

<p>Institution: King's College London</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UoA 21</p>
<p>Title of case study: The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework: Gender and Human Development.</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research by the Conflict Security and Development Group at King's had extensive conceptual, instrumental and capacity-building impact across two areas of policy – gender and human development – in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the 15-member West African regional intergovernmental organisation (equivalent of the EU in Europe), with a population of over 300 million. The underpinning research on youth, gender, militancy and violence was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the UK Department for International Development and Norwegian Foreign Ministry, and had direct impact on gender and human development policy in the Conflict Prevention Framework of the ECOWAS Commission (equivalent of the European Commission) and ECOWAS Council decisions. Impact includes the adoption of new approaches to youth and women to address conditions of violence, and the adoption and implementation of a strategic action plan to change practice regarding women, thereby generating ECOWAS efforts to enhance peace and security in the region, completely transforming the conceptualisation of youth and the situation of all women wishing to work in the field of peace and security.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Social research relating to the Gender and Human Development component of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, conducted partly with ECOWAS engagement and partnership, is relevant to this case study. The research was undertaken by Olonisakin, Ikpe, and Gow, who have been Category A staff at King's throughout the period of research.</p> <p>ESRC and DFID funded research on militancy, violence and exclusion, carried out by the Conflict Security and Development Group, King's College London ('King's') involved questionnaire surveys, interviews and focus groups in the ECOWAS Member States between 2007 and 2009. This research identified a large swathe of people alienated and 'excluded' from official policy frameworks because socially they regarded themselves, and were regarded by others, as 'youth' until the age of 35. Formally, ECOWAS defined youth as 15-24 years old, in line with Western and international approaches, but out of line with cultural experience in Africa and African Union policy. It was important to address vulnerability and the risk of social discontent and unrest, in a situation where regional needs meant that 'youth' policy and practices needed to be extended to 25-35-year olds to reduce pressures for violence, and for positive development, peace and security. The research finding indicated that youth policy was not, therefore, reaching much of the real youth. As a result, there was a spread of alienation with the potential for radicalisation and violence that ECOWAS needed to change. (Refs (a) and (b))</p> <p>Research on women, peace and security, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was undertaken by King's between 2005 and 2009. This research sought to respond to a policy challenge as well as a critical gap in knowledge framed in 2000, by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Among other things, UNSCR 1325 called for an increase in representation of women at decision-making levels in the systems and structures that deal with conflict resolution and management at national, regional and international levels; and to increase women's participation in field based operations. This research, involved in-depth semi-structured interviews to examine the application of UNSCR 1325 in 8 countries and 4 regional organizations, including ECOWAS. One key finding identified a continuing dearth of women in decision-making and in peace and security roles and processes, and in peacemaking institutions, which was linked, among other factors, to limited expertise on issues of peace and security. There was a practical need to increase the number of women working in</p>

'important posts' and 'posts of responsibility', including a need financially to support the training and education of young women in peace and security to bridge the 'skill' gap (Ref (c)).

3. References to the research

- (a) Funmi Olonisakin, James Gow and Ismail Rashid, eds., *Militancy And Violence In West Africa: Reflecting On Radicalisation And Comparing Contexts*, Special Issue of *Conflict Security and Development*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2013, pp. 117-258.
- (b) James Gow, Funmi Olonisakin and Ernst Dijxhoorn, eds, *Militancy and Violence in West Africa: Religion, Politics and Radicalisation* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
- (c) Funmi Olonisakin, Karen Barnes and Eka Ikpe, *Women, Peace and Security: Translating Policy into Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
- (d) Funmi Olonisakin and Awino Okech, *Women and Security Governance in Africa* (Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2011). Pambazuka Press is a progressive, pan-African publisher.

This research was supported by the following grants:

Dr. F. Olonisakin and Prof. AJW Gow, 'Militancy and Violence in West Africa: Reflecting on Radicalisation, Comparing Contexts, and Evaluating Effectiveness of Preventive Policies', ESRC Award No. RES-181-25-0024, £329,647.75

Dr. F. Olonisakin, 'Youth Vulnerability and Exclusion in Africa (YOVEX)', DFID Research Grant, £348,375

Dr. F. Olonisakin and Prof. M. Berdal, 'Conflict, Security and Development Research Programme:) The Reintegration of Armed Groups after Conflict; Women, Peace and Security; Aid and Aid Policies during Conflict', Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Research Grant, £203,000

4. Details of the impact

King's research had direct impact on gender and human development policy and practice and implementation in the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework. Specifically, in two ways: (1) the formal concept of 'youth' used by ECOWAS was changed in response to research findings, and policy and practice were extended to those between 25 and 35, which had previously only applied up to the age of 24; and (2) policy and practice regarding women in peace and security was transformed and new policy and practice adopted, with researchers from King's being invited to translate findings directly into policy formation and implementation. In this latter role, King's researchers drafted parts of policy documents subsequently adopted by ECOWAS, and drafted the Plan of Action for implementation.

Research was designed and developed in cooperation with ECOWAS, with continuing engagement throughout, meaning that findings could be presented well ahead of academic publications and final reports reflecting the research, including showing commissioned short films made to illustrate research findings, and also that ECOWAS could make changes.

Research findings on youth, militancy and violence were presented directly, by arrangement, to the Meeting of Experts on Youth and Sports of ECOWAS Member States, in Cotonou, on 23 July 2008. The presentation on 'vulnerability of youths in West Africa' was noted in the Final Report of the Meeting. The report concluded that 'the youths of the sub-region constitute a huge potentiality

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to be exploited' and decided that 'the documents presented be communicated to Member States for exploitation.' (Source (i), VI, p.7) Following this, research was presented at the ECOWAS Council (equivalent of the European Council, the executive level of the organisation) Meeting of Ministers of Youth and Sports, in Cotonou, 25 July 2008. As a result of these presentations, the age range covered by the label 'youth' was extended by ECOWAS. The significance and reach of this impact is indicated by the ECOWAS Council's adopting this conceptual change and new approach to 'youth' in policy and practice designed to address alienation and potential violence; thereby widening conflict prevention activities to the vast and vulnerable cohort of 25-35-year olds. ECOWAS signed a Memorandum of Understanding under which King's shared research on youth and violence and assisted implementation of Youth Policy. (Source (ii), paras. 15 and 16) The ECOWAS Political Director, in correspondence, noted that the 'Conflict Prevention Framework at ECOWAS benefitted enormously from this research and affected the way in which we framed aspects of our programmes.' (Sources (iii) and (x)).

Research on women, peace and security involved policy engagement from an early stage. Presentations of initial findings were made to the Directorates of Political Affairs and Gender and Social Development at ECOWAS. The research findings on the need for more women in posts of importance and responsibility, as well as on the need for resources to support capacity building (training and education of West African women from in peace and security affairs) were presented to the Consultative Meeting of Experts of ECOWAS Member States on the Draft ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, in Ougadougou, 3-6 November 2007, (Source (iv), p.2), where researchers contributed directly to revision of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, which was adopted as policy. Specifically, King's researchers wrote the final versions of Paragraph 82 articles (ii), (vii) and (viii) of the final ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (source (v)), which became policy. These researchers were subsequently invited to prepare a Plan of Action for implementation, which was presented to and adopted by the Framework's Coordination Committee in January 2010. (Source (vi), p.6 and Annex III, references to Funmi Olonisakin). This contribution specified a requirement to increase the number of women in decision-making roles on peace and security issues in the ECOWAS commission; and the need to develop peace and security capacity building for women. King's has assisted in this process by training young African women in peace and security under the ECOWAS-King's Memorandum of Understanding and placing them in ECOWAS and other institutions (Source (ii), paras. 5, 6 and 8; Sources (vii), Annex I, Items 20 and 21, and (viii), Annex II, Item 6, give examples of these placements).

In February 2012, the ECOWAS Gender and Human Development Department Director approached King's to support implementation of the Plan of Action. King's started work in partnership with ECOWAS (and other international bodies) by creating a programme to educate and train women in matters of peace and security, and to give them practical experience working in one of these organisations. An official Strategic Overview in 2013 noted that the Plan of Action prepared by King's had been 'widely disseminated and utilized in ECOWAS member states' and that the associated research 'used within ECOWAS institutions, national governments and civil society in West Africa.' (Source (ix), p.17, Programme 1, Output 1.4). By July 2013, 41 women have benefitted from this scheme and (a double impact) have worked on making policies. The initial impact on women seeking to work in the field of peace and security has the potential, over several years, to reach and benefit all women in West Africa who wish to work in these fields. This continuing capacity-building implementation confirms research impact as full and as extensive as possible.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact: documents available on request.

- (i) Final Report, Meeting of Experts on Youth and Sports of ECOWAS Member States, Cotonou, Benin, From 22 to 23 July, 2008.
- (ii) ECOWAS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the CSDG, King's College London, 2008. MoU provides work placements for young African women trained by King's in ECOWAS.

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- (iii) Conflict Prevention Advisor, ECOWAS, Correspondence.
- (iv) Consultative Meeting of Experts of ECOWAS Member States on the Draft ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, Hotel Palm Beach, Ougadougou, Burkina Faso, 3-6 November 2007
- (v) ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, Regulation MSC/REG. 1/01/08, Economic Community of West African States, Commission of the CEDEAO, Abuja, Nigeria, January 2008.
- (vi) Report of the Coordination Meeting on the Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, 22 January 2010.
- (vii) Report Of The Inaugural Inter-Departmental Technical Steering Committee Meeting On the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, Draft Report (ECPF), ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, 25 May, 2010.
- (viii) Meeting of the Internal Steering Committee on the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, Draft Report, ECOWAS Commission Headquarters, Abuja, 20 February 2013.
- (ix) Strategic Overview On The Three-Year Priority Plans Of Action (2013-2015) for the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), ECOWAS, 2013.
- (x) Director of Political Affairs and Peace and Security, ECOWAS. [Confirms KCL team's impact on research and training, which was of huge benefit to ECOWAS programmes]
- (xi) Senior Security Sector Advisor to the African Union, Coordinator African Security Sector Network. [Confirms KCL team's impact on capacity development for young Africans in particular]