

Advanced Training for Multi-Method and Policy-Oriented Research

April 19 – May 4, 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is offering a professional development training programme for multi-method and policy-oriented research in:

- a) Advanced Research Design
- b) Research methods in: Social Network Analysis, Comparative Case Studies Research, Action Research and Survey Design & Execution.

The training is unique in using participants' research and small group work to explore design innovations in multi-method research that engages public policy. The training emphasises the design of mixed methods strategies, and explores some of the different ways and moments throughout the research cycle that researchers could engage with different policy actors. It is applied and participant centred, and uses innovative alternative pedagogic approaches such as e-cases, simulations, animations and peer-learning.

PASGR is an independent, non-partisan pan-African not-for-profit organisation established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya. Currently engaged in more than 24 African countries, PASGR works to enhance research excellence in governance and public policy that contributes to the overall wellbeing of women and men. In partnership with individual academics and researchers, higher education institutions, research think tanks, civil society organisations, business and policy communities both in the region and internationally, PASGR supports the production and dissemination of policy relevant research; designs and delivers suites of short professional development courses for researchers and policy actors; and facilitates the development of collaborative higher education programmes.

Course Structure and Dates

This is a residential programme that will be offered in two consecutive blocks, including a mandatory pre- and post-workshop online engagement:

Block 1: Advanced Research Design (11 training days: April 19-29, 2017)

- Designing Social Inquiry
- Multi-Methods Research
- Critical Policy Engaged Research

Block 2: Social Network Analysis (4 training days: April 26-29, 2017)

Block 3: Elective Modules in Research Methods (4 training days: May 1-4, 2017)

- Comparative Case Studies Research
- Action Research
- Survey Design and Execution

Please note:

- i) Block 2 module (Social Network Analysis) is open to any past participant of the Advanced Research Design course or the Multi-Method Research Course (MMRC).
- ii) Block 3 participants: (i) are expected to choose only one elective, and (ii) must have previously taken PASGR's Advanced Research Design (ARD) course or Multi-Method Research Course (MMRC). Participants registering for the Block 1 and 2 courses are encouraged to also register for an elective (Block 3) module. The electives will run concurrently.

Certificates of Completion will be issued on successful attendance of all modules participants are selected into; as well as completion of all required course/peer reading, reviews and assignments.

Target Applicant Profile

These are high level professional development courses for **active and committed African researchers** interested in broadening their knowledge and skills in design and execution of research that lends itself to a multi-method approach application in policy-oriented social science and governance questions. Applicants working in think tanks, universities, policy-research oriented NGOs, civil society, media or government departments are encouraged to apply.

In past years, faculty who teach research methods have incorporated PASGR's training in their courses. It may also benefit university teaching staff engaged in PhD or post-doctoral research.

PASGR is especially interested in receiving applications from female researchers and researchers working in conflict or post-conflict environments.

Participation fee

This programme is heavily subsidised. PASGR will cover training and course materials costs while participants are expected to provide all other costs, including travel and residential expenses. Residential expenses (bed, breakfast and dinner) are outlined below. Participants are encouraged to bring some money to cover incidental and out-of-pocket costs as PASGR does not give per diem.

Residential costs (bed, breakfast and dinner)	Block 1:	USD 650
	Block 2:	USD 350
	Block 3:	USD 350

This training will be held in Nairobi, Kenya and the actual training location will be communicated to selected participants.

How to Apply

Interested applicants must submit a duly filled application form and CV. The application form can be downloaded from: <http://www.pasgr.org/apply-for-research-design-methods-courses-april-may-2017/>

The completed application form and updated CV should be uploaded to the appropriate link, as follows:

Advanced Research Design (ARD) April 2017	http://ow.ly/SiJ73074V4I
Social Network Analysis April 2017	http://ow.ly/qg5s3074VbN
Action Research May 2017	http://ow.ly/kcwB3074Ve0
Comparative Case Studies Research May 2017	http://ow.ly/yQa43074VgC
Survey Design & Execution May 2017	http://ow.ly/hlhe3074ViA

The deadline for submission of both documents is **Sunday February 5, 2017**.

For questions and/or clarification, please email nirungu@pasgr.org

Detailed Course Content

BLOCK I: ADVANCED RESEARCH DESIGN MODULES

i) Multi-Method Research

There is a growing interest in mixed method research among social scientists due to its relevance for policy-oriented research. The practice of mixing methods has emerged as a suitable complement to the dominant quantitative and qualitative paradigms. This module provides insights into the mixed

method approach and its utility for policy engaged research. It examines the basic assumptions of the mixed method tradition and its fundamental principles. The module further discusses how to mix and sequence methods within a mixed method research design. The final sessions of the module provide hands-on opportunity for participants to critique selected mixed method studies. Participants also build skills that they can apply to their own research.

ii) Critical Policy Engagement

Researchers engaged in policy-related work stand to benefit if they interest policy actors in the work they are doing, involve them in the various stages of their research project, and get their feedback to enrich the research design. This module aims to enhance researchers' capacity to strengthen their relationship with policy actors in order to improve their research design and the chances that their findings will be used to engage policy. The module helps participants develop knowledge and skills related to building relationships with various policy actors and decision makers. It refines participants' ability to communicate research ideas and findings. It equips them with skills to distil the key message(s) they would like to communicate to relevant policy actors.

iii) Designing Social Inquiry

The module's first goal is to develop participants' critical engagement with the existing state of knowledge in their respective fields. It equips participants with the competencies to question conventional definitions of the problem, the categories or techniques used for its analysis, and possible interpretations.

It also helps participants to turn ideas or assumptions into researchable questions. This involves making explicit not only one's own possible explanations or hypothesis, but also rival ones that exist in the literature, or circulated through other media. An important part of this process is to explicitly and carefully define the key concepts in a study. Finally, it introduces participants to advances in concept formation and illustrates how concepts can be modified, redefined, or created to accurately capture the empirical events, actors, or processes being investigated.

BLOCK II MODULE

Social Network Analysis

Social network analysis is an analytical approach that allows researchers to analyse patterns of relationships among a set of actors. The actors are usually people, but they can also be organisations, cities, websites, nations, etc. Social network analysis can be applied to substantive problems that cut across many subjects and disciplines. Any research problem where relationships are important may benefit from social network analysis. In this course you will be introduced to the theoretical foundations and research methods used in social network analysis. The course will also explore the usefulness of social network analysis for the study of governance and public policy.

BLOCK II MODULES (ELECTIVES)

i) Action Research

Action research brings multiple stakeholders into the process of research and data analysis that makes the process of meaning making more robust. It allows theories of change to be tested through the action of stakeholders. By engaging multiple actors in a process, wider ownership is achieved making sustainable outcomes more likely. Action research is gaining increasing recognition amongst practitioners and policy makers as it allows evidence to be generated through the process of executing projects and policies. An important advantage of action research is that, as a deliberative and iterative process, it allows flexible responses to complex situations that are constantly evolving. Many traditional research tools build static pictures of situations which are assumed for research purposes to be relatively static.

This module explores a variety of methods ranging from co-operative inquiry to participatory action research and systemic action research. Case studies from a variety of African contexts such as water; HIV; Climate Change Adaption; etc. are used. The module has three components: (1) Theory and practice of action research: exploring the literature on action research, its conceptual underpinnings and different models; (2) Case Studies of action research; (3) A live action research workshop where participants carry out a systemic action research process and collectively analyse it.

ii) Comparative Case Studies Research

We all talk about case studies but we certainly have problems nailing down what they are, when and how to do them. Does your everyday research activity involve comparing two or more objects, periods, events also known as cases? Are you concerned about how the cases should be selected and analysed such that you can make verifiable causal arguments while paying attention to the context of the cases? Are you involved in impact evaluations where experimental designs are not feasible? This module is designed for researchers, policy practitioners and development programme managers who seek to analyse differences, similarities and patterns across two or more cases for the purposes of generating causal insights to influence policy decisions. The module exposes participants to different comparative case study designs, including natural experiments, case selection strategies and determining a unit of analysis, causal analysis, within-case and cross-case analysis and reporting of comparative case study research. The module also demonstrates the flexibility of using mixed or multi-method research to strengthen the analytic process and the arguments made about cases.

iii) Survey Design & Execution

Surveys produce rather than collect data. Designing an effective survey, one that captures what you are after, is an art. Moving from general hypotheses and research questions to specific and measurable concepts, and then to simple questions which respondents can understand and answer, is far from straightforward. There are many decision points. There are also trade-offs in how we measure concepts, the response categories we choose, sampling strategies, and even how interviews are conducted.

All of these components influence the kind of data a survey produces. Survey research requires us to make decisions that apply to millions from a small representative group. If done well, surveys help us understand the dynamics of large groups of people and make generalisations. For policy actors who want to tackle major social issues, surveys can be a powerful tool. However, it is easy to get surveys 'wrong' and produce unreliable data. Unreliable data can lead to poor evidence for public policy.

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