to a rapid change in spiritual affiliation following the insurgency: Pentecostal churches proliferated, often promising a chance to separate with the past through the process of being “born again” (Jones 2005, 2007). In effect, spiritual liberation provided mechanisms for absolution in response to the outpouring of rage and commensurate acts of violence. At the same time, churches preached a theology of liberation from ancestral or “traditional” spirits. This deeply disturbing period in the Iteso region’s history reflects how these tensions in constructing a sense of self, traditions of belonging, and belief, interacted in an altogether unpredictable way that would have implications for its economic, social, and spiritual future.

At the same time, the Mukura Massacre was another reflection of how these tensions compounded further violence. The Mukura Massacre of 1989 was a case in which the 106th Battalion of the National Resistance Army (NRA) allegedly rounded up several hundred men and locked them in a train wagon under suspicion of being collaborators to the Obote regime. After approximately 4 hours, 69 men died of suffocation, and 47 survived (Ogora et al., 2011). The President, Yoweri K. Museveni, would visit the site days later, publicly apologizing and promising compensation for the survivors and a memorial site. While the President kept several of his promises, the Justice and Reconciliation Project (Ogora et al., 2011) noted that many survivors and locals had perceived those overtures as not reflecting their needs. Combined with the extreme delay and poor execution of compensation (some survivors claiming they never received any compensation and over 15 years between the incident and compensation), it reflects how local histories and practices have eroded opportunities for national solidarity.

Trust in the Past: Leadership, Capitalism, and the Necessity of Accumulation

We often conflate leadership with the idea of a charismatic individual who can bring together individuals to achieve a common

goal. This idea of leadership suggests a relationship of power that the leader has over the group. Yet, as scholars of organizational leadership, psychology, and management frequently lament, this conceptualization of leadership assumes a blank slate upon which these individuals have values, desires, and connections given by the leader (Tanto 2013, Ntayi 2013, Yukl 1989). Instead, the relationship is not unidirectional: leaders belong to those they supposedly lead, not necessarily through democratic choice, but through trust. Ugandans appear to exercise inordinate influence over their leaders' actions that demand local corruption and redirect resources in response to poor service delivery (Komujuni and Büscher 2020, Asiimwe 2013, Bukuluki 2013). Instead of exercising authority and pioneering new directions for their constituents, leaders are struggling to navigate the tensions of leadership in which they are obliged to distribute the gains from public office to local interests or risk losing political power and their social standing as leaders.

The common idea of African societies, no less Ugandan societies before colonialism, often speak to a sort of "noble savage", in which poverty did not exist due to the mutual obligations imposed by community life. Early narratives characterized tribes as utopias, where wealthy individuals redistributed their wealth freely, and poverty was generally absent. This description lacks a recognition that few tools were available to those less fortunate to enforce a social contract outside of financial transfers or tax (Stephens 2015). Violence, both intra-tribal and inter-tribal, was relatively common (Kasozi 1994, Reid 2018). In periods of scarcity, warfare to pillage resources (both human and material) was necessary to ensure survival. Leaders, who often had the most to lose, could not rely upon a standing military to call upon and instead had to rely on various tools of conscription, social coercion, and reference to spiritual or political authority to muster armies (Kasozi 1994). Most evident in the Buganda Kingdom, taxation was a way of accumulating massive amounts of resources that could permit more wide-ranging administrative activity and freedom to coerce and demand resources from their people. Leadership became conflated with a redistributive mechanism, not through democratic voting, but rather by withholding or distributing resources and personnel. In effect, individuals trusted

leaders in a particularized manner: to accomplish a particular thing or goal, not as a matter of fact.

The advent of capitalism and introduction into global economies signalled a rapid change in what individuals expected leaders to do and what they could do in turn to their people. In line with assumptions regarding a “modern administration”, the post-independence rulers of Uganda attempted to cobble together various pieces of what was assumed to be desirable: a national army, an impersonal or meritocratic bureaucracy, and democratic voting (Mutibwa 1992, Reid 2018). These ideas were often hastily implemented, failing to fully deconstruct social tools such as socially enforced redistribution, leading to ethnic and tribal tensions. The most pernicious example of the failure to recognize these social tensions was the ethnic homogeneity of the Ugandan military of the 1960s. The ethnic homogeneity of the army, created by racist and eugenic assumptions of who was most suited to military combat (Mamdani 1976), was a source of deep anxiety and unease for decades. Similarly, the political structures used to ensure accountability in leadership were often wholly foreign to the existing and fundamentally unchanged local dynamics across the country (Wiegratz 2010). The idea of nation-building, while initially perhaps adhered to both in word and practice, quickly collapsed in response to demands for development by local groups.

The signals were evident before independence. For example, the movement in the Bunyoro Kingdom in the early 1900s called *Nyangire Abaganda* (I refuse the Baganda) showed how local communities perceived the exercise of indirect rule by British colonial powers as intimately tied with financial and social power (Mbatudde 2013). Perceptions of Baganda as arrogant, corrupt, or power-hungry were symptoms of how inequitable ability to affect the distribution of resources were more important than administrative or technical competence (Mutibwa 2008). Even after Baganda administrators were removed and replaced with local administrators, unrest remained, indicating how administrative leadership and locality were insufficient to give them social authority.

The idea, however that traditional leadership is static or unchanging has little basis. Instead, what is becoming apparent is

how any form of authority that can be appealed to and used to achieve particular ends warrants the most use and, therefore, trust. Studies have indicated that the extent to which Ugandans go to different forms of authority (whether formal or otherwise) does not show extreme levels of differentiation (Golooba-Mutebi 2004, Sanya 2013, Golooba-Mutebi 2018). Instead, constituents held leaders accountable in unconventional ways. For example, in Acholiland, traditional leaders were co-opted by international development partners as local partners in attempts to rebuild following the civil unrest caused by the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) (Komujuni and Büscher 2020, Lundgren and Adams 2014). As bridges between international funds and local communities, local leaders began to prioritize their role as agitators for funds to come to their communities without considering their social authority. When funders withdrew and attention to matters of peace in Northern Uganda decreased, accusations of corruption abounded, and several “traditional” leaders soon lost their authority and any credibility that they had with their constituents (Komujuni and Büscher 2020). However, some “traditional” leaders transformed their practice and, in various forms, re-adopted traditional roles of adjudicating land disputes, witchcraft, and social harmony, often with less financial reward. The financial flow of resources to “traditional leaders” and attempts to “formalize” or “institutionalize” structures of social authority could not fundamentally alter the responsibility of the leaders to distribute the benefits of their position to those to whom they belonged.

In part, this idea of leaders distributing benefits and resources to whom they belonged has its foundations in the various forms of political organization across the country. Regardless of whether one was from more centralized polities (such as Buganda) or more diffuse polities (the Karimojong or Iteso), older men of clans or family structures held positions of leadership (Kasozi 1994, Czuba 2011). Wealth and power were deeply intertwined: wealthy people could call upon the spirits for assistance in periods of scarcity, distributed their resources as a form of social protection when called upon and could therefore demand authority. More impersonal forms of redistributing resources, such as the tax system in the Buganda Kingdom, still vested many resources in the *Kabaka*. Still, the *Katikkiro* (the Buganda Parliament) held the

Kabaka in check through its various clan leaders. In the absence of a monopoly over violence, leaders had limited opportunities to enforce or mandate compliance from their constituents.

Trust in the Past: Youth and the Pangs of Modernity

The youth, one of the largest constituencies in Uganda, is faced with an enormity of tensions in these social structures, exposed to the so-called pangs of modernity. Modernity, in this case, is not just a matter of technological conveniences or access to information. Modernity is how people navigate the past with their understandings of the present and desires for the future. Everything and anything appears to be negotiable, even when, in practice, social worlds circumscribe our behaviours in numerous ways. The decisions of their elders are instructive: it has distorted their trust in these social structures, seeing them as legacies of an ugly and undesirable past, while at the same time striving to find meaning and connections that can sustain them in an impoverished and challenging present.

Youth is by no means a precise term. While modern bureaucracies and institutions classify youth based on numerical chronology, the idea remains new in practice and theory. The persistence of low birth registration has often rendered chronological age meaningless save for necessary interactions with bureaucratic structures. Instead, what makes you mature and capable of adult interactions is socially defined (Beyeza-Kayesha et al. 2010, Seruwagi 2017). The long-standing structures of tradition, such as clans, elders, parents, while transforming, still hold sway in different manifestations (Goist and Kern 2018). One's kin or community may no longer be defined by locality or a myth of common origin, but rather by religious affiliations (Jones 2013, Karlström 2004). Indeed, the shift in family constructions in response to economic urbanization has often made it unclear who has social authority.

In the Ugandan context, chronological existence does not restrict the timing of the transition from a child into an adult with power and authority. The practices of *imbalu* in the Eastern Ugandan region, female genital circumcision (FGM) practices in parts of Karimojong

and Sebei, and other rites of initiation or celebration were structures designed to socialize individuals into their communities (Ochen et al. 2018). Marriage, in other cases, were similar structures designed to do so, as evidenced in the Buganda Kingdom with *ssengas* who were kin who were there to instruct girls into the practices of sexuality and marriage, signalling a move from being a child into an adult (Ndegemo et al. 2018). In effect, the permission to participate in presumably “adult” affairs was and still, to some extent, remains circumscribed by your social standing by those older than you.

Most of these social interventions are rooted in the idea that economic prosperity and social “modernity” are intimately linked. The ideas of liberal values that purportedly are part and parcel of a modern economy would be stifled by “traditions” that would redistribute wealth and restrict the individual ingenuity of Ugandans to be part of a prosperous economy (Pimental 2010, Lundgren and Adams 2014, Kebede 2011). There is, indeed, ample evidence to suggest that greater female emancipation could lead to economic benefits. Still, these debates have obscured how various social belonging and control structures have had value beyond their patriarchal and archaic histories (Abramsky et al. 2016, Ninsiima et al., 2018). The irony in some cases is that these rapid changes in gender roles combined with the shift towards a wage economy have created in their way a new form of social tension.

Conclusions

Based on this analysis of Uganda's past, we conclude that:

1. A sense of shared national identity has never fully emerged throughout the history of Uganda because efforts to cultivate it have failed to reconcile national obligation with one's local or traditional ways of being, belonging, and belief.
2. While critical to short-term regime stability, Macroeconomic growth is not sufficient for creating the conditions for sustained

structural transformation if driven in isolation from socio-cultural transformations in trust.

3. While redistribution of resources was one way of having legitimacy by leaders in Uganda's past, delivering value in non-financial ways and facilitating social coherence was critical to their long-term credibility.
4. The incentive structures of neoliberal policies and practices have contributed to the use of public office as a tool for redistributing personal financial benefits to one's "people" in response to widespread poverty and the limited functionality of systems of service delivery.
5. Younger generations face multiple competing tensions regarding how they construct meaning, compounded by urbanisation, capitalism, and globalisation. These tensions contribute to mental health crises, an increase in transactional and unsustainable relationships, and conflicts between generations.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. Programme managers within the Government of Uganda, business executives, civil society leaders, and international development partners should consider funding problem identification exercises led by implementers and directly affected populations as a separate exercise before project development to produce demand-driven solutions, rather than solution-driven problems.
2. The above stakeholders should ensure that the implementation of their programmes provides avenues for meaningful participation in problem-solving. Participation is not about getting permission or compliance but active buy-in and contributions to the programme's success.

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3. Programme interventions should conceptualise leadership as a structure for facilitating communal problem-solving rather than a vehicle for gaining legitimacy, authority, or compliance.
4. The Government of Uganda and associated programme partners should invest financial resources towards strengthening forums for communal participation to encourage collaborative problem-solving.
5. The Elders Forum of Uganda should receive financial support to facilitate regional dialogues that provide mechanisms for identifying social problems, providing mechanisms for healing social ills, and sustaining ongoing conversations between generations about the way to a violence-free future.

3

Government as “a” Social Contract, Not “the” Social Contract

The Assumed Supremacy of Liberal Democracy as a Functional Model of Governance

Most theories of government have inadvertently assumed the value or functionality of a democratic system and its expression in the Ugandan context. At the core of democratic theories of governance is a “social contract”, in which leaders and citizens have a reciprocal relationship reflected through taxation. However, the reality is that this contract is just one of many contracts that Ugandans employ in their lives to get access to services and live more prosperously. We contend that to understand better how to cultivate a broader sense of trust in the Ugandan government, deconstructing perceptions and understandings of democracy, decentralization, and taxation can show us how struggles over their functionality and value are playing out in practice.

Trust and Elections

Uganda’s recent electoral history shows unresolved tensions in the expression of liberal democracy. Whether it has been the recent introduction of multi-party elections in 2001 to abolishing age and term limits for the President, relatively high percentages of the Ugandan population continue to participate in the electoral system (UEC, 1996, UEC, 2001, Mbatudde, 2013). Despite various ebbs and flows in election-related violence (Conroy-Krutz & Logan, 2012, Mbatudde

2013), surveys show that Ugandans continue to believe in the idea of democracy. What that democracy means to Ugandans both in terms of its practice, purpose, and value is not as straightforward.

Most analysts frame liberal democracy as a social contract between political leaders and their constituents. Constituents pay taxes which political leaders use towards the achievement of particular objectives that their constituents want. The motivation behind electoral intervals is to balance the ability of political leaders to work towards longer-term goals with the ability of constituents to hold leaders accountable for the delivery of their political agendas. The governmental system is assumed to implement these political agendas with an overriding interest in national development. The priority of national interests is adhered to under the premise that all citizens in a given nation-state should be treated equally under the rule of law. Embedded in all of these institutions are particular assumptions about how they should behave with one another.

Governance in Uganda has not conformed well to these assumptions, except the period immediately following independence. Tensions between the local and the national have always existed, often interpreted through an ethnic or tribal lens, and the democratic system at independence was not well-suited to political efforts to try and reconcile these issues. Frequently, proposals that sought to promote a national identity faced fierce political opposition, and leadership resorted to suppression and violence, in part with the presumption that imposing particular visions of Uganda's future might be acquiesced to when they delivered results (Mazrui 1995). In many cases, efforts to consolidate power backfired, compounded by the legacies of colonial systems that racialized positions of power and service delivery through its governance structure. These efforts gave rise to perceptions that politicians and leaders were making national development agendas to the benefit and at the expense of various groups (Mutibwa 2008). In accompaniment to political struggles, the legacies of colonial domination dogged technical leadership, even with the overwhelming optimism that accompanied independence. Divisions created and emphasized by indirect rule only deepened.

Various resets and programs led by different political leaders across Uganda's past have all struggled with accusations of preferential treatment, often framed as one's benefit at the expense of another. During the rule of Idi Amin Dada, he based the expulsion of Indians and subsequent takeover by black Ugandans on the idea that Ugandan Indians were foreigners and therefore suppressed or stifled the ability of black Ugandans to access economic opportunities and development (Mamdani 1976). The effort to build national cohesion through the Constituent Assembly in the early 1990s sought to frame national belonging as being expressed through the new Constitution and the debates that accompanied its development. Yet, all leaders were and continue to be circumscribed by their ability to maintain authority in their local communities: despite rapid changes in the government structure, strategy, and function, citizens' ability to both participate in and experience those changes remain distant and not particularly well-understood.

Ugandans experience these tensions in competing forms of authority, freedom of choice, and shared sacrifice exacerbate the impacts of rapid changes between urban and rural populations on economic opportunity and prosperity. Kampala has seen rapid urbanization in the past two decades. It has grown into a sprawling metropolis (UNAS 2019), accounting for almost 50% of its economic activity, and houses virtually all government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). It has made an economic divide and a social one in which Kampala represents the most robust expression of the shift towards a modern economy, with frequent outbursts of public insecurity. The concentration of political, economic, and social interests in new jurisdictions such as Mbarara, Gulu, Jinja, and Arua creates new challenges regarding who should have power over national resources and decision-making (UNAS 2019). Cities are places in which perceptions regarding democracy diverge most deeply in expression and practice.

BOX 3

Access to Information Act, 2005

Uganda's constitution stipulates the right of citizens to access state information, and Uganda was one of the first African countries to formally legislate this right with the 2005 Access to Information Act (ATIA), followed by the Access to Information Regulations in 2011, which operationalise the Act. The purpose of the Act was to promote efficiency, transparency, and accountability in government and engage and empower citizens to scrutinise and participate in public life (World Bank, 2020).

However, the ATIA has several limitations due to the relatively broad range of exempted information. In particular, there is a lack of effective and independent enforcement and options for appeal, including the absence of sanctions for nondisclosure, which has led public institutions to be inconsistent in complying with the law (World Bank, 2020).

The ATIA and its Regulations specify the classes of information accessible to the public and the procedure for obtaining such information and define restricted classes of information. While the ATIA is under the custodianship of the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, there tends to be confusion at a practical level regarding how to resolve conflicts. For example, a citizen can lodge an internal appeal within the public body that denied the access or lodge a complaint to the Chief Magistrate. However, neither the Act nor its Regulations provide guidance on filing an internal appeal, making it difficult to operationalise, and court processes are often plagued with delays and corruption (World Bank, 2020).

In practice, recent studies have found that civil servants have little knowledge, incentive, or resources to comply or fulfil information requests (Kiiza, Makara, et al., 2019). These findings are corroborated with other findings from a study done under the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative. The study revealed that despite the political will to promote disclosure, full and effective implementation of the ATIA was limited by a lack of administrative appeal mechanisms, negative

attitudes of public officials toward information requesters, general lack of awareness about the law, and poor information storage and retrieval systems (World Bank, 2020). In effect, despite there being a general appreciation for the importance of transparency and access to information, there is evidence that the ATIA cannot function optimally or achieve its intended purposes without changes in how it is funded and rolled out.

Decentralisation: Promises and Vulnerabilities

We describe decentralisation in this report as efforts to balance local and central government interests to improve functionality. Decentralisation has frequently been a source of contention for centuries. In the precolonial era, the most well-known example was the Buganda Kingdom's decentralised political leadership structures (Musisi and Asiimwe, 2007). During the colonial administration, the bureaucracy incorporated local leaders through a policy of "indirect rule". Most recently, the early 1990s heralded a new form again, in which Resistance Councils (RCs) (community-led organisations under the National Resistance Movement (NRM)) were converted into Local Councils (LCs). Almost all of them, for varying reasons, have succeeded and failed in differing ways to facilitate better service delivery and trust.

Intending to transform Uganda into a modern state, the NRM introduced a decentralised system in 1992, which was integrated into the 1995 constitution, and further elaborated in the 1997 Local Government Act. The policies were based on the devolution of power and financial control from central government to empower democratically-elected local governments with the purpose of enhancing local political control, economic development, resource management capacity, and improvements in local accountability (Larok 2008; Onzima, 2013; Musisi and Asiimwe, 2007). The Resistance Councils (RC) model, which to that point had been self-sufficient and self-funded organisations used for security, administration, and mobilisation for the NRM in the

guerilla war, created ideal conditions for local trust-building (Mbatudde, 2013).

Proponents of Uganda's decentralisation policy both domestically and abroad have praised its contribution to more responsive, efficient, and accountable local governance in Uganda, with frameworks for implementing government programmes like Universal Primary Education, the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture, and Primary Health Care (Larok, 2008; Onzima, 2013). Political devolution has allowed citizens to exercise their right to vote for their local leadership, increasing representation and citizen engagement. With area-based planning and budgeting, local infrastructure needs and challenges like bridges and food security can be anticipated and managed more directly (Musisi and Asiimwe, 2007). Under decentralisation, overall access to and quality of social services has risen, and local revenue collection has increased tenfold since the early 2000s (Muyomba-Tamale & Cunningham, 2017; Mushemeza, 2019). All of these successes allow for transactional, "encapsulated interest" forms of trust to emerge between citizens and their local leaders and possibly lay the foundation for the emergence of broader social norms of trust.

For many years, international partners and academics lauded Uganda's decentralisation policy as one of the most comprehensive and integrated local government reform programs in the developing world. In many ways, it initially showed evidence of increased local participation in designing, owning, and contributing to government programs and fostering a more engaged, tax-compliant population (Okidi and Guloba, 2006; Larok, 2008; Mushemeza, 2019; Musisi and Asiimwe, 2007). However, while the rollout and establishment of the policy saw early successes, the efficacy of Uganda's decentralisation efforts have slowed in the past decade, attributed to a contradictory national planning framework involving: (1) an unsustainable proliferation of new districts, (2) recentralisation of local authority and financial decision-making, (3) wage ceilings and public service requirements leaving new districts understaffed, and (4) loss of the dedicated Joint Annual Review on Decentralisation (JORD) due to lack of financing, among others (Mushemeza, 2019).

Since the NRM takeover in the late 1980s, the number of districts in Uganda has increased from 19 under Idi Amin to 134 as of March 2021. This expansion of districts, which began rapidly accelerating in 1997, is greater than any country in the world over this period, and Uganda has more high-level sub-national units, with fewer people per unit than any other large African state (Green, 2010).

The cost of creating a district was initially relatively small, and the early successes of decentralisation indicated that Ugandans could benefit from a new district in their area. The low cost to citizens initially allowed for this considerable increase in new districts without significant fiscal consequence. But with evidence now showing that new districts have become increasingly costly to form and maintain and have been functioning relatively poorly in service delivery, the justification for this vast increase remains unclear (Green, 2010, Mushemeza, 2019).

Some argue that new districts are created to increase political engagement, improve service delivery, and quell ethnolinguistic tensions. However, there are concerns that newer districts are, in reality, both highly inefficient and may *create* ethnolinguistic tensions. Instead, the most likely cause of district proliferation seems to be political (Green, 2008). It is notable, for instance, that the onset of the spike in district creation in 1997 coincides with the opening up of elections. It seems likely that the central government primarily uses district creation for currying political favour through patronage (Green, 2008). Additionally, local leaders see the creation of a new district as a means to access the vast resources of the central state. District proliferation is thus driven from both the bottom-up and the top-down, structured by logics of resource extraction and maintaining political power, respectively.

BOX 4

Baraza Program

In 2009, the Prime Minister's Office initiated the "Baraza Program", an effort by the Government of Uganda to facilitate citizen-government interaction and promote more effective monitoring and evaluation of projects. The district and the sub-counties are supposed to hold community dialogues or *Mabaraza* to share information with the community on what had been planned, implemented, remained to be implemented and to explain the reasons for any variances (Mushemeza, 2019).

Since an initial pilot in 4 districts in 2011, the program has been expanded to 112 districts as of 2018 (ISER, 2018). In practice, the Baraza Program is headed by a district RDC, local government officials, and technical leadership from the Prime Minister's Office going over initiatives taking place in the district and getting feedback from citizens (ISER, 2018).

An external evaluation from the International Food Policy Research Institute in 2017 focusing on Bagezza Sub-County in Mubende District suggested that the program was an overwhelming success. On several occasions, citizens perceived increased responsiveness to citizen concerns by government officials, increased enforcement of accountability for community projects, and greater compliance to professional standards by service providers (Van Campenhout et al., 2017).

At the same time, the evaluation found that some government leaders wanted citizens to take a more active and self-driven role in both preventing and responding to issues in the community instead of waiting for government action. While the implementation was an initial success, it was clear that trust between citizens and government officials was fragile, and the report emphasized the necessity of continuity and sustainability of the program in order to build on the gains of the program (Van Campenhout et al., 2017).

Furthermore, evidence suggests that this kind of Baraza success story is highly localised and context-specific, with most local governments unable to conduct Barazas citing lack of funding, owing to the highly monetised rollout of the program in which citizens were initially offered, and have come to expect, fees for attending the meetings. This reality has largely undermined the Baraza as a method of citizen participation (Mushemeza, 2019).

Still, in the counties where it is successful, an impact evaluation from the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) found a greater willingness amongst citizens to contribute cash for common good projects such as boreholes for drinking water, schools, and health infrastructure, and see this engagement as a sign that barazas have the potential to increase trust in officials and strengthen the social contract (Van Campenhout & Mieke, 2021).

Critics of decentralisation have long noted how such reforms opened possibilities for district and local government capture and public resources for patronage. When a new district is created, a whole new set of technical and administrative staff must be hired, including six executive secretaries, a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Resident District Commissioner (RDC), deputy CAO, deputy RDC, along with a District Auditor, Clerk and Assistant Clerk, Community-Based Services Manager, Education Officer, Engineer, Extension Coordinator, Finance Officer, Director of Health Services, Information Officer, Inspector of Schools, Land Officer, National Agricultural Advisory Services Officer, Personnel Officer, and Planner, among others (Green, 2010). District creation thus generates valuable new public service positions that can be used to reward loyal political allies.

The payroll must include a new district chairperson and a new set of district councillors representing special interest groups such as women, youth, and the disabled, which require 13 individuals per district on average. As lower-level officials are promoted upwards to fill these positions, new job openings are created at all local government levels. Those who claim that new districts are created as a means of regime maintenance through patron-client arrangements see the creation of these

political positions as guarantees of support from local governments to the incumbent for having made those positions available (Green, 2015). Decentralisation can thus represent a continuation of personalised politics, in which loyalty is tied to the person of the President for making these positions available rather than to the institutions of government. The personalisation of politics severely limits the potential for forming broader norms of social trust in society. This patronage system can thus be viewed as a reproduction of the many iterations of transactional arrangements throughout Uganda's tumultuous political history that have engendered distrust within society (Green, 2010).

While the jobs created through district proliferation may seem to benefit the residents of these districts, district leaders have pointed out that creating new districts frequently leads to logistical and administrative problems and may not result in improvements to service delivery (Green, 2015). A study conducted by the International Institute of Social Studies found that the average district spends Ush 14 billion annually, with local revenues contributing on average as little as Ush 632 million to the district budget (Hout et al., 2017). If new districts cannot improve service delivery in practice—whether because of limited financing or capacity, mismanagement, or political interference—they will be unable to contribute to the formation of transactional trust in society.

As a result of the thin spreading of resources and the low local revenue generated by many districts, key departments and functions of local government are unable to operate effectively, if at all. For instance, functions like the Internal Audit Office remains very weak across districts, further limiting the possibility that established bureaucratic processes can contribute to the growth of trust (Mushemeza, 2019).

While there may be some measurable positive outcomes from decentralisation, the idea that the system has improved democratic representation is undermined within a context of political patronage. The goals of the original decentralisation mandate—facilitating local ownership and service delivery—have been supplanted by goals of maintaining the status quo and a transactional approach to trust between central and local leaders, with citizens largely left out of the equation.

BOX 5
Local Government Council Scorecard Initiative

In 2009 Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), in partnership with the Uganda Local Governments Association, developed the Local Government Council Scorecard Initiative (LGCSCI). The program was developed in response to an assessment that service delivery improvement from Local Councils (LCs) is key to bolstering citizen trust in local and central government. With most monitoring systems stemming from institutions embedded in the supply side of service delivery, the scorecard initiative proposes that centering accountability measures within the demand side of service delivery would empower citizens and communities to demand results from their representatives and engage local officials in dialogue (Tumushabe et al. 2010; Hout et al., 2016; Muyomba-Tamale & Cunningham, 2017).

The LGCSCI's three main activities are: 1) an annual assessment of district councils' and councillors' performance based on a scorecard; 2) feedback reports on assessments, covering the included districts and a synthesis report providing a comparative analysis; and 3) capacity building activities aimed at increasing the effectiveness of councils and councillors on the one hand and citizens' demand for accountability on the other hand (Hout et al., 2016).

LGCSCI targets citizens, civil society organizations (CSOs), and local governments. The scorecard is designed to foster and promote a culture of informed and engage citizenry and responsive and accountable governance (Odugbemi and Lee 2011). The initiative's central premise is that monitoring and providing information on LGC performance to citizens will be encourage accountability of local officials. The model is meant to scale upwards to the national level through local governments and CSOs, resulting better performing local government officials and more effective service delivery (Muyomba-Tamale & Cunningham, 2017).

LGCSCI targets citizens, civil society organizations (CSOs), and local governments. The scorecard is designed to foster and promote a culture of informed and engaged citizenry and responsive and accountable governance (Odugbemi and Lee 2011). The initiative's central premise is that monitoring and providing information on LGC performance to citizens will encourage accountability of local officials. The model is meant to scale upwards to the national level through local governments and CSOs, resulting in better performing local government officials and more effective service delivery (Muyomba-Tamale & Cunningham, 2017).

Researchers have found that as a social accountability tool, the scorecard methodology has positively influenced political processes resulting in successful economic and social welfare reform for citizens. Councillors in scorecard districts are perceived to have been less corrupt since the intervention was put in place and while only 17% of incumbent councillors were returned in districts nation-wide, in the 30 districts where the scorecard was implemented 42% of incumbents were re-elected to positions in the district councils. In districts such as Moroto, Lira and Nakapiripirit, the return rate was as high as 75%, 74% and 64% respectively (Hout et al., 2016; Muyomba-Tamale & Cunningham, 2017).

Furthermore, interviews with participants have found some evidence of improvements in public service delivery, which could be attributed to the improved performance of councillors. For example, interviewees gave examples of how the performance of health units had improved due to councillors' strengthened monitoring activities, which contributed to better staff attendance and drug supplies (Hout et al., 2016).

The Auditor General's report in 2019 noted that local governments continue to experience understaffing, with the cause attributed to an ongoing hiring freeze (OAG, 2019). Despite the intent of decentralisation to enhance service delivery, government officials have been tentative about distributing funds to districts with poor service delivery track records (UNAS, 2020). However, the regular creation of

new districts without the requisite financing to increase local capacity building hardly gives these districts a chance to build a strong service delivery infrastructure. Given the lack of capability to capitalise on this infrastructure, the result is further deterioration of trust in leaders' ability to ensure a functional system of service delivery and instead focusing on the particularities of their ability to distribute resources.

Taxation and Accountability

Service delivery, a primary function of central and local government, is a process that requires buy-in from all societal stakeholders: individuals to pay their taxes, civil society organisations to represent the needs of citizens to funding bodies, local governments to engage contractors and allocate funds, private sector businesses and government agencies to execute the contracts, central government to collect and redistribute taxes, and oversight bodies to ensure the propriety of all parties.

Effective service delivery is therefore a useful indicator of trust in society. However, the complex matrix of steps and stakeholders involved in the process means there are many inherent vulnerabilities that can frustrate service delivery. These often stem from a lack of available resources as the result of poor tax compliance and collection, inadequate execution of contracts, as well as the misallocation and misappropriation of funds. Government reports from the Auditor General frequently highlight poor absorption of funds, lack of adherence to project timelines, and exposure of the government to legal challenges and fiscal insolvency. Social surveys also frequently indicate low overall trust of leaders by citizens (OAG, 2016; Fiala and Premand, 2018). These deficiencies are compounded by perceptions of corruption in all parts of the public procurement process in spite of an internationally recognized and robust set of laws, regulations, and policies (Wanyama 2021). In effect, it is not for lack of an enabling structure, but rather that the structure is not adjusted to suit the needs of the context.

Taxpayers are more likely to comply with tax requirements from the state if they experience tangible benefits from public spending, and

an absence of these benefits has meant poor perceptions of government legitimacy and low tax morale. Beyond poor service delivery, perceptions of corruption and lack of clarity on tax obligations further hamper tax compliance (UNAS, 2020).

Uganda's corruption perception index (a quantitative measure of national perceptions of corruption) remains poor, ranking 153rd of 181 countries (Transparency International, 2015). Companies and individuals alike point out the necessity of bribes to receive what should be free services, and episodes of grand corruption are well-publicized but poorly prosecuted in the courts (Transparency International, 2015).

Petty corruption in some parts of Uganda's public sector is a largely normalized method for meeting one's ends. According to a 2013 World Bank Enterprise Survey, roughly a quarter of businesses reported expecting to provide gifts to public officials in exchange for their services (World Bank, 2013). Another study from 2015 found that roughly two of every five Ugandans reported paying a bribe to officials in the previous year (Transparency International, 2015). Reporting has found that this type of corruption is so standard that bribes are requested and paid out in full view without any resistance, as if part of standard procedure (IGG, 2008). A 2012 audit found that public funds were being funnelled into the government salaries of more than 5,000 "ghost workers" across the public administration (Gaffey, 2016). The scheme, which required cooperation between the Ministry of Public Service and the Ministry of Finance, cost billions of shillings in taxpayer money (Wesaka, 2019).

These issues are compounded by a lack of capacity or interest in the institutions that are mandated to correct the action. An Auditor General's report in 2016 noted that approximately 40% of local governments are fully staffed, whereas approximately 40% are severely understaffed, creating conditions in which successful service delivery was never fully possible or expected (OAG, 2016). The resulting difficulty in delivering services engenders a cycle of persistent mistrust between citizens and government.

BOX 6
Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys

To combat misappropriation of state funds intended for service delivery initiatives, Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) have been used in many countries to highlight gaps in delivery of funds to the local level by tracing money allocated from central government to the target facilities. The idea of PETS is that by exposing diversion of funds to the public, government and citizens will be motivated to act through investigations and sanctions and applying pressure on elected officials (Sundet, 2008).

The PETS methodology involves a combination of surveying budget data and publishing results in national and local newspapers, and led to a cut in misappropriation of funds intended for primary schools from 80% to 20%. The Uganda PETS has become one of the most frequently cited success stories in the anti-corruption literature and has spawned a large number of similar initiatives in other countries (Sundet, 2008).

The originators of the PETS methodology stress the importance of the information campaign aspect in this process, noting that leakages had reduced significantly more in schools that were closer to the nearest newspaper vendor (Reinikka and Svensson 2003).

Evidence also suggests that taxpayers do not comply with their tax obligations primarily because they do not understand their obligations. This lack of understanding may be due to overly complex tax processes and regulations, insufficient public outreach, or simply opaque and partially implemented systems. One key example of this lack of understanding comes from the recent creation of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA)’s Public Sector Office (PSO) as a separate office to manage the tax affairs of government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) (Saka et al., 2018). Even though in practice government MDAs are—or should be—large taxpayers, very few revenue authorities treat these organizations as a separate segment of

taxpayer. The PSO was formed as a unique and innovative solution to a persistent problem observed in Uganda: persistent tax defaulting and late payments to the URA from MDAs (Saka et al., 2018). Within its first year of operation, the PSO had increased revenue collection from MDAs by 194% compared to the previous year. The PSO is now the second largest contributor to government revenue in Uganda, after the Large Taxpayers Office (Saka et al., 2018).

BOX 7
e-Government in Uganda

Since the early 2000s, Uganda has been experimenting with e-Government projects and in 2010 formulated its National e-Government Policy. The policy identifies several services and processes that are being progressively rolled out on internet-based platforms for greater efficiency and transparency, with the goal of enabling citizens and officials to easily interact, access and provide services, and concentrate valuable information in a public forum (Nabafu & Maiga, 2012; World Bank, 2020).

The e-Government Policy Framework provides for a range of platforms through which government services are to be delivered, such as the internet, telephone, electronic media, and communication centers, and identifies three broad areas of focus—government-to-government, government-to-citizens, and government-to-business services. These include electronic birth and death registrations, a public electronic recruitment system, a financial management information system, a government internet portal that would make all available government information public, land registry, passport and immigration services, environmental information management system, and an e-procurement system for all public procurement (World Bank, 2020).

Despite economic and technological challenges in its implementation stemming from lack of adequate resources for ICT programs, a lack

of coordination and training across government, and varied quality of network connectivity, the government has rolled out several e-Government programs (Nabafu & Maiga, 2012).

In August 2014, the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and National Guidance, along with the Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa and the Africa Freedom of Information Centre, launched the online platform www.askyourgov.ug. The platform is one of several efforts aimed at improving the accessibility of information to the citizens of Uganda. Citizens can make information requests to different public bodies via e-mail. The e-mailed query is shared publicly on the website and an e-mail is sent directly to the relevant information officer, who must provide a response within 21 days. The responses are also published on the Ask Your Government website and can be viewed by the public (World Bank, 2020).

The government established the Government Citizens Interaction Centre (GCIC) in 2017 as a primary contact center for citizens, to enhance the monitoring of service delivery and provide a channel for feedback and suggestions from citizens. Through GCIC, the public can communicate with the government through various channels, make inquiries, and obtain government information and documents. GCIC has a database of key government institutions and a resource center that contains information on various ongoing government projects (World Bank, 2020).

A study examining the creation of the PSO found that a major contributor to its success was the implementation of “soft” compliance strategies, such as organising taxpayer workshops, making phone calls to relevant contact persons to remind them of filing deadlines, and working one-on-one with relevant officials to ensure a complete understanding of their tax obligations and the procedures and processes for filing (Saka et al., 2018). These findings suggest that in some cases—perhaps especially for large organizations—poor compliance rates may in fact be due to a poor understanding of tax responsibilities and processes, rather than intentional non-compliance. In other words, the key intervention

that led to large tax compliance improvements rested on an intentional process of relationship-building, in which the URA sought to build norms of mutual trust between their institution and other MDAs.

These factors speak to two different barriers to trust, one on the side of the citizens, and one on the side of the government. When project delivery is poor as result of corruption, and when accountability measures are poorly enforced, there is little basis for citizens to take a leap of faith to trust their government. However, there is also a responsibility on the side of citizens to be actively aware and committed to their own involvement in the national development agenda. In this case, that means being aware of and accountable for tax obligations.

Conclusions

Based on this evidence, we conclude that:

1. While Uganda's constitution outlines a strong commitment to free and democratic political processes, it has operated parallel to other forms of leadership and authority, making it only one of several forms of obligation and accountability meaningful to Ugandans.
2. The proliferation of new districts and the over-involvement of the central government in local decision-making and financing have undermined the gains made through decentralisation in improving local representation, service delivery, and local accountability.
3. Despite implementing various transparency and accountability measures, limited trust in the mechanisms for accountability and access to services hamper service delivery and tax compliance.
4. While public participation in government programmes is laudable, its effectiveness is contingent on whether it solves or provides evidence of progress towards problems of value

to constituents. Participation without influence decreases the willingness of citizens to trust in the absence of success.

5. While the national constitution of 1995 was a laudable attempt to reset the nation's political order, its ability to demonstrate value to local citizens in solving local problems remains poor despite efforts to educate officeholders. This lack of perceived value contributes to the usage of public office as a mechanism to redistribute meagre resources to constituents rather than as an expression of political interest in the development of rules that permit citizens to meet their needs and interests more effectively.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development should consider creating or strengthening existing platforms for local authorities (clan heads, religious leaders, and other traditional leadership structures) to participate in and influence local development agendas to enhance the value of the national constitution.
2. The Government of Uganda and International Development Partners should invest in implementing the National Monitoring & Evaluation Policy, focusing on long-term and process-focused evaluations. Shifting focus from programme results to trust in processes can ensure that valuable evidence on how to improve the participation of local communities in programmatic interventions can be found and applied.
3. The Inspector-General of Government (IGG) and the Anti-Corruption Unit in the President's Office should frame integrity and anti-corruption efforts in terms of how to manage

competing formal and informal obligations on officeholders in a transparent manner, rather than as a moral failing.

4. The local scorecards initiative by the Advocates Coalition for Development and the Environment (ACODE) should be provided with sustained funds and incorporated into annual exercises for assessing Parliamentary activity in addition to local governments across the country.
5. Government regulators and authorities should be supported with greater resources to improve their local or regional presences across the country combined with efforts to understand better how to adjust the delivery of their mandates to assist problem-solving in local communities.

Civil Society: Problem-Solving as Political

Competing to Deliver Results

The Committee argues in this section that service provision is not solely the responsibility of the government. Civil society organisations (CSOs) play essential roles in filling gaps in service delivery, advocating for change where desirable, and sharing information on local interests. The ability of CSOs to trust and be trusted is critical to executing more complex and multi-stakeholder projects because it promotes relationships built on a shared commitment to problem-solving. CSO or NGO projects that are perceived to be operating parallel to market, government, or traditional structures are often subject to more stringent oversight, are treated as havens for political opposition, and frequently collapse when removing funding. Problem-solving and how civil society is perceived cannot be fundamentally divorced from political interests. Therefore, examining civil society platforms that have been able to navigate problem-solving in ways that work cooperatively with existing service delivery mechanisms can lend new insights into building trust and delivering services more effectively.

A Conflicted Ideal: Notions of Civil Society

What civil society is, where its boundaries begin and end, has never been clear. Most scholars have suggested very broadly, that civil society can be conceptualized as a all voluntary associative activity that is not political (Tripp 1998, Larok 2008, Mugisha et al. 2020). Other scholars

point out that clan associations, religious organizations, and other non-traditional organizations, should be included in these conceptual definitions. The reality of this general conceptual haziness has been that the civil society space has tended to highly dynamic. The result has been a space of little trust, where suspicions and opportunistic actors have constantly counter-balanced efforts to promote greater inclusivity and influence over public policy and practice.

Despite this conceptual haziness, there has been a general agreement that the driving idea behind CSOs is to increase opportunities, freedoms and rights enjoyed by all citizens and to promote transparency and accountability in the use of authority by those in power. CSOs are often described as institutions that bridge the gap between the public and the government, and therefore play a crucial role in trust-building and civic empowerment (Mugisha et al. 2020). In theory, CSOs and government are therefore meant to complement each other in overseeing public and private sector performance, and in meeting the needs and priorities of communities.

Interviews have shown that the relationship between civil society and the private sector is evolving in Uganda, with the establishment of the Private Sector and Civil Society Initiative, a structured platform for CSO and private sector engagement. It aims to build sustainable partnerships and amplify the voices of both actors. Partnerships between CSOs and the private sector are increasing to a certain extent, with the private sector seeing the importance of playing a role in improving social conditions (Wanyama, 2017).

In terms of relationships between trade unions and government, on policy issues the government and trade unions tend to work well together, with government stakeholders calling on trade unions to present their views and contribute to national development planning. Donors have also supported greater collaboration between employer associations and trade unions, contributing to improvements in social dialogue at the national level in Uganda (OECD, 2018).

However, the relationship between government and CSOs is not always amicable, especially with NGOs whose purpose is to hold government accountable, and to advocate for marginalised communities. The concept of “civility” has often been used by the

Ugandan government to enforce restrictive legislation at the expense of the public's constitutionally mandated rights to civil liberties, effectively curtailing this branch of civil society (Hammett & Jackson, 2017).

The government's control of CSO activities through legislation, as with Uganda's 2013 Public Order Management Act (POMA) and the 2016 NGO Act, stems from a lack of existing trust, and further weakens trust between these sectors. CSO relationships with the public have also been strained in some cases by corruption caused by lack of established internal monitoring systems within CSOs.

A History of Tension and Conflict

Prior to colonial rule, many communities in Uganda were organised around clan associations through which community members interacted with one another. Internal clan associations were orderly hierarchies, and are believed to have formed a stable, cohesive, and responsive forms of political and social order. In the centralized kingdoms of Uganda, such as Buganda and Bunyoro, this form of political and social order is viewed as the origin of civil society (Mugisha et al. 2020).

During the colonial era in Uganda, CSOs were limited and highly regulated. But cooperative unions of export crop growers, trade associations, mission-founded schools and hospital associations, and other, basically charitable organisations were encouraged. By the 1940s, developments in the formation of the civil society movement were motivated primarily by the desire to achieve political independence (Fourie and Kukamba, 2011).

In the 1950s and 1960s, policies based on state-interventionist development thinking encouraged the creation of formal organisations to drive economic development, and to limit political dissent, providing momentum and growth to the trade unions that had been started in the late 1940s and 50s. For example, in the 1950s, a deliberate colonial policy was implemented to facilitate the organisation of workers—society generally—into trade unions. These trade unions were seen as critical drivers for mobilising citizens towards nationalism and economic production and transformation (Mugisha et al. 2020).

These trade unions worked perhaps too well for the colonial powers that put them in place, and with heightened nationalistic struggles against colonial rule, civil society groups became agents of political agitation for independence. Some of these CSOs would give rise to pre-independence political parties. By 1961, there were over 39,000 registered organisations across all sectors of the economy, rising from 259 organisations in 1951 (Fourie and Kukamba, 2011; Mugisha et al. 2020).

After independence in 1962, having seen the potency of the independent union movements in political organising, Obote's UPC took over CSOs and reformed them into government bureaucracies, blurring the distinction between civil society and government. During the reign of Idi Amin, remaining CSOs, and particularly those run by the Churches, were instrumental in fighting the authoritarian tendencies of the regime. In the 1980s civil war following the Obote's resumption of power, the NRM Resistance Councils (RCs) were formed and used to mobilise society and coordinate the movement across the country (Mugisha et al. 2020).

The NRM's decentralization reforms establishing a new democratic order, and opened space for the emergence of many indigenous CSOs. The establishment of the Local Councils after 1986 suited the renewed CSO activity, and the subsequent decentralisation policy gave CSOs the ability to interact with and impose some pressure on state authorities, especially at the local level (Fourie and Kukamba, 2011).

In the 1990s, when development thinking shifted from direct state intervention to more neoliberal, market-based approaches, NGOs took control of the civil society space. Many previously established groups, such as trade unions, suffered, as the new forces of reform made it difficult for them to survive. Prior to reform, these unions represented many farmers and thus formed the bulk of the civil society movement, which was routinely courted by the government for political support (Mugisha et al. 2020). Beginning in the 1990s, as donor funding flooded into the country to support the burgeoning NGO sector, trade unions, cooperatives, and more grassroots based CSOs became less influential.

These reforms have been credited with restoring macroeconomic stability and improving fiscal prudence. But they came at a cost: that

of significantly reducing the state's capacity to provide public goods and services to citizens. Poverty rates remained high and the shortage of social services made the demand for donor-backed NGO support even stronger. NGOs supplemented the gaps in service delivery that the state left behind in the wake of privatisation reforms. This new role for NGOs had the consequence of undermining pre-existing, socially-rooted, membership-based civil society groups in preference for more service delivery-oriented NGOs—though some trade unions do remain quite strong (OECD, 2018; Mugisha et al. 2020).

In the years that followed, a vast amount of development assistance went to NGOs in nearly all development areas, including health, education, water and sanitation, environment, gender, research and governance. Donors preferred to channel their financial support directly to NGOs, because they were considered less corrupt, more efficient, and closer to the community (Fourie and Kukamba, 2011; Mugisha et al. 2020). This shift in the development approach, away from member-based organisations and towards NGOs, has in many ways undermined possibilities for direct citizen engagement in development, and as a consequence undermined trust.

The current situation for CSOs in Uganda presents a number of challenges related to how CSOs are perceived and treated by the government. Furthermore, compromised or ineffective internal structures to ensure accountability have strained relationships amongst CSOs and between CSOs and the public. These issues stem from and engender a lack of trust.

Collaboration, Progress, and the Struggle for Civility

TSome CSOs—especially those focused on economic development, poverty alleviation, improving conditions of health and education—enjoy strong relationships and partnerships with the government. For example, the National Organization of Trade Unions of Uganda, Uganda's largest labour unions representing over 440,000 workers, has special representation in parliament through five worker seats that are elected with the same privileges of general members of

parliament, which has helped the labour movement to advance their agenda, particularly on minimum wages (Fourie and Kakuma, 2011; OECD, 2018). The government also has partnership arrangements in which CSOs that act as sub-contracted agents for service delivery are able to access donor funds through sectoral ministries (Lister and Nyamugasira 2003; Fourie and Kakumba, 2011).

BOX 8
**NGO-Government Partnerships to Strengthen the
Social Contract**

Social protection and social accountability initiatives are often promoted as a mechanism for renewing or strengthening the social contract between citizens and the state in developing countries. Social protection consists of policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability in marginalized groups. Proponents of social protection advance the argument that such interventions can enable the integration of previously marginal groups into society, and as a result increase social cohesion (Devereux, 2007). Others suggest that such measures have an additional broader range of “policy feedbacks” associated with voting habits and regime stability (Barrientos and Pellissery, 2012). In essence, by providing for the needs of specific groups the state becomes more legitimate in the eyes of citizens. Social accountability refers to policies and programmes that aim to increase citizen voice and power in service delivery decision-making processes. Social accountability mechanisms are also argued to strengthen and extend the social contract by increasing the perceived legitimacy of the state, and by providing citizens with a sense that they have a direct stake in the governance of their communities (Joshi and Houtzager, 2012).

Assessing such claims can prove difficult for researchers and scholars, as concepts like legitimacy and the strength of the social contract cannot be measured directly. Some survey evidence, however, does support such claims. Citizens have reported, for instance, that being informed and consulted about social protection or accountability

policies and programmes, and the inclusion of clear mechanisms to raise grievances in the course of implementation, are what counts in improving their perceptions of state legitimacy (Mazurana et al., 2014). In short, it is the way in which goods and services are delivered that strengthens the social contract, rather than the direct provision of goods and services per se. These findings shed doubt on the argument that is sometimes advanced in development circles that the prominent involvement of non-state actors in service delivery undermines state accountability and “depoliticizes” popular agency through a technocratic approach to citizen participation (Bukenya, 2016). What matters more than who delivers particular services or programmes may be how the different stakeholders work together to ensure that vulnerable groups are protected and citizen voice and power are respected.

The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) Uganda provides an example of the government and an NGO working in concert to strengthen the social contract. TASO is an indigenous NGO established in 1987 to help prevent HIV, and restore hope and improve quality of life for people, families and communities impacted by HIV/AIDS (TASO, 2020). Beginning in 2003, TASO initiated the Mini TASO Project (MTP) as a capacity-building programme that involved various training sessions for government health workers, coupled with financial support to district hospitals, and supporting citizens to demand their rights from service providers. The aim of the MTP was not simply to provide services to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHIV), but rather to transform local health systems so that PLWHIV are recognized as full citizens and receive their required treatment in a transparent and accountable manner (Bukenya, 2016). District hospitals did have access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) before the MTP, but did not have the capacity or space to provide education and counselling to PLWHIV. As a result, prior to the MTP health workers recruited few patients to ART, levels of retention on treatment were low, and interactions were characterized by a relationship of “mutual mistrust (Bukenya, 2016).”

Following the MTP, the number of PLWHIV on treatment increased by between 50% and 75%, depending on the hospital (Bukenya, 2016).

Respondents also reported that the attitude of health workers changed dramatically. Where PLWHIV were previously treated as “sinful,” or as second-class citizens, post-MTP hospitals were much more likely to treat them with respect and dignity. These successes were achieved, in part, by the organizing of client representative committees, and client-staff meetings that enabled citizens to be “invited inside the governmental apparatus itself” to influence programmes that directly affect them (Bukonya, 2016). As a result, participants reported improved perceptions of state legitimacy. By providing mechanisms through which bargains between citizens and state representatives could be negotiated and renegotiated on an on-going basis, the MTP in effect facilitated a political process to strengthen the social contract between citizens and the state. This success story provides evidence that partnerships between NGOs and governments can help to strengthen the social contract, especially when they are arranged to both “civilize the state,” on one hand, and to empower citizens on the other.

Increasingly, however, CSOs whose mandates fall outside of these narrow issue areas—such as CSOs who advocate for marginalised groups, or who are otherwise critical of the current government—are stifled through various tactics, including legislated restrictions on certain topics, practices, partners, and gatherings, withholding and redirection of funding and information, threats of violence, and intimidation (Hammet and Jackson, 2017).

The civil society movement in Uganda was historically used as a platform by many political leaders to gain access to political office. However, once in office, they have often become suspicious of the organisational potency of the civil society movement, and sought to absorb it within the state apparatus, and enact laws to delegitimise it. The outlook of government in this dynamic seems to be that CSOs are “the opposition,” whereas this category of CSOs see their allegiance as to justice, and holding powerful agents accountable (Mugisha et al. 2020).

In navigating the relationship with government, the onus is put almost entirely on CSO actors to demonstrate that they are respectful of government institutions and not overly critical (Hammet and Jackson, 2017). Scholars have noted, for instance, that participation in the policy process is by invitation from government officials, who often choose to exclude CSOs deemed critical of the government (Lister and Nyamugasira, 2003).

BOX 9
Non-Governmental Organisations Act, 2016

The 2016 Non-Governmental Organisations Act (NGO Act) is a law whose stated purpose is to provide for a conducive and enabling environment for the NGOs sector, increased capacity of NGOs, improved partnerships with government, and registration and regulation under National Bureau for Non-Governmental Organisations (Wanyama, 2017). However, despite these attempts at regulating NGOs, the Act contains several provisions with the potential to create difficulty for the effective democratic engagement of CSOs in Uganda, particularly regarding the rights to freedom of association and expression, and the distinction between government regulation versus control (Chapter Four, 2015).

Critics claim that the Act attempts to curtail the freedoms of certain types of CSOs, especially those of NGOs advocating for social justice whose mandates run contrary to positions taken by the government (Wanyama, 2017; Mugisha et al., 2020). The Act states that all organisations intending to operate in Uganda as CSOs must work within the goals and objectives approved by the Bureau upon penalty of accreditation revocation, fines, or imprisonment. The law also allows for formation of Non-Governmental Organisations Monitoring Committees at district and sub-county level, which have been criticized for creating bureaucratic processes that delay and frustrate the work of CSOs. Local councils and monitoring committees must also be made aware of and approve NGO convening with the public, further limiting the capacity of CSOs in public engagement (Wanyama, 2017).

Further, provisions which restrict activities that are “prejudicial to the security and laws, [...] interests, [...] and dignity of the people of Uganda,” remain vague and have been used to limit rights to information, freedom of speech, expression, assembly, and demonstration (Wanyama, 2017). Wanyama (2017) notes that “this level to state that the usage of vague terms is not only unconstitutional and contrary to article 28 (12) of the Uganda Constitution that requires for clear definition of criminal offences, but a means to limiting and frustrating the practice and enjoyment of human rights and freedoms in Uganda.” Many civil society activists see this move as intended to curtail the ability of CSOs to independently execute their function of holding government to account (Mugisha et al., 2020).

The current government has increasingly grown distrustful of civil society, so much so that it has enacted laws, such as the Public Management Order Act, aimed at weakening the capacity of civil society groups to organise and, therefore, limiting their capacity to shape Uganda's governance agenda. In 2016 the NGO Act was passed, aimed at directly governing the activities of NGOs (Mugisha et al. 2020).

BOX 10
Public Order Management Act, 2013

In 2013, the Parliament of Uganda passed the Public Order Management Act, 2013 (POMA) in response to increased public protest by opposition parties and some CSOs (Mugisha et al., 2020). The stated purpose of the law was to regulate public meetings; clarify duties and responsibilities of the police, organisers, and participants in public meetings; and to prescribe measures for safeguarding public order (Kasacca, 2013). The passing of POMA raised concerns for human right organisations, CSOs, and opposition political parties owing to its restrictive nature and its potential to curtail civil and political liberties.

Specifically, sections of the bill give the police the final say to as to whether a public assembly can be held or not, and broad authorisation to use force to disperse assemblies, arrest, charge and impose criminal charges on organisers and participants of public meetings. Furthermore, the law provides broad definitions of what a public meeting is and how a private meeting might turn public, leaving interpretation of these to the police as well (Wanyama 2017).

Critics point out that this law undermines the constitutional provisions for freedoms and civil liberties related to public assembly and association, and an Anti-POMA campaign has formed consisting of CSOs organising to challenge the law in the courts (Kasacca, 2013; Mugisha et al., 2020). Concurrently, the law and its enforcement has tended to be more prohibitive than facilitative, with public meetings, especially those held by opposition political parties, increasingly handled as security issues and blocked or dispersed by the police (Mugisha et al., 2020).

While the police have the obligation to facilitate the right to assembly, these confrontations present a negative image of the role of the police as a violator of constitutionally enshrined rights. These confrontations negatively affect the growth of democracy and trust within society.

Various developments, such as the adoption of the POMA, are seen as serious impediments to the functioning of CSOs. Reports indicate that at the district level, restrictions placed on NGO activities by Resident District Commissioners further frustrate CSO activities. There is a broad perception that the space for civil society is shrinking in Uganda, specifically for those organisations doing advocacy work interpreted as politically sensitive to those in power, undermining the autonomy and functioning of CSOs (World Bank, 2020). It is difficult however, to determine whether that perception has been informed by a more effective compliance force (in the form of government regulation) or by changes in the capacity of CSOs to hold powers to account.

Responding to such restrictions, CSOs create networks and alliances with other organisations, citizens, and sympathetic government ministers and civil servants to navigate the imposed restrictions on their

activities (Koh & Soon, 2012). The challenge is that while these groups can gain momentum in their initial stages of formation, restrictive legislation often quells their organising efforts, and when new CSOs are created and foiled in short order, engaging citizens remains a substantial challenge (Mugisha et al. 2020).

The Citizens' Manifesto, a document created by the Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform aimed at combatting public apathy in the face of these government restrictions, argues for the strengthening of Uganda's social contract in promoting citizen engagement, democracy, and better governance (UNNF, 2010).

BOX 11
Social Media Tax and Community Organizing

Digital technology is reshaping the way that information flows in modern society, overcoming limitations of time and space in communications. These changes not only affect how we connect with other people and how we do business, but also how we interact in the political sphere. In that context, social media can be considered as a potential tool for facilitating social contact between citizens and the government, and as a result can influence the way that relationships of trust develop (Kamp, 2016). For instance, government can use social media to solicit public feedback on policy proposals, or CSOs can use social media to organize and coordinate advocacy campaigns to shape public opinion and influence policy. Social media platforms can help citizens to explore new methods of cooperation and collective action, and they can provide opportunities for people to mobilize around a common cause, or to sensitize the public about a particular issue (Kamp, 2016). In short, digital technologies and the social media platforms they enable are becoming ever more central to the relationship between civil society and government.

Others argue, however, that the democratizing effects of social media and ICT access are overblown. It remains unclear if the availability of diverse information in the open space of the internet actually increases

transparency and accountability. Instead, some argue that the diffusion of unfiltered information rather creates confusion, populism, defamation, and hate speech, and undermines any productive relationship between citizen groups and their government (Kamp, 2016). Does social media access actually produce a more active and engaged citizenry, or does it simply lead to a generation of “slacktivists” or “clicktivists”, as some observers have argued (Kamp, 2016)? In theory, social media access should facilitate better community organizing and more effective advocacy—but how can this potential be balanced against its apparent drawbacks?

In 2018, the Government of Uganda intervened directly in these questions by implementing a Ush 200 daily “over-the-top” (OTT) tax for citizens to use any one of more than 50 mobile communication apps. At the time, the new tax was justified on the joint rationale that it would raise additional revenue needed for service delivery (Kafeero, 2021a), and would curb online lugambo (“gossip”) (Suruma, 2018). The new OTT tax led to a widespread outcry and public protest, with objections focusing mainly on how the tax would impact businesses and educational opportunities (Kafeero, 2021b). Less central to the discussion were questions about how the OTT tax might affect community organizing and the broader trust environment between citizens and their government. Many commentators have advanced the claim that the purpose of the OTT tax was actually to clamp down on inconvenient political dissent, demonstrating a clear lack of trust on the part of government towards citizens (Boxell and Steinert-Threlkeld, 2021).

Since 2018, a number of published studies have shed light on the impact of the OTT tax on community organizing. First, according to the Uganda Communications Commission’s own data, the number of internet users in the country dropped by 30% following implementation of the tax, with more than 3 million dropping off in the first three months (Kafeero, 2021b). Studies have also suggested that Twitter users were reduced by 14%, and that the effects were larger for poorer and less frequent users (Boxell and Steinert-Threlkeld, 2021). The OTT tax also fell far short of its revenue targets, raising only Ush 48 billion of the planned Ush 284 billion (Kafeero, 2021a). In short, as a revenue tool the OTT tax has proven to be a relative failure, with

many users able to circumvent the tax through the use of virtual private networks (VPN). As a tool to curb online “gossip,” or make digital engagement more productive, it is feasible that the policy has been a moderate success, purely by way of decreasing overall social media access. However, the available evidence suggests that the impact of the OTT tax on public discourse has been highly inequitable, primarily impacting the poorest members of society and effectively restricting the potential of the internet to provide an open space for public discussion (Boxell and Steinert-Threlkeld, 2021).

In July 2021, the Parliament of Uganda repealed the OTT tax and instituted a new 12% excise tax on mobile data bundles instead, with exceptions made for data used for medical or educational purposes (Kafeero, 2021b). The new excise tax is expected to be harder to avoid, as it cannot be circumvented by VPN. As a result, it's likely that the new excise tax on data bundles will have similar inequitable impacts as the OTT tax in terms of limiting online public discourse to only those able to afford the price increases for mobile data that are likely to follow.

But challenges for CSOs are not limited to restrictive policy from government. Essentially by design, NGOs—although portrayed as citizen-responsive organisations—often do not represent the interests of citizens, since many do not have a grass-roots membership base. NGO agendas can be largely shaped by donors, and the citizens to whom they provide services may have limited opportunities to influence their programmatic work in practice.

CSO Accountability: From Whose Hand Do You Eat?

For CSOs to maintain credibility, they must operate in a transparent, accountable, and inclusive manner. From a theoretical perspective, accountability implies that CSOs must be answerable to some recognised entity, and the literature differentiates between CSOs' upward accountability to donors, downward accountability to the

constituents they represent, and internal accountability with regard to accomplishing their objectives (Mugisha et al. 2020).

Critics of upward accountability from CSOs to donors claim that the prevalence of donor funding has created a dynamic in which NGOs, which now dominate the civil society sector, are susceptible to the demands and frameworks of foreign donors on whose aid they depend. In terms of downward accountability, there is evidence to suggest that a growing number of NGOs treat the availability of donor funding as a form of “industry,” rather than as a means to execute on their mandate of representation and service delivery. Some CSOs also lack clear internal mechanisms to monitor their propriety.

In 2013, the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that there were over 12,500 registered NGOs, up from just 200 in 1986. Donor support to civil society from 2006 to present has been premised on the assumption that CSOs can serve as a platform for mobilising and facilitating citizen participation in political, economic, and social processes aimed at promoting transparency and accountability in governance (Mugisha et al., 2020).

The financing difficulties of CSOs render them dependant on sources that increase their vulnerability to compromise the good virtues that they stand for. First, high levels of poverty make it difficult for CSOs to raise meaningful membership fees from the clients they serve. As a result, CSOs are highly dependent on donor financing, which can undermine accountability to those they serve. Second, the need to stay afloat has sent many CSOs to seek handouts from governmental bodies like the district local governments, whom they are supposed to monitor and demand accountability from on behalf of the citizenry. Third, the engagement of CSOs as sub-contractors in service delivery—whatever the contracts are worth—makes them pursuers of business interests, and appendages of the local government establishment, with less enthusiasm for promoting strong bonds within the community and downward accountability (Fourie and Kakumba, 2011).

Several studies document the high dependence of CSOs on donor funding, estimating that donor support accounts for more than 80 per cent of all CSO revenue in Uganda. As such, there is a trade-off between top-down and bottom-up accountability (Mugisha et al., 2020). NGOs

were originally preferred by donors because they were seen to be closer and more responsive to citizen needs, as well as swifter in the delivery of public goods and services because they were unencumbered by bureaucratic “red tape.” But as donors’ developmental interests have shifted, so has the formation of new NGOs and the programmatic focus of existing NGOs, in order to capture new sources of funding from donors (Mugisha et al. 2020). It’s thus unclear if the shifting focus of CSOs has more to do with the needs and desires of the communities they represent and serve, or more to do with the priorities of their funders.

Donor preference for funding through non-governmental groups helps explain the statistical growth of the NGO sector from just 200 registered NGOs in 1986 to 12,500 registered NGOs in 2013. Many of these CSOs are very small, and sharply divided with unclear pro-people agendas, often making it difficult for the public to know who is actually capable of representing their interests effectively (Fourie and Kakumba, 2011; Mugisha et al. 2020). These CSOs—often located in urban areas—do not always engage with their constituencies in a frequent and meaningful manner to forge sustainable connections, supporting the theory that CSOs are being established in response to the availability of donor funding, and that their agendas are shaped by those resources rather than by a desire to address the needs of their constituents (Mugisha et al. 2020).

We have also seen cases in which some CSO leaders form organisations specifically to attract the attention of powerful agents in government to negotiate for their inclusion into the broader patronage networks that continue to stabilize government. Many of these groups appear just before or during the election period. For example, in the 2016 general elections, the country witnessed the rise of youth groups such as the NRM-Poor Youth, whose leaders eventually ended up working for the government. These practices have promoted divisions within civil society, making it difficult to construct an alliance around the core functions of civil society such as promoting citizen participation, representation and accountability (Mugisha et al. 2020).

These practices continue in part due to a lack of internal accountability structures in some CSOs, enabling the shift in focus away from the stated goal of representing the interests of communities. Many

CSOs are centred around the influence of powerful founding individuals with connections and networks in the donor community (Mugisha et al. 2020). Increasingly and over time, the civil society movement that has come to dictate agenda-setting for political and economic governance in Uganda has been greatly shaped and influenced by specific “NGO leaders.” These leaders are not nested in any form of membership base that they represent, and thus limit the participation and representation of citizens in the governance discourse (Mugisha et al., 2020).

The Ugandan public perceives many NGOs as corrupt organizations that engage in financial mismanagement and nepotism. Responding to the prevalence of these perceptions, a cooperation of NGOs has developed a standardised program called the Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM). QuAM focuses on boosting the credibility, effectiveness, and public legitimacy of the civil society sector, and to correct for the existing lack of guidance manuals on procurement, fundraising, human resource management, risk assessment, anti-corruption, anti-fraud, and poor internal accounting systems (Wanyama, 2017). QuAM is monitored by a body of national council members and QuAM committees at the district level in 23 districts. The program offers certificates to NGOs who register and meet their minimum standards of credibility (Wanyama, 2017). The QuAM thus represents an acknowledgement in the CSO sector of the problems outlined in this report. It also represents a self-driven and collectively-owned solution to these problems. The flexibility to recognize problems when they emerge, and then organize independently to tackle those problems, is one of the greatest strengths of CSOs in general.

Conclusions

Based on this evidence, we conclude that:

1. While some CSOs focused on service delivery and economic development enjoy support and cooperation from the central government, several pieces of legislation purporting to increase CSO efficacy have limited the space for civil society

organising in Uganda, especially for those organisations that seek to hold government and other influential stakeholders accountable.

2. In some cases, a lack of adequate internal accountability structures has left CSOs vulnerable to corruption, leadership capture, and a shift in priorities away from public representation and towards appeasing funders.
3. A lack of consensus on both civil society and its function is creating an adversarial and antagonistic relationship between the state and civil society actors.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Uganda National NGO Forum should consider supporting an independent arbiter to constitute a dialogue platform. This platform would facilitate discussions between civil society actors and the Government of Uganda to help build consensus on addressing conflicts of interest, particularly around public dissent, accountability, and freedom of speech and thought. The inclusion of the civil society Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM) hosted by DENIVA (Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations) would be critical to such a platform's success.

5

Private Sector: Understanding the Trusted Entrepreneur and the Corporation

The Family Business: The Origins and Purposes of Entrepreneurship

The Committee argues in this section that classical analyses of economic development that have focused on the process of “structural transformation” have missed out on what makes an entrepreneur in a given context. Entrepreneurs and their economic value cannot be divorced from their social, cultural, and in many ways, personal lives. The continued prevalence of a so-called “informal” economy shows that these ties deeply influence enterprises and their broader growth and success. To better facilitate private sector growth and, by proxy, trust in its ability to deliver services efficiently and profitably both nationally and internationally, one must understand the social, cultural, and personal dimensions of entrepreneurs that facilitate and inhibit the accumulation of financial capital.

Fighting to Grow: Economic Development Efforts

At the time of Ugandan independence, colonialism had left a fragmented and divided country, making the formation of a stable political and economic settlement a particularly challenging task. At that time, agriculture accounted for 50% of GDP and 93% of employment. Half of the agricultural output came from subsistence farmers, and the

other half was dominated by exports of unprocessed coffee and cotton (Okuku, 2008; Walter et al., 2020).

Carrying over the policies of state-led industrialisation introduced by the colonial government in the 1950s, the Obote government attempted to industrialise and diversify Uganda's economy from a very low base. Using the concept of import substitution industrialisation (ISI), the idea was to replace foreign imports with domestic production through rigorous investment in industrialisation (Ggoobi et al., 2017).

Along with this approach, the Obote government introduced several interventionist policies to drive industrial development and protect domestic production, like heavy import duties and tight quotas on foreign goods that directly competed with locally-made products. However, political instability meant that industrialisation could not be realised before the government had to shift its focus from economic development to political survival, redirecting funds towards security and patronage, ushering in a period of economic insecurity and capital flight (Walter et al. 2020).

Idi Amin's 1971 coup introduced policies and government investments focused on maintaining the status quo, rather than on pursuing meaningful socio-economic development, with no meaningful industrial policy introduced during this period. By the end of the 1970s, virtually all of the industries established with government support in the 1950s and 1960s had collapsed, and Obote's brief return to power in 1980 did not yield any significant economic reforms (Okuku, 2008; Walter et al. 2020).

After seizing power in 1986, the NRM initiated a sustained period of political and economic stability, starting with distributing economic resources to key interest groups. While the NRM had initially tried a state-led approach to industrialisation, economic and trade deterioration compelled it to accept the World Bank and IMF's financial assistance and debt relief, conditional on Uganda's adoption of their Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) (Walter et al. 2020).

The ERP involved reforms such as liberalising coffee markets, enforcing tax compliance through the creation of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), currency devaluation, and a unified exchange rate to

reduce so-called “anti-export bias”, among others. The combination of these reforms and a prolonged period of political stability allowed the private sector to grow, resulting in a stable macroeconomic environment (Walter et al. 2020).

However, while providing a stable macroeconomic environment, the ERP also contributed to the entrenchment of corruption and patronage, which ultimately undermined trust in the government and the privatised economy (Twimukye, 2011). Results of the liberalization process have been borne out in a reversal of progress in several areas of early success, including shifting labour from agriculture to manufacturing and services, export diversity, and growth of the manufacturing sector (Walter et al. 2020). For example, while efforts have been made to move some of the working population from agriculture to manufacturing, early gains in this area have been largely reversed, with agriculture’s share of total employment increasing again in recent years. This shift reflects a working population that is growing faster than the manufacturing sector, leaving large swathes of the working-age population without formal job opportunities (Walter et al. 2020).

Beginning in the early 1990’s, Uganda’s exports became increasingly diverse—an early indicator that industrial development was poised for rapid expansion. But since 2015 export diversity has stagnated and even reversed, returning to the export of mostly primary resources, leaving the economy vulnerable to changes in global commodity prices (Walter et al. 2020).

Some scholars have blamed this reversal of progress on the adoption of a too strong liberalisation program, without an accompanying active industrial policy to guide the process and ensure that investments in infrastructure target specific, strategic industries. International evidence has suggested, for instance, that an interventionist “developmental state” has been a key ingredient in success stories such as South Korea (Kohli, 2004). To address these concerns, the government has recently begun taking a more active role to provide intentional policy and guide the investment process in key infrastructure like roads and electricity (Walter et al. 2020). For example, Uganda’s third National Development Plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 has as one of its five key objectives to “strengthen the

role of the state in guiding and facilitating development,” and concrete initial steps have been taken in this direction (Walter et al. 2020).

The government has also shown its commitment to developing core infrastructure with its investment in 22 industrial parks being built around the country. Furthermore, Uganda Development Bank and Uganda Development Corporation have been revived to provide growth capital to growing industrial firms. Significant investment has been made in electricity infrastructure (see Text Box 12) and more is being made in road networks. As well, Vision 2040, the main policy paper steering the government's plans to transform Uganda into a competitive upper-middle income country, centers industrialisation as key in reaching its target to increase the labour share of industry and manufacturing exports (Walter et al., 2020).

In the context of these historical developments, the present status of trust in the private sector is largely centered on a shift in economic development strategy towards government-led industrialisation driven by the realisation that the private sector, left to its own devices, is unlikely to make the long-term coordinated investments in technology and capabilities needed for new higher-value-added economic activities (Walter et al. 2020).

To enact its vision of economic growth, the government has adopted policies aimed at developing public-private partnerships (PPP). The intention of such PPPs is to direct private investment towards projects that will benefit the whole of society, particularly in the areas of energy and infrastructure (OECD, 2018).

In 2010, Uganda adopted a formal PPP Framework Policy with the goals of establishing better allocation of public funds, more efficient public infrastructure development, enhanced public service delivery, and increased economic growth and foreign direct investment. In 2015 the PPP Act was passed into law based on these principles (OECD, 2018).

The Public Private Partnership Committee, introduced by the PPP Act, approves PPP proposals, ensures that agreements serve national priorities, develops policy, and oversees accountability and efficiency mechanisms throughout the duration of agreements. Furthermore, it implements citizen education campaigns and carries out research to

improve PPP implementation. Development of further PPP policy and initiatives remains ongoing. At the local level, PPPs are also being introduced through local economic development forums, municipal development forums, district investment committees and local Chamber of Commerce chapters (OECD, 2018).

BOX 12
Public-Private Partnerships for Service Delivery

PPPs have been widely hailed as a strategy to harness the productivity and efficiency of the private sector to deliver infrastructure and services for citizens. The provision of such infrastructure and services—being one of the primary responsibilities of government—is in turn expected to increase citizen perceptions of state legitimacy, increase social trust, and strengthen the social contract.

Often, however, such PPP schemes fail to achieve their promise. Studies have shown that successful PPPs rely on, among others, enabling legislation, strong supporting institutions, proper planning procedures, and a good fiscal accounting and reporting frameworks (Chaponda, 2013). In the absence of these conditions, some past PPP schemes have not represented value-for-money, have cut off opportunities for accountability and citizen engagement in decision-making, and as a result have undermined trust in society (Ndandiko, 2006).

But Uganda does have some PPP success stories, which demonstrate the potential of such schemes when the conditions are appropriate. Umeme Ltd., for instance, was awarded a 20-year concession for the supply and distribution of electricity to customers by the state in 2005. Since then, Umeme's investments in the distribution infrastructure (estimated at US\$500 million) have led to several successes, namely: loss reduction from 38% to 17%, increased access to electricity with an estimated 1.2 million customers now connected to the grid compared to 296,000 before the concession was operationalized, and improvements in distribution efficiency from 50% to 83%; the addition of 10 new substations to the network; the deployment of innovations

such as automated meter reading technology; and the construction of 45,000 kilometres of new distribution network (World Bank, 2020).

Additionally, Umeme has made efforts to comply with the Capital Markets Act Cap 84, which, among others, requires compliance with the Uganda Securities Exchange listing rules. Under these rules, all listed entities are obliged to disclose to the general public any information that is likely to have a material effect on the financial results, financial position, or cash flow of the company (World Bank, 2020). Consequently, Umeme regularly publishes detailed information on its website, including annual reports and audited financial statements, updates on litigation, changes in board membership, and information on tenders.

Umeme thus represents a case in which the privatization of a public utility—coupled with close collaboration with government—has led to measurable service delivery improvements, along with increased levels of transparency and accountability. As a result of these achievements, Umeme has advanced public and political confidence in the company. More than 6,000 Ugandans now own shares in Umeme, and the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) has recently become the majority shareholder (with 23%); this has generated significant public goodwill (Godhino and Eberhard, 2019). These developments have served to open the power sector—not only to the private sector, but to a wider and more diverse set of Ugandan stakeholders, including the general public.

The success and stability of private sector involvement in the supply and distribution of electricity in Uganda can be credited, at least in part, to a structured plan to gradually shift ownership of Umeme, through an initial public offering (IPO), to domestic entities. As a Ugandan political analyst and Umeme investor has remarked, “You want as many local entities as possible to be in charge of the economy because they’re not going to run away at the first sign of trouble (Aglionby, 2017).”

In Uganda’s third National Development Plan, PPPs feature prominently as a source of financing for the infrastructure, health, and education sectors, where project cost recovery is potentially high through self-financing. The government communicates with the private

sector through business associations and foundations like the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), which advocates on behalf of more than 190 business associations and works with the government and development partners to develop mutually beneficial policy (OECD, 2018).

Channels like the Private Sector Forum provide structured environments for public-private dialogue throughout the policy cycle, and existing PPPs have already seen success in construction, hydro-electric power, and natural resources. The Private Sector Forum estimates that over 74% of the private sector's proposals to the government for the budget in 2016/17 were adopted (OECD, 2018).

While much legislation has been developed to support PPPs, limited information related to these projects is made available to the public, with only 5 of 28 active PPP projects listed on the PPP Unit's website, and alternative information difficult to find. This paucity of information is partly due to the limitations of the Access to Information Act, which largely exempts information related to private businesses (see Text Box 2). Lack of detailed disclosure regulations and guidelines provide further challenges to record-keeping and access (World Bank, 2020).

PPPs present an opportunity for trust to develop between government, the private sector, and citizens. But it also presents an opportunity where trust could be further undermined—especially if these large and expensive projects fail to achieve their goals, are delayed, or are perceived to be caught up in patronage politics and subject to secretive deals and favouritism, as was the case with the privatization process. In other words, the shift towards PPPs to fund large infrastructure project presents a distinct opportunity: if projects are implemented fairly, effectively, and transparently, then they will represent a repudiation of earlier experiences related to the privatization process that resulted in broken trust. Making information on PPP projects freely and easily available would be the first step in achieving this goal.

Informality and Formality: The Hidden Costs of Transparency

The Ugandan economy has faced the challenge of “informality” for decades, in which the vast majority of economic activity does not directly interact with the formal agencies of public control such as tax collectors or regulators. Often framed as a problem of added value, efforts have been made to try and reform the process by which businesses could register and participate in the formal economy, with limited success. Instead, the challenge is deeper: perceptions of the formal economy and its commensurate demands on entrepreneurs are larger than registration or participation in the formal economy because of what they suggest to social, political, cultural, or family networks: wealth.

Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) represent the majority of Uganda's working population. As in other developing countries, MSMEs are characterised by a high degrees of informality, often only operate for five years or less, and tend to have limited access to affordable finance. Many of Uganda's MSMEs operate in the informal sector that employed 86.2% of Uganda's working population in 2015 (OECD, 2018). Most studies note that it is not just about affordable finance, but instead the ways in which entrepreneurs have to set crucial boundaries in how they balance social and financial boundaries (Schoch 2014, Rooks, Szirmai, and Sserwanga 2009). Most successful entrepreneurs who make the transition from informality to formality have found effective ways of both getting value from their social and familial networks without subscribing to more detrimental demands for preferential treatment (Khayesi and George 2011, Khayesi, Sserwanga, and Kiconco 2017). The family and kin's demands to participate or “eat” in the benefits of the business are circumscribed without social or cultural cost.

In this context, one frames efforts to remedy issues of business capacity as tending to focus on proximal or technical causes of business failure (lack of finance, lack of a marketable product, lack of infrastructure etc.) without considering the social, cultural, and political elements that circumscribe an entrepreneur's decision-making. To remedy this, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives has started to develop policies aimed at enhancing business support, access to

finance, technical and business skills, and a more enabling environment for MSMEs. Other government institutions like the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development and the Uganda Investment Authority have also started including MSMEs in policy development. Furthermore, the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda has rolled out initiatives to support skills development, entrepreneurship promotion, and business incubation (OECD, 2018). Despite these promising recent developments, engagement between MSMEs and government remains limited.

Charity, Philanthropy, Social Marketing or None of the Above: Understanding Corporate Social Responsibility

It is in this frame of reference that one begins to see how corporate social responsibility (CSR) can tend to focus on market share when it is not the relevant source of value for the consumer. Presently, CSR in Uganda is still commonly understood in terms of philanthropy, charity, or social marketing in which CSR serves a proximate strategic purpose: to gain social capital from a regulator or as a means of improving brand recognition and reputation. Such an approach is not wrong; rather, it tends to miss the value proposition for consumers which focus on their relationship with the brand's ability to serve their immediate needs. By framing CSR as a process by which the business presents itself as a member of the community, rather than as a process of convincing the market of its interests and value addition, it can potentially strengthen consumer loyalty and interest in the product because it competes effectively in the marketplace of providing relevant value.

For instance, few companies in Uganda have formalized or institutionalized CSR policies, indicating that they have not been incorporated into broader corporate strategy. The government has also yet to develop a CSR policy framework to guide companies on the most appropriate and useful types of interventions. While some large companies in Uganda do make use of CSR strategies, the practice is extremely limited, especially among MSMEs (OECD, 2018). At the same time, consumers do not particularly well understand what CSR

is intended to achieve: any number of different strategies can yield different perspectives depending on where the respondent lives, their economic status, and prior engagements with the company providing the CSR (Scherz 2010, Kasekende et al. 2015). The lack of a clear winner suggests that no particular way has totally won over the trust of the audience because none have clearly won a threshold of consistency or shown them to be capable of providing for the needs of the consumer in a way that shows them as a business-in-community, rather than as a business and market.

The lack of a clear consensus both in perception and application of CSR limits their impact on sustainable development, despite the fact that CSR investments by large firms can have measurable, positive impacts on development and SDGs. CSR practices, currently, tend to focus on poverty reduction, with some businesses also supporting better outcomes in health, skills development and education, combatting corruption, supporting human rights and addressing environmental degradation (OECD, 2018). However, without any common agenda or platform to coordinate these activities, and without any clear mechanisms to collect and centralize data on their outcomes, it is unclear what benefits are actually accruing and how they could be maximized.

Presently, CSR activities remain largely *ad hoc* and unpredictable. Some organisations to support CSR initiatives are emerging in Uganda, such as the Uganda Chapter for Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives Ltd., and The Institute for Corporate Governance of Uganda, which provide CSR information and advisory services and seek to foster values of accountability, transparency, integrity and responsibility in corporate governance (OECD, 2018). However, the sector would benefit from more open dialogue and explicit coordination towards commonly-defined goals.

Conclusions

Based on this evidence, we conclude that:

1. In Uganda, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial decision-making are not wholly divorced from local social obligations and impositions from one's family, kin, and community. They play a moderating role both in terms of entrepreneurial participation and success.
2. Local social and cultural considerations can drastically influence the public perceptions of considerable accumulation by multi-national and trans-national corporations, thereby affecting the extent to which communities either support or resist their economic activity.
3. While the relationship between civil society and the private sector is beginning to develop, there is still much room for increasing dialogue and partnerships between the two sectors.
4. While corporate social responsibility (CSR) is becoming more relevant to business leaders and more frequently used by companies in Uganda, it has little influence on public perceptions. Its impact on company bottom lines has seen little systematic examination.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, we recommend that:

1. The listing rules for the Uganda Stock Exchange should consider shifting away from a shareholder centred model of corporate disclosures and engage with local business communities to examine how investors and businesses can incorporate non-financial capital into assessments of corporate value.

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2. The Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU) should consider drafting recommendations on accounting principles applicable in the Ugandan context, particularly in the areas of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) disclosures and reporting.
3. The business community in Uganda should consider establishing a forum on corporate philanthropy and charity to understand better the added value of social marketing and corporate social responsibility (CSR) to sustainable development.
4. The King IV Code should be introduced as the standard governance code for all publicly listed companies and distributed to newly registered companies to guide their decision-making and long-term strategy development.

6

International Development Partners: Learning to Fail

The Assumed Supremacy of International Development Orthodoxy

The Committee argues that the continued supremacy and control of international development scholarship from the Global North has deeply influenced why international development initiatives in the Global South continue to see only limited success. The powerful knowledge ecosystem on international development primarily located in the Global North has a long history of convincing arguments for both the necessity and inevitability of particular development models, at the expense of local and particularized examinations of what development means and development's creation. While more recent efforts such as the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Agreement in 2011, have signalled shifts in development orthodoxy, they remain heavily informed by certain assumptions of how to replicate development and economic success that is rooted in the Western experiences of the here and now, rather than in a contextual understanding of the places in which one desires development to occur. The result has been an approach to development that misunderstands what has value in a particular development context and has privileged conforming local realities to international models, rather than using local realities to inform a functional model that may disrupt Western orthodoxies of development and, ultimately, replace them.

The Tensions of Home and Abroad: Balancing Domestic Accountability and International Functionality

While the origins of international development and foreign aid are often considered to have started in the United States in the 1950s following World War II, its motives and expression are largely characterized by the nations providing it. In general, most international development funds have been driven by two sometimes complementary and sometimes competing motives: international development as diplomacy or serving a domestic purpose, and international development as charity and humanity. Depending on which countries have been giving the funds, the institutions of international development have had differing expressions and ways in which they balanced domestic political interests and agendas with their application. The different interpretations regarding international development and its purposes have therefore made it not only difficult for their funding partners to see them as having a shared stake in their development, but also privileged a particular expression of trust in practice.

The history of international development in the United States is informative in understanding how domestic and international interests collide and change. International development was initially exerted by the United States in response to the Cold War (Lancaster 2007). Combinations of espionage, covert operations, explicit funding, and poverty-related development investments, were all employed to try and ensure not only international legitimacy and support, but also to provide new opportunities for countries around the world to participate in global systems of trade and governance. By no means were these strategies unchanging: the end of the Cold War heralded a rapid shift in how the US funded its international development operations through USAID and its particular geopolitical priorities. In some cases, USAID focused on entrepreneurial development, in others, good governance (Lancaster 2007). At the same time, USAID developed its own internal politics, attitudes, and perspectives on what made international development not only important, but why and how it should be used.

Other countries did not always subscribe to these models of international development. Scandinavian countries, namely Norway,

Sweden, and Denmark, tended to focus on the usage of international development as charity, thereby limiting its instrumental use for domestic interests (Kleibl 2013, Lie 2015). The emergence of NORAD, SIDA, and DANIDA as development agencies that explicitly focused on how to improve the human condition of their partners, motivated their practice and their funding priorities in terms of national development. At the same time, what was permissible or desirable in terms of their partners, was different particularly in terms of how funding partners were held accountable.

These tensions in how to both practice, frame, and participate in development processes have been labelled in different ways by various scholars. In cases where these approaches have tended to promote greater efforts to consolidate control over the development process, scholars have tended to see neo-colonial practices (Lie 2015). In other cases, it is framed as a necessary component in exiting the so-called poverty trap (Easterly 2006). No clear consensus is ever fully arrived at, but rather continually contentious interpretations over the value and practice of international development. The lack of consensus is often glaringly ignored: each development agency will subscribe to its own way of understanding and framing its actions without necessarily considering that such devotion to its own ways of thinking may be detrimental to its own functionality and the effectiveness of its partners (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2021, Asiamah, Awal, and Maclean 2021, Kebede 2011). In effect, to expose their models of theories of development to not simply scrutiny, but potential disruption, is to in effect disrupt their own understanding of why and what they are providing international development assistance for.

These persistent tensions have not prevented new orthodoxies or consensus from coming to the forefront. Most recently, the Paris Accords (2005) and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Agreement in 2011 all attempted to try and clarify practices that all development partners should abide by (OECD 2018). These consensus principles for development assistance effectiveness included country ownership, national plan alignment, harmonisation between development partners, managing for results, and mutual accountability, and represented a supposed turning point in the way that development

assistance would be deployed. Its applications however, relies almost entirely on mutual trust between its subscribers to apply its principles.

In the Ugandan context, international development partners have been relatively consistent in this regard. Recent assessments by the OECD highlighted general adherence by bilateral and multilateral partners to these principles including alignment with national plans, the funneling of development assistance through public financial management mechanisms for budgetary support, and the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks led by the country (OECD 2018). This remarkable achievement indicates widespread trust amongst international development partners to these principles, even if those investments are premised on certain assumptions regarding government, civil society, the private sector, and the impact of the Ugandan context on predictability of human behaviour.

One way in which one can see the limitations of these assumptions and relationships is in the pressure that international development partners can exert in the cases of financial impropriety. For example, corruption scandals, including one in 2012 that involved the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), prompted the suspension of donor funds to the Government of Uganda for several years by numerous bilateral partners including the UK, Denmark, and Ireland, and multilateral partners such as the World Bank. More recently, both Germany and the UK froze funding to UNHCR Uganda following the release of an audit report by the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services that documented collusion between OPM staff and the refugee agency. The audit revealed that UNHCR Uganda, seemingly in coordination with some OPM officials, had wasted millions of shillings overpaying for goods and services, awarding major contracts improperly, and massively inflating the number of refugees that were supposedly receiving money and provisions. Yet, by 2017, the World Bank reinstated its funding modalities alongside other partners and the creation of new donor vehicles such as the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) that sought to exert greater control and oversight of funding. In response, most recently, the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) was outright closed by the President as a vehicle for political opposition and failing to represent domestic interests. Diplomatic overtures to try and ensure

the survival of the DGF revealed deep seated animosities and suspicions particularly in the government, regarding the usage of international development funds. Studies have tended to confirm these suspicions: that the withdrawal of funds is not necessarily perceived as a threat or as necessarily changing behaviour (Swedlund 2017). Instead, local authorities perceive these international development funds as dangerous anyways, and instead, their usage of them is not premised on trust, but on their ability to deliver on their priorities, whether national or local in scope.

International Discourses on Power and Decolonizing Science

While international development funders are confronted with these tensions between their domestic politics and international functions, they are being confronted with new tensions in terms of how the theoretical and practical foundations of their operations are perceived and studied. Coinciding with more recent global efforts that have sought to resist narratives that have framed development as deeply intertwined with Westernization and their own challenges with histories of race, inequality, and segregation, international development partners have been making efforts to try and expose themselves to new ideas and ways of thinking about development. While some of these efforts remain largely fledgling and are often the least funded (if they are funded at all), they do reflect the extent to which international development orthodoxy is being challenged to change its practice.

One of the areas in which this orthodoxy is being most challenged is in regards to how social sciences are used to inform policy. One of the most contentious areas in social programming has been the usage of Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) in international development context as a proxy for its broader universal applications (Prichett 2021). Different scholars have argued that RCTs are effective tools to understanding what works in poverty reduction (Sachs 2008, Duflo and Banerjee 2013). In the global south, RCTs are being closely critiqued as attempts to reduce the need for contextual understandings of the underlying political economies that inform not only whether a program

works, but whether it works as designed. These debates are a sign of the extent to which trust in these orthodoxies or assumed supremacy of methodologies is not only being questioned but evolving to better reflect local contexts.

It is also within this context that changes in monitoring and evaluation frameworks are beginning to change from their logical framework origins to more nuanced and contextually guided forms of analyzing and assessing change. The origins of logical frameworks and their usage in international development originated with their usage by the United Kingdom in the early 1980s (Lancaster 2007), which was subsequently adopted by a large number of leading international development agencies (Canada, Sweden, US among others). Scholars have begun to interrogate whether these frameworks are fully applicable, given that they tend to make sweeping assumptions about how the operating environment works that limit the ability of implementing partners to adapt to new information (ODI 2018, Young 2018). New strategies such as the narrative “performance stories” are being employed to show how change is far from linear as a logical framework suggests (Buffardi, Harvey, and Pasanen 2018), although their broader usage by large funding agencies is not well-documented. Changing the ways in which change is understood and success & failure monitored is part and parcel of how trust is expressed because funders are required to adapt their expectations as a form of vulnerability.

Conclusions

Based on this evidence, we conclude that:

1. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners have processes and ways of thinking that profoundly shape what they fund and why, often privileging certain technocratic explanations for what a better world would look like, how it should operate, and how to get there. These ways of thinking often limit what they are prepared to learn and, therefore, processes or outcomes they are willing to trust.

2. While recent commitments to the Paris Agreement and Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Agreement are laudable attempts by the international development community to facilitate greater consistency and predictability in their relations with national governments, their assumptions regarding the functionality of national governments or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) tend to be out of sync with local realities, limiting both what is done and what can be considered successful.
3. While graft and corruption scandals within the Government of Uganda related to the use of international funds harm Uganda's international credibility, international development partners often do not consider the context in which they occur. Missing out on these contextual features can limit then the possibilities or identification of opportunities for social change.
4. The provision of funds by bilateral and multilateral partners inherently alters recipients' functionality and perceptions by both internal and external actors because they change the political and institutional economies of practice.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, we recommend that:

1. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners should consider supporting independent platforms that facilitate deeper discussions of decolonisation of knowledge and the creation of contextualised knowledge.
2. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners should consider shifting their role from funding partner to learning partner, in which implementers design dynamic and adaptive programmes, rather than programmes that execute a rigid plan intended to achieve a particular set of deliverables in accordance with funder driven understandings of change.

3. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners should consider expanding investment in governance programmes that focus on both institutional functionality and space for adaptive programmes that focus on collaborative problem solving with local communities as a way of gaining public trust.
4. Bilateral and multilateral international development partners should communicate to their recipients what they are putting at stake in their investments to communicate what they value and why. Therefore, they should communicate violations of trust even when it does not have financial or contractual implications.

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