THE CONTRIBUTION OF ECOWAS TRAINING CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE (TCEs) TO CAPACITY BUILDING OF THE ECOWAS STANDBY FORCE (ESF)

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Abstract

The African Union (AU) adopted a more viable conflict management mechanism with the view to address the inadequacies of interventions experienced in the past. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), facilitates timely and efficient response to conflict and crises in Africa. The African Standby Force (ASF) is one of the 5 components of the APSA consisting of multidisciplinary contingents made up of Military, Police and Civilians pledged by member states of the AU through the Regional Economic Communities (RECSs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs). The ECOWAS region has been developing its standby force (ESF). The ECOWAS Commission maintains three Training Centres of Excellence (TCEs), at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. While this partnership is producing positive outcomes, there are challenges of incoherent political direction, institutional bottlenecks, coordination and dependence on external funding. The paper outlines the contributions of the ECOWAS TCEs to the capacity building of the ESF.

Keywords: *Capacity Building, Coordination, Partnership, Security, Training.*

Introduction

Within the last few decades, the West African Region just like other regions in Africa has witnessed a series of conflicts fuelled by political and socio-economic issues, leading to tragic eruptions with devastating

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consequences. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at inception was created to serve the purpose of economic integration, however, the realities and exigencies generated by conflicts, led to the ECOWAS engaging with peace and security matters very early, after its inception. The adoption of the first two protocols 'The Protocol on Non-Aggression (1978) and Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence (1982)' (ECOWAS, 2012:8) provided the framework for addressing conflicts within the region. It was also within this framework that the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was formed to address the civil wars that erupted in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. The end of the Cold War signalled hope for a new world order, while the expectations did not materialise as envisaged, the region began to experience more daring and challenging circumstances that necessitated a change in the manner in which these conflicts were addressed. The transition of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) is seen as a major step towards addressing some of these challenges while still maintaining the unity of African states and repositioning the organisation to function effectively both at the continental and the global levels.

From the Organisation of African Union to the African Union

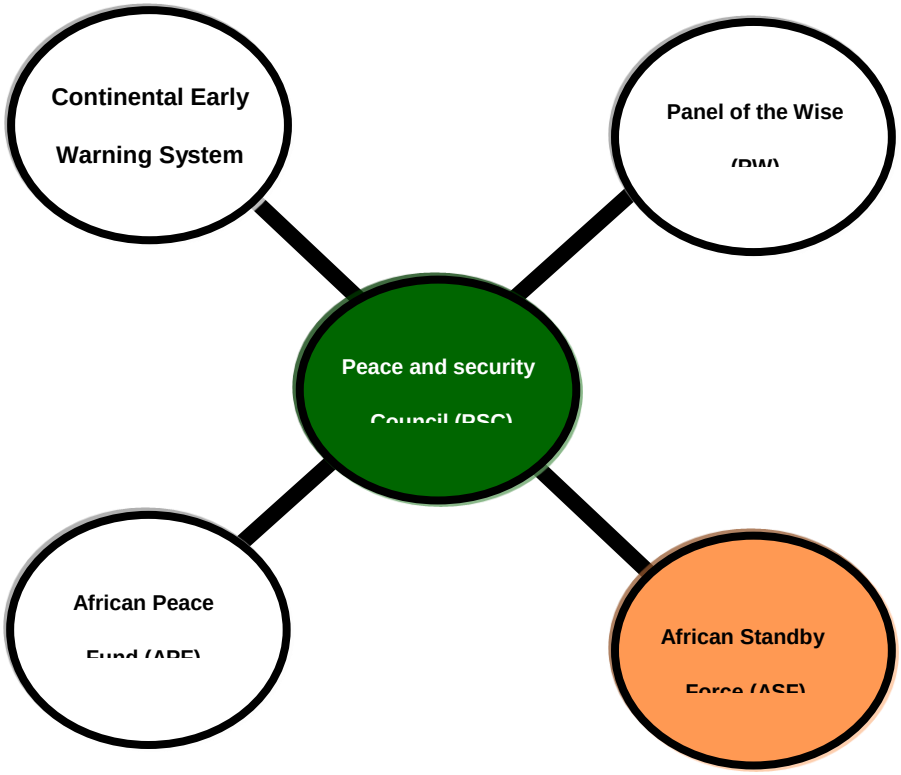
The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution of the OAU proved limited in the type of interventions it could deploy. The transformation of the OAU to the AU in 2002 tended towards dealing with the conflict, economic and developmental challenges on the continent holistically. The main priority of the OAU was the decolonisation of African states and also the defence of their sovereignty and territorial integrity; consequently, it was handicapped in confronting the complex emergencies that faced the continent after the Cold War (like the genocide in Rwanda, conflicts in Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic among others). The Constitutive Act of the AU was adopted during the Lome Summit of the OAU which was held on 11 July 2000. The most significant divergence from the old charter was the inclusion of Article 4(h) which recognises the right of the AU to intervene in member states in case of genocide and gross abuse of

human rights (African Union, 2000:5). according to Article 5(2) of the Constitutive Act, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) was established. The PSC is a collective security and early warning mechanism aimed at facilitating timely and efficient responses to conflict and crises. The adoption and ratification of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of PSC conceived the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The AU PSC according to the provisions of the Protocol is a legitimate mandating authority under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Hence the AU has a more robust conflict management framework which is the APSA.

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

The APSA has 5 inter-connected components or institutional structures for conflict prevention, management and resolution. These are the Peace and Security Council, Panel of the Wise, Continental Early Warning System, African Peace Fund and African Standby Force. Figure 1 below is a graphic representation of the 5 components of APSA.

Figure 1: The Five Components of the African Peace and Security Architecture



Source: (Jibrin, A.T., 2015)

Figure 1 above indicates that the Peace and Security Council is the central pillar of the architecture and represents the driving force responsible for political decision-making. It is composed of 15 members elected based on equal rights, 10 members elected for a term of 2 years, and 5 members elected for a term of 3 years to ensure continuity. The AU Military Staff Committee (MSC) is an advisory organ of the PSC. It advises the PSC on all matters relating to peace and security, especially in areas of troops and major military equipment as well as deployment for Peace Support Operations.

The Panel of the Wise is the mediation and advisory arm of the APSA it is comprised of 5 eminent persons selected from among highly respected African personalities of high integrity and independence,

who have made outstanding contributions to peace, security and development in Africa.

The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) is involved with the gathering and analysis of information using the institutional linkages between the AU and the RECs to ensure mutual exchange on conflict and other issues. Complementing the CEWS is the Committee on Intelligence and Security Services in Africa (CISSA). African Peace Fund is a Special Fund that serves as a means of providing financial resources for the AU mandated Peace Support Operations as well as other operational activities related to peace and security. The African Standby Force is solely for Peace Support Operations, it consists of 5 multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian, police and military components in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice.

The African Standby Force (ASF)

The provisions of Article 13 of the Protocol of Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU establishing the African Standby Force (ASF) states that 'the ASF is to be composed of standby multi-disciplinary contingents with military, police and civilian components stationed in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment' (African Union, 2004:19). The structure of the force is hinged upon 5 regional brigades: Eastern Africa Brigade (EASBRIG), Economic Community of Central African States Brigade (ECCASBRIG), Economic Community of West African Brigade (ECOWASBRIG), North African Brigade (NASBRIG) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADCBRIG). The structure of the force is also to enhance cooperation for peace and security among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) /Regional Mechanisms (RMs) in the continent while adhering to the principle of integration.

A very distinct approach to attaining this capability lies in the area of training and capacity building of personnel to be deployed. The Protocol emphasises the significance of training by providing the necessary enablement; 'guidelines for the training of the civilian and military personnel of national standby contingents at both operational

and tactical levels' (African Union, 2004:20). The protocol also stresses the 'development and circulation of appropriate Standing Operating Procedures to inter-alia: (a) support standardisation of training doctrines, manuals and programmes for national and regional schools of excellence; (b) co-ordinate the African Standby Force training courses, command and staff exercises, as well as field training exercises' (African Union 2004:22). It reflected a determination to undertake periodic assessment of African peace support capacities as well as assist in the coordination of external initiatives in support of the ASF capacity-building in training, logistics, equipment, communications and funding, in collaboration with the United Nations. The Protocol, by the content of its provisions, is all-encompassing, requiring member states to give the Union necessary assistance including rites of passage through their territories.

ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF)

The APSA as earlier stated is made up of five regional standby forces these are: the East African Standby Force (EASF), the North African Regional Capability (NARC), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Standby Force (SSF), the Economic Community of Central African Standby Force (ECCAS) Force Multinationale de l'Afrique Centrale (FOMAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Standby Force (ESF) which was established in June 2004 (ECOWAS, 2012:16). The provisions of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty (1993), the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (1999) recognises ECOMOG which transformed to ESF as the regions peacekeeping force while the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (2008) provides the legal basis for the establishment of the ESF. Furthermore, the preamble of the Mechanism stresses that the relationship between ECOWAS, AU and UN on peace and security is based on the principle of subsidiarity and complementarity. The ESF since its inception has been involved in the training of personnel for rapid deployment. This development channelled effort into training for the military, police and civilian components of the standby force by the

designated training centres of excellence. The ECOWAS Commission maintains three Training Centres of Excellence (TCEs), through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), National Defence College (NDC), Nigeria at the strategic level, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Ghana, at the operational level and Ecole Maintien de la Paix Alioune Blondine Beye (EMPABB), Mali, at the tactical level.

Research Objectives/Questions

The main objective of the paper is to analyse the relationship between ECOWAS, its TCEs and funding partners while building capacity for viable peace and security in the region through training and capacity building. The research questions the paper seeks to answer are as follows:

a. What is the relationship between ECOWAS, its TCEs and its partners?
b. What is the contribution of the TCEs to the capacity building of the ESF?
c. What are the challenges and prospects for training and capacity building in the region?
d. What recommendations or way forward will be proffered to improve training and capacity building for the ESF?

Theoretical Framework

The relationship existing between the different institutions and organisations involved with peace and conflict management in West Africa is based on partnerships. Consequently, the paper adopted the theory of organisational partnerships found in the work of Ronald McQuaid 2009. Mc Quaid in his attempt to explain partnerships posited that, partnerships are varied and circumstantial, and that the only way they can make meaning is by identifying and choosing an appropriate type. Some of the main considerations in the process of identifying partnership according to McQuaid are as follows:

> 'what the partnership is seeking to do, i.e., its purpose and whether it is strategic or project-driven; who is involved, i.e., the key actors and the structure of their relationship in the partnership; when i.e., the timing or stage of development of the partnership process and changing relationships and activities over time; where, i.e. the spatial dimension; and how the activities are carried out, i.e. the implementation mechanisms (McQuaid, 2009:2)

He went further to give different conceptual clarifications of partnership and the one that suits the premise of this work is the definition given by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 1990. OECD defined partnerships as 'Systems of formalised co-operation, grounded in legally binding arrangements or informal understandings, co-operative working relationships, and mutually adopted plans among many institutions. They involve agreements on policy and programme objectives and the sharing of responsibility, resources, risks and benefits over a specified period (McQuaid, 2009). This definition critically captures the relationship between ECOWAS, the TCEs and funding partners which is bound by Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), Project Implementation Agreements (PIA) and other monitoring and evaluation mechanisms like the Meeting of Commandants, Training Coordination Workshops, Training Needs Analysis Workshop and Multi-dimensional Working Groups among others, to enhance the relationship.

Drawing by this definition it is pertinent to mention that the partnership on training for the ESF is based on the suggestion of Hutchinson and Campbell 1998 (McQuaid, 2009); which is, a 'coalition of interests drawn from more than one sector to generate agreement, …have common aims and a strategy to achieve them; … share risks, resources and skills; and… achieve mutual benefit and synergy'. To corroborate this position, Garza's work (2006), on theories of integration, maintains that partnership simply refers to a coalition of interests. This exists between ECOWAS, TCEs and other partners on

training and capacity building based on the principle of subsidiarity towards a collective effort for the common goal of peace, security and development.

While examining the contribution of the TCEs to capacity building of the ESF, the theory of organizational partnerships will be applied to identify and relay the achievements and challenges experienced and would utilize these paradigms to proffer a way forward for this partnership based on lessons learnt.

Methodology

This paper is a desk study and focuses on the contribution of the TCEs to the capacity building of ESF. Information was obtained from secondary sources which include published and unpublished (but documented) sources. These include reports, policies, manuals, papers, correspondences, legal documents and presentations, containing useful information on the subject.

ECOWAS Training Centres of Excellence

The ECOWAS in 2002 designated 3 training centres in West Africa as training centres of excellence for Peace Support Operations in the sub-region in line with the provisions of the protocol relating to the establishment of the PSC of the AU and also the decision of the 4th Defence and Security Commission (DSC) Meeting of 5-6 August 2002 held in Cote d'Ivoire. Following the decision and recommendation of the DSC, the Mediation and Security Council (MSC) called on the lead nations and partners to champion support for the development of capacity in PSO within West Africa [United States, United Kingdom and France also referred to as P3] to establish tactical, operational and strategic level training with the 3 identified centres. The P3 who were also permanent members of the UN Security Council had resolved to assist Africa in Crisis response. The US decided to assist African troops with training, funding and logistic support together with the UK and France who were already involved with most of the countries because of their historical relationships. Given that, France opted for the tactical

level, the UK for the operational level and the US for the strategic level. The categorization of the centres with the lead partners is as follows:

a. National Defence College (NDC) with the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies (CSRS) in the College serving as the Centre of Excellence for Strategic Level PSO Training in West Africa (US Support).

b. Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), serving as the Operational Level Centre of Excellence (UK Support).

c. Ecole Maintien de la Paix Alioune Blondin Beye (EMPABB), serving as the Tactical Level Centre of Excellence (France Support).

Within this framework of partnership, the TCEs were to remain under the ownership of their national governments with support from ECOWAS. They were also to develop their curriculum taking into consideration the priority areas of ECOWAS training needs but also consistent with United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) Standard Training Modules. To further strengthen the effectiveness of the centres and avoid duplicity, the ECOWAS established a coordination mechanism which is the bi-annual meeting of the Commandants of the three centres coordinated and sponsored by ECOWAS.

Concerning funding, the ECOWAS Secretariat irrespective of the funding support from the P3 [and self-generated] was to further support the centres financially. As a result, other partners indicated interest in supporting the centres and also contributing to capacity building for PSO these include Germany, Canada, Switzerland, Norway, Austria, the European Union, Japan and a host of others.

The ECOWAS to legitimise this relationship developed an MOU to set out the modalities for facilitating and enhancing the relationship between ECOWAS and the TCEs in line with the capacity-building needs of ECOWAS PSO. The first MOU was signed in 2007 which focused mainly on training and capacity building while the revised

MOU signed in 2017 had research included. This was to inform evidence-based policy and curriculum development (ECOWAS, 2016).

Memorandum of Understanding

The ECOWAS through the Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the Commission (PAPS) signed the MOU with the 3 TCEs in April 2007 and agreed on the measures to enable the implementation of the MOU. The MOU spelt out the parameters for cooperation to satisfy the training needs of the ESF, particularly in the areas of curriculum development, coordination, selection of course participants, evaluation of participants, data collection, staffing, collaboration with peer institutions, funding and the language for conducting the training.

To achieve the scope of cooperation required for the implementation of the MOU, the 3 TCEs with representatives of the ECOWAS met in Abuja on 17 April 2008 at the ECOWAS Commission (ECOWAS, 2008), this meeting was the first meeting of the Commandants and Staff of ECOWAS designated TCEs. During this meeting, the centres agreed to engage in exchange programmes to aid the sharing of information and knowledge as well as capacity building for their personnel. They also agreed to establish a database of resource persons and graduates in collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission. In line with the decision, the ECOWAS Commission set up a Technical Assessment Board on the database for PSO training in the Centres and also a team to develop a standard evaluation format for course participants.

Subsequently, the TCEs meet in this forum to agree and make decisions on certain issues; it is bi-annual and the hosting, is rotated among the centres. Another forum for coordination on training is the African Peace Support Trainers' Association (APSTA), this is a group comprising the peacekeeping training centres in Africa. The APSTA is a service provider to the African Union Peace Support Operation Department (PSOD), there is an existing MOU binding the Association with the AU PSOD for the development of personnel for the ASF. Through these fora, activities of the Centres are considered and reviewed to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and that the

courses conducted by the centres are standardised and harmonised to conform with the UN Integrated Training Services (UN ITS) standardised modules for PSO training.

The TCEs conduct training needs analysis as well to streamline and prioritise the different levels of training required for ESF through the support of the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) and European Union (EU). During the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) conducted for the ESF in 2006, it was discovered that the military component of the ESF had received considerable attention as it is adjudged one of the most developed in Africa, the police component was also gaining momentum while the civilian component was lagging. To further prepare towards the operationalisation of ASF, the gap identified in the police and civilian component was given adequate attention (in training) to enable the personnel to perform effectively when deployed.

The Training Coordination Meeting held in 2011 to plan for 2012 to 2013 identified the need for better coordination between the AU and ECOWAS and between the ECOWAS and TCEs regarding training needs and delivery to reflect the mandate and requirements of future ASF/ESF missions. The issue of improved financial support also came up between ECOWAS and the TCEs. (Report of TCM, 2011).

Nature and Characteristics of the Centres

The three institutions have been designated to handle different levels of training for the ESF. These institutions also have their peculiarities concerning national ownership, international status, funding and scope of training. The CSRS NDC was set up by the Nigerian government through an act of law in 1996 with a dual mandate for training and research in the fields of international security, defence and peace support operations at the strategic level. It was designated as an ECOWAS TCE in 2005, with the mandate to engage partners for the capacity building of ESF. It remains so till now. The KAIPTC was established by the Ministry of Defence of Ghana in 1998 and commissioned in 2004 to share Ghana's 5 decades of experience in PSO through training. It was designated ECOWAS TCE and assumed an international status with most of the programmes and activities

coordinated and funded by donors. It is currently operating an NGO status with the government of Ghana providing the leadership. The EMPABB was established by the French government to strengthen the capacity of PSO in West Africa at the tactical level. It was initially to be sited at Zambarko in Cote d'Ivoire, but exigencies of the time led to its relocation to Bamako. The French government and other partners provide funding and technical support while the government of Mali provides leadership for the institution. Unlike the NDC, both KAIPTC and EMPABB have the representatives of the funding partners on their governing boards.

Activities of the Centres

NDC

Since its inception, the NDC has been involved in the training of officers in strategic level programmes for national and international assignments including international peacekeeping; the CSRS sponsors the PSO Block in the main training programme of the College. Since 2004, the CSRS began to engage development partners in international peacekeeping activities and programmes. In addition to the peacekeeping course for senior military, police and civilian officers at the strategic level, the CSRS is engaged in the training of all categories of civilian specialists relevant to the conduct of the entire spectrum of peace operations, ranging from preventive action to peacebuilding. In this regard, a major emphasis of the Centre is to develop core competence courses, programmes and facilities for building both civilian and military capacity for peace operations. The programmes and activities are funded and supported by partners and networks the CSRS, and NDC are engaged with. These include the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC), APSTA, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPO), UN Women, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), AU, ECOWAS, EU, defunct Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (PPC) whose responsibility was transferred to Global Affairs Canada (GAC), German Technical Cooperation (GIZ), Save the Children, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Peace Operations Training

Institute (POTI), Cranfield University, British Military Advisory Team (BMAT), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), Small Arms Survey, Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF), International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, governments of Canada, Germany, Sweden, UK, Japan, China. The following are courses delivered at the CSRS NDC among other programmes and activities.

Strategic Level Peacekeeping Training-
Senior Mission Leaders Course
Policing and Sustainable Peace

Foundation Course - designed to provide basic knowledge and skills on mission work, including the roles of the UN, AU ECOWAS, and other international organisations and actors in the field. Participants without previous mission experience undertake the foundation course before attending any of the more specialized function-specific courses.

Function-specific courses - intended for persons proceeding to perform specialised roles in peace support operations, these include:

- Human Rights
- Protection of Civilians in PSO
- Peace Support Operation Planning Course
- Gender in PSO Course
- International Humanitarian Law (IHL)/International Human Rights Law (IHRL) in PSO
- Making Peace Operations More Effective (MPOME), in collaboration with the Small Arms Survey
- Logistics in PSO
- Election Management

Defence Transformation Courses - intended to train persons in the defence and security sector to prepare them for the management of defence and security challenges and transformation.

- Defence and Security Management

- Security Sector Reform
- Defence Procurement and Management
- Gender in the Security Sector Reform
- Gender Advisors Sensitisation Programme
- Personal Security and Kidnap Incident Management

International Disaster Management Course; conducted in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Agency to prepare participants for emergency response.

Engagement with War Colleges for PSO Packages - intended to provide support for the War Colleges in the design and delivery of their PSO Packages and Exercises.

- Army War College, Abuja
- Naval War College, Calabar

Following a concerted effort to improve knowledge delivery in the area of defence, peace and security, the CSRS NDC is also in the process of being accredited by the Nigerian Universities Commission to commence awarding postgraduate degrees under the Defence Post Graduate University Programme.

KAIPTC

The KAIPTC at inception in January 2004 was to serve as a command of the Ghana Armed Forces to provide training for peace support operations and to share the Ghana Armed Forces‟ experiences in the area of peacekeeping, with other nationals, international armies and organisations, after due consultations with international development partners, the Centre eventually evolved as an international Centre of Excellence for peacekeeping training. The partners for the centre are Core: Sweden, Norway, Non-core: Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Nigeria, Switzerland, UK, and the US, Institutional: ECOWAS, AU, UN, German Technical Cooperation (GIZ), Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Legion Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), Cranfield University,

Save the Children, Dag Hammersjolt Foundation, Peace Operations Training Institute(POTI), IAPTC, APSTA, among others. It delivers training and offers a wide range of courses in three categories as follows:

Peace Support Operations

- Multidimensional Peace Support Operations
- Integrated Civil-Military Coordination
- Joint Campaign Planning Course
- Peacekeeping Logistics Course
- Police Middle Management Course
- Police Pre-Deployment Training
- Disarmament Demobilisation and Re-Integration Foundation
- Crisis Information Management
- Advance Training on Stabilization Reintegration
- Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Security Sector Reform (Police)

Conflict Management

- Small Arms and Light Weapons: Foundation
- Small Arms and Light Weapons: Border Security Management
- Small Arms and Light Weapons: Stockpile Management
- Small Arms and Light Weapons: Marking, Record Keeping and Tracing
- Human Rights for Peace Support Operations
- International Criminal Justice
- Rule of Law
- Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
- Election Observation
- Election Management

Peace and Security Studies

- Development Diplomacy Programme
- West Africa Peacebuilding Institute Course
- Maritime Security and Transnational Organised Crimes
- Protection of Civilians in Africa

- Conflict Prevention
- Conflict Analysis and Mediation

The National Accreditation Board of Ghana granted the centre accreditation by which two Master's degree programmes and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programmes are currently run. (KAIPTC, 2020)

EMPABB

EMPABB was established in March 2007 in Bamako to serve as the tactical Centre of Excellence for ECOWAS Peace Support Operations (PSO) training. The tactical training centre for PSO was initially to be set up in Zambakro at Cote d'Ivoire but following the crisis that engulfed the country following post-election violence, the centre was relocated to Bamako. Since its inception, EMP has trained participants from all over the continent and has mobile training teams (MTTs) that move around to train tactical groups. Most of the courses offered at EMPABB are taught simultaneously in English and French just as obtained in the other two centres. The courses are divided into three components as follows: (EMPABB, 2020).

The Military Component:

- Military Observer Course
- Military Command Staff (staffers and planning)
- Disarmament Demobilisation and Re-integration (DDR)
- Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC)
- UN Logistics Course
- Gender Course

The Police Component:

- CIVPOL
- Standard FPU for the UN

The Civilian Component:

- Peace Consolidation
- Foundation Course in Peacekeeping

- Human Rights

Contributions of the Training Centres of Excellence to Capacity Building of the ECOWAS Standby Force

Looking critically at partnerships, McQuaid, suggested some benefits associated with them, which are flexibility and responsive policy solutions, facilitating innovation and evaluation, sharing knowledge expertise and resources, pooling of resources and synergy, developing coherent service, improving efficiency and accountability as well as gaining legitimization and buy-in. Juxtaposing these suggestions by McQuaid and the activities conducted by the Centres in partnership with ECOWAS and other partners, it is pertinent to mention that progress has been achieved. The following are some of the achievements recorded by these partnerships as well as contributions to the capacity building of ESF:

Harmonisation and Coordination of Training Courses

The 3 TCEs in West Africa are members of APSTA and one of the cardinal objectives of APSTA is the harmonization of Peacekeeping training in the continent to that effect, the 5th AGM in Accra provided the association with a platform to undertake some major decisions towards achieving this objective. In pursuit of the implementation of the decisions reached by the 5th AGM, the Association in collaboration with the AU PSOD, held the ASF Training and Coordination Workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 24-26 April 2007 with the following objectives:

- Coordination and harmonization of ASF capacity-building initiatives
- Providing support to the AU in the development of policies and structures for ASF
- Evaluation of African peacekeeping missions;
- Sharing research and lessons learnt.

The Training and Coordination led to the following recommendations:

- Development of a legal framework (MoU) for engagement between the two organisations (AU and APSTA).
- Introduction of APSTA to RECS/ Planning Elements and Regional Brigades to gain recognition.
- The review of APSTA's Articles of Association to include the collaboration with AU, expansion of membership and mobilisation of resources and funding.
- AU (PSOD) to provide APSTA with access to appropriate ASF-related training materials.
- The development of a database of competencies with an emphasis on accreditation and recognition of ASF-related courses
- Establishment, in collaboration with AU and RECs, of a database of trained Civilian, Military and Police personnel.

The training activities conducted in the 3 TCEs conform to the training standards of the AU and UN. Some of the recommendations made by APSTA during the training coordination meeting as well as some of the decisions taken have already been implemented. The training coordination workshop has been held since then, the last meeting held virtually in 2020 as a result of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evaluation of Courses

Course evaluations are carried out within the TCEs to improve the course modules and the methods of delivery. This is being conducted through questionnaires handed to participants at the end of a particular course or through monitoring of courses and interviews to measure the effectiveness of learning, training and processes. Facilitators and resource persons are evaluated as well to ensure that the right level of facilitators is identified and utilised for the subject matter involved. The general aim of the evaluation is to enhance the learning process, identify grey areas and fill the gaps. The role of German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) is highly commendable in this regard. The GIZ has been at the fore partnering with the TCEs to coordinate the evaluation of courses,

enhancement of training coordination and convening of training needs assessment/analysis.

Database

The ECOWAS Regional Network of Distributed Databases for Peace Support Operations is aimed at interconnecting the databases of the three (3) TCEs with the ECOWAS Commission for PSOs. This initiative was carried out with the support of the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ). Members of the board that carried out the feasibility study were drawn from the 3 ECOWAS TCEs and the ECOWAS Commission. The project was a step in the right direction, however, with the requirement for enormous resources. Some centres moved on to establish their individual database and learning management systems (LMS) like KAIPTC and EMPABB while that of ECOWAS is still ongoing. The NDC, through the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture Operations (EPSAO) project, has commenced the process of developing its own LMS. The EPSAO project is an extension of the EU Support to ECOWAS TCEs which was launched in 2018 and is being implemented through the GIZ. The EPSAO Project is a co-funded initiative by the European Union (EU) and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The major aim is to support ECOWAS in preventing and managing conflicts and security threats in West Africa. The need for ECOWAS and the TCEs to source sustainable funding to ensure that the database project becomes fully operational is paramount. The AU has also developed and operationalized the African Standby Capacity (ASC) Roster of trained civilians who can be deployed at short notice.

Participation in ESF Training Exercises

The ESF is made up of a Task Force and a Main Force. The Task Force is composed of personnel from the standby units including police and civilian personnel. It is composed of a Headquarters, two infantry battalions (West and East Battalions) and a Logistics Battalion. On order, the Task Force is to deploy within 30 days and be self-sustained for 90 days. The ESF Exercises are aimed at evaluating the various

standby units, equipment and personnel to be deployed to respond to crises or threats to peace in the sub-region. The exercises are fashioned to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of current Peace Support Operations realities. The arrangements agree with Article 4 (d) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (CAAU, 2002) which calls for the establishment of a common Defence and Security Policy for the African Continent. Within the context of the ECOWAS region, it is covered by article 21 of the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of December 1999. The exercises conducted by ECOWAS are as follows:

- Command Post Exercise (CPX) in Dakar, Senegal June 2006, (Supported by the French)
- Multinational Command Post Exercise (CPX) in KAIPTC Accra Ghana December 2006, (Supported by the US)
- Exercise DEGGO in Thies, Senegal November/December 2007, (Supported by the French)
- Command Post Exercise (CPX) EX *JIGUI* I in EMPAB Bamako, Mali June 2008,
- Field Training Exercise (FTX) EX *JIGUI* II in Kambooinse, Burkina Faso June 2009,
- Ex COHESION in Ikpinle, Benin April 2010,
- Combined Joint African Exercise (CJAX)
- Exercise *AMANI* Africa in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, October 2010,
- Command Post Exercise (CPX) EX *JIGUI* III in KAIPTC, Accra Ghana November 2011,
- Exercise Western Accord in Thies, Senegal, June/July 2014
- Exercise *AMANI* Africa in Lohatla, South Africa October 2015
- Command Post Exercise (CPX) EX *JIGUI* IV is scheduled to be held at NDC, Abuja, Nigeria in 2021 (It is yet to be conducted)
- The West Battalion comprising Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Burkina Faso and The Gambia, led by Senegal was evaluated during Exercise DEGGO, jointly organised by Senegal and France.

- The CPX Ex JIGUI I evaluated the ESF Headquarters at "Ecole Maintain de la Paix Alioune Blondin Beye.
- The Logistics Battalion led by Mali and composed of Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Senegal, was evaluated during an FTX Ex JIGUI II 2009, in Burkina Faso.
- Exercise COHESION BENIN 2010 was aimed at harmonising the Eastern Battalion of the force comprising Benin, Niger, Sierra Leone and Togo led by Nigeria. The eastern battalion was evaluated in this exercise.
- The Combined African Joint Exercise CJAX was the first of its kind and different from the ESF training exercise but exposed participants (students of Staff Colleges) to the concepts, principles & techniques of planning a multi-faceted PSO in the African/ECOWAS Context.
- Exercise *AMANI I* Africa 2010 validated the operational readiness of the ASF to plan, conduct and prosecute PSO and also the early warning and crisis management capabilities. This was held in Addis Ababa.

- Exercise *JIGUI* III 2011 evaluated the ESF, Main Force, as well as the inter-intra operability of the Civilian, Military and Police components of ESF at KAIPTC, Accra Ghana.
- Exercise *AMANI* Africa II 2015 validated and declared the ASF's full operational capability (FOC) to plan, conduct and prosecute PSO in an FTX held at Lohatla, South Africa.
- Exercise *JIGUI* IV: The planning for the exercise commenced in 2017, however following challenges encountered in the rotation of personnel and leadership in the ECOWAS Commission the planning for the exercise was affected. In late 2019 after the completion of all the activities in the timeline for the exercise, the global COVID-19 pandemic outbreak further stalled the process. Most of the funding secured to run the exercise expired. Plans are still ongoing to run the exercise with the view to testing the FOC of ESF and the Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD). Further information on the exercises and the conduct of exercise

JIGUI IV can be accessed in the ESF Handbook 2012 and the reports of the Meeting of Commandants of ECOWAS Training Centres of Excellence 2018 and 2021.

The ESF training exercises tested the ESF concept, and the ESF Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), evaluated the battalions and headquarters and improved the operational capacity of the Force. The successes achieved with the conduct of the exercises were, however, not without challenges. These exercises were made possible by the support of partners (funding, logistics and equipment) the P3+. The TCEs participated actively in these exercises as participants and evaluators. The following were lessons learnt which generally reflected in all the exercises:

- It is important to ensure that funds are provided before any ESF Exercise
- The role of the host nation should be clearly defined.
- Language Integration is very essential for a successful ESF operation (and exercise).
- The role of strategic lift is significant to a successful exercise.

Conduct of Research

In 2017 when the revised MOU came into force, research was jointly conducted by the 3 TCEs on the 'Farmers' and Herders' Conflict in West Africa which has been a major security challenge confronting the region in the last decade. The intention was to link policy development and training conducted in the Centres to the outcome of research and to ensure that policy and training are research-driven and needs-based. The model used in conducting the research was adopted as a model for subsequent collaborative research between ECOWAS and TCEs. The model was that the 3 centres jointly conduct the research with one centre leading and with funding support from a donor partner. (ECOWAS, 2018 and 2021).

Other contributions of the TCEs are in the area of training in security-related issues (Regional Interests, Threats, and Strategic/Security Policy), conflict/crisis prevention, conflict/crisis information analysis, report writing, Disarmament Demobilisation and Re-integration (DDR), Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), negotiation, mediation and arbitration, humanitarian assistance in integrated missions, integrated mission planning among others.

Challenges

Partnerships owing to their very nature are not without challenges or disadvantages, McQuaid identified some factors that could pose a challenge in partnership these include: conflict over goals and objectives, resource cost, accountability, organisational difficulties, capacity building gaps, and differences in philosophy among partners. The TCEs have experienced enormous challenges in the area of mobilisation of resources including financing for courses as well as coordination with ECOWAS and partners. Most of the activities of the Centres are donor-driven hence donors impose certain requirements on their funding support; this in most instances hamper the smooth conduct of courses and programmes. While ECOWAS is experiencing difficulties in getting member states to meet their financial obligations, the partners have equally resorted to diversifying their 'donor' support base with undesirable implications for the funding base of the centres. In the case of KAIPTC, the UK withdrew its funding support at a very critical period which almost led to the collapse of the institution; the KAIPTC has diversified and is even stronger now. For the NDC, the initial support of the US practically did not meet the expectation; rather other funding partners are now being relied upon for the conduct of courses and to run programmes as well. ECOWAS according to the provisions of the MOU is also bound to provide funding support to the TCEs. ECOWAS owing to its funding challenges has not measured up to a considerable level in this regard.

While TCEs, ECOWAS and partners strive to provide the capability for the ESF, they are continually faced with contemporary realities that have tended to make the trio find means of addressing

them. One major area is the necessity to improve the provisions of the MOU to reflect these realities. The MOU has been reviewed to reflect the need for more collaboration on research. The meeting for the review of the MOU also considered course development, content, delivery and impact, to reflect the current security situation in the region like Transnational Organised Crimes (TNC), insurgencies, fundamentalism, trafficking in drugs and persons among others (ECOWAS, 2015). The outbreak of Ebola in 2014 and most recently COVID-19 came with huge institutional implications for providing training and conducting research in the region. These include low implementation of training programmes, postponement or cancellation of programmes; diversion of resources to health care and COVID-19-related expenses; reduction in the number of course participants per class; inability to validate research findings and engage in networking due to travel restrictions; restriction of training to nationals only; and low inflow of funding support from partners (ECOWAS, 2021).

Conclusion

It is pertinent to note that while the partnership between ECOWAS, TCEs and partners are sometimes yielding unintended consequences, the gains are also commendable as a result of the success factors identified in McQuaid's work. The summary of these factors is a clear strategic focus, capacity for cooperation and mutualism, symbiotic interdependency and organizational complementarity. From the successes and achievements recorded, the contribution of TCEs to the capacity building of ESF cannot be overemphasised. The strategic focus has not shifted despite the daunting challenges, the mechanism set up by the ECOWAS has sustained the capacity for cooperation and mutual benefit, as each centre remains very relevant for the area of expertise for which it was initially set up to cover. The three-centre model unlike one which exists in other regions in Africa has promoted integration owing to the cooperation and coordination mechanisms in existence. The activities and programmes have helped in bridging the language divide between the francophone and Anglophone with the wider objective of helping the region. This cooperation has also indicated that the

relationship is symbiotic and interdependent. Complementarity is very evident as it strikes a balance for the partnership.

Recommendations

The following are hereby recommended:

a. The need to identify sustainable sources of funding to support the TCEs programmes and activities, could be in 3 folds: institutional, donor partners and commercialization of courses for institutions which are yet to adopt these methods.

b. TCEs to improve and sustain ICT infrastructure to support online training and research, through partner and institutional support.

c. TCEs and ECOWAS to sustain the conduct of joint training, research and exercises as a means of strengthening partnership and collaboration both physically and virtually.

d. The need to develop digital and hybrid models in the delivery and management of training as occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic.

e. ECOWAS and TCEs to revisit the database project and pursue the development of a joint database of participants, resource persons and subject matter experts.

f. ECOWAS, TCEs and partners to sustain the conduct of needs assessments, curriculum design and development, meeting of Commandants of TCEs, and other platforms that support collaboration like the multi-dimensional working groups.

g. TCEs should be proactive in preparing for and responding to emergencies.

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