



About PASGR

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (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 12 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.

Our vision is 'a vibrant African social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues'. PASGR's three core programmes bring together the right mix of universities, research institutions, government, policy actors, researchers and academics to:

- Establish and sustain partnerships at national/regional and international levels for advancing research, higher education and training;
- Facilitate the creation of policy and research communities;
- Enhance the institutionalisation of a research culture in Africa's universities and research organisations; and,
- Coordinate a collaborative Master of Research and Public Policy with universities in Africa

PASGR is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organisation.



The Research Programme

The Research Programme works with African social scientists to produce high quality governance and policy relevant research that aims at improving institutions and ultimately transforming the living conditions of people in the countries where the studies are conducted. The programme does this through periodic selection of research themes that have broad relevance to African development.

The programme facilitates counterpart building of senior and mid-career researchers through projects that seek to examine development challenges and policies through a governance lens. To inform policies using research evidence, the programme also facilitates research-policy communities of practice (Utafiti Sera).

This brochure describes PASGR's strategic research focus and approaches over the period 2015 to 2018.



Our Governance Research

PASGR believes that governance research should be about rigorous inquiry into state-society-market relations that provides solutions to public policy problems. For PASGR, governance involves a set of institutions, structures, actors, incentives and ideas drawn from – but also beyond – government. It also holds that although interactions among multiple actors and institutions have the potential to provide responses to the challenges of development, they may also contribute to conflicts.

The governance research PASGR facilitates therefore aims at systematic analysis of the complex dynamics underlying these interactions, determining their influence on development efforts, and providing policy options. One of its most important features is that it is problem-driven and seeks to identify what is likely to work in what context.

PASGR's research aims at ensuring high quality publications in addition to informing and impacting policy and practice in countries where studies are conducted.

How PASGR Facilitates Research

- Convening research and policy communities throughout the research process for continuous engagement at country and regional levels.
- Selecting a menu of inter-disciplinary governance research approaches.
- Applying research methods suited to the analysis of governance issues.
- Enabling African researchers to apply governance concepts and methods in particular sectors and country contexts.
- Building research partnerships with African universities, think tanks, civil society and other research organisations.
- Disseminating research findings through high quality publications (edited books, articles in peer review journals, monographs, policy briefs, newspaper articles, and the social media).
- External peer review guarantees high quality delivery.

The main entry point for PASGR's research is country studies that seek to identify context-specific modes of governance while allowing for comparative analysis. Cities or regions could also constitute entry points.



Researchers

PASGR works with two groups of African researchers:

- Senior researchers as Principal Investigators (PIs), Lead Country Researchers and Resource Persons. They are recognised experts in their fields and live in the region or abroad. The PIs lead specific research projects/themes across countries, provide intellectual leadership to country researchers, and ensure quality control from research design to completion.
- Early and mid-career researchers from universities, research organisations, civil society organisations and think tanks. The key feature of research that targets this group is upfront capacity enhancement using PASGR's professional development and training programme and mentoring support from senior researchers.

Areas of Research Focus (Research Themes)

PASGR's Board periodically selects research themes with advice from an Independent Research Committee and staff. Selection of research themes is guided by development issues attracting attention in the region from policy actors and researchers, coupled with consideration of where PASGR-supported research can add value by addressing important or overlooked governance issues or offering additional insights into the issues already addressed by others. . PASGR will facilitate the implementation of three major research themes from 2015-18:

1. Urban Governance and Turning African Cities Around

This theme is chosen against the background of recent rapid urbanisation in Africa and emerging evidence that some metropolitan cities are turning around their past deficits in the provision of infrastructure and services, the regulation of the urban spaces, addressing social justice and citizens' rights, creating or upholding inclusive cities and economies, strengthening local revenue collection, improving service networks, providing employment for the poor, and improving public safety and security.

Lagos, the most populous city in Africa, is frequently cited as one of the cities that have significantly improved their governance performance. Increasingly, other African cities are showing evidence of improved urban governance and turning around. This phenomenon is raising important research and policy questions around devolved politics, citizens' rights and participation, urban inequality and inclusivity, the role of leadership, innovative governance and management and their viability and sustainability. An added question is how city governments are addressing issues of resilience and adaptation to climate change while securing the rights of poor and marginalised urban dwellers.

The following possible research areas singularly or in combination offer opportunities for support:

- I. Urban governance, politics and management of service provision
- II. Advancing inclusive and just cities
- III. Urban responses to climate change, resilience and adaptation
- IV. Trends in urban economic growth and city transformation
- V. Citizens' safety and public security

2. Varieties of Governance and Inclusive Development

PASGR intends to support analyses of inclusive development using the concept of 'varieties of modes of governance'. This research theme is chosen against the background that over the past 15 years that macroeconomic indicators have been consistently positive throughout most of Africa, 'modes of governance' defined by organisation of politics and participation of private businesses, civil society and the citizens have significantly evolved and diversified in many countries.

The variation in the nature of political parties in government and their interaction or collaboration with non-state actors and members of the public is such that we can now talk about 'varieties in modes of governance' in Africa. The following possible areas of research will be supported:

- I. Mode of governance, economic structural transformation and employment creation
- II. Non-inclusiveness, state stability, peace and security
- III. Varieties of governance and socio-economic mobility of the middle class
- IV. New technologies, informal sector, inclusivity and governance

3. Governance, social policy and social protection in Africa

This theme will focus on analyses of modes of governance and the drive towards effective design and promotion of social policies and social protection programmes in Africa.

PASGR collaborates and partners with institutions and organisations inside and outside Africa on projects and programmes that advance areas of its research themes. One such example is the Empowerment and Accountability in Social and Political Action, a multi-country, multi-partner programme led by the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. PASGR has concept notes on all themes to facilitate engagement with potential partners and researchers.

For more information contact: [**research@pasgr.org**](mailto:research@pasgr.org)



PASGR has developed Utafiti Sera to facilitate its research-policy engagement process. Utafiti Sera is 'process', 'place', 'forum', 'platform', or 'vehicle' that facilitates and contributes to building a community of researchers and policy actors working together to ensure that appropriate and negotiated policy actions and uptake occur. This may be through programmes, legislation, and policies, or administrative and other forms of civic actions around issues for which research has provided evidence or for which a synthesis of available evidence has been made.

How Utafiti Sera works

Utafiti Sera is a combination of many things. As a 'process' Utafiti Sera involves sequences of activities that enable the building of a community of interest and practice from where existing and new ideas and evidence flow from members of the community, resulting in collective action and interventions to improve policy design and implementation.

As a 'place', Utafiti Sera provides a space for key stakeholders with interest, power, capacity and motivation to act in diverse ways to ensure that research evidence becomes available and is used to make informed policy decisions and actions. As a 'forum', it provides a non-partisan platform for knowledge engagement, 'outreach' and 'in-reach' by different members of the community irrespective of theoretical and ideological differences, in order to build bridges and work together to establish common ground for the pursuit of agreed upon goals. And as a 'vehicle', Utafiti Sera constitutes motor and pathways, transmission belts and/or channels for shared knowledge (common areas on which there are agreements and consensus) and experiences to enhance policy uptake.

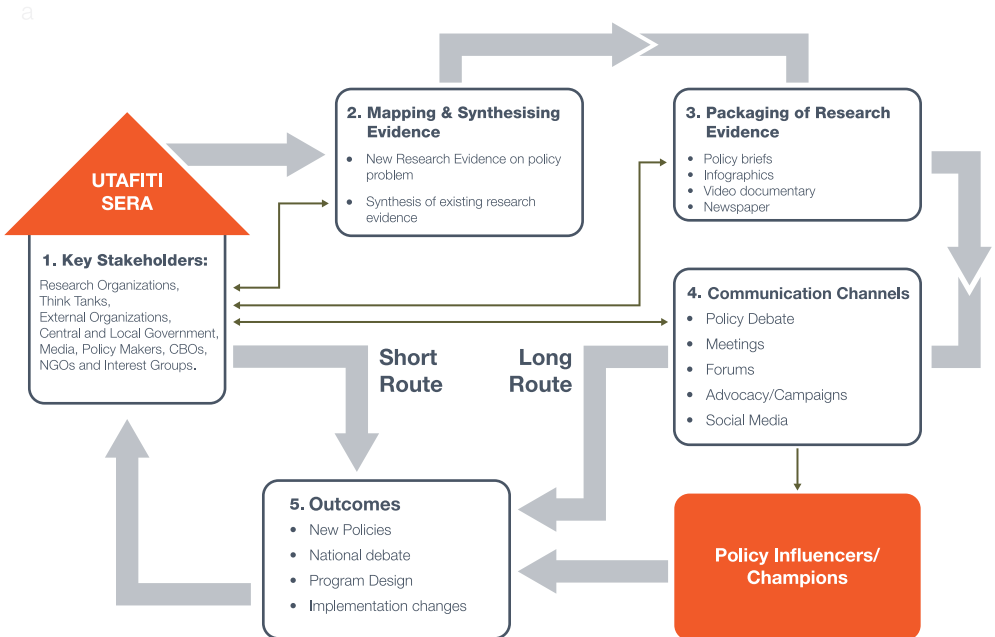
In short, Utafiti Sera is a phenomenon whose form is determined by the specific conjunction and/or context in which it is expressed or put in place. It has no permanent form except that of community formation or action of a collective of researchers and policy actors in the pursuit of policy uptake.

Utafiti Sera at national, local and regional levels is an innovative mechanism to inform and positively advocate, proffer and contribute to appropriate and relevant policies and programmes. Given that policy formation is often a dynamic work in progress, there are other possible routes. Where circumstances permit such as the presence of most of the actors and conditions, Utafiti Sera may take what can be termed a shorter route towards ensuring policy uptake. In contexts that require

more preliminary work to bring the different players and actors together, facilitate contacts, networks and identify interests, Utafiti Sera takes a longer route of communication, building bridges, working out advocacy plans, facilitating ownership, and identifying and mobilising collective and individual champions. This involves a more detailed set of incremental activities. There are therefore different time frames, starting points and steps in making Utafiti Sera work.

The scheme below depicts possible short and long routes to pursue policy uptake. Utafiti Sera begins with building a community or imaginary house (a space) where all stakeholders converge to build consensus.

SCHEMATICS OF UTAFITI SERA





Outcomes

The overarching long-term outcome of the activities of Utafiti Sera is uptake of research evidence as seen in the design of national policies, setting agenda for national debates, and changes in policies and programme design and implementation.

Objectives of Utafiti Sera

- i. Establish and sustain vibrant research-policy communities on specific issues through well planned programme activities;
- ii. Generate new research evidence and synthesise existing ones and make them available to policy actors and practitioners using policy briefs, newspaper articles, social media, among other forms of communication; and
- iii. Engage key policy actors and practitioners through direct contact, policy advocacy and the use of issue champions during meetings, policy debates and workshops.



Outputs

- Develop communities of practice (Utafiti Sera) on specific themes with identifiable members and institutions;
- Inform policy actors and practitioners in the area of the study by availing new and existing research evidence through policy briefs; infographics; newspaper reports; forums and meetings.
- Provide platforms for researchers, policy actors and practitioners to exchange ideas and learning (in-reach and outreach) on the specific theme
- Share research evidence with all members of the Utafiti Sera house and post on websites and social media platforms.
- Develop dedicated social media platforms in the form of Twitter accounts on the issues.

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& GOVERNANCE RESEARCH**

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