

4.0 A History of the Panos family

Panos was founded in London UK in May 1986 by the staff of Earthscan, an Environmental Concern Organisation which had undertaken similar research and dissemination work since 1975. Panos London is a UK registered charity (nr 297366) with a Board of 15 members. Current paid staff in London number 20 and are supported by up to four volunteers.

There developed the recognition that the perspectives and experiences of the people of the south should be central to discourse about development plans, successes and failures.

If development was to be attainable and sustainable, it was necessary that the very targets of the process should not only be consulted but should even take the lead in this process.

Panos therefore realized the need for southern-led processes and therefore an organizational framework that reflected that southern leaderships and perspectives.

Accordingly, in 1996, Panos London began a process of decentralisation leading by 1998 to the establishment of three regional offices in Southern and Eastern Africa and South Asia respectively. Only Panos Eastern Africa has not yet achieved autonomy under this process, and this remains one of the important tasks under this Strategic Plan. The Panos network as a whole employs over 100 people working in all XX continents. Each works with a network of media, NGO, civil society and governmental contacts in the regions and internationally.

The overall governance for the Panos network is currently under discussion. What has so far been agreed upon and implemented is the creation of a Panos Council, an assembly where all centers are equally represented.

Panos Institutes

Eight Panos Institutes and 12 Panos Offices:

Panos South Asia – [Katmandu and New Delhi]

Panos Southern Africa – [Lusaka]

Panos Eastern Africa – [Kampala, Khartoum and Addis Ababa]

Panos West Africa – [Dakar]

Panos London

Panos Washington – [Haiti, Barbados]

Panos Paris

Panos Canada

Panos' experience combines the production and targeted dissemination of balanced, intensively researched and accessible information with catalyzing public debate.

Panos projects aim to increase the capacity of individuals, civil society groups and organizations including the media, and governmental institutions to gain knowledge and understanding of key development issues in furtherance of informed, democratic policies and programmes.

In short, Panos has become a global leader in taking forward thinking on the role of information and communication in developments well as a pioneer in bottom up communication methodologies (e.g. listening clubs, oral testimony), over the past 20 years.

4.1 Panos Eastern Africa

Panos Eastern Africa emerged specifically out of the East Africa and the Horn Regional Program run by Panos London. This program, which started in 1986, had a main focus on capacity building of journalists and information organizations and developed further when Panos London made the decision to under the regionalisation policy to locate management of programs within the regions thus setting up regional offices under their own governance, known as the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), constituting respected and knowledgeable figures from across the region who would become the formal authority for the organization.

The new regional centers are designed to be dynamic catalysts for public debate, rather than bureaucratic structures. All members of staff were to be drawn from within the region and after an establishment of phase of 5-6 years, all the regional centers were expected to become autonomous of Panos London. In 1997, regional office was set up in

Addis Ababa and later relocated to Kampala, thereby converting the Addis office into a country office.

Between 1997 and 2003, the Regional office steadily grew from having only two programs: Media Pluralism and Pastoralist Communication Program, to embracing other programs including: Media for Peace, Globalization and Governance, Environment, Gender and Violence, and HIV/AIDS. PEA covers the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The Regional Office remains headquartered in Kampala, Uganda and a new a country office in Khartoum, Sudan has been added to the one in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Immediate benefits of this were:

- Addressing the marginalization of the poor and their lack of access to information, and the lack of capacity to make voices heard.
- Better focus on a changing development context – a focus on ownership, on putting voices of the poor at the centre of development strategy; (PRSPs, NEPAD etc).
- Practically dealing with the problem of the major gaps between rhetoric of ownership and reality of development practice.
- Recognising the reality of a rapidly changing communication environment, making traditional information and communication methodologies increasingly obsolete.
- Marking the beginning of a global model of decentralised strategic coordination for the whole organisation (e.g. Our Global AIDS Programme.).
- Laying the foundation for viable autonomy.

4.2 Conclusion: A Global Network with the capacity to act locally

As a global organisation: Panos succeeded in bringing all the expertise, resources and capacities of the organisation together coherently around a small number of universally important global issues.

At the same time, the individual Panos Institutes are able to respond to the priorities and need of our regions, but again through coherent, focused set of strategies defined by partners, staff and RAC members.

A common global focus defined by southern Panos' covers the following:

- Trade and Aid
- HIV/AIDS (and public health)
- Media pluralism and ICTs
- Media and conflict
- Global Environment
- Cross cutting: gender and DIME

Augmented by specific regional focuses.

In the case of Panos Eastern Africa, these are:

- Media Pluralism,
- Governance, Leadership and Globalisation
- Conflict
- Pastoralism
- Gender
- Health