

KAGISANO

A DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Flowing from the mid-term review of the Kagisano programme

Programme Implementation period
June 2022 – May 2024



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Tell No Lies, Claim No Easy Victories, Amilcar Cabral

“Always bear in mind that the people *are* not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children.”



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kagisano, a SeTswana word that means building communities together or building harmoniously, was initiated in June 2021 as a three-year programme. Its primary goal is to promote social cohesion and prevent collective violence in selected communities across South Africa.

The Kagisano programme seeks to strengthen the resilience of selected communities by:

- a. building conflict mitigation mechanisms;
- b. strengthening the capacity of community leadership to resolve conflict;
- c. building the capacity of in-school and out-of-school youth to resolve conflict whilst also actively;
- d. deterring them from engaging in collective violence, and
- e. supporting community-driven crime fighting mechanisms as a means of improving community safety, especially that of women, girls and other at risk community groups and persons.

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) is built into the design of the Kagisano Ensuring collective reflection on key environmental factors impacting programme implementation; and

- Collectively plan for maximum programme results and impact.

A detailed process report was developed from the learning meeting and shared with the programme implementing partners to inform their decisions on programming going forward. This workshop report was intended for internal use. It was agreed that a discussion document needed to be produced to facilitate learning with others outside of the programme implementing partners. This discussion document is developed with this purpose in mind.

programme. A structured MEL plan was developed by the implementing partners outlining various approaches for conducting MEL activities. Among these, is a mid-term learning and reflection meeting, designed for partners to jointly review and discuss the emerging lessons from their work and evaluate their performance.

In October of 2022, fifteen months into the implementation of Kagisano, the partners came together for a learning and reflection meeting. This meeting was attended by programme facilitators from each of the partner organizations, heads of the programme, research associates, and monitoring experts involved in the programme. The primary objectives of this meeting were as follows:

- Facilitate evidence-based MEL as an integral part of programme implementation;
- Reflect on the efficacy of strategies deployed in the implementation and roll out of activities;
- Facilitate shared learning amongst the implementing partners;

The discussion document is written in a manner that captures in summary, the lessons emerging from the work that the partners in Kagisano have been doing. It reflects on some of the fault lines and threats to the project of social cohesion building as an integral cog in nation building. The document also outlines various opportunities available for the type of work being conducted by the Kagisano partners, some of which are detailed below:

- i. The abundance of community agency and energy for peacebuilding;
- ii. The assumptions that underpin the Kagisano programme still hold true such as existence of people at

- community level who will put their hand up to participate in the programme, successful community entry, etc.
 - iii. There is willingness in government and others to partner towards strengthening community safety;
 - iv. Community leadership is still key on driving change in communities;
 - v. The work done by Kagisano with youth in schools and out of school offers opportunities for changing mindsets, behaviour, and culture;
 - vi. There has been a willingness amongst BIG gangs to be part of a solution however, this is possible in so far as gang leaders feel that their interests are not threatened.
- ii. Community safety remains a major concern and many communities have become increasingly unsafe;
 - iii. Increasing levels of violent crimes at community level are leading to community members who live in perpetual fear;
 - iv. There is an increasing level of public mistrust of public officials and public institutions and the state's inability to seemingly get the basics right is not helping;
 - v. Poverty and household insecurity is on the rise.

This document also discusses dominant fault lines and challenges that persist and threatens to the project of social cohesion. to the project of social cohesion that that Following are just but a few:

- i. The calibre of community leadership matters. Not all community leadership serves for public good;

Generally, this discussion document accepts that currently, there is no contestation on the importance of social cohesion in nation building in South Africa. The Kagisano programme's implementing partners offer this discussion document as a way of deepening reflections and conversations about social cohesion building in South Africa while reflecting specifically on the work that they are doing and the lessons emerging from there.

I. PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Kagisano programme is supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Afesis leads its implementation in collaboration with partners including Action Support Centre, African Centre for Migration and Society, the Eastern Cape Refugee Rights Centre, Governance and Livelihoods Agenda and Lawyers for Human Rights.

The programme is operational in sixteen sites across six provinces including supported Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and North-West. These communities were identified based on their high rates of collective violence and very low social cohesion scores as revealed in the study by the Making All Voices Count Programme¹

The **objectives** of the Kagisano programme are:

- To strengthen the ability of local structures to develop and maintain transparent, credible, and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms;
- To empower communities to participate in and own conflict resolution mechanisms;
- To foster organic opportunities to bring people together around areas of common concern;
- To work with schools in the community to develop safe spaces for learners to find reprieve from violence while inculcating them with conflict management skills; and
- To Integrate community healing platforms to address the individual and collective trauma crippling communities and contributing to violence.

The programme's intended **results** are:

- i. A significant reduction in the number of incidents of collective violence in target sites;
- ii. An increased number and diversity of organisations consciously working towards addressing a commonly identified vision that includes a commitment to a more peaceful and socially cohesive society;
- iii. A significant reduction in youth-related violence and increased conflict management skills amongst youth;
- iv. Increased safety of women and youth;
- v. An increased ability of community leaders to respond to and mitigate against violence and promote peace using community-centric methods;
- vi. A reduction in the number of people believing the presence of foreign nationals in their community is a significant contributor to their living challenges;
- vii. Increases in average student test scores, particularly of those students who had been primary victims of violence in the past;
- viii. Increased agency of community members to collectively engage with their local authorities to address service delivery challenges; and
- ix. Improved service delivery in the sites of implementation because of increased engagements with local authorities.

Furthermore, Kagisano aims to achieve the following results at a national level:

- a. Provide scalable interventions that can work in many different contexts and communities to address collective violence and nurture social cohesion.

¹ The Making All Voices Count Programme was implemented by Freedom House and some of its partners in the aftermath of the first wave of Xenophobic attacks in South Africa in about 2017

- b. Provide a toolkit of methods and skills necessary to facilitate sustained community-driven conflict management processes; and
- c. Provide lessons for strengthening policy aimed at nurturing social cohesion in South Africa

orientation, ownership, evidence-based reporting, and the quality and value-addition of partnerships established.

I.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING FRAMEWORK

At the heart of the Kagisano programme's design is a focus on fostering learning. To this end, a comprehensive MEL plan has been established as a key component of the programme's operational structure. It presents mechanisms through which regular programme monitoring would be done, as well as modalities for data collection and verification. In their activity plans, the Kagisano's implementing partners agreed on two learning and reflection meetings over the three-year grant period: one midway through implementation and another towards the end of the grant period. The partners also agreed on key learning questions that they would seek to interrogate in the period during the implementation of Kagisano.

Underpinning the approach to learning in Kagisano is also an intention to interrogate the extent to which the programme is delivering on the four principles that support the programme design, that of *result-*

- *Result-focus:* assess the extent to which the programme was achieving intended results;
- *Ownership:* assess and deepen opportunities for transferring skill in ways that would increase the ownership of interventions by target audiences;
- *Evidence-based reporting:* assess the efficacy of data collection and verification methods used in the programme;
- *Strategic partnerships:* assess the depth of partnerships being established in the programme and the extent to which such partnerships contribute to the programmatic goals.

In addition, learning questions were determined at the start of the programme along with some of the key assumptions that the programme's implementing team were making at the time. The table below presents some of the learning questions that were agreed to at the start of the programme:

Learning questions	1	Has the context within which we are implementing this work changed during the reporting period? If so how, and what implications does that have on this work?
	2	Has there been any changes in attitudes and behaviour of target audiences in the last reporting period and what caused this change in behaviour and attitude?
	3	What impact do we foresee this change in behaviour and attitude to have for the programme?
	4	Have we partnered with the right people in the community? Could we have benefited from partnering with other groups?
	5	Have we not left anyone out?
	6	Do we have adequate capacity, skills, and resources to implement the work? And if there are gaps, how do we intend to plug these gaps?
	7	Are our assumptions tested to hold true (or false)? Which of our assumptions? What implications does this have for the programme?

As mentioned above, some assumptions were made at the start of the programme and those are presented below as follows:

- The community embraces a vision of social cohesion and peace;
- There are functional local structures that are widely embraced by most if not all members of the community and if there are no structures in place, there is willingness in the community to establish one;
- The local structures are willing to invest in a sustained coaching journey to eventually assume ownership and leadership of a conflict management and peacebuilding agenda;
- Communities embrace the need for a community-initiated and a community-driven conflict management and peacebuilding process;
- The facilitation process is able to ensure that service delivery challenges are turned into opportunities for rallying the community into collective moments

1.2. THE DESIGN OF THE LEARNING AND REFLECTION MEETING

A mid-term learning and reflection meeting organised by the partners informs this document. The organisers of this meeting were intentional in its design in mining emerging lessons from the work that the partners in Kagisano are doing across all the implementation sites. In the arsenal of information mining tools used were surveys, discussion forums, expert inputs, and facilitator reflections or observations. A survey was developed ahead of the learning meeting which interrogated some of the key

of agency as opposed to being divided as a result thereof:

- The facilitation process ensures that the visioning exercise is a unifying moment and not a divisive one;
- Local structures are able to identify and curb elements that may fuel violence before it even erupts; and
- Collective violence is regarded as anti-social and against the community's vision of social cohesion.

The learning and reflection meeting of October 2022 organised by the implementing partners sought to respond to the following basic questions:

- a) What are we learning?
- b) Is there evidence of results, ownership, evidence-based reporting, and strategic partnerships?
- c) What of our assumptions?
- d) What are the implication for our programme plans and established systems going forward

learning questions, monitoring principles as well as assumptions made in the programme as a way of getting the programme partners to begin to actively reflect on their work. This survey also assisted the programme facilitators to have a sense of what was emerging, at least at a high level, from the different implementation sites to design the three-day programme in targeted and responsive ways.

An independent academic researcher whose research themes centres around questions of society, development and social cohesion was invited to lay a foundation to the three-day workshop through a provocative input as a way of facilitating conversation with and amongst the partners. The partners shared presentations on unique insights emerging from specific sites, reflecting on evolving trends and significant variations.

The final day of the workshop was spent on the 'what then' question and next logical steps for the Kagisano programme. As mentioned above, a process report was developed from the learning meeting and shared with the partners capturing decisions taken which had immediate implications for programme implementation.

2. THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Sound programme design necessitates an understand of the journey from programme initiation to programme results and impact. A theory of change is a globally accepted tool for connecting dots between programme activities, results, and impact. The Kagisano programme is premised on the following theory of change:

IF communities envision a socially cohesive society and are better able to identify and respond to threats to social cohesion, AND there are institutional mechanisms locally to broker peaceful means to conflict management, AND an environment is created that trains youth in new ways of being and thinking and inculcates conflict resolution skills, AND collective trauma is managed and addressed through effective community healing spaces in the community and in schools, AND lessons are derived from such communities and shared widely; THEN communities will be far more resilient, fortified and social cohesive, AND other communities watching will learn and apply similar methods to strengthen social cohesion in their communities, AND a socially cohesive society will emerge in South Africa.

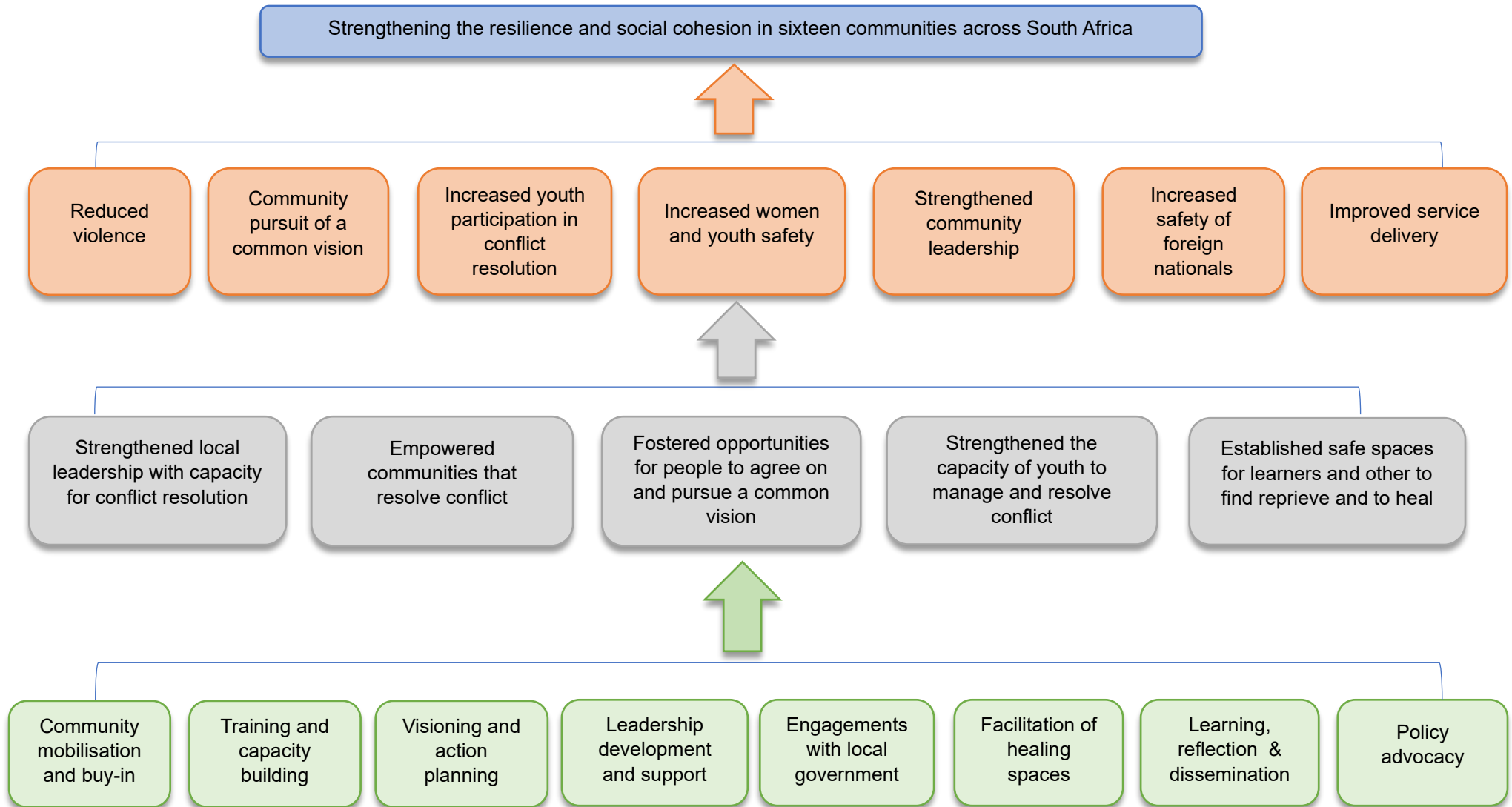
It was further agreed that a discussion document would be written for a wider audience and for a different purpose. In the main, this document seeks to facilitate learning and reflection with an audience outside of the implementing partners in Kagisano.

Embedded in this theory of change are several assumptions that the Kagisano programme makes. These assumptions are:

- i. The target communities share a similar vision of social cohesion and peace as the programme implementing partners;
- ii. There are functional community structures in the target communities and if such structures do not exist, the target communities would be willing to establish some;
- iii. Identified community leaders (or leadership structures) in the target communities would be willing to invest time to participate in training interventions aimed at building their capacity for conflict management and resolution and for a sustained peacebuilding agenda;
- iv. The target communities embrace a need for a community-driven conflict management and peacebuilding initiative; and
- v. There exists an appetite amongst rally residents in the target communities to work together to address commonly identified service delivery challenges and to pursue a common vision.

Presented below are the logical linkages between the programme activities, its objectives, and its intended results.

A summary of the logical framework in Kagisano follows:



3. SOCIAL COHESION ACCORDING KAGISANO (the definition)

The concept of social cohesion has become common in South Africa's policy discourse as anxieties over the deepening levels of societal fragmentation intensify.

Social cohesion as indicated in the National Development Plan (NDP) is seen as both an outcome (the type of society we would like to see), and a process. The recognition of social cohesion as important, both as a process and a goal, is evident in its inclusion as a priority in several policy documents. This is not particularly unique to South Africa, there has been a growing interest amongst many governments and international organisations to pursue social cohesion; most notably those societies undergoing transition or navigating internal divisions or challenges whether they be economic, migration related or ethnic conflicts.

Social cohesion is generally associated with positive outcomes such as: *a more stable and participatory democracy, greater levels of economic productivity and growth, greater levels of tolerance and peaceful co-existence, effective conflict management and resolution, and ultimately, improved quality of life for the people.*

The definition of social cohesion is one of those concepts for which there is little consensus. Social cohesion is best understood by reflecting on its opposite 'anomie'. One only needs to ponder what it would be like to live in a society void of ethical norms and standards, where lawlessness rages and where each person goes by their own rules, such a society is undesirable and its opposite, a socially coherent one, is much more desirable. The Department of Sports, Arts and Culture defines social cohesion as *the degree of*

social integration and inclusion in communities and society at large, and the extent to which mutual solidarity finds expression among individuals and communities. Going by this definition one can deduce that a society is cohesive to the extent that the inequalities, exclusions, and disparities based on ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, age, disability, or any other distinction which engender divisions, distrust and conflict are reduced and or eliminated in a planned and sustained manner.

Some researchers have also focused on the relational meaning of social cohesion determining that it (social cohesion) can also describe the bonds or relationships that exist between fellow citizens and within intimate social groups, especially in the contexts characterised by ethnic heterogeneity (Taylor, 1996; Schmeets, 2012; Moreno and Jennings, 1937; Festonger, 1950).

Others have interrogated not only the existence of social relations, but the quality of such connections and have concluded that strong affective relationships allow group boundaries to be transcended through consensus as opposed to coercion in the pursuit of social welfare (Green et al., 2009). The general consensus amongst the scholars of social cohesion is that the concept refers to the strength of social relations, shared values, communities of interpretation, feelings of common identity and a sense of belonging to the same community, trust amongst societal members as well as the extent of inequality and disparities (Berge-Schmitt, 2000; Woolley, 1998; Jenson, 1998). Maxwell (1996) further asserted that social cohesion also involves "enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community" (Maxwell, 1996, p13).

Kagisano programme's implementing partners agreed to define *social cohesion as the positive relationship between individuals, groups, and institutions within a shared*

space, community, or society. They agreed that a socially coherent community would be one which had institutional mechanisms and the capacity to deal with conflict and tension in ways that do not result in violence, chronic tension, or extreme marginalization of certain sub-groups. This working definition of social cohesion is in line with the spirit of the National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (the NAP) which concludes that there is a role for all of society to play in the pursuit of social cohesion.

4. REFLECTING ON THE IMPLEMENTING ENVIRONMENT

“...It is our pledge to humanity that nothing will steer us from the cause of human rights. Everybody will understand that we have a commitment and a mandate from the overwhelming majority of our people in this country to transform South Africa from an apartheid State to a non-racial State, to address the question of joblessness and homelessness, to build all the facilities that have been enjoyed for centuries by a tiny minority. We want men and women who are committed to our mandate, but who can rise above their ethnic groups and think of South Africa as a whole” (Former President Nelson Mandela, 1996).

In his address to the Constitutional Assembly in 1996 on the occasion of the adoption of the Constitution, then President Nelson Mandela asserted that the building of a socially coherent society goes hand in glove with the fostering of a sense of social security; such as the provision of access to jobs and or livelihood opportunities, shelter, effective crime fighting institutions, access to public amenities and a sense of equality amongst the people of different races, opportunities for growth and social mobility as well as the protection of civil rights and freedoms. In the absence of these he argued, it would be difficult to build social cohesion.

Stories told by the Kagisano programme facilitators highlight increasing levels of violence and criminality in the communities in which the programme is implemented. The facilitators highlighted weaknesses in state institutions that are responsible for crimefighting, the enforcing by-laws, community safety and other such basic services. Absence of leadership at different levels of society was identified as another key challenge which makes the attainment of social cohesion elusive.

There is generally a lack of policy congruence between the governing African National Congress (ANC) on the one hand, and government on the other often leading to mixed public messaging on key policy issues. This policy incoherence has fuelled the rise of populist voices which had been able to capitalise on government’s weaknesses and mobilised communities to act in ways that foster anarchy and lawlessness.

There once existed a period (just after 1994) where South Africans believed government would address many of their socio-economic challenges, however, a dominant view amongst community members, at least in the communities in which Kagisano is implemented, was that government was limited and was not able to address many of the socio-economic challenges confronting many in these communities. As such, there is a greater willingness amongst ordinary community members to participate in processes aimed at addressing societal problems particularly those that appear to have short-term demonstrable gains.

Kagisano highlights that in the main, most ordinary community members want to live harmoniously in safe communities and want to raise their children in safe environments; this is a vision shared with Kagisano. Kagisano has been able to plug into this existing energy at community level.

The lessons emerging out of Kagisano demonstrate that whatever gains have been made, they would be in vain if government fails to address some of the structural and systemic service delivery failures. When the government fails, often, alternative unlawful or divisive solutions emerge. An example is the vigilante groups that often emerge across many communities as an alternative crimefighting mechanism plugging weaknesses of the local Police. Land grabs, unregistered schools, unlawful occupation of empty municipal and private buildings, etc. are examples of unlawful solutions to challenges that government had failed to address.

Programmes like Kagisano can only go so far in fostering harmonious and peaceful co-existence in communities, but if government fails to meet the very basic of services, such gains could easily be reversed. A building of social cohesion goes hand in glove with the fostering of a sense of social security.

5. REFLECTING ON THE PERSISTANT FAULT LINES

The Kagisano programme highlights the persistence of some fault lines which contribute to anomie in the South African society. It is these fault lines that make the work of building social cohesion especially difficult.

5.1 RACE AND POVERTY

In every community where Kagisano is implemented, there are pervasive and extreme levels of poverty. There is an undeniable race dynamic to poverty in South Africa resulting from the country's history of racial segregation and the inability of

government, in the democratic dispensation, to sustain economic growth.

It is no secret that the economy of South Africa is underperforming when compared with population growth. Generally, when population growth outstrips economic growth, the poor are likely to get poorer. One of government's greatest achievement (and one of its largest expenses) is social grants. More than 44% of households in South Africa receive at least one form of social grant and this figure increased significantly² with the introduction of the social protection mechanism introduced to help unemployed persons cope with the effects of Covid-19.

Communities like Dunoon and Masiphumelele in the Western Cape which are surrounded by affluent white communities, or Makhanda where a river separates the affluent suburbs from low-income ones, are a telling visual portrait of the lingering legacy of apartheid.

The inability of the democratic government to provide adequate social security for many poor people in these townships makes the Constitutional promise of a "*South Africa (that) belongs to all who live in it*" sound hollow. Chronic poverty, unemployment and homelessness is deeply traumatic and dehumanising. Many communities where the Kagisano programme operates are defined by these challenges.

Research (in South Africa) has confirmed time and again that incidences of violence, in particular gender-based violence, are highest in communities that have high levels of poverty and unemployment.³

5.2 UNPROCESSED TRAUMA

² M S. Winchester, B King, A Rishworth. 2021. "It's not enough:" Local experiences of social grants, economic precarity, and health inequity in Mpumalanga, South Africa. *Wellbeing, Space and Society*. Volume 2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wss.2021.100044>.

³ Govender I. (2023). Gender-based violence - An increasing epidemic in South Africa. *South African family practice : official journal of the South African Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care*, 65(1), e1–e2. <https://doi.org/10.4102/safp.v65i1.5729>

It is highly unlikely that a people with a history of dispossession, hate, racial discrimination, and violence can simply push past it without having done the difficult work of collectively and individually processing the hurt, trauma, and pain.

South Africa has over the years neglected its role to deal with chronic trauma, and this has and continues to trip the South African society up. The democratic vote of 1994 delivered a democratic government, civic liberties, and freedoms but it did not, and could not, deal with the deep-seated individual and collective trauma that many at the time were (and still are) grappling with.

Trauma in South African society is visible in the ways that people interact with each other, their violent ways in which they engage the state, in the violent nature of its body politic, and in increased levels of violent crimes, to mention but a few. Clearly, people often choose to make political decisions that go against their common interests, such as electing individuals with dubious qualifications and questionable moral character instead of more competent and ethical candidates of a different race, due to unresolved pain from past events.

There are deep seated levels of mistrust amongst South Africans of different races because of a violent and hurtful past. As a society, South Africa is yet to figure out how to effectively process collective and individual trauma.

5.3 THE CRISIS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

South Africa is a political party State in that the lines between the governing political party and the State are often blurred. In South Africa, deployment into senior positions of government is done through the governing political party and this is provided

for in the rubric of the legislative framework that regulates the public service.

Like in many political party states, the governing political party, especially one that is a liberation movement, becomes the distributor of public resources and social security. As a result, the general populace rallies behind it even when it is not performing. In instances where opposition political parties are weak and fragmented, as is the case in South Africa, the electorate has very little choice but to keep the governing political party in power. It goes without saying in a political party State that when the governing political party is in crisis, the country is likely to be plunged into a crisis. The complexity with political party states is that it becomes near impossible to hold the State to account if there are no mechanisms to hold the governing political party to account.

5.4 THE STATE AND PARALLEL STATES

The crisis of (political) leadership in South Africa provided a fertile ground for a parallel State to emerge. The rising **mafioso state** has been widely recorded in the report by the Zondo Commission and numerous other reports and books that reflect on corruption and related patronage networks that often-ground infrastructure and development projects to a halt or bloat the capital spend.

The Zondo Commission highlighted the extent to which such patronage networks had weakened State institutions. Then there is a **gangster state** that runs wild in many communities across the country. Included in the gangster category are some in the taxi industry. The taxi industry has a stranglehold on the country's public transportation system and policies. No public transport policy is possible in country where the taxi industry is the law. In the failure of the State to adequately deliver the most basic of public services, a **private state** has emerged

and delivers better quality education, primary health care, security and crime fighting, clean drinking water, etc.

The worse the public sector is performing the greater the reliance of the public, particularly the middle class, on privatised goods and services. Socio-economic class in South Africa today, determines the quality of basic service one is likely to enjoy. The threat with parallel states is that often, they are not accountable to the public, and in time they do undermine the legitimacy of the democratic State.

5.5 THE FABRIC OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Research indicates that a strong, visionary, and active community leadership that works in the interest of the public, is necessary in driving a vision of social cohesion and peace. There are interesting lessons that are emerging through Kagisano on the topic of community leadership.

In some communities, there is intense contestation for community leadership and the benefits that are believed to flow from such a role; while in others there is absence of community leadership altogether or worse, there is a rise of mafioso leadership. Three kinds of community leadership have been identified in the communities where Kagisano is implemented: the institution of traditional leadership, a mafioso leadership, and multiple self-gain-pursuing community leadership structures.

a. Traditional leaders and social cohesion building

⁴ SANCO. Was a national umbrella body for local civic organisations that were present in South Africa and aligned to the

Kagisano is finding that not all traditional leaders are willing to play a leadership role in peacebuilding and in the building of social cohesion. In communities where there is contestation over the legitimacy of traditional leaders and where traditional leaders struggle to bring different groups in communities together, they are less likely to be effective in brokering peace and fostering social cohesion. Where a development-oriented traditional authority exists and there is little contestation over its legitimacy, Kagisano found that such traditional authorities played a meaningful role in fostering opportunities to bring different community groups together.

b. Presence of a Mafioso Leadership

A mafioso leadership as defined by Kagisano's the partners refers to the kind of leadership that at first glance, appears as though it is developmental and public spirited whilst it is actively engaging in activities that undermine public good and does so knowingly. Examples found in areas where the Kagisano programme operates abound of this kind of community leadership. In one community an unholy tripartite alliance between the Ward Councillor with the local branch of the South African National Civics Organisation⁴ (SANCO) are on the one side; the local Taxi Association with the local Police branch are on the other; and an ex-Ward Councillor turned businessman with the local business forum and labour organisations are on the one side.

In this community, the Ward Councillor and SANCO are responsible for all infrastructure related projects funded by the City. The Taxi Association is responsible for maintaining public order and anti-crime as well as the collection of protection fees with also includes the administration or distribution of local business opportunities according to different nationalities.

struggle for democracy. In 1994, it took a decision to support the ANC and has remained a political ally of the ANC since.

Finally, the business forum grouping is responsible for land distribution and land grabs which ensures consistent population growth. Using this as an example, one cannot argue absence of community leadership in this community as there exist strong and established community leadership structures. The extent to which such leadership acts in the broader interest of the public is however debatable. Equally debatable is whether such leadership is concerned with peace and social cohesion building.

c. Presence of an Amoeba Leadership

In science, an amoeba is a unicellular organism that can shift and change shape, forming temporary lobes as needed when feeding. In Kagisano, an amoeba leadership is one that exists solely for personal gain and changes shape and form as needed for the sole purpose of personal gain. This kind of community leadership has been found to exist in several of the communities where Kagisano is implemented.

This is leadership that starts out with a developmental agenda, often made up of public-spirited persons who with time start beginning to see themselves as the only legitimate leaders in the community and through whom all benefits must flow. Such persons are found in the ward committee, in the school governing body, in the clinics committee, in the development forum, in the community policing forum, etc.

In many communities, it is the same persons who would actively collapse developmental interventions if they were not in the lead or were not benefiting in one way or another. To some degree, they enable participation in and benefit from development interventions by the broader community, especially targeted beneficiaries, but often, they secure their benefit first and almost as a condition to community access. In thinking about processes of peacebuilding and social cohesion, it is highly likely that an amoeba

leadership will land support so long as it stands to personally gain.

5.6 CRIMINALITY AS A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Increasing levels of violent crime was reported across all the communities where Kagisano is implemented with evidence of a presence of 'small' and 'big' gangs. Small gangs are those that are localised, often led by young people and often cover smaller territories or turfs (often streets in suburbs). There is an increasing presence of these small gangs across many townships in the country, particularly in the areas where Kagisano is implemented. These gangs are the ones that profile homes and collect 'protection fees' from those homes they believe afford. The same gangs collect protection fees from street hawkers and other small local businesses. Often, these small gangs engage in turf wars and often shootings ensue in those turf wars.

Big gangs on the other hand are more sophisticated, have established systems and cover larger geographic territories. These are gangs that often have deep links in the country's crimefighting machinery and the Taxi industry particularly in the Western Cape where Taxi bosses are rumoured to be central in the collection of protection fees from foreign-owned businesses. Considering that there is poor regulation of the Taxi industry in general and that there are currently no vetting mechanisms of both owners and drivers, it is not far to imagine that ex-offenders and criminal elements could find themselves in the industry. This is of course not to argue that all taxi bosses and owners are criminals. The general weaknesses in the country's crimefighting mechanisms will undoubtedly lead to the entrenchment of crime as an alternative social enterprise. Already, Kagisano is showing that the trend is taking root across many communities in the country.

5.7 CRIME AND CRIMEFIGHTING

It has already been mentioned in this document that increasingly, South Africans are having to turn to the private sector for the provision of effective basic services, including safety and security. Strategically, the Kagisano programme works closely with Community Policing Forum (CPF) as a conscious intention to strengthening the crime fighting capacity in the communities where the programme is implemented.

This is necessary because it is impossible to build social cohesion and to talk about peacebuilding in communities where people live in perpetual fear. In the areas where Kagisano is implemented, there are only a handful of communities where the CPF functions well. And has adequate capacity, some resources and enjoys support from the local Police.

Generally, the CPF is weak and provides very little support in local policing. In the absence of some community oversight over local policing, negative perceptions about the police take root. The weaknesses in community policing creates a fertile ground for crime and criminal elements to have a stranglehold on many communities across the country and this is disastrous for the building of social cohesion.

5.8 A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY (OR LACK THEREOF)

A key feature of socially coherent societies are effective state institutions that are representative of the greater interests of the public which they serve. The work done in Kagisano highlights that community members across South Africa increasingly believe that state's architecture for accountability is weak and trust in state

institutions, especially those responsible for safety, security, and justice, is low.

In many of the communities, there is a general mistrust of public officials and the institutions which they represent. It is impossible to build social cohesion in an environment in which the populace has very little trust in the state and its institutions. The likelihood of the public establishing alternative mechanisms for justice, safety and security is high in instances where they have no trust in state-led processes.

The way the country, in particular Parliament, responds to the recommendations from the Zondo Commission is going to be key in the project of rebuilding trust in state institutions. Now, it seems that Parliament is the primary oversight body for implementing the Zondo Commission's recommendations, has been unsuccessful in building public trust in the government. This makes the job of building social cohesion rather tricky.

5.9 FAILURE TO GET THE BASICS RIGHT

Some of the national departments such as the Home Affairs amongst others, are an example of a state that is unable to get the basics right.

The increasing number of dysfunctional municipalities that continue to fail to provide the most basic of services to their residents especially to low-income households that are unable to access privatised services, is another example of government failing to get the basics right.

This failure is evident in the everyday stories of many rural villages with no access to clean drinking water, children dying crossing rivers to get to school or drowning in pit latrines. These are all reminders that government is struggling to get the basics right. The failure of government on some of the basics has led

to increased reliability in the public on private service providers thereby increasing the inequality gap (the haves and the have nots) at community level. This is not good in a society that seeks to build social cohesion.

5.10 THE RISE OF MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

Technology has provided immense opportunities for information dissemination and for communication and has created positive opportunities for many. While access to information technology and infrastructure is still limited amongst poor communities, many have used creative ways to bring information to those who needed it. The increased bite-sized and fast-paced way people are increasingly consuming information combined with lack of rigor in verifying information received from social media platforms has created fertile ground for misinformation and disinformation.

It is in these social media platforms where identity and ethnic politics is promoted and where extremists rise and are celebrated. It is also in these social media platforms where xenophobes and extreme nationalists thrive. And where mobilisation for ethnic-oriented action is galvanised.

While one cannot take away the advantages that access to information providers in a country that embraces civic liberties and freedoms, there exist a gap in (and capacity to) engage misinformation and disinformation in ways that shape public opinion for nation building.

Government and others in society (business, civil society, academic, etc.) must be ceased with the project of shinning a spotlight on misinformation because populist groupings are increasingly mobilising towards an

agenda that is in direct competition and in conflict with the Constitution.

CONCLUSION

In these sixteen sites across six provinces, the Kagisano programme highlights presence of conducive conditions at community level to build mechanisms for conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and social cohesion.

Development theorists have long demonstrated the benefits of building from below and of capacity and mechanisms at community level to combat collective violence. Some of the opportunities that had been identified by the Kagisano programme to mention but a few include the following:

- i. The abundance of community agency and energy for peacebuilding;
- ii. The assumptions that underpin the Kagisano programme still hold true such as existence of people at community level who will put their hand up to participate in the programme, successful community entry, etc.
- iii. There is willingness in government and others to partner towards strengthening community safety;
- iv. Community leadership is still key on driving change in communities;
- v. The work done by Kagisano with youth in schools and out of school offers opportunities for changing mindsets, behaviour, and culture; and
- vi. There has been a willingness amongst BIG gangs to be part of a solution however, this is possible in so far as gang leaders feel that their interests are not threatened.

Significant obstacles and challenges to the endeavour of building social cohesion are present, and this document has elaborated on some of these in more detail. The ones mentioned here are just a few examples:

- vi. The calibre of community leadership matters. Not all community leadership serves for public good;
- vii. Community safety remains a major concern and many communities have become increasingly unsafe;
- viii. Increasing levels of violent crimes at community level are leading to community members who live in perpetual fear;
- ix. There is an increasing level of public mistrust of public officials and public institutions and the state's inability to seemingly get the basics right is not helping; and
- x. Poverty and household insecurity was on the rise.

This discussion document is not intending to provide solutions to any of the challenges presented herein, Kagisano's partners do not have the answers. Rather, this document seeks to shine a spotlight on some opportunities that could be explored. To inform and enrich ongoing discussions, it is crucial to understand both the objectives of initiatives like Kagisano and the barriers that hinder the progress of social cohesion efforts. With social cohesion building increasingly seen as key to nation building this discussion document is timely.

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