

Promoting Pluralism Programme

Proposed activities for the period Aug 2009 – Dec. 2010

a. Background

Overall, the programme to Promote Pluralism Knowledge is meant to enhance understanding of pluralism in relation to fundamentalism and to develop civil society-based strategies to increase spaces for pluralism in practice¹. In particular, the PKP programme aims at:

- Generating new knowledge (comprehending and mapping existing studies and practices)
- Intensifying linkages between development practitioners and academic researchers
- Translating acquired knowledge into strategies for promoting pluralism in practice and supporting civil society organisations to design and advance new strategies, policies and practices of pluralism
- Creating an international network of civil society initiatives on pluralism

The first 6 months of 2009 were meant to be a preparatory phase. Its main activities included the production of 5 mapping studies², the constitution of the working group and a regional conference held in April on “Valuing and managing diversity in Uganda”

Some of the issues that have emerged from this phase include:

1. Managing diversity is essential in sharing national resources and services equitably
2. National identity development: there is a need for (formal and informal) education on how to deal with differences and foster unity, given that there are few shared values; a decline in moral values, no shared vision.
3. Politics of identity: Ethnicity (especially), political affiliation, religion, education are some of the forms of identity that impose limits on people’s access to resources and result in unequal access to them.
4. Patronage shapes Uganda’s economic, social and political spheres - Patronage motivated by the desire to care for the less advantaged members in society was seen as positive while hierarchy and unequal power distribution lead to patronage with negative consequences.

¹ The Promoting Pluralism Knowledge programme is a joint project of a number of organisations, initiated by the Humanistic Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (Hivos) in the Netherlands. Hivos works together with the Kosmopolis Institute of the University for Humanistic Studies in the Netherlands and in cooperation with the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society in Bangalore, India; the Centre for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies in Yogyakarta, Indonesia and the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) in Uganda.

² These focused on: “Managing Diversity: Perspectives from Algeria, Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda”; “National identity development: reflections on the cases of Uganda and Tanzania” ; “The Politics Of Identity: Assessing The Influence Of Ethnicity, Regionalism, Religion, And Gender In Uganda” “The Role of Patronage in Shaping Uganda’s Economic, Social And Political Spheres” and “An Inventory of Civil Society Initiatives for the Promotion of Pluralism and Tolerance in Uganda

5. Pluralism and democratic deficit: the right to be different is not guaranteed, minority rights are poorly protected; legal frameworks and practices are inadequate. This allows a deficient leadership to survive - with no desire or competence to manage diversity – as well as weak institutions.

Some of the suggestions made at the conference as to the way forward included:

- Legal frameworks: popularise the constitutional provisions that foster pluralism; better address minority issues and extend the scope of affirmative action.
- Education is key; civic and moral education is needed in schools; the leaders too need training on tolerance; NGO networks need to engage on such issues.
- Distribution of resources: advocating for more equitable distribution of resources (and an effective policy on this), lobby parliament to strengthen existing institutions.
- Vision: contribute to developing a shared vision (open political space for people to participate in this).
- Possible research themes: What current civil society strategies are effective to foster pluralism; different understandings (values and perceptions) of the distribution of resources; documenting best practices.
- A common front: actively involve the media in civil society work's to promote pluralism and vice versa.

b. Preparing the next phase of the programme.

The following steps have to date been taken:

- A number of ideas regarding the way forward had already been discussed (i) by CCFU, when an indicative budget had been requested by HIVOS/Kosmopolis (ii) at the April conference and (iii) at the post-conference meeting of the working group. Reflections by the working group after the conference included the following:
 - i. This is a new and important area of engagement; so far, it has captured participants' interests
 - ii. NGOs, and especially Universities present welcome opportunities to build a common space for engagement.
 - iii. The programme needs to create new knowledge, but with an action orientation at the outset, that could help NGOs re-think their strategies.
 - iv. There is a need to avoid an artificial dichotomy between the 'traditional' and the 'modern', and rather envision a continuum, with the existence of 2 "publics", in the village; and in the NGOs, Government, etc.)
- CCFU met with teams at Nkozi (Uganda Martyrs University and Mpigi NGO Forum); and in Gulu (Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies – Gulu University and the Gulu NGO Forum). Some of the main points arising from these meetings are:
 - i. There is an interest in the programme; the focus is found to be entirely relevant, the issues of pluralism and diversity are quite vital, and justice and resource allocation especially pertinent.
 - ii. 'managing diversity' remains a virgin area for research; yet there is a need for national unity (rather than 'national reconciliation')

- iii. There is interest in adopting an interactive, collaborative stance for the next phase of the programme, which should privilege local views and indigenous knowledge; and be action-oriented rather than ‘academic’ in focus, reaching a wide public with an emphasis on practical, simple steps (e.g. some of the action points of the April conference)
- These views and suggestions led to draft proposals prepared by CCFU. These were reviewed by the Steering Committee on 13th July and 23rd, when it was agreed that the focus of the next phase should be on ‘domesticating pluralism’, as outlined below³.

c. Proposals for 2009-2010

The following orientations and guiding principles were agreed upon by the Steering Committee and are submitted to the programme partners for comments and eventual approval:

- The long term vision of programme partners: while this document details specific activities for the period August 2009-December 2010, the vision of the partners (working collectively and/or individually) extends beyond this time horizon. The PKP partners in Uganda are committed, over the long term, to generate a new vision of a tolerant society.
- The focus of the next phase: will focus on ‘domesticating pluralism’ and, specifically, on generating, communicating and acting upon a good understanding of pluralism and the distribution of resources in its cultural perspective. This entails understanding pluralism and its value of equality in the local context, rather than pluralism in its ‘imported’ and universalistic form. What is considered important is to understand people’s perspectives on pluralism, their moves to engage with each other (f.i. the positive aspects of patronage), to communicate this and to foster action arising from this understanding.
- The desired change for the next phase is to “re-configure debates on governance, by feeding popular perceptions on diversity and democracy in this”. This can then be used to lobby government and others, especially as it will then be the pre-election year (2010).
- Collaborative stance The next phase will privilege practical cooperation between Universities and Civil society organisations as much as possible (with knowledge outputs generated, as well as strategies to address pluralism in Uganda). In addition, the programme will seek to liaise with and build on existing initiatives, e.g. the Human Rights Week and Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform.
- Proposed activities. These will take place under the following five headings:
 - a. *Research*: primary research in two geographical areas to elicit community views and experiences on pluralism and diversity.

³ The members of the committee (until end of July 2009) are: Prof. P. Kanyandago (Martyrs’ University); Prof. J. Kwesiga (DENIVA); A. Larok (National NGO Forum); M.Ndifuna (HURINET); E. Drani and J. De Coninck (CCFU)

- b. *Student placements*: 14 Master's students placements in NGO and academic partners to support the objectives of this phase.
- c. *Academic/NGO conference*: UMU and Gulu University will jointly organise, with the national NGO networks, a conference on taking the pluralism agenda forward.
- d. *Action plans by the respective universities and NGO networks*. The outcomes of the research and the conference will inform the development of action plans by the main stakeholders.
- e. *Popular dissemination and documentation*. Engaging the media, acquiring and developing information materials.

These are detailed in the following sections.

d. Detailed activities

1. Research: The proposed themes will include:

- Local understanding of pluralism and democracy – how is this lived by local communities?
- Diversity: how is it managed by local communities and how are external forces managed (intra and inter ethnic/community differences)?
- Marginalisation, including ethnic marginalisation: what processes are at work? With what results?

There will be two research “clusters”: one around Gulu University [Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies working with the Gulu NGO Forum; the other around the Uganda Martyrs' University [Department of Good Governance and Peace Studies], working with the Mpigi NGO network. Each will select geographical areas for primary research. Currently three field locations per cluster are envisaged, to provide adequate representation. The research areas will reflect different experiences and perspectives on issues of pluralism and distribution of resources, f.i. in relation to the marginalisation of the North and in relation to a context where civil strife has not recently been experienced (Mpigi).

Research process: the following is envisaged, in chronological order:

- a. Community dialogues: 1 to be held in each of the 6 research areas to help refine the research agenda? i.e. what issues are considered pertinent by local communities?
- b. Methodological development workshop: a two-day, field based event (possibly facilitated by CCFU and other members of the steering committee) to finalise the research questions develop and test field instruments (e.g. key questions for focus group discussions; ways to capture intra community differences, etc.)
- c. Finalise a research plan: in each cluster, both academic and NGO partners agree on the way forward in relation to field work and reporting.
- d. Field work: 3 days of field work (including report writing time) in each of the 6 research areas.
- e. Draft preparation, peer review and gap filling if necessary
- f. Final report preparation: to be compiled by each ‘cluster’, then edited as a single document (by CCFU?).

2. Student placements: Both academic partners will place Master's students in the relevant NGO partner within the other academic partner for 2 weeks (the period between the two

semesters, or two separate 1-week periods during semester time), based on partners' profiles and on ToRs to be developed by the host organisations. These ToRs will incorporate common principles (such as feed back mechanisms) to be developed by the Steering Committee. The placements will directly reflect the PKP programme focus areas.

Seven placements are envisaged for 2009 and 7 for 2010, to be deployed as follows:

- a. One UMU student to Gulu IPSS (1 each year = 2)
- b. One IPSS student to UMU (1 each year = 2)
- c. One IPSS and one UMU student to Gulu NGO Forum (1 each year = 2)
- d. One IPSS and one UMU student to National NGO Forum (1 each year = 2)
- e. One IPSS and one UMU student to DENIVA (1 each year = 2)
- f. One IPSS and one UMU student to HURINET (1 each year = 2)
- g. One IPSS and one UMU student to CCFU (1 each year = 2)

3. NGO/Academic conference on 'domesticating pluralism: what way forward for Uganda?'
This will be a follow-up event to the April meeting, convened by all academic and NGO partners on the programme.

The conference will:

- a. Present the outcomes of the field work, as emerging form (1) above. This may include presentations by both researchers and community members.
- b. Provide a venue for the presentations of other papers, following a call for papers to the Ugandan academic and NGO community.
- c. Provide an opportunity for action points to be developed, some of which will be taken up by the NGO partners under (4) below).

A thematic approach is anticipated, on which universities' and CSO perspectives will be sought (through the call for papers) and contrasted.

For planning purposes, 80 participants are anticipated, for a two-day residential event. These may include:

- Partner representatives
- Other concerned civil society organisation (cf. mapping study)
- Participating MA students (as per 2 above)
- Community members involved in the research
- Media representatives

4. Action plans by the respective universities and NGO networks

The outcomes of the research and the conference will inform the development of action plans by the main stakeholders. This could include validation, training, dissemination and public information activities and other relevant action to 'mainstream' PKP concerns in partners' work. In universities, 'pluralism clubs' could be fostered. 7 NGO action plans will be funded.

NGO partners will receive guidance on the contents and approach adopted for their action plans by the Steering Committee. These action plans will be 'vetted' by the committee.

5. Popular dissemination and documentation. Engaging the media and developing information materials (e.g. leaflets in local languages on pluralism).

All partners will be assisted to acquire the necessary documentation materials and to publicize their work and their outcomes (Purchase of books & periodicals; updating their website (linked to existing partners' sites))

e. Programme management

- Composition of the steering group:
 - The Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies; the Mpigi NGO Forum, and the Gulu NGO Forum will join the committee, in addition to the existing members.
 - Representation from Makerere University through HURIPED is being sought.
- MoUs:
 - These will link all partners on this programme and outline their respective responsibilities.