Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

A collection of essays produced by the Pluralism Knowledge Programme in Uganda
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THE CROSS-CULTURAL FOUNDATION OF UGANDA

Developing a pluralistic society and ‘managing diversity’ are seen as increasingly necessary—if challenging—considerations on the political, cultural and socio-economic agenda of most nations in the northern hemisphere. But is this also of relevance to contemporary Uganda? We are fond of saying that our nation is culturally rich and diverse, but more rarely do we investigate the consequences and challenges of managing such heterogeneity, both within our communities and as a nation.

Yet these challenges seem ever more present. Whether it is the complicated relationship between cultural institutions (usually representing ethnic interests) and the unitary state; the fragmentation of our national territory (or not) into ever more numerous districts; the continued feeling of disenfranchisement in northern Uganda; or the complicated dosage of political posts according to region, ethnicity and religion (often, it seems, in preference to competence). Wherever one looks it indeed seems that managing diversity remains a challenge in Uganda today.

Is this surprising? Uganda’s recent history reminds us that this artificial colonial creation is still a young, uncertain entity whose citizens usually find solace and expression in sub-national forms of identity, rather than in their ‘Ugandanness’, a concept that remains difficult to define. It is through these forms of identity that searching and securing resources – whether recognition, jobs, contracts or others – is often undertaken. We also remember that the recent history of Uganda has been characterised by strife, when the sub-national ethnic card has so often been manipulated to the advantage of those in power. The contemporary politics of inclusion and exclusion that determine access to vital resources thus often seem to prolong their colonial trajectory, when foreign religions aggravated intra-and inter-ethnic factionalism, and the policy of divide-and-rule fed into the pattern of collaboration and resistance to colonialism that kept religious divisionism and ethnic consciousness alive.

One could indeed argue that the autocratic rule of post-colonial governments in Uganda since 1962 has reproduced rather than deconstructed ethnicity. In particular, patronage continues to pervade economic, social and political spheres: ethnicity is therefore then neither about pluralism, nor about ‘tribes’, but an ideology of dominance that inevitably results in a significant democratic deficit. In such an environment, favouritism and corruption thrive and result in the current perception that cultural diversity represents exclusion to the detriment of the collective public good. For the future, therefore, effectively managing diversity appears as not only extremely difficult, but as inescapable for national health.

It is therefore not altogether surprising that, at a national conference on managing diversity held in Kampala in April 2009, a main conclusion was that, by virtue of...
the nation’s history and its ethnic, political and religious composition, valuing and managing diversity is central to equitable and sustainable development.

The Pluralism Knowledge Programme
This conference was held under the auspices of an international initiative, the Pluralism Knowledge Programme and this volume arises from the work of organisations and individuals attached to universities and NGOs, brought together since 2009 by this programme in Uganda.

The Pluralism Knowledge Programme (PKP) also linked universities and NGOs across four countries\(^1\). The initiative was taken after civil society based organisations in the South signalled growing intolerance, often manifested as fundamentalisms rooted in religion, ethnic affiliation, nationalism, social class, gender and other identities or value systems. As one observer then put it, “It seemed increasingly difficult to mobilise local communities to deal with the complexities of diversity and co-existence, rather than the more accessible but divisive and polarising issues of difference. These developments seemed to curb the organisations’ pursuit of a pluralist, diverse and dialogical culture for development and empowerment.”

Responding to this, a group of academics and civil society-based actors expressed a desire to rethink their strategies and reinterpret their understanding of local situations. They decided to cooperatively search for and generate knowledge aimed at developing new insights into diverse manifestations of diversity and to comprehend divergent experiences and views on pluralism. As this volume illustrates, both academic and practical sources of knowledge are considered essential, as is the interaction between them. Academic knowledge offers a broader conceptual understanding of the issues at hand. Practitioners’ knowledge and experiences provide new insights into how fundamentalism pervades the work of civil society organisations and which concrete initiatives best promote pluralism or fail in development practice.

Pluralism or diversity?
This enquiry is built on the premise that processes of civil society building that are aimed at the ability to live creatively in a pluralist society should be worked out in different directions, at the social or communal level through initiatives of civil society organisations, the business world, by religious and other institutions, in particular in the field of awareness raising, media and in the public debate.

It takes as point of departure an understanding of diversity that is essentially descriptive and passive: diversity describes the differences between our respective

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\(^1\) The Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Programme is a joint initiative by the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (HIVOS), together with the Kosmopolis Institute of the University for Humanistic Studies in the Netherlands, 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). For a list of Pluralism Knowledge Programme partners in Uganda, see Part VII.
identities – whether given, ascribed, or bestowed - as individuals, groups and societies. Pluralism is on the other hand understood here as the principle that people should be respected for what they have reason to value in their lives (Sen, 1999). Pluralism accommodates people to value difference and promotes their active encounter with diversity, by seeking understanding across lines of difference. This also presents a key value in the domain of human development. Diana L. Eck (2006) argues that a limited kind of pluralism may depend on clear boundaries of interaction, but that a deeper kind may require steady and meaningful engagement across differences, e.g. across ethno-religious lines. Eck thus offers salient points to orient our thinking: first, pluralism is not diversity alone, but the energetic engagement with diversity. Diversity is a given, but pluralism is not; it is an achievement. Mere diversity without real encounter and relationship will yield increasing tensions in our societies. Second, pluralism is not just tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference. Tolerance is a necessary public virtue, but it does not require people to know anything about one another.

Is pluralism relevant in Uganda?

To start examining the relevance of the concept of pluralism in Uganda, the 2009 PKP conference attracted many participants from academia and civil society organisations. Five mapping studies that had been commissioned to explore various aspects of pluralism can be found in this volume. The first concerned the role of ethnicity, regionalism, religion and gender on the politics of identity in Uganda and the author (Kayiso, this volume) stressed that “the politics of inclusion and exclusion are central to understanding the politics of identity”. The author notes that these have continued to reproduce themselves over time: as in the colonial and post-colonial ‘divide-and-rule’ policy; forced political integration into the nation-sate; skewed access to resources; and authoritarian government. Forms of identity that impose limits to people's access to these resources are principally ethnicity and nationality but also include political affiliation, class, religion, education, language and gender. The author further notes the consequences of this state of affairs, such as the ‘over-centralisation of power’ in Uganda; the development of a ‘personality cult’; the emasculation of national institutions and the lack of political will to effect changes and become accountable.

The second study (Maraka, this volume) focused on the role of patronage in shaping Uganda’s economic, social and political spheres and explained how patronage, in addition to the politics of identity, influences access to resources, while noting that managing patronage can also facilitate the management of diversity. Both positive and negative connotations and effects of patronage are reviewed; how it is ingrained in the culture of Ugandans, having been present from pre-colonial times, and having a continuing effect on identity, development and state formation. The positive aspects of patronage include a force for inclusion and care of the weak and the poor and, more broadly, for managing social, economic and political affairs. On the negative side, patronage and clientelism are recognised as hindering poverty eradication when
relationships are hierarchical and power sharing unequal. In Uganda, it is entrenched “from top to bottom”; its effects on culture are pervasive (such as in the notion that “politics is the way to get rich” and in fostering paternalistic values among the country’s leaders).

Still, an inventory of the main civil society initiatives (Amaniga, this volume) revealed a wide range of activities, ranging from advocacy (for inclusion), capacity building, protection of human rights, awareness and sensitisation, peace building, and developing national values. While these activities have resulted in some change (such as contributing to building a broader knowledge base about democracy and civic consciousness; and stimulating constructive debate), challenges included the increasingly contested space for NGOs and the media to operate in, an unsupportive policy and legal regime, sporadic funding, and often negative attitudes towards pluralism, reflecting low levels of civic education.

Looking beyond Uganda, an analysis of NEPAD’s country reports from Algeria, Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda (Naisiko, this volume) indicated that managing diversity appears as a crosscutting issue, with the rationale for managing diversity given as nation-building, unifying people within the state, so that it remains politically stable. Managing diversity is however also seen as a challenge in all countries. The author identifies two main implications for Uganda from her study: to avoid conflicts, issues of ethnicity in national development cannot be taken for granted; and managing diversity is essential in sharing national resources and services equitably. This calls for inclusiveness in building people’s potentials to become productive members of the community and to contribute to its sustainability.

Another international perspective is offered in comparing Uganda and Tanzania from a national identity viewpoint. Tumwine (this volume) remarks on the “low levels of national identity among Ugandans” as compared to Tanzanians. The reasons for the apparent success in “nation-building” in Tanzania include the uniting role of the political party in Tanzania and President Nyerere’s visionary leadership; while in Uganda ethnicisation of the army, the special position that was accorded to Buganda at independence; and the struggle for livelihood manifesting itself in religious, ethnic and racial intolerance are underlined.

The conclusions of the debate underlined that, by virtue of our nation’s ethnic, political, and religious composition, valuing and managing diversity is necessary for equitable and sustainable development. This, it was felt, demands the recognition of differences, engagement with these differences and creation of equal opportunities for all to be productive.

More fundamentally perhaps, there was a recognition of identity and diversity as both familiar and elusive; as ‘natural’, constructed and ascribed, often finding their sources in exploitative mechanisms. The importance of an ‘African’ cultural dimension to understand identities and distribution of resources was also underlined,
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as well as the need to understand diversity as a collective endeavour and the apparent lack of political good will and trust in Uganda (as expressed in skewed distribution of resources, corruption, etc.). The role of capitalism and whether it can accommodate pluralism was part of the inquiry, given its focus on the survival of the fittest and its spawning of policies that promote divisions and intolerance (e.g. exploitation of some districts resources; district-centric decentralisation, under-represented minority groups). In building tolerance, a common language was not seen as necessarily the solution (especially if imposed; and as the example of Rwanda had shown), but education (curriculum, non-formal, civic) and ‘visionary leadership’ were agreed to be important, recognising that, in Uganda, the leadership does not currently seem to positively address issues of diversity and pluralism.

It was also noted that the Uganda situation presents a paradox: while much emphasis is placed on the difficulties the country is facing in managing diversity, one forgets the more tolerant aspects of society and its remarkable track record in surmounting grave crises that threatened national unity. Nevertheless, many signs that fundamentalist tendencies are spreading in many spheres were noted, such as the way the person looks at her/his neighbour or the shrinking political space to express dissenting views. One could find reasons for this in skewed access to resources, but also in the absence of a national project, amidst fractious identities. For the future, therefore, effectively managing diversity appeared as inescapable. As De Coninck (this volume) points out, the 2009 ‘Kampala riots’, the continued uncertainties surrounding anti-homosexuality legislation and the reactions following the deadly 2010 bomb blasts – as illustrated by one of the cartoons by Ras – continue to highlight this national challenge in its diverse manifestations.

This challenge is later further emphasised by J-J Barya (this volume) in his paper on “Politico – Cultural Pluralism, Diversity and Public Order Management in Uganda Today”, which was presented at the National Convention on Peace, Democracy and Governance, co-organised by the PKP in 2011 (see also the press release - *A Time To Act On National Peace And Development* – this volume). In his paper, Prof. Barya recalls that Uganda is an artificial colonial creation, with different ethnicities and nations who do not see themselves as one people. The non-political elements of the different peoples’ cultures, he argues, are rarely controversial, but tensions usually arise where culture meets with political processes and power, such as in the dispute between the central state and nationalities that demand more autonomy. Prof. Barya observes that, while the Constitution of Uganda lays down human rights standards that protect the freedoms necessary in a pluralistic society and a multiparty system, today’s public order management regime – in terms of practice, legislation, political pronouncements - undermines efforts at managing diversity. The current regime, he argues, has done little to foster pluralism. Taken together, several legislative instruments are intended to stifle freedom of association, the right to dissent, media freedom and are against the spirit of encouraging unity in diversity whether at a political, civil or cultural level. Informal platforms (cultural associations in universities, community radios) to replace
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the formal space threatened by these laws and practices have emerged, but these can exhibit exclusionary tendencies, reinforcing differences between communities. Therefore, the author urges, civil society, political parties, the media and liberal elements in government need to work together to ensure that anti-democratic laws, policies and practices in place and proposed Bills are amended or dropped.

Meanwhile, the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda undertook research on legal pluralism (CCFU- this volume), and drew on four case studies to present reflections on its relevance in the Ugandan context. The cases highlight the resilience of structures, mechanisms and values that help local communities organise themselves and deal with the problems they face, as opposed to the existence of the monopoly of a single state-inspired governance framework. Further, not only are ‘traditional’ reference points being used, they are also being adapted to new sets of local circumstances, although the study notes that one must avoid any romanticism about such governance systems. Nevertheless, the authors suggest that there is much to learn from such systems and from examining their potential contribution to enhancing governance as a nation. This encourages us to consider the co-existence of several value systems. The authors argue that legal pluralism is indeed desirable, providing a source of alternative ideas and experiences that can contribute to the design of appropriate mechanisms, institutions, and practices. The case studies also suggest that benefits could be derived from moving from an ‘either or’ situation, to one where the positive aspects of both types of governance perspectives are brought together. The paper concludes that traditional cultural leaders, if they are to continue playing an effective role in the current context, must have the self-confidence to claim their legitimacy, to resist co-option, but also to constantly re-invent themselves and ensure that there is no risk of being tainted with any suggestion of adhering to authoritarian and paternalistic values that are ill-fitting with people’s contemporary aspirations. In the process, they can contribute to a more legitimate and accountable exercise of power to the benefit of all citizens, in tune with the vital cultural values that can inform the future of the nation.

Investigating local perceptions of diversity and its management

While the initial conference and subsequent research had recognised the relevance of pluralism in the local context, it was felt important to further understand how Ugandans view diversity and its management, especially at the ‘grassroots’, rather than pluralism in its ‘imported’ and universalistic form. PKP partners from the Gulu and Mpigi research ‘clusters’ set their research teams off in April 2010, focusing on selected local communities in the districts of Mpigi in central Uganda, Amuru, Pader and Dokolo in northern Uganda and Kibaale in the western region. The research teams engaged diverse groups and individuals in these communities to explore people’s understanding and experiences of pluralism, diversity, and marginalisation.

Everywhere, it was revealed (see Uganda Martyrs University et al, this volume), diversity was perceived as a challenge and its most dominant manifestation was ethnicity. Other perceived sources of diversity included political affiliation, economic
status, sometimes religion. It was thus noted how newcomers in a particular locality had to “buy-into” the dominant culture and how different dimensions of identity determined access, use, ownership to resources, especially political affiliation (and its overlap with ethnicity). Underlining this, respondents generally understood pluralism as “living together in stable harmony, even if you have to give up some of your identity”. Co-existence included a dimension of give and take, but it was also a concept associated with expected (or real) benefits, or sometimes necessitated by local conditions, such as the need to fit in an alien environment. Diversity was locally managed, but mechanisms were limited in their effectiveness because they tended to be ad hoc and un-coordinated. With regard to ethnic marginalisation, the roots could often be traced back to the colonial period when different patterns of ethnic manipulation and power (based on access to resources) emerged in different parts of the country. Currently, reasons for marginalisation included competition for limited resources (as a strategy of excluding others); lack of education or knowledge; and ethnic bigotry, justified by stereotyping others; and identifying others as a threat to the current order. Exclusion was indeed found to be a lived reality in the local communities, with pluralism not necessarily considered or understood, and differences accommodated mainly through patronage and assimilation.

Meanwhile, Uganda Martyrs’ University’s Jimmy Ssentongo embarked on his PKP-sponsored PhD research and he too focused on Kibaale district. In the paper included in this volume, he argues that this district “presents a curious case that is grounded in a complex history of pre-colonial inter-ethnic rivalry; colonial ethnic manipulation; a colonial legacy of strained ethnic relations; and contemporary trends of massive immigration into the area with attendant immigrant-phobia catalysed by memories of foreign domination and humiliation”. Ssentongo shows how the current ethnic relations between the native Banyoro and immigrants from other parts of Uganda are mediated through Kibaale’s history of marginalisation, but also by manipulation by opportunists (especially politicians) and by Government’s weak and sometimes ill-conceived interventions. Can pluralism flourish in such an area? The author notes that the people of Kibaale have harmoniously co-existed at some points of their history and that any answer as to a pluralistic future can best be found in a study that focuses on the perceptions of the people themselves, where social reality is viewed as constructed by the people through whose agency meaning and relations are formed. In his paper, the author indeed tests the validity of the dominant theoretical frameworks which social scientists have used to understand and explain dynamics in and between ethnic groups - primordialism and constructivism. A synthetic outlook is adopted where, through a critique of each of these two theoretical lenses, a synthesis is developed to account for the persistence of ethnic conflicts in Kibaale and the circumstances under which pluralism is made possible in a multi-ethnic context.

Issues of identity, whether ‘natural’ or ascribed, also emerge in a ‘lived’ way in the study conducted by the Uganda National NGO Forum (this volume) on one of the marginalised minorities in the country, people living with albinism. The study
for instance indicates that the extent of inclusion of persons with albinism in the ‘disability movement’ is largely dependent upon issues of identity and perceptions. Thus, while most of the persons with albinism interviewed perceived themselves as persons with disabilities, less than half other persons with disabilities did so. It was also generally reported that the attitudes of service providers across sectors are negative and stigmatising towards people with albinism. As a result, there are no customised interventions to address their specific needs and, in many cases, people with albinism access mainstream services without specialist care to meet their specific health, education and other needs.

To complement this overview of local perceptions of pluralism, and illustrating his argument with three case studies drawn from the Mount Elgon area, Wanda (this volume) offers a critical perspective on the very notion of pluralism by recalling that the liberal paradigm imposed on African communities has undermined Africans’ power to interpret the world through their own symbols - which has led to “a crisis of meaning, of life, persons, and community.” Wanda argues that, instead of uniting their people, political elites have resorted to colonial-era tactics of exploiting ethnic diversity for their benefit. In so doing, they perpetuate neo-colonial domination and espouse visions and programmes of modernity and development driven by imported cultural benchmarks. It is from this position that the author offers a critique of pluralism as a school of thought and of its relevance in the local context, seeing pluralism as an individualistic “mono-cultural model (...) aimed at bringing together previously isolated people together voluntarily and involuntarily into new and ever closer neighbourhoods by the increasing integration of markets [and] the emergence of new regional political alliance [and marketing] the culture of the west as the most just, the most tolerant (...) and the best model for the future”. Instead, Wanda shows through case study material, local communities are moving away from the perspective of African ‘victimhood’ and cultural pluralism by experimenting with ‘cultural clusterism’ as an ‘afrikological’ approach towards renewed community-centred empowerment, thus taking up the opportunity to participate in meaningful ways in resolving the challenges of discrimination.

Does one “learn” pluralism?

Whatever its local perception, is pluralism an acquired value and, if so, how is pluralism ‘learnt’? Three contributions examine this question. The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda first set out to establish the significance of the family as a space for nurturing the value of pluralism in Uganda (Drani et al, this volume). This research explored the role of the family in managing cultural diversity, a family being perceived as the space where acculturation begins and where difference in terms of ethnicity, religion and gender, among others, is defined, understood and managed to foster (or not) harmony from the smallest unit of a household to the wider community.
Within families met, ethnic and religious identities were found to be the most significant sources of difference. Managing this required understanding the other to seek commonalities and compromises. Pluralism, or the lack of it, was seen to be nurtured during childhood and in turn determining freedom of association, choice and management of difference in adulthood. With education and other forms of exposure, families, especially in urban areas, seemed more tolerant of diversity than earlier was the case. A breakdown in traditional social systems was however noted, resulting in poorly guided younger generations and dysfunctional families. The extended family, as a main source of cultural orientation, was also challenged. To compensate, there were emerging centres of collective identity outside the family that increasingly influenced the self. The family however remained the most suitable spaces for nurturing values, reinforced by cultural reference points, especially regarding ethnic identity.

The next step was to investigate the situation in secondary schools (DENIVA, this volume). This showed that while most secondary school mottos included ‘diversity’ or ‘equal opportunities’, bullying, discontent among teachers, students’ strikes, and intolerance along ethnic, religious and cultural lines, were commonly reported and pointed to a lack of equal opportunities and to problems in managing diversity. While some school policies and practices were accommodative of difference and while there was a readiness to foster pluralism among students and teachers in both government and private institutions, there was neither teacher orientation nor guidelines to do so. Apart from school regulations, the Ministry of Education had not instituted a deliberate policy to provide information to parents and children on their rights and duties in respect of others. In conclusion, Uganda’s educational system is shown to lack a philosophy for a multicultural, pluralistic output and several recommendations are made, including in-service training for teachers on how to promote pluralism in schools and a curriculum review to ensure that both content and teaching methodologies embrace pluralism.

As ‘architects of knowledge’ and learning environments, universities also play an important role in influencing ways in which pluralism is lived and promoted. The third study examined how four Ugandan universities engage with diversity, how they manage increasingly multicultural student bodies, diverse academic and non-academic staff, and how this engagement is influenced by government policies and the academic, social and political contexts. The author (Vusia, this volume) shows that, whereas pluralism and diversity were important values articulated in different ways by each of the universities, there was limited action, except in a few schools or departments, to establish a deliberate agenda dealing with issues surrounding difference and diversity. University administrations lacked programmes that adequately focused on students’ diversity and the opportunities as well as challenges this presented for providing an education that supports co-existence, engagement with difference and the development of well-rounded graduates able to function well in a variety of circumstances. Ethnicity and religion were important considerations in all the universities when it came to student representation or dealing with
the university administration. Tension between groups was often addressed by disengagement but also provided opportunities for individual students to choose to engage with different people or those with different world views, taking a stand to use such differences as platforms for understanding, rather than isolation.

What can be done?
A further set of two papers in this volume examines efforts to manage diversity from civil society perspectives, one focusing on inter-religious cooperation, the other on the women’s’ movement.

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) stands as one of the main inter-faith institutions in Uganda and set out to interrogate the extent to which the Council lived its mission and, more specifically, how IRCU-supported faith-based organisations promoted the spirit of inter-religious action in implementing their activities. The focus was on inter-faith dialogue as “the different faith communities not just living harmoniously side-by-side, but actively knowing about and respecting each other and each other’s beliefs in fair and honourable competition”. Was this in practice, the author queried, a myth or reality? To the extent that people of different faiths reported working together and showcased joint projects aimed at improving their health and transforming their socio-economic well-being, this was reported to be an important landmark of inter-religious collaboration. On the other hand, there were also a number of voices reporting challenges with respect to inter-religious collaboration, reflecting prevailing differences in religious beliefs, practices and perceptions. Further, it was concluded that collaboration was not grounded in the theoretical underpinnings of inter-religious dialogue. The study recommended capacity development of religious leaders in such dialogues, as well as increased support of IRCU work by senior religious leaders.

If inter-faith collaboration presents challenges, so does the sometimes fractious women’s’ movement. The Ugandan Women’s’ Network (UWONET – this volume) examined the challenges this movement currently faces in managing diversity, both within itself and in relation to its evolving operating environment. If this movement is by nature heterogeneous, it had until recently managed to cut across religious and ethnic lines as well as political affiliations. The author notes that, more recently, the movement appears to have been a victim of its diversity and has failed to develop a cohesive voice in addressing women’s concerns, aggravated by competition between organisations for donor funding. Pluralism is not being broadly addressed in the sense of having women with differing opinions energetically engaging each other. Instead, there is avoidance of alternative views; tolerance rather than engagement. The author concludes that the challenge facing women’s organisations is therefore to harness this diversity and to build on a common vision. Respecting diverse views, energies, talents, capabilities and resources could thus be used as a strategy to build a strong social movement, owned by women from all walks of life, rural and urban, old and young and from the ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ sectors.
The interview with Bishop Niringiye (this volume) helps us to conclude with an affirmation, not only of the importance and relevance of managing multi-dimensional diversity in our country, but also to keep questioning the very notion of pluralism and its acceptance in the local context. Echoing Wanda, Bishop Niringiye departs from a notion where people are allowed to express their difference – no matter what, without ‘normative pattern’ (especially with reference to sexual orientation); where there are “no common norms, no standards” and where identity is a matter of choice. In registering his disagreement with this understanding of ‘what we are’, Bishop Niringiye suggests that pluralism based on the individual has become a dogma, which only works so long as societies are rather homogenous. At the other end of the spectrum, one should also decry tribalism, he argues, the notion that ‘what we know, what we believe, becomes the standard’, without agreeing on who are the ‘we’. Instead, it is proposed to ‘celebrate plurality’ and to accept it as fact and gift. “But in order to celebrate we need to dance to the same tune. The challenge we face is identifying the common ground, our shared values, or shared identity”.

II. MANAGING DIVERSITY - THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

1. The Politics of Identity: Assessing the Influence of Ethnicity, Regionalism, Religion and Gender in Uganda – A Literature Review

Kayiso Fulgencio

Abstract

This literature review covers scholarly work on different aspects and forms of identity and its impact on human development in Uganda. It reviews the factors that determine the development of identity and highlights the different forms of identity that limit people’s access to resources and the institutions involved. It outlines the institutions involved and deals with the role of ‘choice and reasoning’ in explaining people’s affiliations and allegiances, and the reasons for people’s attachment and shifting allegiances.

Having shown how the advent of colonialism in Uganda found the local ethnic groups at different levels of socio-political organisation, the review shows how intra-and inter-ethnic factionalism was aggravated by ethnic tensions caused by the forceful integration of people of different cultural backgrounds into the same administrative units. The colonial policy of divide-and-rule also fed into the pattern of ‘collaboration’ and ‘resistance’ to colonialism that kept religious divisionism and ethnic consciousness alive. The north-south divide in Uganda is one of the most enduring legacies of these policies and the review suggests that all the historical
factors determining the development of identity in Uganda are still relevant today. This validates what several commentators have termed the reproduction of the colonial state by post-colonial administrations.
Today, ethnicity, political affiliation, religion and gender are still strong forms of identity to determine individual and group access to resources. As for the gender factor, much has been done to promote gender-balance and sensitivity in Uganda, but much remains to be done, especially to operationalise gender policies and programmes. To tackle these social injustices, one of the dominant themes discussed by a number of commentators is institution-building. Writers in this respect suggest that the break-down of institutions in the 1960’s was largely the cause of Uganda’s political troubles. This introduced militarism and ‘personalised rule’, symptoms of authoritarianism, in Uganda’s politics. Building strong institutions will reduce instances of corruption, nepotism, influence-peddling and other social vices arising from the ‘personality cult’ syndrome. The author argues, as a personal conclusion, that an understanding of pluralism would enhance human development and capacity expansion in Uganda. He suggests that the NEPAD self-evaluation mechanism should become a compulsory mechanism to be acceded to by all African countries.

THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

The aim of identity politics is to empower the oppressed to articulate their oppression in terms of their own experience - a process of consciousness-raising that distinguishes identity politics from the liberal conception of politics as driven by individual self-interest. The politics of identity or identity politics has been defined as political action to advance the interests of members of a group whose members are oppressed by virtue of a shared and marginalized identity such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Identity can be defined as “an abiding sense of selfhood, the core of which makes life predictable to an individual”. It can be conceived of as more than a psychological sense of self; it encompasses a sense that one is safe in the world physically, psychologically, socially, even spiritually. For a long time social groups have made their choices and organized their lives according to dimensions of identity.

Identity, whether based on gender, religion, region, or ethnicity can be an obstacle to development. Wilson and Frederiksen observe that the uncritical use in development studies and development practice of concepts such as ‘grassroots’ and ‘participation’ indicates a willful denial of the relevance of identity-based social difference and inequality in “Third World societies”. They contend that the question of political identity has for long been central for policy-makers accountable to the task of nation-state building. Historically, identities have been created in a tension between policy-oriented definitions from the outside and self-definitions. They fluctuate in accordance with local, national and global power politics.

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3 Ibid.
Joireman categorises five types of identity that people generally subscribe to: ethnic, religious, regional, racial and linguistic. Identity has an element of choice: within these membership categories, an individual can decide what priority to give one membership type over another in different contexts. Since the decision is an individual undertaking, not everyone finds each of these identities to be important. For instance, individuals have the identities of citizenship, gender, race, language, politics and religion. There is no doubt that a sense of identity and belonging to a group with shared values and other bonds of culture is important for individuals. According to the ‘instrumentalist school’, identity is conceived of as a means to some specific political end, focusing on the goals of the identity group rather than one’s origins. Instrumentalists thus contend that identities may be important at some times and in some circumstances and completely absent at other times. The ‘primordial school’, on the other hand, considers identity as given and static, and attributes it to cultural or other historical commonalities.

Laakso and Olukoshi attribute the many incidences of violence and conflict in various parts of Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East to racial, ethnic and religious factors; with a vast majority of them being intra- as opposed to inter-state in nature. They observe that since the late 1980s, some of these conflicts have assumed genocidal dimensions. At the heart of this turmoil is a crisis of individual and group identity which, in the context of deepening social injustice, the weakening administrative and policy apparatuses of the state, the decline of the ideologies of communism and anti-communism that dominated the Cold War era, and an accelerating process of globalisation, has called into question some of the basic premises of the contemporary nation-state project. In this respect, Bangura concurs that the accelerating pace of globalisation, coinciding with deepening, world-wide market forces, has had direct implications not only for state capacity and legitimacy but also for social processes as various groups and individuals seek to re-define themselves in a rapidly changing domestic and international environment. Thus the changing requirements and environment of globalised capital accumulation have, together with pressures of an increasingly international consumption culture and a globalising mass media, influenced identity formation and diversification in a most complicated manner all over the world.

This literature review covers scholarly work on different aspects and forms of identity and its impact on human development in Uganda. The purpose is to map out and make an inventory of the main academic research that has been carried out in the last five years. Having contextualised the politics of identity in this introduction, Chapter Two

8 Human Development Report ibid.
9 Joireman op.cit.
covers the factors that determine the development of identity. Chapters Three and Four highlight the different forms of identity that limit people’s access to resources and the institutions involved. Chapters Five highlights the institutions involved and deals with the role of ‘choice and reasoning’ in explaining people’s affiliations and allegiances, and the reasons for people’s attachment and shifting allegiances. Chapter Six explains how an understanding of pluralism would enhance human development and capacity expansion in Uganda.

MAIN FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ‘IDENTITY’ IN UGANDA

The politics of inclusion and exclusion: historical overview

This section attempts to provide a summary of what the different commentators have written on Uganda’s identity and political history. Over all, the most important factor raised by most commentators is the politics of inclusion and exclusion that have assumed different manifestations, such as a long standing divide-and-rule policy, socio-political reorganization/transformation, limited access to resources and authoritarianism. The section examines events from the colonial period up to the present. Although it deals with these forms separately, in reality they were happening simultaneously and reinforced each other.

Divide and rule policy

The crisis of national identity in Uganda is a function of one region’s (Buganda) privileged position bestowed on it by the 1900 Uganda Agreement. Buganda’s historically privileged position is pivotal to the understanding of the evolution of ethnicity, religious factionalism, and regionalism in Uganda. When British colonialists arrived in Buganda, they found a kingdom headed with a relatively more advanced form social organisation than for other ethnic groups. With their base in Buganda, they used Baganda agents in their military campaigns to conquer other areas such as the Bunyoro Kingdom where King Kabalega attempted to resist British colonialism. Buganda’s direct collaboration with British imperialists thus aggravated the ancient rivalry between the two kingdoms, a matter further compounded by the annexation to Buganda of two Bunyoro counties as war booty. To date, there are about 4000 land titles still held by ‘absent’ Baganda landlords in these areas, where in effect the indigenous Banyoro are mere ‘squatters’. The British colonialists also sent Baganda as administrators in other parts of Uganda, a policy that earned the Baganda hatred as they came to be regarded as agents of British imperialism. A case in point is Kakunguru, a Muganda administrator who played a considerable role in bringing eastern Uganda within the fold of British rule.

13 Karugire (1980). A political history of Uganda p.89
15 Karugire op.cit. p.206
16 Karugire op.cit.p.107
Owing to the same policy of divide-and-rule, the northern ethnic groups became sources of police, army and prison personnel in Uganda. In the long run this caused instability as northern leaders used their numerical strength in the armed forces to acquire and retain power. In the south, cash crop production was encouraged which depended on labour provided by migrants from the north, Kigezi and Rwanda. This polarised society economically, socially and politically.

The 1962 Independence Constitution reaffirmed Buganda’s superior position in the new state, to the chagrin of the rest of Uganda. Hitherto, the relationship between “the Mengo establishment (Buganda kingdom) and the national political leadership has been one characterised by Buganda’s demands for a privileged status over and above that of other areas...” By aspiring for a constitutionally backed position to reassert its identity, Buganda’s ethnic demands were regarded by the rest of the country as a road block to national identity. Using divide and rule politics, the British had kept the fire of ethnic politics burning.

**Socio-economic reorganisation and forced political integration** Colonialism brought about socio-economic and political transformation in the ‘native’ communities, leading to the inclusion of some and exclusion of others. In some cases, an ethnic group would be split between two states. In other cases, formerly antagonistic societies or those with dissimilar cultures were put together. For instance, ethnic units that constituted Uganda were at different levels of social and political organisation, ranging from centralised societies in the central and western regions, to semi-stratified ones in the north and northwest, and to clan and age systems in the east. Many commentators agree that it was such policies that created the north-south divide which has largely contributed to Uganda’s past and present political instability. As a consequence of this forced integration, accentuated by state-authored systems of discrimination and inequality, has been the long history of agitation over the right to self-determination by ‘dominated’, ‘oppressed’, and marginalised groups of which minorities constitute a special category.

The problems of creating districts and administrative units by colonial authorities came to the fore in eastern and western Uganda. In western Uganda, ethnic tensions culminated into the Rwenzururu guerrilla movement in 1962, peasant resistance against “intense nationality oppression that led to land deprivation, language

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17 Okuku, ibid.p.91
18 Ibid. p.11
20 Bateisibwa (2002). Ibid. p.8
23 Karugire op cit. p.175
exclusion and job discrimination through most of the colonial period.”

Bateisibwa observes that the search for national identity in the post-colonial period is far from being achieved as social groups still identity themselves with the lowest units of social and political organisation namely, ethnicity, class, region, religion etc.

Access to resources Musana argues that in “the history of Uganda, missionary religions have had a serious interest in the management of the country.” As Karugire observes, “[with] the arrival of the Christian missionaries began the real colonisation not only of Buganda but of Uganda...” The religious wars fought in Buganda in the 1890s between the Anglicans, the Catholics and Muslims were an attempt to assert their identity in Buganda and later Uganda. Karugire attributes these wars to a quest to control resources, since “the immediate cause of the Muslims’ discontent was the feeling that they had not been given a fair share of the offices of state by their Christian allies after the deposition of Mwanga, the king of Buganda.” Moreover, he posits that the long lasting impact of the early wars in Buganda was that henceforth religious affiliation became the basis of political association and action. He notes that “whereas, at this point in time, the unconverted populace (‘pagans’) was the majority, by the end of the wars they had forfeited access to political power as the old values were discarded for new ones, the access to which was, for a very long time, exclusively controlled by missionaries.”

Waliggo illustrates the gradually souring relationship between the Catholic Bishop Kiwanuka and the Kabaka (King) of Buganda, owing to the ‘politics of exclusion’ practiced by the Protestant elements in the Buganda kingdom. This led Bishop Kiwanuka to complain to the Kabaka against the ‘politics of exclusion’ and ‘institutionalised discrimination at Mengo’.

The takeover of mission-founded schools in 1963 was further evidence of the battle for the control of resources pitting the Catholic Church against the Obote 1 UPC government, which, in the eyes of Catholics, served the interests of the Protestants. Schools were perceived as sources of recruitment for political leaders, opinion leaders and party supporters. Mudoola therefore contends that the UPC leadership must have realised the formidable socio-cultural base the DP leadership had in Catholic schools. Thus the takeover of the schools was one of the surest ways of neutralising it through control of resources, staff and school curricula.

Authoritarianism Okuku contends that colonialism was by definition anti-democratic.

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28 Ibid.p.69
29 Ibid.p70
30 Ibid p.70
31 Waliggo ibid. p. 109
32 Mudoola op.cit p.33; Okuku op. cit p.91
33 Okuku op. cit p.92
He observes that being by nature autocratic, colonial rule exerted political and economic exclusion of the colonised which enhanced regional, religious and ethnic consciousness. Equally true, the autocratic rule of post-colonial governments in Uganda since 1962 has reproduced rather than deconstructed ethnicity in Uganda. Okuku’s argument is vindicated by Mudoola’s observation that “by the outbreak of the 1966 Crisis, Obote had in the military a reliable constituency based on ethnicity”. Available figures indicate that by 1963, 50 per cent of the national army was drawn from Acholi, and most of the remainder from West Nile. With an ethnic-based army, the Obote regime was prepared for a confrontation with Buganda and the opposition within his Uganda People’s Congress. Therefore, the ruling ethnic groups of the newly-independent state appeared to have adopted a ‘winner takes all’ approach. Yet despite his military victory over Buganda, Obote never made inroads into Buganda; the Baganda remained subdued, bitter and sulky. Until Amin’s coup in 1971, Buganda remained in a state of emergency, which rendered Obote more dependent on the army for fear of domestic upheavals; and this, in turn, generated within the military a sense of politico-functional indispensability, relegating to the background civil political institutions as legitimising instruments. That the Baganda cheered Amin’s coup in 1971 helped to legitimise Amin domestically and internationally.

Mudoola argues that Amin’s coup against Obote was a decisive reaction against polarisation in the military along ethnic lines and attempts by Obote to have Amin neutralised. Amin’s regime fanned negative ethnic and xenophobic sentiments in 1972, when he expelled Asians, accusing them of sabotaging the economy. His 9-year rule was characterised by gross human rights abuses, and the torturing and killing of thousands of people, with the Langi and Acholi especially targeted. The cycle of violence fanned by ethnic animosity re-emerged after his overthrow in 1979. The theatre of conflict shifted to the West Nile region, where the bulk of Amin’s army hailed. The Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), the national army which, together with Tanzanian forces, had deposed Amin, was composed of a large number of Acholi and Langi soldiers who had escaped Amin’s purges in the 1970s. Ward documents atrocities committed by the UNLA when it entered West Nile in 1980, ‘liberating’ the area with great brutality. The massacres committed manifested the level of ethnic polarisation and militarism in Uganda.

39 Mudoola ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid. p.130
The 20-odd-year LRA-Government war in northern Uganda is a reaffirmation of Okuku’s argument that the post-colonial state is a reincarnation of its colonial forerunner. To many ethnic groups, the ‘independent’ state is an instrument for the advancement of their own interests, mainly under the principle of ‘winner takes all’. While successive governments have accepted ethnic diversity, they have also suppressed particular ethnic groups in order to promote the interests of the political leader’s ethnic group. While the NRM regime is characterised by peace and prosperity in the south, peace talks to end the war have not been conclusive, nor has the humanitarian crisis of people forced into IDP camps been resolved. Okuku finds that two major factors stand out clearly from this conflict. First, militarism by the NRM— the belief that the conflict can only be ended militarily and two, an ethnic mind-set of the NRM regime towards the people of the north, which borders on a vendetta, a post-colonial legacy.

Class formation Using the perspective of class formation in Uganda, Mamdani examines how colonial policies led to social stratification and how this, in turn, culminated into socio-political conflicts based on inequalities in access to resources. He argues that the signing of the 1900 Buganda Agreement created a class structure of landlords and peasants in Buganda. Parcelling out pieces of land to the king and the chiefs created “a class of powerful but parasitic landlords” which extracted an agricultural surplus product from a tenant peasantry through payment of busulu (rent) and envujo (tribute). Using the colonial policy of divide-and-rule, a class of labourers from the north and south-western was created to offer labour to peasant farmers in the south where crop production was introduced. It was this early exploitation of labour from the north that explains what Banugire terms as ‘uneven and unbalanced development’ in Uganda; a factor that is hitherto responsible for the current Government-LRA war.

FORMS OF IDENTITY USED TO LIMIT PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section presents the different forms of identity that impose limits on people’s access to resources and opportunities, both individually and collectively. The categorisation is made according to the researcher’s perception of order of importance.

Ethnicity, ethnic minorities and nationality

Ethnicity Writing on the Bahima and Bairu ethnic groups in Ankole, Doornbos discusses the question of ethnicity in African politics in two perspectives. One is

46 Wairama op.cit.p.7
47 Okuku ibid. p.103
49 Ibid.
about ‘vertical’ relationships, concerned with potential conflict between ethnic identities and national loyalties\textsuperscript{51}. The second focuses on ‘horizontal’ relationships: conflict between ethnic groups themselves. On the ‘vertical’ perspective, Doornbos concedes that in new states people’s basic political identifications are generally not with the state, but with sub-national units such as linguistic, ethnic, religious, racial or regional collectivities\textsuperscript{52}. He argues that “it is not only […] impractical to obliterate sub-national ethnic identities, but generally it seems unnecessary too…To call for a general sublimation of non-national into national identifications as a precondition to national development, would be putting the cart before the horse…”\textsuperscript{53}. He argues that ethnic identity largely derives its saliency and meaning from the social context in which individuals and groups find themselves. He posits that “in the ‘horizontal’ perspective, contextual analysis, not a focus on ethnic attachments per se, appears necessary to come to grips with the problem of ethnicity”\textsuperscript{54}. Barongo expounds three models to explain conflict situations: social pluralism, cultural pluralism and ethnic pluralism\textsuperscript{55}. To him ‘ethnic pluralism’ is the best model to explain Uganda’s ethnic conflicts. In this model, ethnic groups constitute centres of political power and claim the identity and loyalty of their members\textsuperscript{56}. Barongo argues that “using ethnic identity and solidaristic ties as weapons of political bargaining, the elite cadre of the various groups thus engage in constant struggles for the control of state power”\textsuperscript{57}. Therefore, such a state of affairs creates tensions among the ‘in’ and the ‘out’ groups, and leads to political conflict which in turn will often lead to violence. Barongo’s model conforms to Okuku’s instrumentalist definition of ethnic identities as “social constructs defined by historical conditions in which they emerge [and being] an effective means of political mobilisation for those who seek access to state power in order to change the pattern of resource distribution”\textsuperscript{58}.

Using the ‘ethnic pluralism’ model, Barongo demonstrates that the colonial administration in Uganda was based on a system that recognised the multi-ethnic nature of society, whereby territories or districts demarcated along ethnic lines became the basic political and administrative units\textsuperscript{59}. Thus the kingdom and district political and administrative units provided traditional elites with a wide range of opportunities for political participation and decision making\textsuperscript{60}. However, with increased political centralisation after independence, the central government started encroaching on the powers of federated states, particularly of Buganda, and was perceived to be using

\textsuperscript{51} Doornbos (1978). *Not all the king’s men: Inequality as a political instrument in Ankole, Uganda*, P. 169

\textsuperscript{52} Doornbos ibid p.171

\textsuperscript{53} Doornbos ibid,p.172

\textsuperscript{54} Doornbos ibid 173


\textsuperscript{56} ibid

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid

\textsuperscript{58} Okuku (2003). “Ethnicity, state power and the democratization process in Uganda”p.87

\textsuperscript{59} Barongo op.cit. 71

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
its powers unfairly to suppress the interest and aspirations of local political entities, resulting in an increasingly strained relationship between the central government and local administrations. They finally broke, leading to the abolition of all cultural institutions. The destruction of the foundations of political pluralism in Uganda, ending the politics of institutional and legal opposition, ushered in an authoritarian central government

**Ethnic minorities** Ethics minority groups have been defined as “non-dominant groups of individuals who share certain national, ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which are different from those of the majority population, [and] share certain characteristics which single them out of any given society often as marginalized groups”\(^\text{62}\). These characteristics often include living in remote geographical locations, being poor, lacking basic social services and being victims of poor policies - with a very existence threatened by unfavourable policies of government and majority groups\(^\text{63}\).

Wairama points out that minorities are largely excluded from the economic, political and socio-cultural life of the rest of the population\(^\text{64}\). Groups that are considered minorities in Uganda include the Alur, Ba’mba, Bagungu, Bakenyi, Bakonzo, Batwa, Bavuma, Ik (Teuso), Kakwa, Karamojong, Lugbara, Luluba, Ma’di, Nubians, and Soo \(^\text{65}\). The Uganda Constitution, 1995, does not define ‘minorities’ although it provides under Article 36 that: “Minorities have a right to participate in decision-making processes and their views and interests shall be taken into account in the making of national plans and programmes”\(^\text{66}\). The preceding articles however provide for affirmative action (Article 32), the rights of women (Article 33), the rights of children (Article34), and the rights of people with disabilities (Article 35), indicating that the framers of the constitution had a limited view of the term ‘minorities’\(^\text{66}\).

It could be argued that the juxtaposition of ‘minority groups’ and ‘marginalised groups’ has tilted the balance of attention from the former to the latter. A Minority Rights Group report thus notes that whereas government has made some progress in addressing the needs of marginalised groups, “no development policy is in place to effectively address inequalities between minority and majority communities”\(^\text{67}\). Ethnic minorities constitute another vulnerable group for which there is no comprehensive strategy\(^\text{68}\). According to the Africa Capacity-building Foundation (ACBF) Self-Assessment Report (2007), government is widely claimed to be insensitive to the needs of ethnic minorities who often find themselves in conflict with various

\(^{61}\) Barongo op.cit. 76
\(^{62}\) CDRN “Study of selected ethnic minority groups in Uganda” EMG Research Report (2008) p. 1
\(^{63}\) CDRN ibid.
\(^{64}\) The Uganda Country Self-Assessment Report and Programme of Acrion.p.145
\(^{65}\) Ibid.
\(^{66}\) Wairama op.cit. p.9
authorities, especially on issues of their habitation and land. Minority groups often have limited access to social and economic services and do not have the opportunity to participate in community governance.

A study by the Community Development Resource Network (CDRN) on selected minority groups in Uganda presents the following as challenges facing minorities: lack of policies or programmes to encourage participation of ethnic minorities at the lower level of government; limited knowledge on part of the local government leaders about the rights of ethnic minorities; failure of minorities to recognise their identity, leading to mistreatment by majority groups and government; and inadequate effort by local governments to preserve or recognize them as ethnic minorities with a unique cultural and linguistic identity.

While minorities face discrimination, women from minority communities are doubly affected. The Minority Rights Group (MRG) notes that, being at the crossroads of gender and ethnicity, minority women suffer from multiple forms of discrimination. Low levels of education among minorities, as well as remote locations limit their knowledge and exercise of their rights. In times of conflict, minority women suffer disproportionately from gender-based violence. Moreover, national institutions and structures are very poorly equipped and financed to deal with all the aforementioned issues.

**Nationality** In some instances people have been expelled from Uganda on the pretext of their foreign nationality. In the 1960s Obote expelled Kenyan Luos from Uganda who were working in the East African Railways Corporation, one of the common services of the East African Community. In 1972 Amin expelled Asians, accusing them of economic exploitation. Ward observes that the political conflicts raging between the Bahima/Banyarwanda communities and Bairu in Ankole intensified the lands disputes between the two ethnic groups which culminated in a blanket expulsion of the Banyarwanda immigrants in 1980s. These three occurrences have one element in common; the victims were purported to be non-Ugandan nationals. According to the instrumentalist school, disputes pitting ‘nationals’ and ‘foreigners’ are predicated, among others, on issues such as (limited) access to resources and other related opportunities.

Mamdani discusses two categories of identities, political and legal. He states that colonialism categorised the population in two overall groups; races and tribes. Non-

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid
71 CDRN, “Study of selected ethnic minority groups in Uganda” p.26
72 MRG (n.d.). Discrimination against minorities, op.cit
74 Ibid
75 Kabwegyere (2000): “Civil society and the democratic transition” p.100
76 Ibid
77 Ward, “The Church of Uganda amidst conflict” p.91
78 Joireman op.cit.p.1
natives were tagged as races (e.g. Europeans, Asians), whereas natives were said to belong to tribes (called ethnic groups in post-colonial period). This distinction had a legal significance. All races were governed under a single law - civil law, and tribes were governed under customary laws - each tribe with separate laws. The essence of this discrimination was that the different races were meant to have a common future, whereas different ethnicities were not. Secondly, the discrimination granted different sets of rights: customary rights (e.g. the right to use land) to indigenous groups and the non-indigenous denied the same rights.

**Political affiliation**

The NRM came to power in 1986, promising fundamental changes in Uganda’s political and constitutional life, an end to religious sectarianism and tribal divisions, and a return to peace and security. Many of these promises have been fulfilled in some measure in the southern part of the country. But northern Uganda, and particularly the Acholi region, have experienced the opposite with chronic conflict, violence and devastation. Before the Juba Peace talks, the churches were for long critical of the Museveni government for its failure to get to grips with the problems in the North. An Anglican bishop is quoted saying:

...We are most affected by the way the Government has dealt with the [war] situation. Innocent people suffer killings on all sides. Cattle–rustling appears to be organized by the government. It is done systematically. There now no cattle from here to Gulu...

*(Ward, pp.201)*

This quote refers to the LRA-Government war that started in 1986 when the then southern-dominated NRA drove out of power the UNLA dominated by northern ethnic groups largely Acholi and Langi. Since 1996, Museveni has lost all elections in the north, a testimony that the NRM does not have a firm grip there. The war that has been raging for two decades has also affected the pace of development in the region. According to the Anglican bishop, the government is intentionally punishing the people in the north for fighting the government instead of embracing it, like in other areas. In February 2009, a new cabinet was announced. That the president appointed to the cabinet only two full ministers (i.e. 11.4%) from the north was interpreted as marginalisation of the region. According to a newspaper article, “the region shunned President Museveni and he gave it just two full cabinet portfolios...”

**Class**

To enhance class divisionism and perpetuate its control over resources, colonial policy created an intermediary class of small traders (commercial petty bourgeoisie) linked to the metropolitan (industrial) bourgeoisie. This was done by restricting

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80 Ibid. p.7
83 “New Cabinet: Museveni sows mustard seeds.” *(Saturday Monitor, February 28, 2009)*; Okuku op.cit.p.104
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Africans “in the agricultural economy and out of the market place” and keeping the (Indian) petty bourgeoisie “in the market and out of the agricultural economy”84. Mamdani thus argues that the Asian (Indian) commercial bourgeoisie became a principal intermediary in the imperial exploitation of the colony as it linked domestic production and consumption to an externally oriented export-import trade85. This vindicates the argument that the mission of imperialism was to search for exploitable resources for a surplus product to satisfy the metropolitan economic interests86.

Muherereza discusses socio-economic differentiation and the lower income levels arising out the commercialisation of tobacco farming in Masindi district87. He analyses the nature of tenancy relationships between the landlords and former migrants, on the one hand, and relations between the tobacco company (BAT) and the contractual growers on the other88. Notwithstanding the commercialisation of tobacco farming, Muherereza observes worsening poverty levels among peasant farmers which he attributes to “production loans extended to farmers by BAT which eat up their incomes…” and to the fact that “much of the peasant farmers tobacco is sold as low grade”89.

Namara discusses the plight of domestic servants in Uganda; as a category of workers that emerged due to increasing demand for women’s labour in the wage economy in the public and private sectors90. As more women get involved in the labour market, there is need for substitute labour in the household to undertake what has been universally assumed to be women’s role. Domestic work is largely dominated by women for a number of reasons. First, is the perception that “domestic work is women’s work”91 which attracts people with no alternative opportunities of employment, of whom women constitute a large section. Two, low pay partly explains the dominance of women, since men tend to pull out of spheres of work that is low-paid within the economy92. In Uganda, apart from the Employment Decree (1975) and the Workers compensation Act (2000), there is no specific legislation on conditions of service for domestic workers. Therefore, the exploitation of domestic workers by their employees arises from the fact that the majority lack binding contracts, and those who have them do not fully understand their value93.

Rubanga highlights the 4-month takeover of the Mulco Textile factory by workers, owing to the oppressive and exploitative management of Madhvani International.

84 ibid
85 Ibid, p.65
89 Ibid, (p.38-39)
91 Namara (2001). P.3
92 Namara (2001) ibid
93 Namara (2001). P.38
The take-over collapsed because of state pressure and lack of managerial know-how on the part of the workers. Nevertheless, the brief take-over proved a testing ground for workers’ organisation, militancy and capacity to shape the political economy of the country.

Asowa-Okwe discusses the interaction between capital, the state and the fisher people of Lake Kyoga and Lake Victoria, which led to the commoditisation of the fish industry. He observes that the use of superior technology to satisfy the ever-expanding market obliterated the indigenous technology of the pre-colonial canoe fisheries. This inevitably led to social differentiation in the fishery, resulting into four categories: fishing capitalists, middle fisher people, poor fisher people and fish labourers who work for wages under employer-employee relationships. As a consequence, the last two categories are worse off today than in the pre-capitalist era.

Recently, there have been conflicts between market traders and private developers when Kampala City Council (KCC) endeavoured to privatise its markets in Kampala. In all these cases, the sitting tenants/vendors’ demands to buy the markets had been ignored. Instead, KCC had sold the markets to rich private developers, a situation that led market vendors to riot. When KCC and the Ministry of Local Government failed to resolve the conflicts, the traders appealed to President Museveni. “What are you looking for in privatising markets where thousands of poor people are working? How can NRM be involved with such a type of feudalism?” wrote President Museveni to the Local Government minister. Consequently, it was decided that in selling markets, the interests of the sitting tenants should be given priority. The market privatisation presents two scenarios. One, if not handled with a pro-poor approach, the policy can lead to the disempowerment of the poor as their means of production are appropriated by the bourgeoisie. Two, that a market conflict needs the intervention of the office of the President validates Barongo’s thesis of the excesses of political centralisation in Uganda.

A similar ‘class’ conflict was exemplified by a few city traders who petitioned KCC to outlaw street vendors whom they accused of contributing to the decline in their sales. Vending is largely attributed to neo-liberal economic policies of privatisation.
and liberalisation, which encourage private entrepreneurship and minimal or zero government control and regulation of trade.\textsuperscript{102}

**Religion**

Nsibambi attributes religious-based internal inequalities in Buganda to the 1900 Agreement. Henceforth, power was distributed in the kingdom according to religion.\textsuperscript{103} Waliggo concurs and attributes the defeat of Mugwanya (a Catholic) in his contest for Katikiro-ship (premiership) in the Buganda kingdom to his religion.\textsuperscript{104} As Karugire argues, Catholics constituted the largest group that was denied access to economic and political power in the whole (Uganda) Protectorate courtesy of the imposition of colonial rule. Discrimination against the Catholics took the form of denying them public offices or not giving them such number of offices as were commensurate with their numbers.\textsuperscript{105} The issue of marginalisation of Catholics still persists: Muhereza and Otim point out the ‘bitterness’ of the Catholics following a cabinet reshuffle after the 1996 general elections: “\textit{An analysis of cabinet appointments shows that out of twenty-one cabinet posts, twelve went to Protestants, five to Catholics, and four to Muslims}”\textsuperscript{106}.

The Protestant preponderance in Museveni’s cabinet, therefore, conforms to Ward’s observation that the “\textit{Church of Uganda has had a more complex and ambitious relationship to the state since independence owing to its ‘quasi-establishment’ status}”\textsuperscript{107}.

**Education**

The school admission system, especially admission to post-primary institutions, is reported by CSOPNU\textsuperscript{108} not to be in the interest of the promotion of social interaction and coexistence among different ethnic groups. According to the report, school admission promotes ethnicity more than nationalism. It was noted for instance that school admission is not based on random selection of qualified students that would allow more social interactions among different ethnic groups; but on score and the ability to pay. This meant, therefore, that it was virtually the children of the rich (from middle income families) who dominated the best education institutions in the country. Ultimately, the skewed school admission system determines access to employment opportunities with the most lucrative jobs going to the students from elite schools.

\textsuperscript{102} International Political Economy (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_political_economy), downloaded:27/02/2009
\textsuperscript{103} Nsibambi (1995), “The restoration of traditional rulers” p.48
\textsuperscript{104} Waliggo (1995), “The Catholic Church and the root causes of political instability in Uganda” p.109
\textsuperscript{105} Karugire (1980), A political history of Uganda. p.134-135
\textsuperscript{106} Muhereza & Otim op.cit p.195
\textsuperscript{107} Ward (1995), “The Church of Uganda amidst conflict: The interplay between church and politics since 1962” p. 72
\textsuperscript{108} Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (n.d.)
from elite backgrounds and pursuing ‘elite’ courses. This leads to further polarization among social classes, accentuate social inequalities and, in turn, this undermines social cohesion which is the cornerstone of nationalism.

Muhwezi observes that although Universal Primary Education (UPE) has had a positive impact on gender disparities in general, they still persist in “enrolment, performance and retention.” Muhwezi (2001). The effect of Universal Primary Education (UPE) on the gender gap in education in Uganda…p.4. He argues that cultural beliefs and practices still affect girls’ educational attainment. For instance, girls are overburdened with domestic responsibilities; thus by the time they reach school they are already tired. As a consequence, some girls regard UPE as an extra burden and therefore opt to drop out and get married. Moreover, in some places girls who delay to get married are looked at with scorn Muhwezi (1995). Ibid; Opolot (2001). “How universal is Universal Primary Education? P.34

Examining access and equitable learning under the UPE, Opolot observes “a dual primary education class structure” Opolot (2001). How universal is Universal Primary Education? (p.34). On one hand, are children of the poor wasting away in ill-equipped rural UPE schools, where access to school premises is all they can obtain. On the other, children of the rich have choice to enjoy a good education in private and public primary schools. Opolot attributes this to “the glaring differences in financial and infrastructure endowment” of the UPE and non-UPE schools. It is against this background that he remarks that “UPE has improved children’s access to class room buildings but not to quality primary education.” Opolot (2001). P.vi Further, Opolot points out that in most cases, children with special learning needs are left out of the education process as teachers are either absent, or unable to provide them with much-needed attention due to unmanageable workload. Opolot (2001). P.4. He observes that in northern Uganda, the effectiveness of UPE is limited by insecurity. He attributes this to the squalid conditions in most UPE schools in protected camps, characterized by health risks not conducive to an ideal learning environment.

Otím observes that although UPE has increased access to primary education nationwide, it has minimal relevance to the lifestyles of specific communities in Uganda; the pastoralists and the fisher folk. Otím (2002). Revising the curriculum: A study on the relevance of the Primary School curriculum for fishing and pastoral communities” (p.1). He states that education in these areas has failed to provide the necessary ‘pull factor’ that encourages them to send their children to school, because most have not experienced the advantages of education. Otím attributes this to the failure by government to assess the dynamics of the relationships between education and the demands for improving the livelihood of the majority of the beneficiaries.

109 Muhwezi (2001). The effect of Universal Primary Education (UPE) on the gender gap in education in Uganda…p.4
111 Opolot (2001). How universal is Universal Primary Education? (p.34)
112 Opolot (2001). P.vi
113 Opolot (2001). P.34
114 Gulu district was one of the selected case studies.
115 Opolot (2001). P.35
116 Otím (2002). Revising the curriculum: A study on the relevance of the Primary School curriculum for fishing and pastoral communities” (p.1)
117 Otím (2002). P.2
Language

Language is a crucial element in the definition of people’s identities and is central to the formation of nationalist ideologies. Highlighting Bunyoro’s complaints against Buganda’s occupation of the latter’s ‘lost counties’, Karugire points out the suppression of the Runyoro language in courts, offices, churches and schools in preference for Luganda, resulted in opportunities and resources in the lost counties being pegged on the acquisition of a new ethnic (Kiganda) identity. A CDRN study of the Banyala ethnic minority group reports a similar situation, where the Banyala lost their language and cultural identity through forced assimilation into Buganda culture. Most Banyala were discouraged by Baganda leaders from using their Lunyala language and encouraged them to use Luganda instead.

In her study on policy spaces at the district level and below in Uganda, Brock observes that, at Local Council (LC) V and to some extent LC III levels, the issue of language is a critical determinant of participation. She noted that when proceedings are conducted in English, as they are often at the LC V level, many of those attending, particularly women are excluded. The more powerful have an interest in maintaining the status quo of spoken English. Further, quoting a female respondent, Brock observes that district council meetings at which the language factor was ‘debated’ did not give adequate time for people to give their opinions. In view of the above constraints it is hard for women to realise the BPFA twelve identified critical areas of concern, one of which is ‘power and decision-making’.

Gender

Although Uganda has a good record in the promotion and protection of the rights of women, there are still many obstacles to gender balance in the country. Karuhanga-Beraho observes that despite women’s greater contribution than men in both food and cash crop production, they have less control over the resources generated. She attributes this to: a) limited access to and control over land; b) limited access to agricultural extension services; c) limited access to financial services (for example, only 1% of women in agriculture have access to credit); d) constraints associated with labour (i.e. women tend to face lower returns to their labour compared to men); e) limited access to education (i.e. women’s illiteracy hampers their access and ability to understand technical information or even recognise and make use of available resources).

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119 Karugire op.cit.pp206
121 Brock, “Context, rules, participation and exclusion” p.138
122 Brock ibid.
123 Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) Critical Areas of Concern
125 Karuhanga-Beraho (2002). “The Women’s movement in Uganda and women in Agriculture” p.92-93
opportunities); and limited access to appropriate technology (i.e. most of the activities undertaken by women (e.g. production, storage, and processing are arduous, time-consuming and inefficient)\(^{127}\).

In her study covering local government in three districts, Brock acknowledges “widespread agreement among respondents that women do not participate fully in policy spaces, either in terms of numbers, or in terms of the quality of their participation”\(^{128}\). Policy and decision-making is virtually a preserve of men and this has far reaching repercussions on the status of women as it impacts on the pace of women’s empowerment. Ahikire highlights the constraints facing the Domestic Relations Bill (DRB) in Parliament\(^ {129}\). The spirit of the DRB is to reform and consolidate the law relating to marriage, separation, and divorce, but it is facing stiff resistance because of economic, cultural and religious factors. The President for instance called for the halting of the bill to “calm Muslims and other men who feel that it had marginalised them.”\(^{130}\) The bill was perceived as a ploy by “middle-class women to commercialise marriage and to restrict men to one wife”\(^ {131}\). It was reduced to the issue of ‘monogamy’ versus ‘polygamy’.

Bwambale similarly asserts that Uganda has taken part in several international conferences on gender issues, at which international instruments have often been signed\(^ {132}\). However, although international and regional instruments have been used as tools for mainstreaming gender, power relations between women and men have not changed. Most interventions have focused on the ‘symptoms’ and ‘effects’ but not on the underlying socio-cultural, economic, and political factors responsible for gender inequalities. She observes that whereas the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is mandated to mainstream gender in the national development process, there are limited resources for the implementation of gender programmes\(^ {133}\).

**Vulnerability**

Persons with Disability Persons with Disability (PWD) are estimated to number 2.46 million in Uganda\(^ {134}\). They are in many cases marginalised or excluded from the benefits of economic growth and national development. According to the ACBF Country Self-Assessment Report (2007), they are powerless, and often suffer abuse because of their inherent conditions.

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127 Karuhanga-Beraho (2002). Ibid. p.94-96
130 Ahikire ibid.
131 Ibid
133 Ibid.
Nambi observes that, despite considerable progress in gender relations for the past decade, “the rights of PWD, especially women, are still not fully recognised” and attributes this to a society that is still characterised by gender inequality in favour of men. This manifests itself in denial of marriage, deprivation of the right to education in favour of boys and able-bodied children, and lack of facilities for PWDs in health units.

Government has formulated policies and laws to advance the interest of PWDs, and increased public awareness on disability related issues over the past years. However, there are no national indicators for measuring success and no studies have been carried out to see if these changes have improved the quality of life of PWDs; and how disabled people are benefiting from these policy and institutional measurers.

The elderly The elderly constitute 6% of Uganda’s population. The government is committed to protecting the rights of the elderly persons, aged above 60 years. This commitment is enshrined in the Constitution (in the National Objectives) which stipulates that “The state shall make reasonable provision for the welfare and maintenance of the elderly.” Further the Local Government Act provides for representation of 2 elderly persons (male and female above 60 years) on the Local Councils. The concerns of older persons are reflected in the National Policy for Older Persons which specifically targets impoverished older persons, older persons taking care of others, older widows and widowers, and incapacitated older persons. The implementation of the above policy is scheduled for next year. In many cases the elderly have lost respect of the community due to diminished roles to influence political processes and have little social support and feel hopeless.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Government launched an IDP Policy (2004) aimed at ensuring that IDPs enjoy the same rights and freedoms under the Constitution and all other laws as all other Ugandans. However, there is a gap between policy and practice, as IDP communities still lack access to social services and infrastructure, agricultural input, construction materials and social support. This delays their voluntary relocation to their places of origin. That aside, there are land disputes in the districts affected by the conflict in northern Uganda: as people are encouraged to voluntarily return home, much of their land is occupied by camps and army detaches that need to be relocated before the owners access their homes. This demonstrates lack of implementation of the IDP Policy and inadequate measures for post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building.

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135 Nambi (2002). “The changing conditions for women and girls with disabilities” p. 72
136 Nambi (2002). ibid
138 Ibid
139 ACBF (2007), Country Self-Assessment p.21
141 ibid
Refugees  As of 2003, Uganda had over 200,000 refugees who had fled from neighbouring countries due to armed conflict and abuse of human rights. Uganda’s Refugee Policy and the recently enacted Refugee Act 2006 have been recognised as a model and progressive piece of legislation in the region\textsuperscript{143}. The strategy to allocate land for cultivation to enable refugees fend for themselves remains a cornerstone of Uganda’s refugee policy. However, funding of refugees from government is very limited as most of the assistance is obtained from the UNHCR Country Programme. Besides, poverty, policy and procedural obstacles tend to hinder refugee access to justice. It is hoped that the Refugee Act 2006 would ease and regulate some of the critical administrative and judicial processes\textsuperscript{144}.

MAIN INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE IMPOSITION OF LIMITATIONS ON PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section categorises a number of institutions that impose limitations on people’s access to resources and opportunities.

The Civil Service

To discuss the role that the public service can play in imposing limits on one’s opportunities and access to resources, Kabumba notes: “Despite what some people say about the need to separate politics and administration, today’s reality is otherwise... politics and administration are very much interlinked, especially at the higher levels. So, whether they admit it or realise it or not, the fact is that [public servants] arrive at their top posts, stay in them, and, finally lose them, because of politics- and not purely on the basis of their technical competence, although the latter is usually a requirement”\textsuperscript{145}.

Kabwegyere seems to concur with the above quote when he asserts: “Where there is intense ethnic competition, the state and bureaucracy become a mirror of conflicts to the outside”\textsuperscript{146}. It is the level of corruption and nepotism in many government departments, which makes it practically impossible for many people, without connections, to get job opportunities/promotions or access public resources\textsuperscript{147}. Thus the ex-state-minister of health, Captain Mike Mukula, accused the president of being the brain behind “more westerners in better government jobs”\textsuperscript{148}. Mulera also points out the most important departments/institutions that are nearly all controlled by Banyankore and Banyakigezi\textsuperscript{149}. Besides, very many of these are related by blood or

\textsuperscript{143} The Uganda Country Self-Assessment Report and Programme of Action (2007).p.144
\textsuperscript{144} ACBF (2007): Country Self-Assessment Report: p.21
\textsuperscript{145} Kabumba (1989), “Ethnic conflict within the public service”p.163-64
\textsuperscript{146} Rupesinghe (ed), “Internal conflicts and their resolution” p. 16
\textsuperscript{148} G.Namukoye, “Media houses should go slow on ethnicity subject”( Daily Monitor, February 1, 2008);
\textsuperscript{149} Mulera,“ In praise of tribalism” (Daily Monitor, February 4, 2008)
through marriage\textsuperscript{150}. Okuku argues that the post-colonial Ugandan state is a replica of its colonial counterpart, since both are/were organised along ethnic and regional lines. Thus the persistence of ethnicity in politics is attributed to the failure to dismantle and reform the colonial state\textsuperscript{151}.

Brock observes that in district councils, the dominant minorities silence the disempowered majority that is, the technocrats and other ordinary councillors\textsuperscript{152} and even the relatively small range of actors included in the process do not have equal agency. The process of lobbying is far from equitable, and many kinds of people are excluded because of gender, or ethnicity, or lack of connections to the networks of the powerful. According to a Transparency International study on Uganda in 200, it was discovered that district tender boards were the most corrupt departments in local governments\textsuperscript{153}. The report notes that the tendering process has been turned into a business by politicians to settle their economic problems and their supporters; it talks about influence peddling and favouritism practiced by Local Government officials. Using the example of district tender boards, it could be argued that there is limited space that can only be penetrated by those who can afford to buy their way. Otherwise, the majority are shut out irrespective of qualifications or capacity to deliver even better services.

**The Army and security forces**

We have seen that ethnic divisions within the armed forces in the long run caused instability as northern leaders used their numerical strength in the armed forces to acquire and retain power. Subsequent regimes from Amin (1971-1979), Obote II (1980-1985, Lutwa (1985-1986) and Museveni (1986-present) have been engaged in ethnically-based recruitments at different periods in time, in tune with the instrumentalist school that regards ethnicity “as a created sentiment, based on social, political and cultural resources”\textsuperscript{154}. Ethnic identity is a useful mobilisation tool for political elites as they tend to benefit from the occurrence of ethnic conflicts\textsuperscript{155}. The deliberate recruitment into the (para) military along ethnic lines culminates into an ethnically organized state, antithetical to institution-building and thus heralding authoritarianism. As Mudoola argues the ethnisisation of the “military and its involvement in solving political disputes generated within the army a sense of political functional indispensability and led to the marginalization of civil institutions”\textsuperscript{156}.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibibd.
\textsuperscript{151} Okuku, “NRM has perfected the art of ethnic state” (Daily Monitor May 9, 2008)
\textsuperscript{152} Brock, “Context, rules, participation and exclusion” p.139
\textsuperscript{153} ACBF (2007). Country Self-Assessment p. 43-44
\textsuperscript{155} Mudoola, Dan (1993)Religion, ethnicity and politics in Uganda p.103
\textsuperscript{156} ibid
Parliament
In Parliament, the largest proportion of MPs belong to the ruling party; the NRM. On many occasions, the political minorities (UPC, DP, Independents) have been marginalised owing to the NRM’s parliamentary numerical strength mediated by a powerful caucus. Thus, on the whole, Parliament is not free from the influence of the Executive through the majority Movement caucus. According to the ACBF Country Self-Assessment, the 7th Parliament enacted little meaningful legislation, owing to the inability of MPs to present individual bills and chronic absenteeism157. Its legislative, policy oversight and decision making has become deeply dependent on the consensus reached in the Movement caucus. The minority opposition members do not have the necessary numeric strength to offer the necessary checks and or block any excesses by the Executive158. The political culture of no-party movement system still lingers on, even under a multi-party dispensation159. As Barongo argues, it is the political centralisation of the Ugandan state that “signalled the end of the politics of institutional and legal position and conferred an authoritarian outlook on the central government”160.

Civil Society Organisations
According to the CIVICUS/DENIVA report, the diversity of civil society participants can be assessed using three perspectives; social inclusiveness in terms of membership, inclusiveness in terms of CSO leadership and the geographical distribution of CSOs. On social inclusiveness, the study noted the marginalisation of small groups, including ethnic and religious minorities and ‘poor people’161 in favour of ethnic majorities, ‘mainstream churches’ and local elites. In terms of inclusiveness in CSOs leadership, there was marginalisation of women, religious minorities and the rural population. In these cases, leadership was dominated by the ‘upper class’ comprising mainly the educated and socially connected. Being ‘elitist’ NGOs are ‘distant’ from the people they purport to serve. As for the geographical distribution of CSOs, it was established that most are urban based and oriented. The poor regions (the north and eastern) are relatively less served by NGOs due to insecurity and distance. This contradicts the essence of the NGOs - bringing service closer to people. That a sizeable percentage is concentrated in Kampala and other urban areas seems to vindicate the view that a good many NGOs are ‘elitist’ and therefore not strategically positioned to assist the poor.162.

The Private Sector
A study carried out by the Steadman Group revealed that in Uganda corruption was a serious non-tariff barrier that the private sector continues to grapple with163. More than

158 Ibid.
160 Barongo (1989). Ethnic pluralism and political centralization: The basis of political conflict”76
161 CIVICUS Civil Society Index Project p.28-29
162 CIVICUS Report p.31
163 Editorial: “Don’t condone corruption” (Daily Monitor, February 11, 2009)
20% of business leaders who were surveyed by Steadman said they perceive bribery as a “major obstacle” in acquiring business licences. According to Transparency International, Uganda’s ranking on the Corruption Perception Index worsened from 111st to 126th among 180 countries from 2007 to 2008. There is evidence therefore that Uganda is retrogressing in the fight against corruption, attributed to a lack of political will to combat the vice, demonstrated by government’s efforts to undermine the anti-corruption institutions that have been put in place.

According to the ACBF Country Report, there is an imbalance in the private sector. Whereas, it is largely dominated by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which accounts for 95% of the businesses, the informal sector is weak, ill defined, and hardly visible. Many micro and small enterprises (MSEs) owners are not visible because umbrella organisations face requirements which are sometimes prohibitive to small business registration. The MSMEs neither appreciate the relevance or benefits of subscribing to membership of such associations. As a result, MSMEs are not effectively represented and neither do they access information and support for their businesses. The legal and regulatory framework within which investment takes place in Uganda is still wanting. Commercial courts, are predominantly urban-based and are overcrowded, making it difficult for the majority of micro and small entrepreneurs to access them.

‘CHOICE AND REASONING’ IN THE AFFILIATIONS AND ALLEGIANCES OF UGANDANS

Why do people identify and attach themselves with the religious, ethnic or political projects that they do, and how and why do these allegiances change? This section highlights the factors that guide people’s ‘choice and reasoning’ to determine affiliations and allegiances and explain shifting patterns. It identifies the following as push factors: employment opportunities and job security; patronage, loyalty and political affiliation.

Patronage, loyalty and political affiliation

The notions of patronage, loyalty and political affiliation are simultaneously discussed since, in a number of instances, they interface. According to the ACBF (2007) Country Self-Assessment, the executive pushed through significant constitutional revisions in the 7th Parliament that were approved by a parliament whose Movement majority had been compromised through financial inducements and the removal of voting by secret ballot. Patron-client politics is an offshoot of corruption which is
abuse of power manifested in several forms, such as embezzlement of public funds, influence peddling, nepotism, bribery, etc. According to Makara et al., 71% of cabinet members are Bahima kinsmen, controlling 75% of the budget. Ndebesa contends that if those in positions of responsibility abuse power with impunity then conflicts will be inevitable.

People join political parties as a form of identity or belonging. Parties, among others, help to aggregate people’s different interests and provide a choice to the electorate. Mudoola attributes the formation of political parties in Uganda to ethno-political and religious considerations. For example, the formation of the DP was a response to the marginalisation of the Catholics; and the UPC emerged as a platform for Protestants outside Buganda and non-Baganda from other areas to challenge Buganda’s demand for a special constitutional position. Writing about Ankole, Doornbos observes that the minority Protestant Bahima allied with Catholic Bairu and joined DP, while another portion of the Protestant Bairu joined UPC. DP’s loss of political power in the 1962 elections sparked off crossings from the DP to the ruling UPC. Mamdani argues that rural peasants and immigrant communities in the Luwero Triangle joined the NRM/A owing to a change in the definition of rights from ‘descent’ to ‘residence’. This change had brought the two communities together: even immigrant communities could vie for leadership positions. He also points out that women and youth joined the NRM/A on the ticket of ‘gender’ and ‘vulnerability’. Makara et al. argue that people formerly in the NRM joined the FDC following internal conflicts between factions within the NRM, originating in the 1994 constitutional debates. The split occurred in 2001 when some NRM senior members demanded that the group that came to power in 1986 should give way to a new breed of NRM leaders.

Churches

Why do people join religious organisations? Using the cases of the Pentecostal church, the MRTCG and the Faith of Unity, Kayiso analyses the factors...
responsible for people’s joining religious organizations, including widespread poverty, affliction by witchcraft and incurable diseases, desire to strength one’s faith, liberalism and flexibility, and the spirit of cooperation/fellowship.

**PLURALISM, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND CAPABILITY EXPANSION**


Pluralism means accepting diversity and active seeking of understanding across lines of difference without shedding of identities. Promoting pluralism therefore means opening spaces for dialogue, human dignity and equality. The capabilities approach offers a framework for the realisation of social justice and human development. By focusing on people’s capabilities, it directly looks at the kinds of entitlements (e.g. freedoms and rights) they enjoy, and more specifically, at the opportunities and choices available to them in leading valuable human lives. In a pluralistic society people are allowed the freedom to choose their identities - and to lead the lives they value - without being excluded from other choices important to them (such as those for education, health or job opportunities).

**Promotion of democratisation and good governance**

Uganda is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and therefore a multi-cultural society. All societies in Uganda are plural since human organisation is based on different levels of identity; family, clan, village, tribe, religion, language, region and nationality. Government should therefore adopt measures to build strong institutions, deepen

183 Abakwenda are considered to be at the rank of a ‘bishop’. In hierarchy, they rank next Bisaka
188 There are recommendations from different sources that will be incorporated in relation to religion, education, and language.
189 Diana L. Eck. “What is pluralism?” http://www. Downloaded 19/01/2009
190 International Summer School on Human Development and Human Rights 2008 p.7
192 Human Development Report, 2004
193 Okuku op.cit.p.108
194 Mudoola op.cit.; Okuku op.cit.; Katusiime (2006). “Civil society organizations and
political pluralism and inclusiveness by recognising the restoration of multipartyism so that it exists ‘in fact’ and not ‘in name’. Although the NRM government opened up political space, the role and contribution of opposition political parties to national development is curtailed. Therefore, functioning multipartyism will guard against the politics of exclusion. There is need for fair electoral laws and procedures, an independent electoral commission; and a fair and inclusive system of representation.

Further, a government based on proportional representation (PR) would take into stock Uganda’s spectrum of political pluralism. This would avoid the pitfalls of the politics of winner-takes-all. PR was specifically designed to provide for minority representation and thereby counteract potential threats to national unity and political stability. Hyden defends the PR system by raising its strong points as the capacity to reduce polarisation, diminish parochialism, sustain fairness claims, encourage issue-based politics and promote collation behaviours.

Promotion and protection of rights
Government should conform to the required standards spelled out in the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights and provisions in the Constitution to which it made a commitment to ensure the protection of freedoms and rights. It should develop and publicise guidelines for promoting the right of association, particularly the right to assemble; sensitisate the security forces on the rights of individuals; increase the geographical coverage of formal courts; and increase staffing and provide conducive terms of pay for the judicial officers in order to increase their availability across the country. All recommendations of the Annual Human Rights Commission reports should be implemented by government; and civic education should be intensified and integrated into school curricula.

Rights of women and gender equality Although Uganda has ratified a number of international and regional human rights instruments in regard to women’s rights, there is room for further improvement. The country needs to operationalise the National Gender Policy and the National Gender Action Plan to facilitate its implementation. National gender institutions must be strengthened with increased financial and human resources.

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196 Barya (2000). “Political parties, the Movement and the referendum on political systems in Uganda: One step forward, two steps back? pp25-27
197 UJCC (2003). “The Uganda We Want p. 10
198 Barya ibid
200 Ibid; see also UJCC (2003). The Uganda We Want p. 10
202 ACBF (2007), Country Self-Assessment p.48
203 ACBF (2007), Country Self-Assessment p.23
resources; support programmes with a direct effect on women’s needs established; as well as programmes for the most vulnerable women’s groups, such as those in rural areas, refugee camps, women with disabilities and teenagers\textsuperscript{204}. Further, enacting the Domestic Relations Bill and the Sexual Offences Bill, among others, will go a long way in addressing gender inequality\textsuperscript{205}.

**Vulnerable groups** Uganda is a signatory to regional and international instruments that enjoin government to provide all rights to its citizens, irrespective of their social, economic, or cultural back grounds, and ensure that these are enshrined in the Constitution\textsuperscript{206}. Vulnerable groups need special protection and a development environment that creates an inclusive society, with empowered men and women, youth and children capable of demanding their rights and accessing social services (e.g. education and health)\textsuperscript{207}, environmental resources and other entitlements\textsuperscript{208}. There is a need for restitution and compensation for ethnic minorities deprived of their land; and to develop and adopt a minority Community Comprehensive Development Strategy\textsuperscript{209}. District and lower local governments should be sensitised about the need to prioritise the rights of vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, PWDs, the elderly, children, people living with HIV/AIDS, refugees, and IDPs. Government ought to guarantee that such groups are sensitised about their rights and encouraged to participate in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of policies that affect them\textsuperscript{210}.

**Strengthening institutions**

There should be an official assessment of Parliament to identify weaknesses and devise appropriate interventions to improve its efficiency and effectiveness\textsuperscript{211}. Parliament should work out a constitutional mechanism and appropriate legislation that would enable the three branches of government to resolve possible conflicts. Government should institute measures that guarantee the independence of the Judiciary by providing it with adequate human and financial resources and filling all vacant posts on the bench\textsuperscript{212}. Moreover, all reforms being undertaken in the Justice, Law and Order sector should be speeded up to enhance access to justice for all, and most especially women, orphaned children and other vulnerable and marginalised groups\textsuperscript{213}. To avoid a history of authoritarianism, there is a need to transit from personal rule to institutional rule\textsuperscript{214}. Government should desist from a) using the

\textsuperscript{204} Bwambale op.cit. p.72  
\textsuperscript{205} The Uganda Country Self-Assessment Report and Programme of Action (2007) p.485  
\textsuperscript{206} CDRN, “Study of selected ethnic minority groups in Uganda” p.29  
\textsuperscript{207} The Uganda Country Self-Assessment Report and Programme of Action (2007) op.cit; MFPED: Uganda Vision 2025 p.73  
\textsuperscript{208} Wairaka op.cit p.14  
\textsuperscript{209} The Uganda Country Self-Assessment Report and Programme of Action (2007) op.cit., p.148  
\textsuperscript{210} CDRN op.cit  
\textsuperscript{211} The Uganda Country Self-Assessment Report and Programme of Action (2007).op.cit., p.106  
\textsuperscript{212} ACBF (2007). Country Self-Assessment p.48  
\textsuperscript{213} AGF VII (2007), “Building the capable state in Uganda” p.25  
\textsuperscript{214} UJCC (2003), The Uganda We Want. P. 21
military and security forces to solve essentially political problems; b) regimenting society through the proliferation of security organs; c) using confrontational methods and treating disputes or differences with its opposition as disputes with enemies. In the Public Service, there is a need to eliminate redundant institutions, to ensure coordination, enhance productivity, and create a professional and effective Service. As for the army the police and security forces, they should be non-partisan, non-personal, not ethnic in character and subordinated to political authority. To get rid of militarism, Ugandan society needs to reduce the dangerous level of armament.

With regard to local governments and decentralisation, there is a need to establish and support through capacity building and institutional strengthening the operations of an institutional framework at both national (for supervision and guidance) and local levels (for implementation).

**Prevention, reduction and management of conflicts**

Most of the internal conflicts have their roots in the history of the country. The major causes being political differences, access to and control of land, rivalry over water and pasture, ethnic and cultural differences, and a scramble for control of resources. To this end, government should put in place a comprehensive framework to conclusively deal with post-conflict (alternative) justice and peace issues; maintain the amnesty for the rebel groups and deal with reintegration of ex-combats including ex-child soldiers and abductees. To bridge the north-south divide, government should expedite the implementation of the Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) as a strategy for post-conflict reconstruction. Support of non-state actors such as CSOs and the Church needs to be strengthened by developing mechanisms for soliciting common positions, supporting peace processes in northern Uganda and addressing the long-term issue of national reconciliation. Government should operationalise the Equal Opportunities Commission Act in order to promote inclusiveness and redress the different levels of marginalization in society. Further, government should enact the Land Act to deal with the root causes of land-based conflicts.

**Enhancing the role of civil society in national development**

Government should recognise and uphold the value of having a vibrant civil society involved in key areas, such as sustaining democracy and good governance, conflict resolution, monitoring government poverty eradication programmes, inter-cultural networking and sensitisation of communities on their rights. As such, civil society

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215 Ibid. p.7
216 APRM Country Review Report 7
217 UJCC (2003), The Uganda We Want. P. 8
218 Ibid. p.38
219 Ibid
221 Ibid
222 Ibid
should be seen as partner in development and government should acknowledge this reality\textsuperscript{224}. Therefore, more resources and support should be extended to trade associations, farmers institutions, business groups, trade unions, development agencies, women’s organisations, faith groups, and CBOs as they complement government in service delivery\textsuperscript{225}. The advantage of civil institutions lies in the fact that they are part of society; and they interact with the people almost on a day-to-day basis\textsuperscript{226}.

**Improving access to resources**

Limited access to and unfair distribution of resources is a key source of conflict, especially in multi-ethnic societies where some may be favoured and others marginalised. Poor people need access to information on development opportunities, government policies, their rights, avenues of redress and access to services\textsuperscript{227}. They need to be consulted on determining priorities for planning and resource allocation at the local level, as well as on programmes and initiatives that are designed to benefit them or that will affect their lives. Further, the social capital of the poor needs strengthening through effective groups, representation, support family structures etc. To address the issue of limited resources, there is a need to, \textit{inter alia}, fight corruption more effectively. In this case, CSOs can empower local people with information that can enable them monitor development projects\textsuperscript{228}. There is also a need to conserve exhaustible resources such as forests, fish, and wetlands by using them sustainably. Alternative sources of income should be introduced especially in marginal areas to mitigate environmental degradation and resource use conflicts. A Land Act should be amended to address land-based conflicts and a land policy be developed to streamline land utilisation. Government should endeavour to enhance the livelihoods of the rural and urban poor by providing equitable access to water and sanitation, energy, shelter, micro-credit and markets\textsuperscript{229}.

**Creating a literate and well-informed society**

There is also a need to provide free and compulsory universal primary and secondary education and establish affordable, appropriate and adequate tertiary educational institutions countrywide. This includes specialised education and training programmes for the disadvantaged, vulnerable groups, and gifted students. Non-formal education and functional literacy programmes needs promotion in all districts and at community level\textsuperscript{230}.

**A God-loving and God-fearing Nation**

Finally, Uganda should be God-loving and God-fearing Nation, where all people, or at least the greatest majority of them, have God at their centre in all they do and in

\textsuperscript{224} ACBF (2007). Country Self-Assessment p.136
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{227} CPRC (2005). “Chronic poverty in Uganda. P.51
\textsuperscript{228} The Uganda Country Self-Assessment Report and Programme of Action (2007).p.421
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid
\textsuperscript{230} Uganda Vision 2025 p.71
their respect and relations with all other people of diverse region, ethnicity, political ideology and way of thinking.\(^{231}\)

**CONCLUSION**

The advent of colonialism in Uganda found the local ethnic groups at different levels of socio-political organisation, while some had lived in antagonistic relations with one another. Foreign religions compounded intra-and inter-ethnic factionalism, which was aggravated by ethnic tensions caused by the forceful integration of people of different cultural backgrounds into the same administrative units. The pre-colonial antagonism promoted by the colonial policy of divide-and-rule fed into the pattern of ‘collaboration’ and ‘resistance’ to colonialism that kept religious divisionism and ethnic consciousness alive. The north-south divide in Uganda is one of the most enduring legacies of these policies. Colonialism deliberately promoted cash crop production in the south, which extracted surplus labour from the north to produce raw materials for the metropolitan economy. As Mamdani argues the “impoverishment of the north was thus a condition for the relative prosperity of the south.”\(^{232}\) Uganda is a multi-ethnic society and the foregoing contradictions have fuelled socio-political conflicts that have threatened its unity, peace and the spirit of co-existence.

Indeed, all the historical factors determining the development of identity in Uganda are still relevant today. This validates what several commentators have termed the reproduction of the colonial state by post-colonial administrations. For instance, the support of mini-kingdoms among the Baruli and Banyara, and the attendant adversarial relations between Bunyoro and Buganda is reminiscent of the old colonial policy of divide-and-rule. By elevating the two cultural sub-units to ‘kingdom’ level, it is expected that the Banyara and Baruli will be at par with Buganda, and will command more resources and claim a bigger space to participate in national issues. Further, under the decentralisation policy, the balkanisation of the present administrative units has increased ethnic tensions as each group attempts to scheme for a territorial rearrangement that will enhance its control over resources. Given, inter alia, the financial unsustainability of such arrangements, there should be a set of clear criteria to be used in determining whether a section of the population deserves and qualifies to upgrade its administrative status.

Today, ethnicity, political affiliation, religion and gender are still strong forms of identity to determine individual and group access to resources. There are many departments, ministries and government institutions where certain ethnic groups dominate. As for the gender factor, much has been done to promote gender-balance and sensitivity in Uganda, but much remains to be done, especially to operationalise gender policies and programmes.

\(^{231}\) UJCC (1999). *The Uganda We Want* p.31  
\(^{232}\) Mamdani (1978). *Politics and class formation in Uganda* p.52
Political affiliation is an important factor to the extent that if a member of the ruling party fails to win an electoral position, the president could still consider appointing him/her to join a pool of ‘presidential advisors’. This is one reason for people switching allegiances to the ruling party. Religion also plays a considerable role in deciding who gets what, even at the national level. As Muhereza and Otim have demonstrated, religion is still a powerful tool in determining political appointments. Religious institutions have a big role to play in contributing to social, economic and political development of the country. Over 90% of Ugandans are followers of the different religious denominations. Thus, contrary to frequent disparaging remarks and admonitions from local politicians that religious leaders should not navigate political waters, the role of a religious leader by far transcends the confines of the spiritual domain.

On the side of education and limited opportunities, the ‘old boy’ syndrome is still strong. To tackle these social injustices, there is a need for increased transparency in public service recruitment. For instance, recruitment could be left in the hands of professional human resource bodies selected in a transparent manner; and these should have good profiles and track records to eliminate ‘makeshift’ organisations.

One of the dominant themes discussed by a number of commentators is institution-building. Writers in this respect suggest that the break-down of institutions by the Obote I government was largely the cause of Uganda’s political troubles. This introduced militarism and ‘personalised rule’, symptoms of authoritarianism, in Uganda’s politics. With the absence or lack of strong institutions, even low-key conflicts such as market quarrels and land wrangles require the intervention of the President. Strong institutions – such as like those to check the excesses of the executive - can be built (or strengthened if already existing), in an environment characterised by good governance, democratisation and the rule of law. Building strong institutions will reduce instances of corruption, nepotism, influence-peddling and other social vices arising from the ‘personality cult’ syndrome.

Further, one can agree with Barongo, Mudoola and Mwesigye that the ‘excessive centralisation of power’ in a multi-ethnic political context is/was the major origin, cause and effect of political and social conflict in Uganda. But then how do we answer the questions: has the decentralisation programme cured Uganda’s social and political conflicts; to what extent has service delivery been improved at the local government level; have levels of accountability and transparency increased as a result of decentralisation; are resources equitably distributed and accessed in the local governments? No single remedy is thus adequate to address the nation’s problems. There is a need to seek a ‘package’ of remedies and apply them in the right combination by the right group of people and at the right time.

Although most of the cases of social injustices are located in the State sector, it has been established that even civil society (non-state sector) manifests the same anomalies,
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albeit with different levels of intensity. Like government, civil society organisations, particularly NGOs, are culpable of marginalising vulnerable groups such as PWDs, ethnic minorities, women and the poor. Often these NGOs are elite-controlled and based in urban settings and one wonders how they claim to complement government efforts when they, themselves, fail to extend services to categories of people left out by government. By doing so, they compromise their moral stance to hold government accountable for its failures.

In most cases, Uganda has put in place good policies and laws, and signed a number of regional and international instruments that have remained unoperational. This problem is identified in policies, laws and programmes intended for vulnerable groups, rural communities and the poor segments of society. This is attributed to lack of political will, and lack of financial/human and other resources to implement them. On the side of the citizenry, the problems that hinder it from active participation range from political intimidation, ignorance, conservative cultural mind-sets and poverty.

In conclusion, one could suggest that the NEPAD self-evaluation mechanism become a compulsory mechanism to be acceded to by all African countries and recognized by the G8 countries, the United Nations and its agencies, and by all international financial institutions. In this respect, the APRM assessment reports should be used by international development agencies and multilateral financial institutions to accord technical and financial assistance to only those countries that score a minimum of 70% of the agreed values, codes and standards on the thematic areas: Democracy and Political Governance, Economic Governance and Management, Corporate Governance and Socio-economic Development. Otherwise, in its present (voluntary) form the NEPAD/APRM remains more or less a futile apparatus with hardly any potential for enforcement action against recalcitrant states.

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2. The Role of Patronage in Shaping Uganda’s Economic, Social and Political Spheres - A literature review

Emmanuel Maraka

Abstract
This study provides an inventory and analysis of the main academic research carried in the past 5 years on the role of patronage in shaping Uganda’s economic, social and political spheres. While the author shows that the seeds of postcolonial, neopatrimonial governance were sown by the colonial state, he cites several sources that show that political patronage in Uganda has continued to capitalise on ethnic and religious identities, and the use of the military. The manifestations of patronage include political patronage, clientelism, cronyism, and nepotism and presidentialism which can be found not only in state institutions, but also within the private sector, civil society and the donor community. The consequences are diverse, including a state seen as “omnipotent and paternalistic” and, whereas patronage negatively affects society as a whole, poorer people are even more vulnerable.

But patronage is also a survival strategy for the poor and it is intertwined with culture, understood as African culture with its principles of respect, reciprocity and responsibility. Patronage supports the peoples of Uganda to survive in times of adversity caused by nature and the failures of the state to protect and provide for the people. Understood as social capital, patronage may be regarded as a key asset in the overall portfolio of resources drawn upon by the poor and rich alike, as they manage risk and opportunity and seek to gain access to resources and decision-making processes.

Based on the findings of this study, the author recommends further study of common values among Ugandans and utilising these to develop a shared national identity. In particular, there is a need to study how the positive aspects of patronage function in Ugandan society and how these can be used as a force for good.

INTRODUCTION
This study provides an inventory and analysis of the main academic research that has been carried in the past 5 years on the role of patronage in shaping Uganda’s economic, social and political spheres.

The report comprises nine sections including this introduction. Section 2 deals with the concept of patronage, its forms and other associated concepts. Section 3 focuses on the evolution of patronage in Uganda; section 4 presents the current situation of patronage in Uganda and section 5 covers the effects of political patronage. What is the role of choice and reasoning in affiliations and allegiances? This is the focus
of section 6, while section 7 examines reasons for the formation and change of allegiances. Section 8 takes a look at efforts by civil society to challenge patronage. The report ends with a synthesis and conclusions expressing the personal views of the researcher.

Information available indicates that civil society organisations in the South have signalled the growth of various forms of intolerance, often manifested as fundamentalisms rooted in religion, ethnic affiliation, nationalism, social class, gender and other identities or value systems. These developments curb the organisations’ pursuit of a pluralist, diverse and dialogical culture for development and empowerment.

The specific purpose of this study is to provide knowledge about the role of patronage in shaping the economic, social and political spheres of Uganda. The study was guided by the following research questions:

a. How has patronage evolved historically? How did patron-client relationships affect the economic, social and political spheres?
b. What is the current situation?
c. Which roles does ‘choice and reasoning’ play in the affiliations and allegiances of people in Uganda?
d. Why do people identify and attach themselves with the religious, ethnic or political projects that they do, and how and why do these allegiances change?

The study was undertaken by desk research. Documents were sourced from the internet, libraries and local academic centres. Literature was acquired from local bookshops.

UNDERSTANDING PATRONAGE

The concept of “patronage” is explained using the associated theories of social capital, social network and patrimonialism, after which a working meaning of patronage is provided. Patronage occurs in various forms. These include: neo-patrimonialism, political patronage, clientelism, cronyism, and presidentialism.

Social capital – According to Wikipedia, the internet based dictionary, social capital refers to resources based on group membership, relationships, networks of influence and support. Bourdieu (cited in Wikipedia) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.”

Social network – Wikipedia, gives the following meaning of a “social network” as “a social structure made of nodes – which are generally individuals or organizations – that are tied by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friendship, kinship, dislike, conflict or trade. The
resulting structures are often very complex.” (emphasis added). Berman et al (2004, pp.4-5) argue that social networks are a means of getting social capital and protection through traditional networks of kinship and ethnicity.

Patrimonialism – Max Weber is cited in Wikipedia to have written of patrimonialism “as a form of government centred on family structures, particularly on the authority of fathers within families, in other words patriarchy.” It is the traditional meaning of patronage that is associated with culture in Africa, including its projections onto a broader set of social relationships. Weber’s overarching argument was that with modernity, patrimonial forms of government gave way to bureaucratic rationalism as an abiding logic of governance.”

Patronage – According to Wikipedia, patronage is the support, encouragement, privilege and often financial aid that an organization or individual bestows to another for mutual benefit. Patronage has both negative and positive connotations and is embedded in social relations and social networks of people as individuals, families, communities, organisations and societies. As a positive concept it embraces activities that provide approval and support in social, religious, economic and political relationships. In the negative sense, it is associated with the unfair and corrupt practices of political patronage, e.g., clientelism and cronyism.

Political patronage – In theory, political patronage is a quasi-universal form of politics, whereby politicians use state materials to reward individuals for their electoral support. Some patronage systems are legal and therefore not necessarily corrupt (Wikipedia). Erdmann, G. & Engel, U. (2006) define political patronage as “the politically motivated distribution of “favours” not to individuals but essentially to groups, which in the African context will be mainly ethnic or sub-ethnic groups.” This is the meaning used in this paper. Other types of political patronage, e.g., nepotism and cronyism violate the law and codes of ethics and are therefore illegal and corrupt (Green, 2008; Wikipedia).

Neo-patrimonialism – is a term used for patrons using state resources in order to secure the loyalty of clients in the general population, and is indicative of informal patron-client relationships that can reach from very high up in state structures down to individuals in say, small villages (Wikipedia). In neo-patrimonial regimes, authority is exercised through both patronage networks and the bureaucracy with rules applied selectively (Erdmann, G. & Engel, U., 2006).

Clientelism – Stokes (2007) argues that the concept of clientelism suffers from a lack of consensus and considers it to be: “the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?”

A distinguishing feature of clientelism given by Erdmann & Engel (2006) is that clientelism implies a dyadic personal relationship between patron and client. It is the individual who benefits, while in political patronage it is collective benefits,
e.g., roads and schools. This is the meaning adopted in this paper and it is different from that held by Rubongoya (2007, p.163) that: “clientelism involves the award of personal favours (patronage) through informal channels to selected groups of people (clients)...”

In considering the clientelism-patronage relation, Stokes (2007) distinguishes between economic monopoly over goods which the patron controls independent of the outcome of an election, and political monopoly over goods that s/he controls only when s/he retains office.

Cronyism – refers to partiality to long-standing friends, especially by appointing them to positions of authority, regardless of their qualifications. Hence, cronyism is contrary in practice and principle to meritocracy (Wikipedia). The net encyclopaedia further says that cronyism exists when the appointer and the beneficiary are in social contact; often, the appointer is inadequate to hold his or her own job or position of authority, and for this reason the appointer appoints individuals who will not try to weaken him or her, or express views contrary to those of the appointer.

Presidentialism – According to Rubongoya (2007, p.168) this form of patronage “engenders values of governance style in which leaders, the president in particular, personalise power; promote a cult of personality, cultivate paternalistic language and political behaviour; encourage non-bureaucratic but a large apparatus with outward trappings of a formal legal order, and exercise various forms of absolute power.”

Political patronage and political corruption In the Uganda anti-corruption literature, (discussed in section 8 – challenging patronage) there is frequent use of the term “political corruption” and a separation of corruption into “petty corruption” and “grand corruption.” Political corruption seems to be taken as part of grand corruption but there is limited use of the term “political patronage”.

EVOLUTION OF PATRONAGE IN UGANDA

This section focuses on answering the first question of the study: How has patronage evolved historically? How did patron-client relationships affect economic, social and political sphere? It is structured to include two subsections: patronage in pre-colonial Uganda and patronage in the colonial era.

Patronage in pre-colonial Uganda

Uganda grew out of a forceful consolidation of fragmented societies that coexisted but did not identify politically, nor did they have systematic economic/social systems that united them for a common societal goal. Some of the societies were centralised bureaucracies (e.g., Buganda) and others were stateless (e.g., Bugisu and Teso). Political organisation rested on the kinship-based unit of clan.

An account of Uganda’s political history from around 1500AD is given by Karugire S.R. (1980), who reports that there were different philosophies upon which political organisations rested. Among the Acholi, for example, there was a tendency not to
solve family disputes by force, and all important decisions affecting the community could be arrived at, not by a single person, but by consensus of the elders representing the different clans constituting the particular community (p.11). Karugire suggests that, during the pre-colonial era, patronage encouraged politico-socio-economic stability and prosperity of the peoples whose institutions were in a state of change and growth. Based on Karugire (1980:12–16) the following can be cited and are supported by Mamdani (1996) and referred to by Rubongoya (2007):

a. Anyone could only live in a group (social network) under rules and regulations that gives more advantages than separate existence could afford such individuals.

b. The relationships between people were not conceived in terms of mechanical abstracts but in personal relations, which, Mbiti (1970:140) puts thus: “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am”.

c. The overriding concern for a clan unit was the protection of the whole unit’s integrity and economic welfare. There was reciprocity of goods and services. There were mechanisms for redistributing wealth.

d. There was no room for individualism or impersonal governorships, hardly any exploitative landlords or oppressed peasants, and abuse of political power was checked.

e. These states were endogenously developing and had not reached a state where they needed to devise institutional restraints against abuse of power.

**Patronage in the colonial era**

In this section patronage is looked at from a political angle that centres on the impact of colonialism from 1860 to 1962. Karugire (1980) gives a detailed account of this period. The notable events with relevance to patronage based on a summary by Rubongoya (2007, p.21-22) and supplemented by reference to Mamdani (1996) are the following:

a. A religious dimension was introduced and religion was used to define political identity and influence the politics of the country; compounding ethnic formations. This marked the beginning of a socio-political fault lines in Ugandan society that prevail up to today.

b. Principles of social order (patronage) governed by trust, accountability, reciprocity, and authority were disorganised.

c. Uganda was balkanised into several districts, re-enforcing ethnic identities and differences. Buganda was to subdue other nations of Uganda especially those in eastern and northern Uganda.

d. Decentralised despotic administration was established. A police force was established, comprising of persons recruited from the northern ethnicities. There was inequality in economic development of the country. The army has continued to play a central role in the politics of the country.
The seeds of postcolonial, neo-patrimonial governance were sown by the colonial state, as concluded by Rubongoya (2007, p.22). It was autocratic because its source of power and legitimacy was external. This conclusion is shared by earlier authors: Karugire, 1980; and Mamdani, 1993.

PATRONAGE IN UGANDA TODAY

Manifestations of patronage

Political patronage in Uganda is manifested through the neo-patrimonial rule of the NRM (National resistance movement) government (Rubongoya 2007, Tangri & Mwenda 2005, Hickey 2003) that has continued to capitalise on ethnic and religious identities, and the use of the military. The manifestations of patronage include political patronage, clientelism, cronyism, and nepotism.

Strategies that were used by President Museveni to legitimise and reconstruct the state, are given by Rubongoya (2007:67–90) as successes of the NRM government. These same strategies have been used by the NRM government for political patronage. Some of these strategies are first listed. This is followed by a description of manifestations of political patronage in Uganda.

- Introduction of popular democracy and the local council system throughout the country;
- The philosophy of broad-based and inclusive government that attracted many politicians from other old parties;
- Participatory making of the Constitution promulgated in 1995;
- Gender sensitivity to women empowerment; evidenced in reserved position for women in local councils, and increasing female enrolment in institutions of higher learning by affirmative action.
- Privatisation and civil service reform

These strategies have, however, been said to be used for political patronage, clientelism and cronyism; and presidentialism has emerged as shown below.

Clientelist patronage Friends and relatives of high-ranking NRM government and military officials have taken advantage of their positions to gain access to wealth, power and influence outside of formal channels and with disregard to the law (Rubongoya, 2007:163).

Recruitment of citizens on the basis of their political affiliations by local government officials is clientelist patronage. This view is advanced by Rubongoya with reference to the IGG 2003 report on graft and abuse of office, who also notes that the contract of Jotham Tumwesigye, the author of that “critical report” was not renewed; he was replaced.

At another level, there is a view that the individual merit principle of political competition under the NRM no-party democracy was in reality based on individual
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Rubongoya (2007:165) states that “corruption by top government officials has trickled down into lower echelons of the institutions of the state and has also become the normative basis for any transaction, be it official or private.”; however, high profile officers find ways of escaping the law, lower level officers get caught.

Political patronage The Uganda Country Self-Assessment Report and Programme of Action (SAR) 2007 indicates that Uganda has registered progress in the area of governance, including free and fair competition for political power and respect for the rule of law and supremacy of the Constitution; there are some views to the contrary, much as there could be progress. Mbazira (2008) argues that the progress registered is mainly measured in comparison to past governments and the fact that ratification of international instruments is taken to mean their successful implementation, which is not the case in Uganda. Other studies (Hickey 2003, Robinson 2004; Tangri & Mwenda 2005, Rubongoya, 2007) report grand political patronage characterized by NRM influence over the Electoral Commission, suffocation of multi-party democracy and constitutional amendments influenced by corruption and intimidation, among other things. These views are consistent with Mbazira’s critique of the SAR.

The president has created districts on the eve of general elections – 11 and 14 just before the polls of 2001 and 2006 respectively (Rubongoya, 2007 p.165) as political patronage. More about district creation is detailed in a section below.

Rubongoya also advances that the NRM’s response to Buganda’s demands is political patronage based on ethnic identity: “On the eve of every general election the NRM has acceded to one demand or another in order to turn the Baganda into pro-NRM voters...” (p.167)

Cabinet appointments are yet another form of political patronage in Uganda (Rubongoya, 2007:167). Whereas it is constitutional for the president to make cabinet appointments, the size of Uganda’s cabinet almost doubled in 2001 when it increased from 21 to 40 posts, and shot up to 67 in 2003 without any commensurate increase in government business. Today the cabinet stands at 78 ministers. This is legitimate use of discretion for illegitimate purposes that has entrenched corruption (Anti-corruption Coalition of Uganda, 2004:10).

Cronyism As mentioned earlier, cronyism refers to partiality to long-standing friends, especially by appointing them to positions of authority, regardless of their qualifications. Mukyala-Makiika (pp.101-102) states that with personnel powers devolved to local communities as a result of decentralisation, people are increasingly recruited on the basis of their nationality (ethnicity) rather than individual merit.

Presidentialism Rubongoya (2007:168) asserts that presidentialism has emerged in Uganda. It engenders values of governance in which the president “personalises power, promotes a cult of personality...and exercises absolute power”. It has produced
regime hegemony in Uganda. Presidentialism is a manifestation of a neo-patrimonial system and therefore raises the profile of informal structures of power thus leading to abuse and manipulation of the formal institutions of the state. Rubongooya (2007:169) argues that Museveni’s personalisation of power has followed this pattern - he has manipulated the constitution, LC system, government ministries, etc. He concludes that the fundamental change that Museveni promised to bring has not happened.

**Policies that entrench patronage**

Some government policies have been described as entrenching patronage. These include the decentralisation policy, privatisation policy and the land policy. Decentralisation is looked at below first.

**Decentralisation policy** The model of decentralisation in Uganda today is associated with NRM rebel activities before the formal decentralisation process started in 1992 (Nsibambi, 1998). It is considered a truly locally ‘owned’ system, which gradually became part of popular donor discourses on decentralisation. According to Okidi and Guloba (2006), in the early 2000s as the NRM political leadership that came to power in 1986 was preparing the country for multiparty competitive politics, the decentralisation system gradually drifted from being a vehicle for local democracy and efficient service delivery to an instrument for advancing central-level political motives that constitute political patronage. From this perspective the manifestation of political patronage is the creation of new districts (Larok, 2008:4,20-22).

According to Elliot Green (2007), district creation is “an on-going creation, new patron-client relationships can be seen as part of the same dynamic that has led to the ever-increasing size of the Cabinet and the Parliament”. Okidi & Guloba report that the creation of new districts expanded political and administrative jobs from a total number of 6,036 in 1991 to 12,948 in 2006. These jobs are used by the president for patronage to reward loyalists and buy off political opponents (USAID, 200). Operating each district approximately costs the government Shs 685m to Shs1.3 billion as wage bill per year (Nuwagaba, 2008).

A study by Transparency International reports that, following decentralisation in 1996, political corruption at the local government level has increased and impacted significantly on resource allocation and service delivery in the districts. The Second National Integrity Survey, 2003 also reports political corruption in districts. Tax assessments are reported to have come under undue influence of political leaders who have in some instances placed political supporters in lower tax brackets (Titeca, 2006).

**Gender dimensions of patronage in decentralisation** The creation of districts, according to Green (2007), has a gender dimension. In addition to the creation of jobs at the district level, there is also the creation of jobs in parliament. Each new district brings with it a new woman MP. Women are patronised by the NRM on the claims of historical recognition of women by the NRM. The result is that Women
MPs as a percentage of all MPs with voting rights has gone from 14.0% in 1996 to 25.0% in 2008, giving the NRM numerical advantage in parliament that is used for regime consolidation.

The quota system of representation for marginalised groups (women, youth, and people with a disability) is intended to give institutional channels and political space to address issues of gender and chronic poverty. Hickey (2003), while referring to research in lower councils of Kamuli and other literature (e.g. Tripp, 2000), reports that a significant problem has emerged: women’s representatives within the system feel that they lack autonomy to pursue women’s interests where they may conflict with the Movement policy with some Women’s Secretaries actually opposing pro-women initiatives on this basis.

**Patronage in the private sector and civil society**

Public corporations in Uganda have been used by governments, including the NRM regime as vehicles for political patronage. Tangri & Mwenda (2005) make references to the World Bank criticisms of the privatisation process for “non-transparency, insider dealing, conflict of interest and corruption”. They argue that “many privatisations benefited those with political connections.” Specific examples abound: the Uganda Commercial Bank (UCB) had been recapitalized by the government to the amount of US$72 million, but was sold for only US$11 million to a Malaysian company. Other companies were similarly sold cheaply. The Uganda Grain Milling Corporation (UGMC) was sold to Caleb’s International a Ugandan firm in which President Museveni’s brother Salim Saleh had a controlling interest. (Tangri & Mwenda, 2001:120)

A large proportion of Ugandans belong to at least one civil society organisation (CSO), and Uganda is reported to “exhibit one of the highest densities of associational life of any of the countries surveyed”. Ugandans give a limited share of their cash to charitable purposes (Civicus/DENIV A, 2006), but the charity sector of CSOs in Uganda is growing, driven by external factors. It emerges from a state of deprivation that prevailed after the collapse of the state in Uganda, following the military dictatorship of Idi Amin. At the policy level, CSOs are yet to gain competence and to be able to generate financial support locally. Studies by CDRN (2004) reveal that NGO workers have to balance their need for employment/personal survival against altruistic and external demands by the international donors and government. These studies also show the existence of pressure from the grassroots for material benefits from these organisations.

The Civicus/DENIV A study gives a low score of 1/3 to CSOs in Uganda, in regard to their internal democracy. Members have limited influence in the election of leaders of CSOs and there is much dependence on founder members that are often seen to have power, resources and other privileges. The study however reports of low public trust in political parties with much higher trust in Faith-based and non-governmental organisations.
Patronage and the donor community in Uganda

This section points out donors as part of global patronage network that replicates patronage in the positive and negative senses. The international financial institutions (IFIs), mainly the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, agreed to finance the Uganda governments of Obote II and Museveni/NRM. Of significance is the financial support to the NRM government since 1990, based on conditionalities, such as acceptance of a neo-liberal agenda, abandoning the socialist-nationalist economic agenda, pursuit of democracy and “good governance”, etc. Hickey (2000) expresses this view and raises the concern that presently there is a tendency within development studies to focus on questions of regional, national or local development. He calls for looking beyond Uganda to examine the ways in which politics and power relations in the global arena also shape the reproduction and potential reduction of long-term poverty.

Moncrieffe (2004) reviews the literature of how donors undermine human rights, democracy, and governance. She reports that some analysts contend that IFIs are especially intent on ‘showcasing’ Uganda, not merely to advertise a particular poverty reduction model but to improve their own image. This has entailed some ‘trade-offs’, with deliberate actions in some areas and a much more guarded approach in others. Moncrieffe states that: “to many onlookers, Uganda’s special position means that it has been able to secure its own patronage arrangements with the donors, unlike Kenya and other ‘less agreeable’ countries.”

EFFECTS OF POLITICAL PATRONAGE (PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS)

What are effects of political patronage? They are various factors affecting government institutions, and the values of the people at local and national levels.

Effects of political patronage on government institutions

Robinson (2004) suggests that the attitude and moral commitment of public officials for undertaking reforms to attain good governance has been negatively affected if not lost. He argues that the country has not fared well in achieving and sustaining the objectives of reform initiatives, whether through building administrative capacity, improving managerial efficiency, or strengthening public accountability. The net institutional effect is that the state institutions have become “personalized” or “privatized”: power and authority are situated in the person, not in the office.

It is not clear from the literature whether lack of adequate funds to finance the work of anti-corruption institutions is a patronage strategy. Nevertheless it is evident that the institutions responsible for co-ordinating the government’s anti-corruption efforts lack resources and capacity, in turn undermining their effectiveness. The
legitimacy of these institutions has come under question in the face of a low rate of level of prosecutions and the failure to check large-scale corruption by senior political figures (Hickey 2003).

The removal of presidential term limits has enabled the President to have extended stay thus protecting “historical” political patronage networks. For example on the over inflated purchase of land using funds of workers (National Social Security Fund Temangalo land purchase), it is reported in the press that President Museveni, on November 3, 2008 lectured the NRM Caucus at State House and dissuaded them from censuring ministers who were implicated the corrupt practice. (John Kazoora, “Turning NRM caucus into a military parade.” The Daily Monitor, November 12, 2008)

Political patronage is reported to have not only an effect within state institutions, but also on how the general population perceives services provided by the state. Theoretically, according to Titeca (2006), a developmental function of political patronage could occur where it can facilitate linking local level up to central level and therefore attracts resources to a marginalised area without harming development. That is not possible in Uganda where the government has much more limited resources than developed countries. Titeca, based on research done in Western Uganda, shows that, more resources have been allocated to the area of a local MP to support constituents who voted “well”, giving signs of skewed development with long term effects. Titeca also points out the following effects:

- At the lower level of government tensions can arise between civil servants/technocrats and elected leaders/politicians.
- The local government therefore gets less revenue because elected leaders do not want their constituency to be harassed by paying tax dues, and no sanctions are executed.
- At all levels of government, many politicians do not want to confront their electorate, they do not want to lose votes. Civil servants who should undertake the allocation of resources based on a legal-rational approach fail to do so, as they get co-opted to the particularistic logic of political patronage.
- Tension results in a high turnover of technicians and politicians in the local governments, leading to loss of skilled human resource and memory.
- Political patronage can lead to small scale but serious conflicts as one camp accuses the other of some malicious actions. Each camp then tends to use tricks to gain political advantage, leading to continuous instability in decision making.

The creation of districts in Uganda has carved out ethnic populations, the consequence being a re-enforcement of social networks pervading particular populations. Some division of districts has split one ethnic group into four and more districts, with the consequence of psychological separation of people and in some cases conflict, such as the undecided location of the headquarters of Tororo, Terego and Maracha districts.
In both cases the creation of districts shapes people’s patronage perception and values, and the structure and functioning of social networks with the local and central governments. The districts also become more dependent on the central government. The client-patron relationship is created and re-enforced (Green, 2008).

Effect of political patronage on values and culture

People have come to believe that the only way to get rich is through politics. The property of expelled Asians was re-distributed to Ugandans through patronage. With every change of government in Uganda, there has been a tendency for this to re-occur, but this time with the transfer of assets from those who were formerly in political positions to those who were excluded (Mamdani 1996, Department of Ethics and Integrity, National Strategy for Mainstreaming Ethics and Integrity in all Sectors and all Institutions in Local Governance in Uganda, 2003).

Patronage can lead to high levels of paternalistic values among the electorate. Among communities experiencing high political patronage, the state is seen as “omnipotent and paternalistic” and “top-down”. Services are not perceived to be ‘universal’ or ‘equal’; they are from those who are in power to those who are loyal to the party in power. Effectively, people do not expect the state to be there for everyone, but only for the people of their ‘political camp’ or network. Beyond the patron, there is no state, as the ‘big men’ are perceived to be the providers of all the service provision activities of the state (Titeca, 2006).

As early as 1987, as observed by Wiebe & Dodge (1987:4), one of the results of politics of patronage and clientelism is that no systematic ideology of national consolidation has been developed.

Effect of political patronage on public resources

The Government’s National Strategy to Fight Corruption (2004-2007) states that grand corruption has led to the significant loss of public funds through embezzlement and malpractices in procurement processes. Different reports from the IGG, the Auditor General, Transparency International and even the National Integrity Survey (2003), estimate that at least Ug shs.150 billion is lost annually in procurement processes.

Hickey (2003) argues that political patronage is having an effect on the current focus and direction of the national development strategy, given that political patronage has built the hegemony of the NRM regime. Development in Uganda is a political project of the NRM and is both being driven and characterised by a particular form of politics of neo-patrimonialism that prevails over direction and resource allocation at the centre.

Patronage is hurting the poor and perpetuating poverty. Reports from CSOs (ACCU, 2004, ACCU 2006, MS 2007) assert that political corruption contributes to petty corrupt practices. Corruption has a direct bearing on the persistent poverty levels
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experienced in Uganda. Whereas it negatively affects society as a whole, poorer people are even more vulnerable and thus badly affected. In many instances, they are unable to pay bribes and thus access the services they require. Up to U.shs.50 billion annually is extorted from the poor in the health sector alone, where services are supposed to be free (MS Uganda, 2007). The fact that they cannot afford these bribes means that fewer women and their children receive the treatment they require, ultimately affecting their productive capacity.

Political patronage is hindering the reduction of chronic poverty. Hickey observes two defeats on issues that the Women Caucus in parliament and women’s movement in Uganda have campaigned on. These are the 1998 Land Act and Domestic Relations Bill. Thus the observation that “the inclusive character of Uganda’s political system towards marginal groups was offered as a favour rather than claimed as a right, and has yet to transcend the politics of patronage from which it emerged” Hickey (2003) emphasis added.

HOW DOES PATRONAGE WORK?

What roles does ‘choice and reasoning’ play in the affiliations and allegiances of people in Uganda? The researcher was not able to access much literature to answer this question. This could point to a knowledge gap that needs to be filled by further research.

Choice and reasoning are mediated by social institutions (Habyarimana et al 2006). A study done by Habyarimana et al (2006) done in Kampala concludes that ethnic communities share norms and institutions that facilitate the sanctioning of non-contributors and these facilitate collective action among homogenous ethnic communities. This stems from the fact that co-ethnics enjoy greater proximity to one another through social networks; that they are more mutually “findable” and this makes them able to employ strategies that rely on reciprocation (a fundamental principle in African kinship).

From the theory (as argued above) that patronage is embedded in human relational activities observed through kinship and ethnic identity, Karugire (1980) advances that patronage is part of the culture of the peoples of Uganda. Despite the imposition of a Western worldview, values and systems on the people of Uganda, the typical African culture still prevails. This is explained in more detail in the section above on patronage in pre-colonial Uganda.

Choice and reasoning in patronage is influenced by a need to access resources and to maintain productive networks. Chia-Hsin Hu and Ben Jones (n.d,) in their paper An Investigation into the Relationship between Household Welfare and Social Capital in Eastern Uganda conclude that social capital, as expressed in less institutionalised social networks, has a significant effect on household welfare. Individual villagers develop social relationship independent of village organisations. Personalised networks are demonstrated in the social relationships developed by entrepreneurial
homes where household heads belong to peer groups, political networks, or correspond with friends and relatives in distant towns. Some networks were established during the colonial period.

Thus, patronage is a survival strategy for the poor. Ssewaya (2003) supports this view stating that in event of shocks, the available options for the poor are seeking patronage or to out-migrate in search of casual labour, aggravating poverty within the household.

PATRONAGE ALLEGIANCES

This section focuses on answering the question: *Why do people identify and attach themselves with the religious, ethnic or political projects that they do, and how and why do these allegiances change?*

The section begins by looking at the link between religion and politics at international level to provide a wider perspective given that Islam and Christianity are foreign to Uganda. The clergy, missionaries and political intellectuals are identified as key agents in the formation of religio-political projects and allegiances.

Influence of key actors and the link between religion and state politics. Mamdani (2004) argues that the emergence of political Islam was the result of a modern encounter with Western power. Although this source is not specific to Uganda, the researcher deemed it relevant as it provides a meta-nationalist perspective. Taking a historical perspective, Mamdani shows how culture and religion have been politicised. He talks of “political Islam” and “political Christianity” as being political movements that speak the language of religion. He questions writers who speak of “religious fundamentalism” as a political category and associate it with “political terrorism”. He advances the view that fundamentalism emerged as a struggle inside religion, not between religions, as a response to an enforced secular modernity (Mamdani, 2004:37-39). He considers the concept “fundamentalism” to be an invention by the Christian clergy in 1920. Two things are of much significance: the influence of a function of evangelical Christians on the political platforms of US government at the close of the last century and the emergence of radical Islam.

The clergy and missionaries have played a significant role in bringing religious affairs to the politics of Uganda as in other parts of the world; through the propagation of specific values (Karugire, 1980 and Mamdani, 2004). They are therefore among key agents of changes related to the formation of religious and political projects. Mamdani (2004:47) identifies political intellectuals with an “exclusively world concern” (those who are not involved in religious affairs) to be the pioneers of political Islam. In Uganda the Democratic Party is associated with the Catholic Church while the Protestant Church is associated with Uganda People’s Congress, political parties that competed for power in the formation of the first post-colonial government.

With reference to Mamdani above and the religio-political polarisation in Uganda during the colonial era, it can be argued that politics as a struggle for power to rule is
of the greatest influence in the formation of religio-political groups and allegiances. Allegiance with these groups changes with the change in patron-client relations.

Allegiance with the ethnic group Patronage in Uganda is intertwined with culture. It embodies democratic values and African philosophy of “ubuntu” (refer to section above on patronage and pre-colonial Uganda). The creature “Uganda” came into being following colonial penetration that introduced religion and exercised patronage unjustly – used political patronage – to introduce indirect rule and the institutions of state administration. As a result the people of Uganda hold on to patronage and patrimonialism for conducting their everyday affairs (largely in rural areas) and the political patronage to link with the state (in urban areas). This view is supported by Mamdani (1996) hence what he calls a “bifurcated state”.

The state – and all its attendant impositions on the peoples of Uganda – with its legitimate possession of coercive power, has great and pervasive influence on the perceptions and behaviour of citizens in regard to public and private affairs. Mwenda (2009:7) points out that the role of political/state leaders in executing the functions of the state is significant as rulers tend to exercise a disproportionate influence on the fate or fortunes of a nation.

Given that social networks are a means of getting social capital and protection, perceived injustice would force people to resort to other social groups to garner power, such as tribe and religion in their defence. Betty Kamya (2008) argues that injustice is perceived to arise when there is unfair or inequitable treatment, which may in turn promote abuse of office, patronage, human rights abuse, flouting agreed procedures, as well as corruption. Green (2008) echoes this view when he says that the claim made by coup d’état leaders that the previous regime was ‘tribalistic’ or ‘corrupt’ is merely another way of saying that patronage was unequally distributed across society. It is reported that “as the Movement became identified with the southwest, opposition parties began to redefine themselves in regionalist and ethnic lines, some reflecting the post-independence alliance patterns.” (USAID, 2005)

Mudoola (1987:58-62) presents the view that people get into political projects to address the psychological, material and political deprivation that has resulted. He argues that there has been an imbalanced resource allocation to people of this country during both the colonial and post-colonial administrations: imbalances were and are reflected along regional, ethnic, religious and class lines. Besides geo-specific imbalances, Mudoola draws a broad picture of an economically deprived northern Uganda that dominated power and the army, and an economically more developed southern Uganda that has had not a fair “share of the country’s power, considering their contribution to the nation’s wealth”.

Another suggestion advanced by Mudoola (1987:56) is that Uganda’s political elite get involved in political projects to protect or advance their own narrow interests. He argues that the political elite who are reflections of various traditions have not
outgrown the local social forces they represent. Their “political formulae” are used not to resolve conflicts for the ultimate good of the political system, but as tactical weapons to be used in protecting particular interests. Wiebe and Dodge (1987:4) claim that leaders have frequently encouraged rivalries for their own advantages and the advantages of their own followers, rather than the good of their country.

**Need for employment and political power.** The use of political patronage in recruitment and the creation of districts (discussed above) greatly influences political allegiance towards the NRM as a political party to access jobs. Political patronage has specific motivations:

- Increase influence and therefore political capital to be re-elected. President Museveni is reported to have used U.shs. 5 million to influence the removal of term limits to allow him to stand again in 2006 (USAID, 2005)
- Recoup campaign investments - One factor leading to neo-patrimonial practices is the fact that leaders want to maximise the benefits derived from state resources: all of them have invested much money in their electoral campaigns. This is demonstrated by Titeca (2006) with reference to research done in Western Uganda.
- Render social benefits to people of one’s own nationality, i.e., to the nationality from which the political leader originates (refer to political patronage section).

Politicians also legitimately acquire patronage (in the positive sense) and therefore gain political advantage over opponents through addressing priority needs of the electorate. The NRM is reported to have allegiance from women who perceive that they have gained from the regime (Rubongoya 2007).

**CHALLENGING PATRONAGE BY CSOS**

What initiatives have been taken by CSOs to address patronage?

The study did not comprehensively look at all efforts to address patronage, work done by another related study. The response is limited to political patronage. Work by CSOs in this respect is carried out under the general rubric of anti-corruption work. This has been undertaken under the agenda of good governance for accountability and transparency. Publications such as by The Anti-Corruption Coalition of Uganda (ACCU), MS Uganda, Transparency International Uganda, DENIVA were reviewed and are cited in this paper. Among the anti-corruption actors there is limited effort to encourage pluralism.

Who are the anti-corruption CSO actors in Uganda? What are their activities?

The Anti-Corruption Coalition of Uganda (ACCU) is the major NGO that has brought together over 42 organisations (national and international) together to form anti-corruption effort in Uganda. ACCU has regional branches across the country. The work of ACCU is supported among others by MS Uganda (MS). MS claims
to be “a pioneer among the international NGOs in Uganda in playing a central role in the fight against corruption” and that “it is still in the lead with regard to both geographical coverage and the depth of its engagement with corruption issues” (MS Uganda Newsletter November 2007). MS Uganda is among the founders behind the Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU) that was established in 1999. MS Uganda works with other organisations ACCU, International Anti-Corruption Theatre Movement (IATM), Apac and Koboko Networks.

The press seems to be the strongest civil society anti-corruption actor (USAID, 2005) with The Daily Monitor, which is not government owned, often undertaking investigative reports as one of its major strategies to compete with the New Vision, owned by the Uganda Government.

CSO reports and studies have largely focused on exposing acts of corruption, establishing the effects of corruption and exposing political patronage as the underlying factor of corruption in Uganda. To address corruption in terms of its fundamental causes and resulting effects CSOs have undertaken the following activities:

- Building the capacity of anti-corruption CSOs at national and regional levels (e.g., ACCU and her regional networks such as Teso Anti-Corruption Network)
- Civic education such as championed by MS Uganda – democracy as lifestyle.
- Joint advocacy campaigns with faith-based organizations.
- Anti-corruption studies by higher institutions of learning and research organizations, and production of training materials.

The anti-corruption literature of CSOs cited in this paper shows that the effort in addressing patronage also includes advocating for the prosecution of corrupt officials, which does not capture the apex of patronage. The early interventions by CSO (excluding universities and colleges) related to culture in development in Uganda seem to be limited to CCFU. The mainstreaming of culture in development in anti-corruption work is yet to become one of the major strategies. The National Strategy to Fight Corruption recommends that: “There needs to be a thorough study of Uganda’s cultures to collect its norms and values, assess them in light of the requirements of the public service so that the positive ones are assimilated and a programme for discouraging the negative ones designed and implemented.”

The study encountered a report of proceedings and recommendations of a leaders retreat held at Kasunga Training and Conference Centre in Kyenjojo district, in July 2006. The retreat brought together leaders from political parties; namely NRM-O, FDC, UPC, DP, the Anglican, Orthodox, and Catholic churches and Tooro Kingdom. Participants came from the districts of Kasese, Kabarole, Kamwenge and Kyenjojo purposely to hold a dialogue on a process of understanding conflict, development and reconciliation potentials of the peoples of the region. This conference seems to be an effort to foster pluralism.
The National Strategy to Fight Corruption and Rebuild Ethics and Integrity in Public Office (p.20) acknowledges that CSOs in particular have played a strong role in articulating concerns about the spread of corrupt practices in public office and have also proved important rallying points for rural communities. The same report however states that there is little evidence that awareness conducted has had any impact on the public service behaviour. It suggests that public information should be carefully planned and targeted in order to influence the policy environment and change attitudes and behaviour.

Government institutions to deal with corrupt practices have been established but, as observed by Deininger & Mpanga (2004), they have not been matched by public education on the proper procedures, resulting in a lack of knowledge on procedures to report corruption.

One way of addressing political patronage is by working to develop the civic competence of citizens. MS Uganda is making efforts in this direction, by supporting local governments to train local government leaders. It is not apparent, however, that there is a concerted effort by CSOs to address political patronage (neo-patrimonialism) as a fundamental cause of corruption.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Patronage is a phenomenon that is here to stay. It is infused in the culture of the peoples of Uganda, understood as African culture with its principles of respect, reciprocity and responsibility. Patronage supports the peoples of Uganda to survive in times of adversity caused by nature and the failures of the state to protect and provide for the people.

Understood as social capital, patronage may be regarded as a key asset in the overall portfolio of resources drawn upon by the poor and rich, powerful and disempowered, as they manage risk and opportunity and seek to gain access to resources and decision-making processes. And, as stated by the World Bank (2000), forms of social capital interact with other forms of financial, physical, human, and natural capital in determining social and economic outcomes at household, local, regional, and national levels.

It is therefore possible to argue that one view associates patronage with culture and local community associations and the underlying norms (responsibility, trust, reciprocity) that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. In Uganda the value of responsibility provides the opportunity for those who are in need such as those who are weak physically or otherwise to be cared for by those who are strong physically and/or better resourced. The cultural values of responsibility linked with other values such as reciprocity, make patronage networks an asset that could be used to address community problems including poverty.

This view may be critiqued. It highlights the positive aspects of patronage for members of associations, but remains largely silent on the possibility that patronage
may not benefit the weak, the poor and society, and that group membership may entail exclusion and significant costs.

Consequently another view of patronage is suggested that recognises its positive and negative effects by broadening the concept to include vertical associations, where relationships among members may be hierarchical and power sharing unequal. From this viewpoint, more encompassing forms of associations and networks including the local, national and international political, social and economic interactions can be analysed. It is then possible to assess the extent to which patronage results in inclusion or exclusion, tolerance or intolerance and has positive and/or negative effects. This makes it possible to determine how patronage can be used as a force for improving the livelihood of the weak and poor and at the same time address political patronage that excludes and oppresses them.

Patronage and clientelism was used in the establishment of the colonial administration in Uganda, and has a continuing effect on development of nations in Uganda and the development of a Ugandan identity. These effects need deliberate actions of a pluralistic nature to foster peace, harmony and sustainable improvement in the quality of life.

When political patronage and clientelism were introduced into Ugandan society by colonialism, conflict arose and persists between patronage as a force for social inclusion and development (e.g., addressing poverty), and patronage as a force for political influence to control power. This conflict extends to the way culture is understood. The culture of the peoples of Uganda is despised, blamed and neglected but also acknowledged and respected, the past is despised and denied but it is also revered and cherished; Western culture is accepted, admired and promoted but it is also despised and rejected.

Political patronage and clientelism has affected the political values of the people of Uganda. Politics is seen as the way to get rich quickly and a means to redress social and economic imbalances created by the past governments. Political patronage and clientelism is entrenched, therefore, in Uganda to-day. It helps to access jobs and distribute political appointments, reflecting nationality and religious affiliations. Patronage in its negative forms is having negative effects on society: fuelling corruption, responsible for misuse and loss of public funds, and perpetuating chronic poverty.

Civil society’s response to political patronage and clientelism is undertaken as anti-corruption work. As mentioned earlier (in section 2) political patronage is a quasi-universal form of politics, whereby politicians use state materials to reward individuals for their electoral support. However, other types of political patronage, e.g., nepotism and cronyism violate the law and codes of ethics and are therefore illegal and corrupt. It is in response to flouting the law through use of political office and public resources for personal advantage that some CSOs challenge political patronage for being unfair discrimination against and exclusion of some citizens, especially the poor.
Based on the findings of this study, it seems appropriate to recommend that we further study common values among peoples of Uganda and utilise these to develop a shared identity of being Ugandan. In particular, there is a need to study how the positive aspects of patronage function in Ugandan society and how these can be used as a force for good.

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JOHN – JEAN BARYA
For HURINET – Uganda

Abstract

In this paper, the author deals with the issue of the attitude of the Ugandan State to political and cultural pluralism and diversity in the country. This is tackled by focusing on the public order management regime that exists and what is being proposed by government in terms of law and policy in this area, as well as the way ethnic and cultural identities and expressions are conceived, treated and/or managed. The author argues that the current state of the management of public order in Uganda must be seen in a historical context, but especially in view of the more recent years dominated by the NRM regime, a regime characterised by populism and neo-patrimonialism. While the provisions in Uganda’s Constitution generally conform with the provisions of international instruments, several laws and Bills, he argues, are intended to stifle freedom of association, the right to dissent, media freedoms and are against the spirit of encouraging unity in diversity whether at a political, civil or cultural level. With a shrinking public space for the populace to express their views divergent from those of the government, informal platforms (cultural associations in universities, community radios) to replace the formal space threatened by the laws and practices have emerged, but these can exhibit exclusionary tendencies, reinforcing differences between communities.

The author concludes that the NRM regime has done little in terms of programmes and policies, laws and concrete actions to encourage the ideal that Ugandans should accept their various diversities and yet live together harmoniously. Therefore Ugandan civil society, political parties, the media and liberal elements in government need to work together to ensure that anti-democratic laws, policies and practices in place and Bills proposed are amended or dropped.

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the critical issue of the attitude of the Ugandan state to political and cultural pluralism and diversity in the country. The issue is dealt with by focusing on the public order management regime that exists and what is being proposed by government in terms of law and policy in this area.

The paper therefore seeks to conduct a human rights and diversity sensitivity audit of sorts of the national constitutional and legal framework, national policies and

233 Several of these Bills, though amended, have now become law (editors).
action plans as well as the actual state practice regarding public order management. It is intended that this assessment places the public order management regime within the context of the universal human rights standards required or desired with a view of advancing pluralism and diversity generally but also ensuring that the same public order management regime promotes democracy and the rule of law in the society.

The paper is divided into six sections. Section one is this Introduction, Section two is the Methodology while Section three deals with the context in which the study is undertaken, namely the nature of the Ugandan state and Ugandan society. Section four deals with public order management, international standards, existing laws and proposed laws (Bills) while Section five deals with existing policies and practices, and Section six is the conclusion.

**METHODOLOGY**

The paper essentially relies on legislation and decided cases as well as international conventions for legal and human rights norms that are analysed or used as benchmarks. In addition government policy documents, official speeches and reports are used to determine government policies, practices and predispositions. Key personalities were also interviewed vide the assistance of HURINET - Uganda particularly from: academia police, civil society and religious leaders, cultural leaders and political leaders. Newspaper reports and accounts of relevant events, views and opinions have also been relied on and, of course, secondary literature pertinent to issues of pluralism, diversity and democracy.

**CONTEXT: UGANDAN STATE AND SOCIETY**

The current state of the management of public order in Uganda must be seen in a broader historical context but at the same time we note that the specific public order management regime in place is a more recent construction of the NRM government that was for 20 years a one-party regime (though some in it called it a no-party arrangement) which was reluctantly forced to adopt, at a formal constitutional level at least, a pluralist multiparty system of governance in 2005. One of the major problems in the change that took place from the so-called movement system to a multiparty system since 2005 is that while a referendum was held on 28 July 2005 and the Political Parties and Organisations Act (No. 18/2005) was passed by parliament in November 2005, all the other laws and institutions set up and groomed under the Movement System logic were never changed and indeed have not been changed to date.

In terms of certain institutions of the state two things remained: one, the assumption that the government and the state belong to or revolve around one individual, which is President Y.K. Museveni; the other the assumption that the only legitimate political organisation was that of the President, i.e. the NRM. These specific institutions that have not changed are the army, the police, intelligence organisations and the Electoral
Commission. However up until 2001 the President had not had much interest in the judiciary, in terms of influencing appointments or interfering with its independence. This came after the 1st petition against his contested re-election in 2001 heard by the Supreme Court. Because the President had his election confirmed by Court only by a narrow majority of 1 judge the President realised the importance and mediatory role of the judiciary. Since then he has vowed to appoint only pro-regime judges! Nonetheless to a large extent the judiciary today remains one of the few institutions of state that is relatively still independent.

The army, the police and intelligence organisations have not been nurtured as national institutions but rather as personal instruments of the president or at best instruments of the regime rather than of the state or the people. This is partly a result of the short post-colonial history of the Ugandan state that saw each regime come and go with its army and police or had them significantly reconstructed to serve the incoming regime. The first post-colonial government of UPC – Obote I (1962 – 1971) depended to a large extent on the support of a colonial army that recruited mainly from Northern Uganda. With Idi Amin (1971 – 1979) an attempt was made to have the leadership of the army in the hands of some West Nile groups and even Sudanese. Thus the UPC – Obote II regime attempted to reconstruct the army in the image of the UPC – Obote I regime. The NRA changed the image of the army from 1986 to date. The main recruits were from Buganda and Western Uganda but with a core leadership close to President Museveni personally and his ethnic group. Indeed before 1990 (when the Rwandese deserted and began a war to return to Rwanda) the NRA also had many ethnic Tutsis in its ranks. The late Fred Rwigyema even became Deputy Army Commander. In spite of annual recruitments the leadership and command of the army is still in the hands of people personally close to the President including his son Muhoozi Kainerugaba now in charge of the Special Forces. The police and intelligence organs also operate more or less in the same way mainly geared to personal rule and protection of the President and his regime than broader loyalty and interest in the state or the people of Uganda.

The above style of leadership has been viewed in different ways, one for instance as populism and the other as neopatrimonialism. Populism has been defined as

\[ \text{a political strategy through which a personality leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalised support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers (Kurt Weyland 200)} \]

On the other hand neopatrimonialism refers to a political system in which authority rests on the personal power exercised arbitrarily under the direct control of the ruler in spite of the existence of formal institutional or constitutional arrangements. The neopatrimonial ruler extends patronage, personal grace and favours at the expense of

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234 Presidential Election Petition No. 1/2001
235 On the role and place of the army see also R. Tanguri & A. Mwenda 2003; Giovanni Carbone 2005
institutional and constitutional limitations to his authority\textsuperscript{236}

Whichever way one looks at President Museveni’s regime, it contains both elements of populism and neopatrimonialism. The question then becomes why should this be so in Ugandan society?

There are a number of historical and socio-political reasons for this situation. First the political conflicts that followed the removal of Idi Amin Dada from power in 1979 led to chaos and war and any person or group that brought about peace or relative place (since Northern Ugandan had a prolonged war) would gain credibility and legitimacy at least initially.

Secondly some level of economic recovery and economic growth has been achieved and this in itself creates some constituency consisting of those that have benefited from the economic recovery and neo-liberal economic policies though the same policies have created poverty and injustice of the part of many citizens. However it is these poor citizens that are then fed on populism or are then managed through clientelism and patronage.

Thirdly as Ugandan society is still essentially a rural peasant society the role of civil society and organized politics is only relatively strong and felt mainly in urban areas. However even here the traditional civil society organisations that would provide a check on state power like trade unions and professional associations are weak or have been weakened by the neoliberal policies (retrenchment) or are systematically infiltrated and/or co-opted by the regime\textsuperscript{237}.

It is therefore important to note that the management of public order has to be assessed against the backdrop of a state that is highly personalized and where the mediating role of institutions is extremely weak and that this weakness is preferred by the regime leadership. The mediating role of the judiciary is therefore detested and frequently not only is the judiciary interfered with but attempts are made to bypass it in favour of military courts that are directly under the control of the regime.

PUBLIC ORDER MANAGEMENT: INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, EXISTING LAWS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Conceiving public order management: human rights standards

There are internationally agreed standards that relate to public order management in a society that is pluralistic in composition but also a society that has different political parties, cultural and ethnic groups, religious organisations and so on.

Uganda’s 1995 Constitution has a Bill of Rights (Chapter 4) that is predicated upon well-known international Covenants. Article 29(2) of the Constitution provides that every person shall have the right to:

\textsuperscript{236} See J. Scott & G. Marshall 2005: 483

\textsuperscript{237} See for instance J.J. Barya 2001
a. freedom of speech and expression which shall include freedom of
   the press and other media;

b. freedom of thought, conscience and belief which shall include
   academic freedom in institutions of learning;

c. freedom to practice any religion and manifest such practice which
   shall include the right to belong to and participate in the practices
   of any religious body or organisation in a manner consistent with
   this Constitution;

d. freedom to assemble and to demonstrate together with others
   peacefully and unarmed and to petition; and

e. freedom of association which shall include the freedom to form
   and join associations or unions including trade unions and
   political and other civic organisations.

The above constitute the basic civil and political rights on freedom of conscience,
expression, religion, assembly and association. In addition Article 29(2) provides that
every Ugandan shall have a right

a. to move freely throughout Uganda and to reside and settle in any
   part of Uganda;

b. to enter, leave and return to Uganda; and

c. to a passport or other travel document.

The Constitution also provides that every Ugandan has “a right to participate in
peaceful activities to influence the policies of government through civic organisations”
(Article 38(2)) whereas with regard to cultural identity the Constitution further
stipulates that

    every person has a right as applicable to belong to, enjoy, practice, profess,
    maintain and promote any culture, cultural institution, language, tradition,
    creed or religion in community with others (Article 37).

Thus the above provisions in Uganda’s Constitution generally conform with the
provisions of international instruments such as: the Universal Declaration of Human
Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These
instruments stipulate the well-known political, civil, cultural and socio-economic
rights. It is these rights that are also reflected in Uganda’s Constitution apart from the
socio-economic ones which are not well articulated in the Constitution. Therefore the
above constitutional provisions provide a starting point and basic benchmark upon
which any assessment of the public order management regime should be made.

Equally important are the more recent Conventions on cultural diversity. There
is the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001 and the Convention
The 2001 Declaration sees culture as a set of distinctive material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group and which encompasses art, literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. It also observes that culture is as the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, the development of a knowledge-based economy and also affirmed that respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation in a climate of mutual trust and understanding are among the best guarantors of international peace and security.

The 2005 Convention is intended among others (Article 1)

- to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions;
- to create the conditions for cultures to flourish and to freely interact in a mutually beneficial manner;
- to foster interculturality in order to develop cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples.

The Convention has a number of guiding principles and one of the most important reads

> Cultural diversity can be protected and promoted fully if human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, information and communication, as well as the ability of individuals to choose cultural expressions, are guaranteed. No one may invoke the provisions of this Convention in order to infringe human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or guaranteed by international law, or to limit the scope thereof (Article 2(1)).

Taken together the above constitutional provisions and principles in international conventions give us standards and benchmarks of rights that must be protected in any public order management regime in particular to ensure that political pluralism, cultural diversity and diversity in general are advanced. The basic rights that are at the core of how pluralism and diversity should be managed both from a constitutional and international human rights perspective are therefore the following:

1. Freedom of association and assembly especially for political parties and civil society;
2. Freedom of speech with emphasis on freedom of the media;
3. Freedom of assembly and the right to demonstrate;
4. Freedom of movement;
5. The right to culture, cultural institutions and cultural expressions.

For purposes of this paper we have chosen to leave out freedom of conscience and of religion which may need separate treatment as the right raises several other issues that may go beyond the scope of this paper.
However at the centre of the public order management regime and the different diversities in Uganda, what is more pertinent and needs urgent attention are the questions of political pluralism and political party freedom to exist and operate as well the way ethnic and cultural identities and expressions are conceived, treated and/or managed.

THE DIVERSITIES: POLITICAL PLURALISM AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES

In Uganda today the major political fault lines are between the NRM – Museveni regime on the one hand and political parties and cultural – cum – traditional entities on the other. Even the political calculations and horse–trading really revolve around freedom of political parties to operate on the one hand and the potential political role of cultural leaders and cultural institutions and therefore, from the point of view of the regime, the need to use them or if they reject this, the need to subjugate and humiliate them. In between these two actors (political parties and cultural institutions) are mediating institutions that the state is also interested in regulating, namely the media and civil society.

Political parties

The NRM – Museveni regime was between 1986 – 2006, that is for 20 years, very much opposed to the idea of political pluralism and therefore prescribed the operation of political parties. They were only forced through local political and international pressure to concede to political party freedom to exist, operate and organise. Nevertheless many recognise this concession as a progressive step by the government to ‘accommodate other people who may not necessarily be of the same political thinking.’ But the concession was not a conviction. Indeed apart from the referendum that allowed a return to multi-party politics and the passing of the Political Parties and Organisations Act in November 2005, everything in the state machinery and ethos remained as constructed under the one-party or no-party so-called Movement System (from 1995) or the earlier period when NRM (the original NRM, not the 2005 NRM party) was the only political organisation allowed to exist and operate in the political arena. Arguably, according to one commentator political pluralism, a

‘hallmark of democratic government with people subscribing to different political ideologies and rightly exercising their political rights within an environment where there is a spirit of mutual accommodation and no marginalisation on the basis of political beliefs, cultural and religious beliefs remains elusive in Uganda.’

238 See HURINET-U interview with Mr. Kaddu Robert, Head of Political Science Department, Kyambogo University-Kampala Uganda, 16/6/2010.

In Uganda today, 36 political parties are registered but only a few are really politically relevant. They represent different political, socio-economic, regional and cultural diversities in Uganda. Currently there are many parties on Uganda’s political party register at Uganda’s Electoral Commission, but in reality only about ten are active and have some level of actual existence. It is these or a smaller segment of them that could be significant in assessing their levels of socio-political and cultural representation of Ugandan society. The active ones include:

1. NRM (National Resistance Movement) (Leader: Y.K. Museveni), ruling party.
2. FDC (Forum for Democratic Change) (Leader: W.K. Kiiza Besigye)
3. DP (Democratic Party) (Leader: Norbert Mao)
4. UPC (Uganda Peoples’ Congress), (Leader: Olara Otunnu)
5. PPP (Peoples’ Progressive Party) (Leader: Jaberi Bidandi – Ssali)
6. UFA (Uganda Federal Alliance) (Leader: Olive Betty N. Kamya)
7. PDP (Peoples’ Development Party) (Leader: Obedi Bwanika)
8. CP (Conservative Party) (Leader: John Ken Lukyamuzi)
9. JEEMA (Justice forum) (Leader: Asumani Basalirwa)
10. SDP (Social Democratic Party) (Leader: Michael Mabikke)

Apart from these there is the newly formed Buganda-wide political organisation known as Ssuubi 2011 (Hope 2011), under the leadership of former Buganda Katikkiro (Prime Minister) Joseph Mulwanyamuli Ssemwogerere. Ssuubi 2011 in 2010 entered into an alliance (vide a Memorandum of Understanding) with IPC (Inter Party Cooperation) which is an alliance of FDC, CP, SDP and JEEMA.

The major ethno-political differences which the different political parties try to deal with and/or navigate include the following:

a. The so-called North-South divide; (or Bantu vs. others)

b. Buganda –vs.- the rest;

c. The perceived dominance of Westerners (particularly as reflected in NRM the ruling party) and further sub-divisions within this so-called Western Camp.

It is significant that whereas in the past political discourse used to involve class and social position analysis, this has taken a back seat and the main discourses revolve around ethnicity, regionalism and to some limited extent, gender issues. This goes to a large extent to show that identity politics whether for positive or negative purposes has taken centre stage in Uganda for some years under the NRM. Identity politics has been used to construct and deconstruct alliances, patron-client relationships and to undermine the growth of institutions and the institutionalization of politics and political processes.

See http://www.ec.ug/regdparty.html
Cultural identities and diversities

According to Uganda’s 1995 Constitution (as amended in 2005) there are 65 indigenous communities or ethnic groups in Uganda (Third Schedule). The Constitution also recognises citizens by birth to be only those persons born in Uganda one of whose parents or grandparents is or was a member of any of the indigenous communities existing and residing within the borders of Uganda as at the first day of February 1926 and set out in the Third Schedule to this Constitution (Article 10(a)).

There have been many issues and disputes among Uganda’s different ethnic groups and many of these disputes and conflicts have been manifested in the political arena. Uganda as an artificial colonial creation is not a nation. Instead it has different peoples, nations and ethnicities. This poses a singular problem, what makes the people of Uganda Ugandans other than an artificially created colonial boundary? The different peoples of Uganda do not see themselves as Ugandans, or as one people but rather as Baganda, Banyankole, Bakiga, Acholi, Langi, Basoga, Bagisu, etc. - all the 65 groupings referred to in the Third Schedule of the Constitution. No common language of communication exists and they have no common culture. In fact Ugandan people hardly communicate with one another – if there is any communication it is by proxy through political intermediaries and other fora and the media in different languages.

But difference in culture, language and ethnicity in itself is not problematic. The problem arises when it is necessary to determine how this difference and diversity are managed and how the different groups of people relate to each other. In relation to the subject-matter before us the most poignant elements in cultural and ethnic diversity in Uganda have been the role and place of cultural leaders on the one hand and the politics of ethnic calculation for electoral and legitimation purposes on the other. The way in which the NRM – Museveni regime handled the northern war/conflict was part and parcel of this latter calculus. Currently the standoff between the Kabaka’s “cultural government” and the NRM – Museveni regime and the regime’s creation of sub-cultural leaders in Buganda is worth exploring vis-à-vis the President’s obsession with rehabilitating the Bunyoro monarchy and elevating it to a leadership of Uganda’s cultural leaders. On the other hand the refusal by government to recognise Mr. John Barigye as King (Omugabe of Ankole/Banyankore) is also part and parcel of a process of ethnic calculation for electoral and legitimacy purposes on the part of the NRM – Museveni regime.

The non-political elements of the cultures of the different people of Uganda are usually not controversial. Culture generally refers to knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law and customs of a given people (J. Scott & G. Marshall: 132–133) including their language and social organisation. The problem usually arises where culture especially in a multicultural society like Uganda intersects with political processes.
and political power. For instance while the issue of national language is still not agreed it is not a big political problem. The major problem in Uganda is the dispute between the artificial (colonially-created) central state and some distinct nationalities that demand autonomy and self-determination as a people and cultural community especially Buganda. For instance referring to the riots of September 2009 in Uganda one study has observed

the relationship between the central government and traditional and cultural leaders ... is unclear, not properly and clearly articulated in law and is not a result of a historically arrived at consensus by the people of Uganda or their representatives. It is this relationship and the unresolved demands of Buganda for recognition as a nation organized and administered in a federal relationship with the central government ... that is responsible for the current tension between Buganda and the centre. On the other hand the unequivocal desire by President Museveni and the central government not to meaningfully share power with any group, region or community except on terms dictated by the central government/ or the President (as with decentralisation) means that conflict with those who wish for meaningful autonomy or sharing of power with the centre would result in confrontation242.

THE LEGAL REGIME

As we have seen, the Constitution of Uganda clearly lays down human rights standards that promote and protect freedoms necessary in a pluralistic polity and a multiparty system. It also recognises cultural diversity. However how does the public order management regime in place today relate to these rights, their protection and enjoyment?

The major pieces of legislation that deal with public order management are the Penal Code Act (Cap. 120) and the Police Act (Cap 303). Other laws related to public order management but indirectly are: the Anti – Terrorism Act of 2002 and others that are intended to hamper civil society organisation, like the Non-Governmental Organisations Registration (Amendment) Act No. 25/2006 or those aimed at restricting media freedom, like the proposed Press and Journalists (Amendment) Bill 2010, the Regulation of Interception of Communications Act 2010 and the Public Order Management Bill 2009. Therefore we focus on the Penal Code Act and the Police Act first.

The Penal Code Act

The Penal Code Act mainly provides for unlawful assemblies – being assemblies of 3 or more people that cause or are likely to cause a breach of the peace (S.65(1)). An unlawful assembly which becomes a breach of the peace and a terror to be public is then a riot (S.65 (3)). A magistrate or police officer of or above the rank of inspector or any commissioned officer in the army

242 HURINET-U 2010: 14 – 15
in whose view twelve (12) or more persons are riotously assembled or who apprehends that a riot is about to be committed by twelve or more persons within his or her view, may make or cause to be made a proclamation in the President’s name, in such a form as he or she thinks fit, commanding the rioters or persons so assembled to disperse peacefully.243

The police may disperse the assembly and “may use all such force as is reasonably necessary for overcoming … resistance”, if there is resistance; “and shall not be liable in any criminal or civil proceeding for having by the use of such force, caused harm or death to any person” (S.69)

There is also provision for declaring certain organisations unlawful societies (s.56) and the Minister (who is Attorney – General in this case) may by statutory order declare any organisation “to be a society dangerous to the peace and order of Uganda” (S.56 (2)(c)).

In general the police has not been using these provisions under the NRM – Museveni regime. Instead they have preferred to block peaceful rallies, to disperse them with tear gas and live ammunition and more recently to organize and work with an illegal vigilante group known as the Kiboko Squad, that ruthlessly beats unarmed and usually peaceful demonstrators of the political opposition and at times mere civic protests for instance over the attempt by government to sell of Mabira natural forest (for sugarcane farming) or residents protesting over bad roads, etc.

Instead the police has tended to rely more on the provisions of the Police Act. We assess it below.

**The Police Act**

The Police Act makes provisions related to the so-called regulation of assemblies and processions. These are in sections 32 – 37 of the Police Act. The Act also regulates the use of public address systems. The most important provisions are in sections 32 and 35. And section 32 has been a subject of constitutional litigation. Section 32 (1) provides that an officer in charge of police may issue orders to regulate:

- the extent to which music, drumming, or a public address system may be used on public roads or streets or at occasion of festivals or ceremonies;
- the conduct of assemblies and processions on public roads or streets or at places of public resort and the route by which and the times at which any procession may pass.

This particular provision is not problematic because it does not prohibit freedom of association and assembly provided it is merely regulatory for the good of both the demonstrators, assemblies or processions and the general public. However it may be abused by police.

243 S.68, Cap. 120
On the other hand the most problematic sections are Section 32 (2) and 35 of the Police Act. Section 32 (2) provides as follows:

if it comes to the knowledge of the inspector general that it is intended to convene any assembly or form any procession on any public road or street or at any place of public resort and the inspector general has reasonable grounds for believing that the assembly or procession is likely to cause a breach of the peace, the inspector general may, by notice in writing to the person responsible for convening the assembly or forming the procession, prohibit the convening of the assembly or forming of the procession

This section has been used several times especially before 2008 to muzzle the political opposition. No rallies or public assemblies of the opposition were allowed except during the campaigns for presidential and parliamentary positions just before the elections in February 2006. However the section was in 2005 challenged by Muwanga – Kivumbi in the Constitutional Court. In Muwanga - Kivumbi vs. Attorney-General 244, although the Constitutional Court eventually annulled that provision as being unconstitutional, it took three years to do so and the reasons why Muwanga – Kivumbi had wanted the declaration had more or less been overtaken by events. Between March and May 200 Muwanga – Kivumbi as Co-ordinator of the Popular Resistance Against Life Presidency (PRALP) had organised several rallies in different parts of Uganda to protest the proposed removal of presidential term limits to allow President Museveni to run for presidency for as many times as he wished. His freedom to associate and oppose the proposed change was always being violently blocked by police quoting Sections 32, 34 and 35 of the Police Act. Although the decision of the Constitutional Court was useful for others, it was practically inconsequential for the petitioner because on 30th September 2005 parliament passed the Constitution (Amendment) Act No. 11 of 2005 and among others removed presidential (2) term limits. The case was determined on 27th May 2008.

For the citizens and all organisations wishing to peacefully assemble however this Constitutional decision is very important.

As the lead judgment of Justice C.K. Byamugisha put it, regarding S. 32(2) of the Police Act was unconstitutional. To her,

in the matter before us there is no doubt that the power given to the Inspector General of Police is prohibitive rather than regulatory. It is open ended since it has no duration. This means that the rights available to those who wish to assemble and therefore protest would be violated.

The justification for freedom of assembly in countries which are considered free and democratically governed in my view is to enable citizens gather and express their views without government restrictions. The Government has a duty of maintaining proper channels and structures to ensure that legitimate protest
whether political or otherwise can find a voice. Maintaining the freedom to assemble and express dissent remains a powerful indicator of the democratic and political health of the country.

I therefore find that the powers given to the Inspector General of Police to prohibit the convening of an assembly or procession an unjustified limitation on the enjoyment of a fundamental right. Such a limitation is not demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic country like ours.

The subsection is null and void. The petitioner is entitled to a declaration to that effect.

All the constitutional court judges unanimously agreed that S. 32(2) of the Police Act was null and void. It can no longer be used and relied on by police.

However before this judgment was delivered the Minister for Internal Affairs in 2007 issued a statutory instrument literally prohibiting assemblies, demonstrations and processions. Dr. Ruhakana – Rugunda the then Minister issued the Police (Declaration of Gazetted Areas) Instrument No. 53 of 2007 in which two regulations were particularly draconian. Regulation 2 provided

“the following areas are gazetted areas in respect of which it shall be unlawful for any person or persons to convene an assembly or hold a demonstration or procession in which it is reasonable to suppose that more than twenty-five persons will be present unless a permit has been obtained in accordance with this instrument

a. the whole area within Kampala City, including any street, road, lane, avenue, highway, green belt, square, central business area, places of public resort or residential areas; and

b. any area within a city, municipality, town or urban area in Uganda including any lane, avenue, highway, walkway, green belt, square, central business area, places of public resort and residential areas within that city, municipality, town or urban area”

In addition regulation 3 provided that

“a permit for the holding of an assembly, demonstration or procession of more than twenty-five persons within a gazetted area shall be issued by the Inspector General of Police or an officer designated by him or her”

In short the government had prohibited assemblies, demonstrations and processions of political and civic organisations in all urban areas of Uganda. It was a novelty that a ridiculous proposal was being made by government that these assemblies, demonstrations or processions be held in villages or national parks! In addition the prohibition was for any assembly of 25 or more people and not whether they were likely to cause a breach of peace or break any law as envisaged under S. 32 (2).
Indeed the government was allowing and still only allows and even gives police protection to its supporters or groups known to support government to assemble and demonstrate. However Statutory Instrument No. 53 of 2007 lapsed after a year and has not been renewed. But since only s. 32 (2) of the Police Act was nullified by the constitutional court, government can still revive Statutory Instrument No. 53 of 2007 or enact a similar or worse instrument under the said S. 35 of the Police Act.

**Other laws and bills**

The management of public order is regulated essentially by the Penal Code and the Police Act. But as stated above there are other ancillary laws and proposed laws (Bills) that affect the political opposition, the media, civil society and private persons that have grave implications for the protection of human rights and the advance of pluralism and accepting unity and harmony in diversity. These are the Anti-Terrorism Act 2002, the NGO Amendment Act 2006 already enacted; and the Regulation of Interception of Communications Act 2010 the Press and Journalists Amendment Bill 2010 and the Public Order Management Bill 2009 which are still under discussion.

The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2002 was enacted in the wake of the September 2001 attacks on New York allegedly by Al Qaeda and has the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) of Joseph Kony, the Allied Democratic forces and Al Qaeda as terrorist organisations in its Second Schedule. But our main concern about this Act is with respect to freedom of association and media freedom. The Act can be used to terrorize, frame or intimidate the political opposition, civil society critics and the media as abettors, sponsors or supporters of terrorism.

The NGO Amendment Act 2006 is on the other hand being challenged in the Constitutional Court. In brief the Act gives dictatorial powers to the NGO Board over NGOs, introduces a periodic permit to allow operation, gives unnecessary requirements before registration which can be abused and introduces dual liability. Above all the composition of the NGO Board disregards civil society interests and representation (See also NGO Forum and DENIVA 2006 and HURINET – Uganda: c.2008)

This law has been widely criticized as aimed at stifling the available mouth pieces calling for tolerance and unity-the civil society organisations within the country. Such laws are not conducive for the ‘non-government entities in place which have gone a long way to promote unity regardless of diversity.’ For instance Non-government bodies such as Inter-religious Council bring together people from different religious, cultural, and political back ground but such laws can be a blockade to the functioning of such entities.

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245 HURINET – U and 7 others vs. Attorney-General, Constitutional Petition No. 5 of 2009.
246 HURINET-U Interview with Mr. Lutaya Hassan, Imam, Makerere University Mosque, Makerere University-Kampala, Makerere-.8/6/2010.
247 As above.
Closely related to the above is the Regulation of Interception of Communications Act 2010 which creates a big room and potential for the violation of the rights of freedom of expression and the right to privacy and particularly the arbitrary powers of the Minister and the failure to provide for judicial review or direct appeal to courts of law.

The Press and Journalists Bill 2010 greatly negates freedom of speech, media freedom and freedom of association and assembly. In particular the Bill is intended to muzzle press and media freedom by the composition of the Media Council and the Minister’s arbitrary powers, requiring editors to ensure what is published is not prejudicial to national security, limiting foreign involvement in the print media, the requirement for registration and licensing which can be abused as well as arbitrary powers of revocation of licence²⁴⁸.

The Public Order Management Bill 2009 proposed by government is one of the most cynical and draconian laws yet that government intends to use to curtail freedom of association, assembly and free speech. It is cast, in its long title in a benign way, as intended “to provide for the regulation of public meetings, duties and responsibilities of police, organisers and participants in relation to public meetings; to prescribe measures for safeguarding public order and … related matters.”

But the actual regulations are intended to beef up existing draconian laws and Bills and in particular to defeat the Constitutional Court decision in Muwanga– Kivumbivs. Attorney – General by reproducing the nullified S. 32 (3) of the Police Act.

The major provisions which are inimical to freedom of association, assembly and free speech include the following:

i. The Bill does not regulate the conduct of public meetings but is intended to restrict them in such a way that they become meaningless or do not take place at all. S. 6 (1) defines a public meeting as “a gathering, assembly, concourse, procession or demonstration of three or more persons in or on any public road as defined in the Traffic and Road Safety Act or other public place or premises wholly or partly open to the air;

a. at which the principles, policy, actions or failure of any government, political party or political organisation, whether or not that party or organisation is registered under of any applicable law, are discussed; or

b. held to form pressure groups to hand over petitions to any person or to mobilize or demonstrate support for or opposition to the views, principles, policy, actions or omissions of any person or body of persons or institution including any government administration or governmental institution.”

²⁴⁸ See also HURINET – Uganda 2010 (a)
ii. The definition of a public place under S. 2 includes “a place which at the material time the public or section of the public has access, on payment of a fee or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission as defined under the Penal Code Act ...”

iii. Notice of a public meeting must be given to the Inspector General of Police notifying him of the intention to hold a public meeting at least 7 (seven) days and not more than 15 days before the proposed date of the public meeting and must include the estimated number of persons expected at the meeting and a clearance letter from the proprietor of the venue (S. 7 (1) and (2))

iv. Incomprehensibly the Bill also requires that the organisers should ensure

a. that all participants are unarmed and peaceful
b. that statements made to the media and public do not conflict with any existing laws of Uganda
c. and undertake to compensate any party or person that may suffer loss or damage from any fall out of the public meeting (S. 11)

v. The Bill gives extensive and unnecessary powers to the Inspector General of Police and the Minister of Internal Affairs which include the following:

a. the power to allow the holding of a public meeting and to give conditions under which it should be held and the power to disallow the holding of a public meeting for a number of reasons including “any reasonable cause” (S. 7 and 8)
b. where an authorized officer refuses the holding of a public meeting appeal goes to the Inspector General of Police in the first instance and thereafter may go to the High Court
c. the section under the Police Act (S. 32 (2)) which was nullified by the Muwanga – Kivumbi case is reintroduced in the following terms

“14(1) Where the Minister is of the opinion that it is desirable in the interests of public tranquillity, the Minister may, by statutory instrument declare that in any particular area in Uganda it is unlawful for any person or persons to convene a public meeting at which it is reasonable to suppose that more than twenty-five persons will be present unless a permit has been obtained by the persons concerned.

14(4) In every instrument made under subsection (1), the Minister shall, in consultation with the Inspector General of Police, name an authorized person empowered to issue permits authorizing the holding of a public meeting of more than twenty-five persons and it shall be within the discretion of that person to either withhold a permit or to
issue a permit subject to conditions as to

aa. a place where the public meeting may be held;
bb. the number of persons shall be permitted to attend the public meeting and
c. the time or duration of the public meeting.”

d. the power of the Inspector General of Police or his authorized agent to stop or disperse a public meeting and also the use of force and fire arms under S. 9 and 11.

Taken together the above laws and Bills are intended to stifle freedom of association, the right to dissent, media freedoms and are against the spirit of encouraging unity in diversity whether at a political, civil or cultural level. They cannot be a basis for encouraging political pluralism and unity in diversity. In particular, the Public Order Management Bill contravene the provisions of Uganda’s 1995 Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights because all these guarantee the rights of citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs, their freedom of speech, freedom of association and assembly as well as the right to dissent and also to demonstrate peacefully. The Bill also contravene Article 92 of the Constitution of Uganda which prohibits the enactment of laws intended to alter or nullify a decision or judgment of a court of law (See also Foundation for Human Rights Initiative and others, c. 2010)

Some sections of the public contend that there is deliberate policy by the government to enact such laws that reinforce the populace’s diversity rather than celebrating it.249 They argue that public order management cannot be well managed on the premises of suppression of divergent views as this can only lead to feelings of marginalization-apparent or real within the different sections of the society. This can only further conflict within Uganda.250

THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Generally the Uganda government has no specific policies on the issue of public order management and diversity. However the thinking of government can be gleaned from the policy on culture, then the laws, practices and official and semi-official statements. While not formally articulated a policy by practice can then be identified.

Uganda National Culture Policy 2006

The Uganda National Culture Policy was prepared by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in 2006

This policy document does not refer to the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

249 HURINET-U Interview with Dr. Paddy Musana, Director, Peace and Conflict Studies, Makerere University-Kampala, Makerere-.8/6/2010.
250 As above.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

2001 or the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005. However broadly the policy recognises importance of culture, and the diversity of Uganda’s cultural identities.

It also agrees that respect of one’s and other peoples’ culture is crucial and unity in diversity should be accepted and policy interventions should “focus on the promotion of harmonious co-existence among different indigenous communities and encourage intra and inter-cultural exchange”. To this extent, though mainly a bureaucratic rather than a democratically arrived at consensual position, the policy represents some progress.

Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC)

The Uganda Human Rights Commission, a government and constitutional body has done some thinking about pluralism, diversity and public order management. In this regard it worked on and published Guidelines on Public Demonstrations in Uganda 2009 (in conjunction with the police, civil society and JLOS).

These guidelines on public demonstrations in Uganda took into account international human rights standards and the provisions of Uganda’s Constitution on human rights particularly the freedom to assemble and to demonstrate together with others peacefully and unarmed and to petition (Article 29 (1) (d)). They also identified different roles and obligations for the police, the RDCs, the organizers and the participants (UHRC 2009:11–19), all aimed at ensuring that exercising “police powers must recognise the need to facilitate rather than hinder demonstrations” (ibid. 10).

The UHRC has also had occasion to pronounce itself on the question of freedom of assembly generally and the right to demonstrate in particular. In its 2006 Annual Report released in 2007 UHRC noted “multiple curtailments of these freedoms (of association and assembly) by security agencies in some cases resulting in loss of life and miscarriage of justice” (UHRC 2006: 62). UHRC also noted the denial of bail for political prisoners and conflict between the executive and the judiciary with the executive threatening the judiciary, disobeying court orders and violating the sanctity of court premises (ibid. 66).

Of particular significance for the public, citizens and all peace loving people the UHRC also had occasion to pronounce itself on the role of vigilante groups particularly the so-called kiboko squad. UHRC investigated this vigilante group that first appeared in 2007 organised within Kampala’s Central Police Station (CPS). The large vigilante group armed with sticks has been assaulting anti-government demonstrators moving side by side with police. Indeed during the Mabira Forest demonstrations they came from CPS. Referring to several other such groups the UHRC had this to say;

The ‘kiboko squad’ is currently the most conspicuous of these groups, and if it is allowed to thrive its high profile could encourage impunity and the proliferation of other criminal gangs. The Commission is cognizant of President Yoweri Museveni’s directive to the Inspector General of Police, Major General Kale...
Kayihura to discourage any future ‘kiboko’ activities, but also of his praise for the ‘kibokos’, a contradictory stance that could encourage some to take the law into their own hands. The Commission hopes that such activities will not be seen again (UHRC 2006: 71).

The UHRC’s hopes were in vain because during subsequent demonstrations, the last one being when IPC leaders and members were demonstrating against the Electoral Commission in June 2010 the police appeared together with the same kiboko squad in Kampala beating up the peaceful demonstrators including FDC leader Dr. Kiiza Besigye251.

**PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES AND STATEMENTS**

A number of observations may be made about presidential initiatives and statements especially in the last 5 years. The President and the Government give formal acceptance of different cultures and diversity in Uganda as is reflected in Uganda’s 1995 Constitution but in reality and practice, the diversity is not accepted.

The President reluctantly embraced political pluralism, forced on him by citizens’ demands and western interests (‘donors’). On several occasions, he and some NRM leaders have indicated and pronounced themselves on this reluctant embrace.

The President has been at the forefront of creating non-viable but ethnically based districts. For instance as one commentator has put it this has created a Mengo versus President Museveni rivalry, which has also brought out questions whether the current co-existence among different ethnic groups within Buganda and other regions of the Country can be maintained. More specifically President Museveni has consciously moved to create a number of cultural leaders in Buganda Kingdom while refusing to accept Buganda demands for a federal status within Uganda. According to Fred Guweddeko

>  "Mengo opposes Museveni on the balkanisation of Buganda Kingdom through the creation of sub-ethnic districts. Tooro Kingdom is the example whereby the formerly single unit is dissected into: Kasese for Bakonjo, Bundibugyo for Bamba, Ntoroko for Batuuku, Kibaale for Bakiga, etc. This balkanisation will replicate the current Buganda crisis in Bunyoro, Busoga, Tooro, Teso, Acholi and West Nile Sub-regions”252

The President accepts cultural institutions that play no political role or only roles acceptable to him (development, culture, language, morals, etc.). There is no official government position on these and no consensus. However as a result of the Mengo-Museveni conflict particularly after the September 2009 Buganda riots, the President

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proposed to introduce a law regulating cultural/traditional leaders that emasculates their social and political functions. In late 2010 following a perceived support of the Kabaka of Buganda and Mengo leadership for the opposition, particularly the IPC (Inter Party Cooperation) which is in alliance with Ssuubi 2011 the President, it seems, intentionally and maliciously introduced the Traditional and Cultural Leaders’ Act 2011 instead of trying to create and advance harmony in diversity among the different communities in Uganda. This is not only another attempt at divide and rule but is intended specifically to subjugate and humiliate the people of Buganda and particularly their Kabaka. For instance under this proposed law government may at any time withdraw recognition from the King, will decide on his welfare and needs and those of his family, will grant or refuse him permission to travel abroad, proposes to have him as one of the rotational leaders in a regional tier government, et cetera, et cetera. When the Bill became Law on 1st February, 2011 some of these clauses were removed. The above is partly responsible for the current stand-off between the Kabaka/Mengo/Buganda and the Central Government/the President.

In the same vein, the above situation has exacerbated ethnic differences in Bunyoro (Banyoro/Bakiga) did not help in resolving resolve the Balaalo (Bahima) versus Banyoro/Baganda conflict. These differences have been artificially enhanced because various peoples and ethnic groups in Buganda and in other parts of Uganda have lived harmoniously for a long time. Apart from growing scarce resources particularly land it is the politics of ethnic calculation on the part of government leadership that have led to recent ethnic conflicts.

The President closed some media during the September 2009 riots and only reopened CBS Radio Station late 2010 mainly for campaigning and electioneering purposes. Otherwise the open air discussion programmes (Bimeeza) continue to be banned as well as many critical programmes and journalists on this and other radios. Though opened, the radios continue to be censured and particularly do not give free access to opposition politicians and groups.

The President personally rather than as government policy is opposed to bail for some categories of suspects (e.g. suspected rioters, those charged with terrorism, etc., i.e. those suspected of challenging the authority of the state). On several occasions he has repeated this view. For instance, in an address to the NEC (National Executive Committee) of the NRM in January 2010 he stated as follows regarding corruption:

"Many people have been arrested in this connection. We however, need to legislate to stop the granting of bail to people accused of theft of government drugs, embezzlement, treason, murder, rape, sodomy and defilement. Recently we had the amazing phenomenon of the LC V Chairman of Mayuge being sentenced to death when he was out ‘on bail’! He used that chance to escape. This must be stopped, if not by the courts, then by the NRM through our caucus and Parliament by way of legislation.”253

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253 Y.K Museveni, Chairman of NRM: “President Museveni’s speech to NEC”, The New vision 12th
Additionally related to the above has been what commentators insist is the ‘militarisation of every aspect of life in Uganda central to which being the constant language of the gun’ normally manifest in the President’s statements. This mindset of militarism doesn’t tolerate divergence of views; it rather operates on allegiance of the subject to what he or she is told by the person with the military might on the notions of military science. Indeed, it has been responsible for the clamp down on demonstrations or political rallies by the opposition parties within the country simply because they have divergent opinion and modes of governance from the Presidents’. Commentators maintain that such modes of governance take advantage of the fact that the government is the originator of laws and as such enact laws which reinforce unitary thinking which is cannot work in a diverse society such as Uganda. This was very prominent during the one party rule disguised as the ‘Movement System rule’ which effectively stifled Ugandans of a different ideology from expressing their views for over ten years. Thus, it is argued that it is vital that militarization of the society is abandoned.

The unfairness of the political playing ground according to some sections of populace makes

‘the adoption of pluralism is a “Public Relations” exercise by the government. Article 29 of the constitution is not fully operationalised. The environment is not enabling of pluralism and diversity; the regime came into power through the gun and monopolizes power –akin to communism. There is political fundamentalism and coming face to face with people with alternative views presents a threat to the ruling party.’

POLICE, INTERNAL SECURITY ORGANISATION AND RESIDENT DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS’ POSITION

The position of the police on public order management in the face a politically and culturally plural society is generally at par with the spirit of existing repressive laws or the proposed ones (the Bills) discussed in Section 4 above.

The police has been selectively enforcing the repressive law. The police particularly represented by the Inspector General of Police, Major–General Kale Kayihura (a lawyer – soldier) see itself as part and parcel of the ruling NRM regime and as President Museveni’s protectors. The old existing laws (particularly the Penal Code) have selectively been used against the opposition and critical media. And in spite of the generous human rights provisions of the 1995 Constitution, new laws passed are regressive and tend to ignore those provisions.

January 2010.

254 HURINET-U Interview with Dr. Paddy Musana, Director, Peace and Conflict Studies, Makerere University-Kampala, Makerere-.8/6/2010.

255 Id.

256 Supra note 6.
‘The level at which the police has been fused with the military or militaristic tendencies is alarming. It is no longer civil but only an extension of the President’s machinery to insure that Ugandans with different alternatives to those of the NRM are not given a chance to dialogue on them with the populace. Beatings with teargas are the synonymous with the Police. They have become the law unto themselves which effectively puts the people with diverse political and cultural views out of action.’

The Police however avers that the thwarting of demonstrations is not a ‘trend or operation mode for the force rather it has had to come into action in the past to ensure that the demonstrations are held in peace considering other Ugandans too who do not want to engage in such activities also deserve their rights and freedoms.’ The police also warns of ‘opportunistic politicians who always thrive and achieve political capital when there is violence in the country and thus are always interested in pushing the police to the limit even if dialogue would have averted more problems.’

The Police, Resident district Commissioners (RDCs) and District/Sub-county Internal Security Officers (DISOs/GISOs) have been at the forefront of obstructing the freedom of association, assembly and free speech of the opposition. The three organs do not separate their positions as state officials from the interests of the sitting NRM government or more specifically from the interests of the President. They have all been involved in assaulting, intimidating arresting media workers as well as enforcing censorship as demanded by political leaders whether at national or local level. The Human Rights Watch May 2010 report has meticulously recorded these threats to the media. Interestingly the police tends to see the media as an enemy. According to one investigation

“physical assaults on journalists have gone largely un-investigated by the Ugandan police. Because police and other security forces are often the perpetrators of such violence, journalists ... are very reluctant to report physical abuse by government agents” (Human Rights Watch 2010: 11)

However the most prevalent forms of media repression have revolved around closure of radio stations, banning journalists and above all charging them with a number of offences such as: incitement to violence, terrorism, promoting sectarianism or sedition. Incidentally in August 2010 the Constitutional Court struck down the offence of sedition as being unconstitutional.

Reports detailing all these anti-media stances and police/government positions have

259 As above.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

been made this year, 2010. For instance having analysed the broader and immediate causes of the riots one report concluded among other things:

the state used the riots to violate the rights of many Ugandans. These rights were and continue to be violated: freedom of speech and expression, press and general media freedom, the right to just and fair treatment in administrative decisions, the right to life and freedom from torture, the right to liberty, right to a fair trial and the right to culture and cultural institutions (HURINET Uganda 2010: 36)

One of the worst ways in which freedom of speech for the opposition has been curtailed apart from the banning of rallies and demonstrations by police and RDCs is denial of access to airwaves/radios. A report dealing with this issue summarized the problem as follows:

“while some station managers said they would be willing to host Besigye, several said that either they or their owners were reluctant to give a platform to someone perceived to be extremely critical of government policies and particular government officials because they fear loss of advertisers, loss of NRM loyalties, or the negative consequences of perceived affiliation with the ‘opposition’”

Indeed both Besigye and Olara Otunnu leaders of FDC and UPC respectively have been denied appearing on various FM radio stations even after paying for the same.

“In some instances RDCs write or speak to the media owners informing them not to host Besigye and other lower – level opposition supporters. In some instances RDCs come to the station to prevent the broadcast. Some station managers told Human Rights Watch that their owners gave in to RDC’s pressure, while others rejected the RDC’s demands and, as of yet, had not faced any punitive consequences. In one instance a radio station manager revealed that the owner would lose his job with the Central government if his station hosted Besigye”

In short police and RDCs (usually working together with DISOs and GISOs) have not only thwarted opposition and critical voices in terms of freedom of movement and assembly but they have consistently sought to deny them the most effective means of communication, the FM Radios, especially outside Kampala. As one interviewee notes;

‘This hijack of the media-especially radio air waves has largely been facilitated by the fact that most private FM radios stations in the rural areas are owned by the ruling party members mainly ministers or NRM sympathisers. They thus seem to be behaving basing on an unwritten code prohibiting them from hosting or according air time to anyone with a contrary view from that of the

262 See HRN – Uganda, 2010, HURINET 2010 and Human Rights Watch 2010
263 Human Rights Watch 2010: 3
264 ibid: 4
government. Having a contrary view from that of the government qualifies one to be an opposition and therefore a saboteur. Such people therefore according to the regime are dangerous as they can poison the people with their lies.  

This is very significant because in the rural areas the only available and accessible media are the FM radio stations and not newspapers. Very clearly police, RDCs (and NRM leaders/cadres, DISOs and GISOs) do not believe in political pluralism. They have been trained and conditioned to believe that the political opposition is illegitimate and only the NRM leaders and adherents have the rights of assembly, demonstration, movement and free speech. To them the rights enshrined in the 1995 Constitution are of no meaning. The same may be said of their attitude to cultural diversity. It is tolerated as long as it does not question the political status quo. This is why the disagreements between central government/Museveni and the leadership of Buganda/Kabaka led to riots in September 2009 which the state used not only to close down radio stations but also to ban open air debates (bimeeza) on radio stations and suspend or completely ban some journalists.

EMERGING COPING TRENDS OF DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM: HOW INCLUSIVE?

In the event of the ever-shrinking public space for the populace to express their views divergent from those of the government, there has been formation or re-establishing of informal platforms to replace the formal space threatened by the laws and practices discussed. These informal spaces are worth interrogating. They are characterised by exclusionary tendencies rather than all inclusive. Indeed, they are tailored down to the people with the same cultural (tribal or ethnic), same language and more or less coming from the same region from the country.

Whereas there is nothing wrong with such assemblies and associations, the motives driving them and leading to their formation are not reflective of a free-will, voluntary get-together. Rather their formation has been prompted and largely based on ‘countering’ what they term as ‘oppression’ from the wider majority or minority but with power and influence. These groups are feared to be the breeding places for radicalism of cultural and belief that one’s culture is superior and over the others or that other tribes are bent on destroying them and as thus the cause of development of intolerance towards other members not of their own like.

Cultural groupings in national institutions of higher learning

Most common and vibrant of these groupings are housed at institutions of higher learning. These groups/platforms/associations have been affiliated to the different cultural seats in the country namely Buganda Kingdom and Busoga Kingdom, both

265 HURINET-U interview with respondent at Makerere University-Kampala, Makerere-.8/6/2010.
266 HURINET-U interview with respondent from Nkobazambogo Buganda Youth Group based at Makerere University-Kampala, Makerere-.8/6/2010.
267 HURINET-U interview with respondent at Makerere University-Kampala, Makerere-.8/6/2010
boasting of youth groups alike known as *Nkobazambogo* an activist Buganda youth group with branches in all the country’s universities and other institutions of higher learning and *Basoga Nseethe* respectively. Among others include Teso Students Development Association (TESDA), Batooro Students’ Association. Indeed, there are advantages affiliated with these groups including engaging in social/community activities, propelling cultural aspects concerning their particular tribes or regions of origin among others. Makerere University boasts of 62 registered cultural associations, with 46 being active. Other universities with these groupings include Makerere University Business School, Uganda Martyrs University Nkozi, Uganda Christian University Mukono, Islamic University of Uganda, Mbarara University of Science and Technology among others.\textsuperscript{268} International students, mainly from neighbouring Kenya and Rwanda, have also taken to forming their cultural associations based on their regions of origin in their countries.\textsuperscript{269} Some of these groups have been responsible for grooming the various prominent leaders in the country, the fact that some are radical and militaristic notwithstanding. And rightly, some have pursued and indeed were formed on an agenda aimed at perusing their common goals together for a collective force within the various institutions of which they are part. One key informant noted that:

‘You feel you are part of something focused in this big university of over 30,000 people. When you meet with them, you feel at home. You have a sense of belonging. We engage in activities that nurture our culture, an issue that may not be on the agenda of other students.’\textsuperscript{270}

However, there are also fears that such groups are prone to intolerance tendencies in the guise of celebrating diversity or their culture. Particularly ethnic base/specific groups/associations are susceptible to this trend as one interviewee notes:

‘Some tribes take it so seriously. So they can easily form a force that demands for what they want at whatever cost including violence. They should not go further than what they are supposed to be; cultural groupings existing only to grow their culture.’\textsuperscript{271}

Another avers that

‘When by any mistake, you join them (for example you go for their meetings), they deal with you in a way that brings about a feeling of ‘you are not part of us.’”

The exclusionary nature of these groupings may not be problematic but the likelihood of ‘hijacking’ these platforms by ‘self-seeking’ politicians cannot be ruled out and as thus makes the youth who are members of these groups susceptible to manipulation

\textsuperscript{268} See Diana Nabiruma, ‘Are cultural associations relevant in universities?’, The Observer, 29 August 2010
\textsuperscript{269} Id.
\textsuperscript{270} HURINET-U interview with respondent at Makerere University-Kampala, Makerere-.8/6/2010
\textsuperscript{271} Id.
of intolerance of others not like them.\textsuperscript{272} Indeed, at some instances, the cause of these groups, noble as it may be, has always been taken over by selfish interests of radical students within them or politicians affiliated to them that continue to preach the politics of ethnicity with overtones of ‘them’ vs. ‘us’.\textsuperscript{273} The fear amongst the populace is when these groupings take on tribal sentimentalities and as thus become a dividing factor especially amongst the youth. This ultimately dents the hopes that the youth, rather than religion, ethnicity, nation, ideology, or class, provides a subversive, inclusive, flexible, and markedly democratic basis for imagining a new Uganda.

\textbf{The rise and rise of community radios}

This search for a voice has led to what some commentators view as a ‘catastrophe in making’ with the mushrooming of community radios using the local language as the medium of expression.\textsuperscript{274} Indeed, whereas this is media freedom and indeed freedom of expression, of which the radios are conduits of these freedoms, there are fears that their establishment is not necessarily out of the need to express their freedoms rather a ‘reaction’ to what other regions are doing. Some sections of the public thus see this trend as reinforcing the differences between the communities in Uganda and as thus creating allegiance camps not necessarily to the nation (in which direction Ugandans should be rallying towards) but rather to the narrow perspective of a region/community/ethnic tribe.

\begin{quote}
\textit{‘So if the Banyoro have their radio, we should also have ours and speak only our local language using it. Is it not our right? We have to fight assimilation and extinction of our languages that was coming with just a few radios based in Buganda region.’}\textsuperscript{275}
\end{quote}

Indeed the launch of the Luganda weeklies, Gwanga (Nation) and Eddoboozi (Voice) by King Ronald Mutebi, the cultural leader of the Buganda Kingdom are viewed as a direct replacement for the kingdom’s shut radio station Central Broadcasting Services (CBS) with the sole aim of campaigning for the demands and interests of the Kingdom as an entity. Whereas the importance of these communities radios is not in question, the possibility of misuse is real and the effects can be dangerous towards national disunity rather than cohesion.

\section*{CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS}

\textbf{Conclusion}

The state of public order management in Uganda today is a living contradiction. While the 1995 Constitution provides for all the necessary civil and political rights related to freedom of speech, assembly and association, the public order management regime in place – that is practice, legislation, political pronouncements and regime behaviour,
several existing laws and tabled Bills – is regressive and anti-human rights.

Uganda society is a diverse and pluralistic one. From the issues of political pluralism and cultural diversity canvassed here we conclude that the NRM regime has done little in terms of programmes and policies, laws and concrete actions to encourage the ideal that Ugandans should accept their various diversities and yet live together harmoniously. The public order management regime in place reflects elements of populism and neo-patrimonialism.

Therefore Ugandan civil society, political parties, the media and liberal elements in government need to work together to ensure that the anti-democratic laws, policies and practices in place and Bills proposed are amended or dropped as the case may be.

**Recommendations**

Taking the above findings into account, if public demonstrations and assemblies are to be held and freedom of speech and association upheld and human rights respected generally as part and parcel of encouraging the acceptance of pluralism and diversity, we make the following recommendations:

i. Achieving a consensus on the value of respecting human rights as enshrined in our Constitution and international instruments

ii. Reviewing the criteria for granting district status and resolving the debate around: decentralisation, regional tier governments, federalism or secession as different options available for managing diversity

iii. The recently passed Traditional and Cultural Leaders’ Act 2011 ought to be reviewed in order to allow a sober assessment, to re-assess its purposes and objectives and ensure that it promotes harmony in diversity rather than encouraging division.

iv. Agreeing that every Ugandan should be free to move and live in any part of the country; avoid anybody being *omufuruki* (internal immigrant) as a negative trend. Freedom of movement and right of residence in Uganda and the East African Community after the coming into force of the Protocol on the Common Market should be respected by government.

v. Review the NGO law of 2006, the Anti-Terrorism Act 2002 as well as the proposed Press and Journalist Amendment Bill 2010 and the Interception of Communications Act 2010 to ensure protection of freedom of association, assembly, privacy and media freedom.

vi. Stop media censorship especially *ebimeeza*, some programmes and banned journalists which acts have also led to self-censorship. Media freedom and *ebimeeza* should be restored. RDCs, intelligence officers at local level and LC and NRM leaders should stop the practice of blocking opposition leaders from appearing on private FM radio stations.
vii. Repeal relevant anti-freedom sections of the Police Act and Penal Code Act as identified herein. However we note that in August 2010 the Constitutional Court struck down the crime of sedition as being unconstitutional.

viii. Review and improve the UHRC Guidelines on Public Demonstrations in Uganda 2009 and have them as part of the law regulating police and demonstrators with a view of protecting human rights (of freedom of expression, assembly and organisation) while keeping the peace.

ix. Withdraw the Public Order Management Bill 2009 as it is essentially unconstitutional and seeks to reverse the Constitutional Court decision in Muwanga – Kivumbi.

x. Remove the Army from involvement in Police work except in clear emergencies where the Police cannot cope and ensure that Police acts as a civil force that is non-political and non-partisan and protects the interests of all political parties and civil society organisations and stops acting as and with the militia of the ruling NRM Party and/or government.

xi. All the above may require the convening of a National Conference to deliberate on all the major issues currently dividing Ugandans and ensuring that consensus is achieved and the necessary policies, programmes, laws and constitutional amendments are made.

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III. MANAGING DIVERSITY - COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES
4. Perceptions of Diversity and Pluralism in Selected Sites in Northern and Central Uganda

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Abstract
The Pluralism Knowledge Programme conducted research in 2010 to explore, through dialogue with selected members of the community, people’s understanding and experiences of pluralism, diversity, and marginalisation. The results of this research initiative were presented at a conference in Kampala on “The lived reality of managing diversity in Uganda” in June 2010. This paper summarises the outcomes.

In Mpigi, Amuru, Pader Dokolo and Kibaale districts, diversity was perceived as a challenge and its most dominant manifestation was ethnicity. Other perceived sources of diversity included political affiliation, gender, economic status, sometimes religion. These determined access and ownership of resources, especially political affiliation (and its overlap with ethnicity). Respondents generally understood pluralism as “living together in stable harmony, even if you have to give up some aspects of your identity”. It was also associated with expected (or real) benefits. Pluralism was fostered through intermarriages, community groups and economic activities that cut across religion and ethnic lines, trade, and sharing social facilities. Local mechanisms to manage diversity were, however, limited in their effectiveness because they tended to be ad hoc and un-coordinated. Newcomers into established communities had to “buy-into” the dominant culture. Exclusion was a lived reality, with differences mainly accommodated mainly through patronage and assimilation. Reasons for marginalisation included competition for limited resources; lack of education or knowledge; and ethnic bigotry, justified by stereotyping and naming others as a threat to the current order.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE
The PKP programme started in Uganda in 2009 with a preparatory phase, whose main activities included a regional conference held in April on “Valuing and managing diversity in Uganda”. One conclusion that emerged from this phase is that managing diversity is essential in sharing national resources equitably and that a better understanding of local perceptions of diversity was necessary.

As a result, the PKP programme launched a research initiative focusing on ‘domesticating pluralism’ and, specifically, on understanding pluralism and its value of equality in the local context rather than in its ‘imported’ and universalistic form. What was considered important was to understand people’s perspectives on pluralism, diversity and marginalisation; their moves to engage with each other; to communicate this and to foster action arising from the understanding. The desired change was to
“re-configure debates on governance, by feeding popular perceptions on diversity and democracy in this”. The results of this research initiative were presented at a conference in Kampala on “The lived reality of managing diversity in Uganda” in June 2010. This paper summarises the outcomes.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research in the northern and central regions was carried out at six field sites, whose selection was based on the following criteria: level of stability vs. “turmoil”; level of diversity (cultural, political, religious, ethnic…) vs. homogeneity; culturally rooted vs. new or newly established community. Three sites in northern Uganda were selected (in Gulu, Pader and Dokolo districts) – where the field work was carried out by a mixed team of researchers from the Gulu NGO Forum and Gulu University (Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies). Three sites in Central Uganda were also selected (in Mpigi and Kibaale districts) - where the field work was carried out by a mixed team from the Mpigi NGO Forum and Uganda Martyrs University.

Working definitions were used for *pluralism* (building on diversity for equitable and peaceful co-existence); for *diversity* (difference in togetherness) and for *marginalisation* (“side-lined”, discriminated from full participation). The research was qualitative and various research tools were used, in addition to individual interviews and focus group discussions. Altogether approximately 300 respondents were interviewed.

**COMMON FINDINGS ACROSS ALL SITES**

**Diversity**

In all sites, diversity was manifested and perceived as a challenge and its most dominant manifestation was ethnicity. Other perceived sources of diversity included political affiliation, economic status, sometimes religion. The new comers have to “buy-into” the dominant culture (e.g. obligation to speak a dominant language, to adopt certain names, adopt a clan…) and perform useful services to the dominant group, which, over time can lead to resistance by the dominated. Youth tended to be more intolerant of ‘the other’ than their elders, especially among the poor. With regard to gender, women’s empowerment was visible, but men often reacted negatively to this (and resorted to unproductive activities, e.g. drinking, violence) – as un-cultural and loss of power by men.

Different dimensions of identity determined access, use, ownership to resources, especially political affiliation (and its overlap with ethnicity). This was pronounced with respect to land, less so with respect to Government services.

**Pluralism**

Respondents generally understood pluralism as “living together in stable harmony, even if you have to give up some of your identity”. It thus included a dimension of
give and take, but it was also a concept associated with expected (or real) benefits, or sometimes necessitated by local conditions, such as the need to fit in an alien environment.

Pluralism was therefore enhanced where different factors were present (environmental changes and circumstances that promoted it; individual or community initiatives to promote it) and where an advantage to engage with “the other” was perceived. There were different types of advantages (individual, fear of an unstable community). Pluralism was fostered through intermarriages, community groups and trade across religious and ethnic lines, social encounters at religious and social functions and sharing public facilities e.g. schools, hospitals.

Some problems in relation to diversity were not easily shared (where differences are taken for granted and justified; or conflict are seen to be of a private nature. There was often a “do not rock the boat” attitude – e.g. on ethnic and gender-based issues). Nevertheless, diversity was managed, sometimes unconsciously, in different ways, for instance through local leaders (official, cultural and religious); the police; elders and NGOs.

However, these management mechanisms were limited in their effectiveness because they tended to be ad hoc and un-coordinated; reactive, undermined by a limited understanding of human rights and democratic practices (elections manipulated along ethnic lines); often from NGOs, rather than from government; where the latter’s action could undermine them; informed by patronage and fostering manipulation.

**Marginalisation**

With regard to ethnic marginalisation, the roots can often be traced back to the colonial period when different patterns of ethnic manipulation and power (based on access to resources) emerged in different parts of the country or where new relations of production assumed ethnic dimensions (the dominated were reduced to labourers). These led to stereotyping and eventual exclusion through political parties, religion, and education. With regard to marginalisation along gender and generational lines, women and youth rarely have much power as this remains culturally determined, although they benefit from growing economic empowerment (as opposed to political empowerment).

Currently, reasons for marginalisation included competition for limited resources (as a strategy of excluding others); lack of education or knowledge; ethnic bigotry, justified by stereotyping others; identifying others as a threat to the current order. Marginalisation took place in several ways: it could affect the entire community, especially where the current Government was not perceived as addressing their historic issues effectively (land ownership, cattle rustling, …); it could affect access, control and ownership of resources; it could affect ethnic groups (migrants were routinely marginalised; hence they remained “the other”, excluded, even over the next generation; and it could affect those in minority political parties (leading to
being considered a ‘traitor’ or being excluded from resources.). Stereotyping within the community was often used to dehumanise and to justify ‘side-lining’ the other (f.i. being branded as witches).

Marginalisation bred fear and mistrust; it excluded the marginalised from information and from other resources and services, thus perpetuating poverty (as for the Karamojong in Buganda and Acholi). Survival mechanisms for the marginalised included patronage and assimilation (adopting a clan, a pet name, learning the dominant language).

SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Differences between sites in the Northern and Central regions

Assimilation of immigrants: Traditional and cultural practices differ from north to south: in Buganda and Bunyono, socially stratified societies (reflecting the land tenure system and the existence of the kingdoms) resulted in immigrants expected to assimilate as Bakopi, and in tensions that made building a pluralistic society challenging.

Volatile sites

Original population marginalised by immigration and other historical processes. Because of continuous historical processes of marginalisation, Banyoro were often more assertive and even hostile, and immigrants responded in the same way. This presented grave challenges in building a pluralistic society. Because of a history of conflict (cattle rustling), society in Adilang faced particular challenges in relation to pluralism as it had marginalised certain groups. Thus, the Karamojong were still marginalised and stereotyped, and Karamojong women were especially despised.

‘Culturally Rooted’ Sites

Where the value of communal living and hospitality survives, culturally rooted populations were more welcoming as compared to mixed communities that were suspicious and conservative. However, because of the ‘cultural-rootedness’ of these sites, there was a tendency of exclusion of ‘the other’, based on their cultural practices, in spite of efforts by immigrants or returnees to assimilate. It was particularly difficult for new comers to acquire land or political positions. The role of elders in settling conflicts was more pronounced than elsewhere.

Sites with mixed populations

While on the surface, a tolerant society appeared to exist, there was limited pluralism: local leadership was still often monopolised by one ethnicity – the indigenous population – and access to services still favoured the same group. In mixed societies, as one would expect, inter-marriages were more frequent than elsewhere. However, there were limits here too: in the Dokolo site, for instance, the Iteso women who are in mixed marriages were marginalised, with a lower social status.
OVERALL ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD

Pluralism: experiences, achievements and limitations

- *Pluralism is not close to people’s concerns*; the concept is seen as somewhat artificial, ‘a new thing’. What makes more sense in the local context is tolerance. Pluralism seems to be reactive, to opportunities, to a problem and to benefits (sometimes in response to forced circumstances, e.g. having to co-exist with other ethnic groups). People know about tolerance, not the second one (engaging with difference). Other lived realities are assimilation, uniformity and patronage: this is what people understand as pluralism. As a result, differences are despised, sometimes the subject of violence.

- *Exclusion is a reality*; but it is based on people deviating from the norm; not about the freedom to be different, which would support pluralism. This is linked to the value of ‘ubuntu’, not as an individual outside of a collectivity. We define ourselves in terms of our belonging to a community.

- In the past, there was a greater degree of tolerance – this was fostered by the prevailing cultural values then and with a situation where one was expected to ‘stick’ to one’s position, e.g. the role of women, the role of a *mukopi*, the role of a chief, etc. Hence the long standing (pejorative) words to describe the ‘foreigner’.

- If pluralism is not very present in people’s consciousness, the fact that all sites showed signs of growing differentiation shows that pluralism will have to be built. One way would be through ‘democracy’ but, at present, this is mainly understood as only going to the ballot box and multi-partyism. And ‘human rights’ are questioned, where the unequal balance of power is undermined, especially with respect to gender, children and development.

- Currently, differences are accommodated through (a) patronage and (b) assimilation, often re-enforced by governance systems, practices and philosophies. One form of exclusion is linked to patronage: the in-group will access resources. This is an unstable approach, with limitations: a spark can easily rock the boat and lead to violence. Hence the need for coercion and force (the police, etc.). Yet, there is an opportunity: we are willing to listen and dialogue.

What can be done?

This research suggested a number of follow up action points. The PKP programme has already planned a number of research dissemination events and dialogues at local, regional and national regional levels. The conference suggested that

i) Local leaders, both government and cultural, can help in conflict resolution; religious leaders through emphasising unity in their preaching; elders in advising youths; NGOs in providing services and sensitisation across religious and ethnic boundaries.
ii) Local governments need to avoid any action that undermines pluralism, as when informed by patronage and manipulation. The full implementation of the Equal Opportunities Act was deemed urgent; as well as developing codes of conduct for local governments, civil society organisations and their networks on how to manage diversity.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON MUGGE AND KANYIKE IN MPIGI DISTRICT

Pluralism and diversity in Mugge and Kanyike

Mugge and Kanyike parishes in Mpigi district were selected because of the intensity in which pluralism is lived, i.e. the existence of traditional means to solve diversity problems in Mugge and the relatively violent area of Kanyike. The Baganda dominate in both, with immigrants mainly constituted by Bakiga, Banyankole, Banyarwanda, Barundi, and Basoga.

In Uganda, loyalties are traditionally deeply rooted in culture and ethnicity. The history of the Baganda shows a people in a structured society with a tradition and culture under a monarchy. The King (Kabaka) is a supreme monarch with layers of leadership under him organised under chiefs and clan heads down to the lowest subject in the kingdom. At the top is a kingly line of the Balangira, with Batakka (land owners) in the middle and finally the Bakopi or the commoners. The king bears political, spiritual and cultural powers over his subjects. Traditionally, all land (and women) belonged to him: individual subjects were so to say care-takers of the king’s property.

Colonialism and the subsequent formation of Uganda as a nation changed Buganda. Land was distributed under different forms of tenure (crown land, mailo land and public land) which allowed foreigners to acquire land and property within Buganda. With Buganda at the centre of political and administrative activity in the colonial and post-colonial period, the king lost most of his powers over land, property, and his subjects, and he only remained with the role of cultural head. These changes created an atmosphere where foreigners could come into the kingdom and easily live and stay there, and could access land, with or without respecting the traditions of the Baganda.

Baganda and ‘foreigners’

Given the position of Buganda at the centre of administration and commerce in the colonial period, other tribes from all over Uganda, most especially Bakiga and Banyankole, have settled in villages in search of work, with Banyarwanda from Rwanda and Barundi from Burundi. Each new group of people has come along with its own religious, customs and cultural practices.

With migrants of different cultures and ethnicities, foreigners often find themselves at the crossroads; either having to adopt the dominant culture or to retain their
cultures while they live with their hosts. The study shows that either choice has not been smooth. With the influx of newcomers in a land that had natives, whereas the natives are threatened by the immigrants, especially regarding the erosion of cultural values, the loss of their perceived old identity and direction, the immigrants look at themselves as the segregated lot. Whereas adopting a dominant culture seems to bring relative stability, it requires the migrant to buy into this culture and more often the migrant remains a foreigner. That is to say, that buying oneself into a culture does not give him/her an automatic entry without retaining a past. On the other hand, retaining a culture of origin has faced significant resistance from a host community, demanding that the immigrant follow the host’s dominant culture. History and the current realities show immigrants as a people who are not wanted and who are not allowed to have a status equal to that of the indigenous population. These factors have become a source of conflict. Forms of intolerance have continued to challenge the management of diversity, demonstrating that tribal differences and loyalty to ethnic kinships are a major dividing factor.

In addition, the introduction of foreign religions (mainly Christianity and Islam) has brought religious conflicts and intolerance. Within the Christian religions, Roman Catholics are often in conflict with the Protestant Anglicans to access political power and gain social influence. Within religions, strong divisions also exist. First, Protestants in the past affiliated to a political party, the Uganda Peoples’ Congress (UPC), while the Catholics had their affiliated Democratic Party (DP) which lost influence. This religious intolerance continues to affect the running of society. Second, with the advent of the Pentecostals, mainstream Protestantism and Roman Catholics find it hard to unite and cooperate.

Further, Christians often view Muslims as a people of the lower class and, with current world issues on terrorism, they are also seen as a people who are anti-western and enemies of Christendom. Finally, Christians and Muslims continue to side-line those who adhere to traditional beliefs from areas of influence.

A changing context
In the past, ‘foreigners’ were accommodated and fed for free and they had high respect for the natives on their land which helped to sustain peace and unity. The immigrants recognised that good morals within the Buganda community would save society from disintegrating. This helped in identifying wrong characters, who could then be guided to co-exist with others, while extreme cases were punished. Those who migrated observed a high level of discipline and they tried as much as possible to get acquainted to the life style of the natives.

Despite the differences, the former communities of Baganda welcomed these strangers as their porters and workers in their plantations and showed a degree of hospitality at the time. They could work and after some time take back whatever they had acquired to their homes and whenever they returned they brought a new person. As time went
by, some won the trust of the community members and their employers who gave them land for settlement. Many brought their wives while others intermarried in the local community.

Currently however, many people who come to Buganda have acquired land and other assets which are causing wrangles. Many Baganda have been displaced from their land and this is one reason for suspicion of strangers. Contrary to this perception, it was noted that the so called land grabbers in most cases acquire land through rightful channels. Indeed the Baganda sell their land to the immigrants but, as land is the most valuable asset available to the community, poverty caused by dominating foreigners is depriving them of their valued assets. Moreover, most Baganda are simply squatters on the land, the rightful owners (Mugwanya’s family) sometimes sell the land to non Baganda, only to discover this when they are close to being evicted. This creates a sense of powerlessness among the natives, hence culminating into hatred and enmity for the immigrants.

The Baganda feel that they should rule in Buganda. They feel cheated since the power base in the current national administration that has headquarters in Buganda is not of their tribe. The Banyankole who occupy high positions in government are taken as foreigners who are there to ‘grab’ not only power, but also the resources of the country and in particular resources naturally meant for the Baganda.

Differences in cultural practices have also led to prejudice. Different eating habits are for instance cited as bases of cultural bigotry. Bakiga and Barundi condone practices that are seen as backward among the Baganda, such as sharing plates when eating; or Banyarwanda using bare hands after sneezing to clean themselves, considered ‘dirty’ by the Baganda. It was noted that intermarriage was considered undesirable, especially between the Baganda and Barundi because the Barundi at the time were segregated, despised and, in addition to being considered unhygienic, were often times accused of practicing witchcraft. Intermarriage was also limited by class differences since the Barundi were mainly considered to be labourers and therefore of a lower class.

Another divisive factor is politics where belonging to a particular political party weakens practices of pluralism. Government services were said to be rendered depending on the political belonging of an individual; and social networking places for example bars are classified according to political parties. During political campaigns, some people are called hypocrites/betrayers when they join new political parties, although after elections people come together and forget their party differences.

Finally, there are three major religious categories in Kanyike Parish, these are Christianity, Islam and traditional belief systems. Christians dominate, but is divided as Catholics, Anglicans and Savedees/Born Again/Pentecostals. Muslims constitute a minority. Both the Christians and Muslims also partake in a traditional belief system, sometimes secretly to avoid being stigmatised, as some Christians and Muslims associate such belief with witchcraft and demonise it.
Conclusion

Cultural institutions and ethnic kinship in Uganda have been core drivers of change. Belonging to an identity group provides an opportunity for self-actualisation and a home for communion. Most of the cultural institutions have however been manipulated to suit a particular political interest, thus creating insiders and outsiders. Insiders get privileges and outsiders are excluded. Cultural and ethnic patronage becomes negative when becoming an area of interplay between political identity and ethnic identity.

The study results show that ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, class, and gender remain strong forms of identity that determine how individuals and differing groups access resources. Results further show that communities identify and attach themselves with their religious, ethnic or political affiliation to form patronage and allegiances either to include people who are identified with them or exclude those who are not. This has affected political and social values in determining who accesses public jobs, social services, hence rendering political affiliation, or belonging to a certain tribe or religion, determinant in political and social belonging. These forms of patronage have fuelled corruption, caused conflicts and are responsible for misuse of resources and the perpetuation of chronic poverty.

Major challenges therefore remain to be addressed with a view to ensuring the consolidation of a peaceful environment. Effective democratic institutions for managing diversity require, beside appropriate constitutions and laws, a conducive cultural and political milieu. There is absence of laws, policies and a coherent vision that address the issues of inclusivity and effective management of diversity, which has remained a formidable political task in addressing the challenges of building Uganda as a nation.
5. Living with Ethnic Difference in Uganda - Reflections on Realities and Knowledge Gaps with Specific Reference to Kibaale District

JIMMY SPIRE SSENTONGO

Abstract
In this paper, the author examines the inter-ethnic challenges of varying degrees of intensity and complexity that have gripped the district of Kibaale, following an intricate history of pre-colonial inter-ethnic rivalry; colonial ethnic manipulation; a colonial legacy of strained ethnic relations; and contemporary considerable immigration into the area with attendant immigrant phobia. The author also shows that that tension is allowed to persist in Kibaale by Government’s weak and sometimes ill-thought out interventions.

Such a background raises questions about the possibility of successfully managing diversity in the area, even though the people of Kibaale have harmoniously co-existed at some points of their history. The paper focuses on setting out the realities of living with ethnic differences that the Kibaale case present and suggests that these are best answered through a study that focuses on the perceptions of the people themselves. This suggestion supports the researcher’s constructivist theoretical outlook, where social reality is viewed as constructed by the people.

The author contends that co-existence is not impossible in the area and recommends that, to better understand the possibilities of pluralism in Kibaale, research should be undertaken starting from people’s own perspectives as the ‘meaning makers’. It is thus important to know what allowed them to co-exist in for more than thirty years so as to understand what triggers tension and how it can be addressed. To conclude, the author argues that one can transcend meaning and ideals but one cannot ignore them as the fundamental starting point for engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Uganda is embroiled in a number of inter-ethnic challenges at varying degrees of intensity and complexity. Kibaale presents a curious case that is grounded in a complex history of pre-colonial inter-ethnic rivalry; colonial ethnic manipulation; a colonial legacy of strained ethnic relations; and contemporary trends of massive immigration into the area with attendant immigrant-phobia catalysed by memories of foreign domination and humiliation. In 2002, the ethnic tension in the area peaked with the outright rejection by the Banyoro of an ‘outsider’ (immigrant) who had been elected to the post of District chairman. While the Banyoro feel threatened by the rising number and influence (political and economic) of immigrants in their area, the
immigrants are also insecure about their future in the area without a political power base. Moreover, it is their constitutional right to stand for political office as legitimate residents of the district.

The above situation raises nagging questions about the possibility of pluralism in the area. Within the painful memories (history) of the Banyoro in relation to domination by the ethnic other (Baganda), do possibilities remain for living in ethnic difference even when the ‘new other’ becomes politically or/and economically influential? It raises a query on how the different ethnic groups in the area feel and what they make out of the situation. This query is further raised by the observation that the people of Kibaale have harmoniously co-existed at some points of their history (1960s – 2000) when they went to the same schools, churches, markets and even intermarried (Schelnberger 2005). This paper particularly focuses on explaining the realities of living with ethnic differences that the Kibaale case presents and the questions raised by those realities. The questions specifically concern the possibilities of pluralism in Kibaale and the conclusive suggestion is that these are best answered through a study that focuses on the perceptions of the people themselves. This suggestion is grounded on the researcher’s constructivist theoretical outlook by which social reality is viewed as constructed by the people through whose agency meaning and relations are formed.

THE CONTEXT OF ETHNIC DIFFERENCE AND ITS CHALLENGES

Humanity is grappling with many social issues that seem to have eluded solutions up to today. One of these key problems facing contemporary society is that of co-existing with the various forms of difference that characterise it. “Difference animates key conflicts of our time. Claims about difference breathe life into cultural, ethnic, religious, and values conflict” (Brigg 2008, p.6). As Sen (2006) observes, among the key developments on account of which such tensions and conflicts are becoming more pronounced today are the increased global and national contacts and interactions, and in particular extensive migrations, which have placed diverse practices of different cultures next to each other.

The diversity from which tension emerges in different societies could certainly be acknowledged as a permanent feature of all human societies, manifested in different forms and dynamics over time. According to An-na’im (2008), this is what makes diversity a very important aspect for consideration in human relations, especially in view of how people negotiate their differences for sustainable pluralism. As An-na’im notes, pluralism is “... an ideology and system that accepts diversity as a positive value and facilitates constant negotiations and adjustments among varieties of difference without seeking or expecting to terminate any or all of them permanently” (2008, p.225). The way and extent to which this ideal is practically possible within a context of ethnic diversity with strained relations is the main focus of this investigation.
Among the most notably sensitive differences in the African context is ethnicity which has led to social tension and exclusion of some groups from their full rights as citizens (Ratcliffe 2004). The 1994 genocide in Rwanda, where about a tenth of the population was exterminated, was largely a result of ethnic strife and suspicion between the Hutu and Tutsi (Mamdani 2001; Rukooko 2002; Guest 2004). According to Guest, “ethnic or religious differences have been the pretext for violence in Sudan, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, both Congos – the list goes on” (Guest 2004, p.110). One of the most recent large scale ethnic clashes in Africa happened in Kenya in December 2007 where, after disputed presidential elections, forty eight ethnic groups coalesced into pro-Kikuyu and anti-Kikuyu alliances leading to the death of about one thousand five hundred people (Collier 2009). What we should read into the various cases of ethnic conflict is that when engagement with ethnic difference goes wrong, the implications can be severe and, therefore, that pluralism is of much significance. However, the many cases of ethnic conflict that feature in the African story should not be interpreted to indicate that ethnic diversity in itself is problematic and/or bound by necessity to result into conflict. The relations that ensue in multi-ethnic encounters should be viewed as a function of the nature of engagement between communities (Varshney 2005).

Living with ethnic difference in Uganda

To illustrate the significance of addressing questions of living with ethnic difference in the context of Uganda, let us now turn to the ethnic landscape in the country in general and then Kibaale, the focus of the paper, in particular.

In its Vision 2025, where it commits itself to the task of carefully managing ethnic diversity in the country, the Uganda Government acknowledges that though very beautiful in almost all ways, “Uganda has been, regrettably, really rotten from within in terms of ethnic conflicts” (Republic of Uganda 1998, p.303). To substantiate this strong statement, among others, it highlights the following violent ethnic confrontations in Uganda’s history:

*The uprising of the Bamba and Bakonzo against the Batooro and the Central Government in 1962; the 1966 confrontation between the Baganda ethnic group and the Central Government [in which the latter deposed the former’s king by military force] which was deemed to be Northern [in inclination]; the wanton and brutal massacres of members of the Acholi and Langi ethnic groups during the Amin regime; the equally wanton and brutal retribution by these latter groups against ethnic groups from the West Nile region – Idi Amin’s home region – after*

276 The Kikuyu are the biggest ethnic group in Kenya. Although the violent conflict was sparked by the disputed presidential elections, the tension between the Kikuyu and some other Kenyan ethnic groups (such as the Luo) had been building over time.

277 With the theme ‘Prosperous people, harmonious nation and beautiful country’, Vision 2025 is the Government of Uganda’s strategic document that reflects the country’s history, core values and aspirations in terms of objectives and goals.
the fall of Idi Amin; the war in the Luwero Triangle; and ... the ... civil war in the north (Republic of Uganda 1998, p.303).

Though based on broader ideological reasons, the war that brought Museveni into power in 1986 was to an extent perceived as a war of the Southerners against the Northerners who were known by the derogatory term ‘Anyanya’. The twenty-year Northern war that followed Museveni’s ascent to power also bore an ethnic twist as a response of the Northerners to perceived deliberate marginalisation by the ‘Southerner Government’.

With over sixty five ethnic groups (Kabananukye and Kwagala 2007), Uganda is one of the African countries that are ethnically very diverse. Most of the people are Bantu-speaking and the majority of the population lives in the south of the country. Bantu-speaking people constitute about 70 per cent of Uganda’s population while Nilotic groups make up about 25 per cent. The Nilotics are mainly composed of the Acholi, the Langi and the Alur ethnic groups (about 15 per cent) from the north; and the Iteso and Karamojong (about 10 per cent) from the north eastern part of the country (Mwakikagile 2009). Of these, the Baganda in the Buganda Kingdom are the largest, with 17 per cent of the country’s population.

The 2002 Uganda National Population and Housing Census report (the most recent Census) places other ethnic groups as follows: Banyankore (9.8 per cent), Basoga (8.6 per cent), Bakiga (7.0 per cent), Iteso (6.6 per cent), Langi (6.2 per cent), Acholi (4.8 per cent), Bagisu (4.7 per cent), Lugbara (4.3 per cent), and other Ugandans from smaller ethnic groups are put at 30.7 per cent.

In Kibaale District, the Banyoro are the ‘indigenous’ ethnic community. The 2002 Census Report indicates that there are 24 main ‘tribes’279 living in Kibaale. They are distributed as indicated in the Table below:

### Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Kibaale District - 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Banyoro</th>
<th>Bakiga</th>
<th>Alur</th>
<th>Bagungu</th>
<th>Acholi</th>
<th>Lugbara</th>
<th>Bafumbira</th>
<th>Chope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>193,555</td>
<td>126,312</td>
<td>5,240</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>32,241</td>
<td>3,240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Baruli</th>
<th>Bakhonzo</th>
<th>Batoro</th>
<th>Banyankore</th>
<th>Banyarwanda</th>
<th>Kebu</th>
<th>Bagisu</th>
<th>Langi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>11,742</td>
<td>8,352</td>
<td>9,256</td>
<td>3,331</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

278 The Bantu-speaking people are a group of people who speak related languages and have relatively similar social characteristics. They occupy a large part of Zaire and southern as well as eastern Africa and are said to have originated from the Congo region of central Africa and spread rapidly to the Southern and eastern Africa. Today, more than one half of the population of Uganda is Bantu-speaking (http://www.ugandatravelguide.com/bantu-people.html).

279 Although the word tribe is being abandoned today in anthropological and sociological circles, largely due to its demeaning colonial roots, in several parts of Africa, and in Uganda in particular, it has been sanitised and is still widely used to denote ‘ethnic group’ in a non-derogatory sense. However, for this paper to fit into the wider discourse on ethnicity, the word tribe is avoided except where cited from elsewhere.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Iteso</th>
<th>Lendu</th>
<th>Baamba</th>
<th>Basoga</th>
<th>Bahororo</th>
<th>Banyore</th>
<th>Baganda</th>
<th>Bagwere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2,261</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>4,475</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Republic of Uganda (2005)

The total population of immigrants (including what the Census categorises as ‘small tribes’) is at 212,327 while the Banyoro are 193,555. It therefore indicates the immigrants to be more than the natives, a phenomenon, as we shall see later, which also informs the tension in the district. However, as shall be discussed later, the numeric factor is but one among others.

According to an ‘Inquiry into Bunyoro Issues Report’ (Republic of Uganda 2006), the area also accommodates 3,900 people from other small tribes including: the Babukusu, Bagwe, Bahehe, Bakenyi, Banyara, Basamia, Jopadhola, Kumam, Sabiny, Dodoth, Ethur, Teuso, Jie, Jonam, Kakwa, Karimojong, Kuku, Madi, Mening, Mvumba, Napore, Nubi, Nyangia, Pokot, Tepeth, Vonoma, Babwisi, Banyabindi, Basongora, Batagwenda, Batuku, and Batwa. The report indicates that, as of 2002, Kibaale’s total population was 405,882, with a high growth rate of 5.2 compared to the national rate of 3.3. In the next sub-section, the researcher explains the genesis of the above demographic phenomenon and its implications to pluralism in Kibaale District.

THE GENESIS OF ETHNIC TENSION IN KIBAALE’S CONTEXT

Kibaale District, which is part of Bunyoro Kingdom, located in western Uganda, has been one of the vivid hotspots of ethnic tension at the start of the 21st century in Uganda. However, as with most forms of socio-political organisation and relations in Africa (Mamdani 2001, Mamdani 2004), the roots of this tension can be traced back to colonial times, and this helps us to both contextualise its complexity and meaningfully interrogate the possibilities of pluralism in the light of all dimensions of the case.

In the 1890s, the British colonialists faced much resistance in establishing their rule in Bunyoro Kingdom. Hence, the former resorted to collaborating with the Buganda Kingdom (who had pre-colonial rivalry with the Banyoro over territory and might) to fight the Banyoro. This move marked the defeat of Bunyoro towards the end of the 19th Century and, in appreciation for the support from Buganda and/or for strategic reasons, the British ‘donated’ a big and very culturally significant fraction of Bunyoro land (six counties – later to be known as the ‘lost counties’) to Buganda.

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280 Bunyoro kingdom is one among many ‘kingdoms’ in Uganda. These kingdoms are constitutionally viewed as cultural institutions and are not allowed to participate in political affairs.

281 The number of counties actually given by the British to Buganda is still contested. Contrary to the popular account of six (or seven) counties, Kiwanuka (1968) and (Lwanga 2007) argue that only two counties (Buyaga and Bugangaizi) were extended to Buganda, the rest had already been conquered by Buganda. This study does not intend as part of its scope to verify what the true account is, but what is important to draw from this is that there was significant territorial lost by Bunyoro.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

(Schelnberger 2005; Espeland 2006). Kiwanuka (1968) contends that it was more for strategic reasons than for appreciating Buganda that the counties were annexed to the latter. He argues that, the British having appreciated the administrative structure of Buganda, they wanted to take advantage of it in Bunyoro as well through indirect rule thereby helping to curb further resistance to their rule and reducing administrative costs.

It should be observed that the territory carved from Bunyoro was geographically larger than the original size of Buganda, too large to be ignored by Bunyoro. In humiliation of the Banyoro, through the authority of the British colonisers, Buganda effectively sent her chiefs to administrate and embark on ‘Bugandanising’ Bunyoro through entrenching Kiganda282 language and culture and thereby deculturating the Banyoro (Kihumuro 1994). By force of law, Runyoro (the language of the Banyoro) was effectively banned from official communication and all the Banyoro had to adopt Baganda names. Up to today many Banyoro elders bear Baganda names. This psychological trauma still plays into the dynamics of ethnic relations with the effect of triggering sporadic moments of xenophobia in fear of being dominated again. In some cases, it is simply used as a mobilisation scapegoat by opportunistic politicians to win favour on grounds of ethnicity.

In 1964 (after independence from British rule in 1962), as had been recommended by the colonialists at their departure, a referendum was held in two of the six ‘lost counties’ – Buyaga and Bugangaizi – that had been given to Buganda and the vote was in favour of returning the territories to Bunyoro. Consequently, Schelnberger (2005) reports that the Baganda chiefs and their agents were chased from Bunyoro with spears and machetes. But they left without giving up their legal ownership of the land and kept their official land titles for over 2,995 square miles (Republic of Uganda 2006). These owners are locally known as ‘absentee landlords’. This situation left the Banyoro effectively as squatters in their native land, who had to pay feudal dues to the absentee Baganda landlords. This caused bitterness fuelling negative memories of domination.

Even though a Land Fund was established by force of the Land Act (1998) to, among other functions, buy out the absentee landlords from the area, much land still remains in the latter’s hands. Its implementation is complicated by the requirement of the same Act that “… any compulsory acquisition of land for purposes of implementing … shall be at a fair market valuation assessed on a willing seller willing buyer basis”. Some absentee landlords are not willing to sell their land.

In addition to this historic presence of the Baganda and the Banyoro people in the area, a number of other ethnic groups have been settling in Kibaale over time. Most of these settlers are from western Uganda (mainly the Bakiga). Some have settled through official state resettlement schemes. Republic of Uganda (2006) indicates that about 300 Bakiga families were resettled in Ruteete – Kagadi in 1965 by the Government under an arrangement initiated by Kigezi leaders in consultation with

282 Adjective in reference to something ‘of the Baganda culture’.
the Omukama of Bunyoro (Sir Tito Winyi). Another official resettlement scheme was the Bugangaizi resettlement scheme of 3,600 families in Nalweyo – Kisiita in 1993. The resettled group was of Bakiga who were previously evicted from Mpokya Forest Reserve.

Due to the above resettlement schemes and other factors, the largest population of the Bakiga (126,312) in Bunyoro Kingdom is found in Kibaale District (Republic of Uganda 2006, p.38). The resettlements, together with other voluntary migrations into the area, effectively tipped the demographic figures with the migrants outnumbering the indigenous group. This in itself may not have sparked off tension between the Banyoro and the migrants but, as shall be later explained here, it fostered the ‘ethnicisation’ of local politics amidst a numerical disadvantage on the side of the Banyoro and set the scene for conflict.

In observation of these series of resettlements, the Mubende Banyoro Committee, an ethnic pressure group formed in 1984 to ‘fight’ for Banyoro rights, feels that, by resettling groups of people there, Government has turned their region into “a dumping ground of refugees and migrants” (Mubende Banyoro Committee Memorandum – MBC - 200, in Republic of Uganda 2006, p.21). It can be read from MBC’s Memorandum that this feeling is not helped by the claim that the Banyoro did not consent to the Government’s resettlement schemes.

Some of these new settlers were invited by the native Banyoro and were given land along forests in order to shield the Banyoro’s gardens against vermin and wild animals (Nsamba-Gayiiya 2003). Some were given land by local chiefs for token payments while others bought it from the native Banyoro. Many more people have migrated to the area in search for land or/and following their relatives. Bunyoro has been a convenient place for resettling other Ugandans who were overpopulated in their areas (especially Kabale and Kisoro districts) because the war between the British government and the kingdom from 1893 to 1899 and the diseases that broke out thereafter left the area with virtually no population (Kihumuro 1994; Republic of Uganda 2006).

Initially, the settlers were quite well received in the then sparsely populated area and they mainly served as labourers for the indigenous Banyoro. But with the increase in numbers of settlers, financial strength, and the attendant cut-throat competition for resources and power, inter-ethnic conflicts started to emerge in the wake of the 21st century (Green 2006). It should be noted that the migrants are not mere temporary residents. They are permanent resident citizens and, as such, have clear stakes in the political process. This complicates the ensuing ethnic bargains through ethno-political competition.

Large-scale open violence took place between February and May 2002 when a Mukiga was elected as the District Chairman. This is the highest position at District level within Uganda’s decentralised framework. It is also referred to as Local Council Five (LC 5) as the highest of the five local government councils. LC 4 is the County, LC 3 the Sub-county, LC 2 the Parish while LC 1 is the village.
power to someone they considered to be a ‘foreigner’ and clashes ensued between Banyoro and settlers in some places. The Banyoro started to claim back land from non-Banyoro. Violence again emerged in April 2003 when news spread that land that belonged to Bakiga was being allocated to the Banyoro by the District Land Board (Espeland 2007). The violence that followed left three people dead, several others injured, huts burnt, and livestock killed (Schelnberger 2005). In 2005, Schelnberger observed that the situation was calm but the conflict remained at a stage of high intensity where it could easily break out into open violence again.

With a tendency of peaking during elections, the tension remains up to today. In the analysis of the Inquiry into Bunyoro Issues Committee, “the Banyoro think that they are being re-colonised while the other tribes think that their survival in the region will be guaranteed only if they are in charge” (2006, p.45). Such feelings seem to put the two sides on oppositional directions. To further complicate the case, sometimes the Government’s intervention has only served to aggravate the tension. This is partly because it is viewed in terms of the side it would be taking in the Banyoro – Bafuruki polar equation. After the Mufuruki (immigrant) LC Chairman had been forced to step down for a compromise replacement in 2002, Government felt that there was a need to come up with a policy to prevent such a scenario from re-occurring. In a letter titled Guidance on the Banyoro/Bafuruki Question (July 2009), the President284 - suggestively justifying the Banyoro’s rejection of non-indigenous leaders - asks:

i) If the Bafuruki dominate political space in the area to which they migrated, where do the indigenous people of the area find another political space?

ii) If the Bafuruki were more nationalistic, why could they not find some persons among the indigenous people and vote for them?

iii) Can some people from indigenous groups successfully compete, politically in the areas of origin of the Bafuruki? If not, is this not an unequal relationship?

iv) Suppose we were to infuse 100,000 Bafuruki into Acholi or Karamoja [other Ugandan ethnic communities], what would be the reaction? If the Acholis and Karamajongs were to react violently, would it mean that they are not Ugandan enough or would it be that the policy was wrong?

In an apparent condemnation of the migration of the Bakiga [the dominant immigrant group] into Kibaale, ‘an already enfeebled population [of the indigenous Banyoro] on account of history’, he argued that “horizontal rural migration by peasants after they have exhausted land in one area is not a progressive way of creating national integration. The more correct way is vertical migration, from the farm to the factory”. On account of the above contentions, as one of the possible solutions, the President proposed as 20-year affirmative action:

1. Ring-fencing the LC V positions in the whole of Bunyoro region for the indigenous people; and also ring-fencing the sub-county leadership except

284 Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
for the sub-counties around the Kisiita and Luteete areas [the resettlement schemes].

2. Ring-fencing the positions of Members of Parliament in the whole of Bunyoro region for the indigenous people, except for the special constituencies created around Lutete [sic] and Kisiita resettlement schemes.

The President’s suggestion was considerably lauded by the Banyoro. In a response written by Ford Mirima (September 3, 2009) on behalf of the Banyoro elders, they said:

The Banyoro, understandably, fully support the president’s position. They say that they have been victims of colonial suppression for generations, a marginalized minority, purposely kept backward to satisfy colonialists policies, which polices [sic, policies] were unfortunately inherited by independent Uganda successive Governments even after the country attained independence. ... Banyoro’s prayer is that these proposals reach cabinet, then go to parliament and are given the force of law so that they can be implemented.

However, some Banyoro, represented by the LC 5 Chairman of Masindi District (also within Bunyoro), felt that the suggested affirmative action was an insufficient concession. Instead, they suggested that: “For anybody to contest for any leadership position from Parish level to Member of Parliament, that person’s paternal grandparent should have lived in Bunyoro by 1926” (Gyezaho 2009)285. This requirement would certainly disqualify most of the Bafuruki.

On the other hand, the President’s suggestion was met with resistance and contempt from a wide section of the non-Banyoro within and outside Bunyoro. At the centre of the reactions was a fundamental concern that such a measure was inconsistent with the procedural rules that constitute democracy. Commenting on the President’s proposal in the Abu Mayanja Memorial Lecture – August 7, 2009, Mamdani felt that in such a suggestion:

The real shift is in the definition of citizenship. Nationalists defined citizenship as Ugandan, regardless of origin; Amin defined it as black Ugandan. But, today, it is proposed that the core rights of citizenship - the right to political representation - be defined on a tribal basis. The NRM286 is the first government in the history of independent Uganda to propose a dilution of national citizenship in favour of a tribal citizenship. My argument is that if we adopt this proposal, we shall be returning to an arrangement resembling colonial rule287.

In re-emphasis of his thesis of contemporary African politics as more of a colonial legacy, Mamdani interprets the President’s proposal as the usual reference to the colonial book in ‘times of crisis’. Mamdani’s view should be appreciated from the

286 National Resistance Movement, which is the ruling party.
implication of the President’s suggestion that indigenous groups are entitled to a wider set of rights than legitimate migrant groups/individuals. Such a view goes contrary to a fundamental tenet of the Ugandan constitutional provision that “... all persons are equal before and under the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and in every other respect and shall enjoy equal protection of the law” (Section 21, Art. 1).

On the other hand, the President’s suggestion ought to be assessed as well from the angle of a response to ethnic bargains based on historical marginalization despite ‘indigenousness’. Viewed as an affirmative action, if it is indeed true that the Banyoro are marginalised, the President’s suggestion passes as just/fair in a remedial sense. But this needs to be handled delicately to avoid giving the impression that rights and privileges are extended to some sections of society by the state on the basis of ethnicity.

In another move to resolve the tension, in 2010 the President passed a directive to the Attorney General and Minister of Local Government to create two new counties/constituencies. He said, “we need to split Buyaga with a new constituency centred around the former Lutete [Ruteete] refugee camp to cater for the Bafuruki, and also to split Bugangaizi, to create a county/constituency around Kisiita [resettlement scheme] to cater for the Bafuruki there” (Lumu 2010). Though the move was rejected by Bunyoro Kingdom, it was ultimately implemented. The idea seems to have been to ensure that each group gets representation of their own at parliamentary and other local government levels. Whether this can help in bringing about short and long term harmony remains a lingering question. The 2011 elections were generally peaceful, but the ethnic calculations were not completely out of the picture. There were strategic alliances on ethnic lines and, in some cases, deliberate moves to share out constituency representation in parliament by ethnicity. The sustainability of such an arrangement is debatable.

Still in a bid to sort out Bunyoro’s issues and in display of their significance, in 2011 a fully fledged Ministry for Bunyoro Affairs was created. The minister appointed to head the above ministry (Saleh Kamba) was neither from the area nor a Munyoro. In response to this development, the Prime Minister of Bunyoro Kingdom (Yabeezi Kiiza) said: “We thank the President for creating a ministry for us but the appointment of a minister who is not a Munyoro is a big concern for us. We have several people from Bunyoro who qualify to head it [the ministry]”. Eventually a Munyoro was appointed Minister in November 2012.

Even in appreciation of the Banyoro’s history of marginalisation, the above response to the appointment of a non-Munyoro minister for Bunyoro Affairs together with

288 The creation of a constituency goes with the creation of other sub-units thereunder such as LC III. Leadership of these is also through elections.

289 http://mobile.monitor.co.ug/News/-/691252/1172156/-/format/xhtml/-/mg7veb/-/index.html Viewed on August 11, 2011
the rejection of a non-Munyoro LC5 Chairman in Kibaale in 2002 seem to point to a nativist feeling among the Banyoro that issues of Bunyoro ought to be, first and foremost, their business to determine. But this is contested by some non-Banyoro and it raises questions on its implications to wider society if, after official endorsement, it spills into other areas in Uganda such as Karamoja and Luwero which have special ministries on the ground of affirmative action. Should they also ask for ministers from their areas? That could play against the spirit of national integration. It was also particularly curious that shortly after the President’s letter proposing ring-fencing was published, the Buganda Kingdom announced that they were planning to count all their people and their origins. More importantly, the contestations also raise questions over the possibilities of co-existence amidst the ethnic differences in Kibaale.

An earlier study in the Pluralism Knowledge Programme in Kibaale (ND) indicates that the Banyoro are not happy with what they call the arrogance of the Bakiga and their refusal to adopt Banyoro culture, respect their king (Omukama) and learn their language (Runyoro). MBC also claimed that “due to arrogance the settlers have failed to be assimilated or learn the ways of the people who hosted them” (Republic of Uganda 2006, p.192). It is not well-received among a wide section of the Banyoro that a number of Bakiga still practice their culture and speak their languages and that they have even renamed some of the places in Kibaale giving them Rukiga names.

On the other hand, in an open memo to the president from 36 ‘Leaders from the Non-Banyoro Community living in Kibaale District’, they argued that “We believe that non-Banyoro living in Bunyoro do not have to deny their culture and identity in order to be considered respectful. We also believe that respect for one community’s culture cannot be a one way street” (The Observer, 10 August 2009). In the same communiqué, the immigrants also felt that it is their constitutional right to stand for any electoral position in the area, practice their culture, and legally settle where they wish.

These sentiments and line of events highlighted above serve to demonstrate the complexity of the current ethnic sensitivity of Kibaale and call for inquiry into the possibility of pluralism in the area through people’s own perceptions. As the above account indicates, Kibaale was specifically selected on account of the fact that it has been one of the predominant spots of ethnic tension/conflict in contemporary Uganda (Espeland 2007 and Nkurunziza 2011). Boulding’s classical definition of conflict as “a struggle over values, claims to scarce status, power and resources” (cited in Jeong 2008) is clearly exemplified by the Kibaale case. It further becomes a case for academic interest due to its complexity and entanglement in ethnic, historic, economic, cultural and political factors.

290 See Gyezaho and Mwanje (05 August 2009). ‘Bafuruki hit back at President Museveni, Mengo to issue IDs to all Baganda’ From http://www.mail-archive.com/ugandanet@kym.net/msg26575.html Viewed on 13th march 2012.

291 Rukiga is the language for the Bakiga.
One would say that what we see here is a failure to acknowledge and negotiate difference. However, as argued by An-na’im (2008), such failure does not have to be final or conclusive. “Since every failure holds a new possibility of success in the future, the question should always be what people can do to achieve the transformation of the permanent realities of difference into sustainable pluralism” (An-na’im 2008, p.225). This is also in consideration of a very important observation that the people of Kibaale have co-existed peacefully from the 1960s to 2000. “Together they built community structures such as health centres, they sent their children to the same schools, worshipped at the same churches and they also intermarried” (Schelnberger 2005, p.30). Schelnberger’s observation points to the possibility that the people of Kibaale could be having imaginations - based on their past and present experiences – on how ethnic pluralism could be framed again in their community. The rationale for a focus on people’s own perceptions in the Kibaale complexity is explained further in the theoretical perspectives on which this paper and its suggestions are grounded.

PRIMORDIALISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM AS THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ETHNIC CONFLICT

The two most dominant theoretical frameworks which social scientists have used to understand and explain the existence and dynamics in and between ethnic groups are primordialism and constructivism (Hale 2008). This paper is largely inclined towards a constructivist approach but, there are aspects of primordial theory which will be brought into consideration. As such, the conceptual frames of both theories will be explored. A synthetic outlook is adopted where, through a critique of each of the two theoretical lenses, a synthesis is developed which deems to offer a stronger account of how and why some ethnic conflicts persist and the circumstances under which pluralism is made possible in a multi-ethnic context.

Primordialism

The key argument of the primordialists (Shils 1957; Geertz 1963; Huntington 1996) is that ethnic conflicts are renewals of age old antagonisms and hatreds.

Primordial conceptions of ethnicity focus on shared qualities such as a common language, a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history and allegedly inherited physical or/and behavioural characteristics common to members of the group (Narrol cited in Poluha 1998). These are considered to be ‘givens’. In this line, Geertz specifically defines primordial attachment as:

One that stems from the ‘givens’ of existence or more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed givens of social existence; immediate contiguity and live connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These continuities of blood, speech, custom and so on are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering coerciveness in and
of themselves. One is bound to one’s kinsman, one’s neighbour, one’s fellow believer ipso facto as the result not merely of personal attraction, tactical necessity, common interest or incurred moral obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself (cited in Rex 2002, p.90)

Accordingly, most primordialists think “ethnic communities are persistent, resilient, robust, and capable of eliciting deep loyalty, intense attachment and strong motivation, and, in consequence, are particularly resistant to change” (Harowitz cited in Coetzee 2009). Contemporary ethnic conflicts are thus viewed as the renewal of age old antagonisms (Roe 2005). This theory could partially serve to analyse ethnic conflict and exclusion in Uganda especially in relation to emotional ethnic ties and allegiance to perceived common ancestry, which exists among most ethnic groups in Uganda. Among the Baganda, for example, one way of expressing one’s Baganda identity is by reciting ancestry (a list of ancestors). It is also used as a means of identifying (and sometimes excluding) non-Baganda. And, in emphasis of common ancestry, the Baganda also identify themselves as bazzukulu ba Kintu (grand children of Kintu – the mythical first Muganda). It should however be noted that, just as many other ethnic groups in Uganda, the Baganda group has over time assimilated several other peoples into its fold yet they are also identified as Baganda. Therefore, at best, the primordial explanation of ethnicity by common ancestry is largely mythical. It is mainly for this reason that such ancestral accounts often contradict the known biological and social history of an ethnic community. We would rather argue that the boundary of ethnicity tends to shift, narrowing or broadening in accordance with the specific needs of political mobilisation at different times. It is for this reason that descent as an ethnic marker is often selectively cited or may matter on some occasions and sometimes not.

In his famous book, The Clash of Civilisations (1993), Huntington views different ethnic and religious groups as civilisations defined by their cultural differences. He identifies differences in language, ethnicity, family, nation, religion, common traditions and history, which he says are “not only real; they are basic” (p.22). Conflict between different civilisations is thus mainly based on cultural differences, which he considers less mutable and therefore less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones. In prediction of the ‘return of traditional rivalries’, he argues that new waves of conflict across the globe in the 21st century will be a direct result of competing ethnic identities.

Without considering the arguably influential factors of economic competition and political manipulation often entangled within ethnic tension, he argues that the differences of language, ethnicity, culture, and history do not merely exacerbate conflict, they are the cause. He predicts that with the world becoming a smaller place, increased interaction, will “intensify civilization consciousness” and enhance group “awareness of differences between civilizations and commonalities within
civilizations.” The civilisation consciousness in turn invigorates differences and animosities stretching - or thought to stretch - back deep into history.

Casting doubt on Huntington’s primordial analysis, Roe remarks that “while Huntington’s thesis seeks to propound a systematic explanation for violence and war, his conclusions appear every bit as deterministic as those who proffer ancient hatred explanations” (2005, p.27). And its weakness precisely lies in its deterministic reductionism in explanation of conflicts, some of which may not be rooted in histories of hatred. Reinforcing Roe’s criticism, Sen adds that within Huntington’s determinism:

Modern conflicts, which cannot be adequately analysed without going into contemporary events and machinations, are then interpreted as ancient feuds which allegedly place today’s players in preordained roles in an allegedly ancestral play. As a result, the ‘civilisational’ approach to contemporary conflicts (in grander or lesser versions) serves as a major intellectual barrier to focusing more fully on prevailing politics and to investigating the processes and dynamics of contemporary incitements to violence (2006, p.4).

Moreover, to add to Roe and Sen’s critique, as shall be seen later, whereas the history of ethnic relations in Kibaale, for example, plays a role in contemporary tension in the area, that may not lead us to the reductionist conclusion that elevates it at the expense of contemporary political manoeuvres/manipulations and other relevant explanations.

In The Clash within Civilisations, Senghaas further criticises Huntington’s thesis as being essentialistic. “... he [Huntington] regards civilizations as not adaptable and changeable over centuries. Deep down, they remain constant, and they tend to process external influences so as to guarantee continuity” (2002, p.73). Moreover, in his monistic identification of cultures as singular civilisations, Huntington ignores the plurality of identities ‘within’ (Sen 2006) and, by extension, the clashes within. He ignores the extent of the internal diversities within his civilisational categories and the interactional porosity of the civilisational borders that he presents as though they were rigid boxes frozen in time.

Senghaas argues that “holistic statements have never been analytically useful and cannot be justified today in the face of growing cultural conflicts within civilisations” (p.74). In the same line of critique, in her study entitled The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence and India’s Future, Nussbaum argues that “thinking in terms of a ‘clash of civilisations’ ... leads us to ignore both the heterogeneity of all known civilisations and the inter-penetration and mutual influence among cultures that is a fact of human history” (2007, p.7). We should not ignore both ‘internal diversity’ and ‘cultural borrowing’.

Sen (2006) highlights divisions between the rich and the poor, between members of different classes and occupations, between people of different politics (political affiliation), and between language groups. Divisions of religion, gender, and age group could be added to Sen’s list.
On the whole, primordialist theories would not adequately explain the non-historical aspects of Uganda’s ethnic rivalries. For example, primordialism does not account for the ethnic conflicts in Uganda that originate from political manipulation of the ‘ethnic card’ (Kigongo 1995; Muhereza and Otim 1998; Storey 2002; Mamdani 2004; Nsamba et al. 2007). This is in reference to ethnic conflicts that are fuelled by politicians as they pit ethnic groups against each other for political scores. Guest observes that:

*Most of Africa’s ethnic strife has its roots in the manipulation of tribal loyalties by the colonial authorities [and some post-independence African leaders]. And most of today’s conflicts owe their persistence to modern politics, not primordial passions* (2004, p.111).

Citing the example of Rwanda’s 1994 genocide, Guest argues that a primordial ‘ancient hatreds’ explanation of the violence cannot suffice. Just as Mamdani (2001), he admits that it is true that the Hutus always hated the Tutsis and vice versa but that:

*Hutus and Tutsis have only thrown themselves at each other’s throats since their political leaders started urging them to. The genocide was carefully planned by a small clique of criminals, to maintain their grip on power. They were not forced to carry it out by passions beyond their control, or by the irresistible tide of history* (pp. 112-113).

The history of the Hutu-Tutsi relations, especially in the light of colonial favouritism for the Tutsi (Mamdani 2001), was of course connected to the genocide but not a sufficient reason for it. Besides, even history is constructed through socio-political dynamics, not a ‘given’.

Primordialism also fails to explain the conflicts emerging from perceived and actual discrimination, especially in the distribution of power and other resources (Smith 1994). Moreover, as remarked by Okuku (2002), primordial conceptions look at ethnicity from a static and negative stance with a tacit suggestion that ethnic rivalries can never be addressed, as though ethnic pluralism is an impossibility. But ethnicity is never static since new forms or characteristics are perpetually created because what is considered to be significant changes over time (Bacova 1998, Paloha 1998, and Gunaratman 2003). “This flexibility makes it possible for members of ethnic groups to communicate their ethnicity in different ways” (Poluha 1998, p.33). In Gunaratman’s view, ethnicity is not an objective, stable, homogenous category but is produced and animated by changing, complicated and uneven interactions between social processes and individual experience as shall be explained by the constructivist theory.

More importantly for this paper, an exclusive primordialist account also fails to explain why there are long periods of peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups such as in Kibale, or why these waves of ethnic consciousness and tension take place at particular times (Coetzee 2009). It also fails to explain why ethnic groups seemingly
appear, disappear, and sometimes re-appear throughout history. A constructivist outlook critically addresses some of primordialism’s presuppositions.

**Constructivism**

Constructivists emphasise that, just like ethnicity itself, ethnic conflicts are socially constructed through the agency of those competing for positions of advantage in the modern state (Mamdani 2004). The competition could be for jobs, political positions, and economic interests. As such, it is the competitive threats (real or imagined) that bring people together (Weber 1922, Barth 1969, Smith 1994 and Coetzee 2009). In the social constructivist thesis, it is the level of threat from the ‘out-group/s’ and nature of political mobilisation that will determine the emergence or non-emergence of inter-ethnic conflict.

One of the explanations central to the constructivist line of analysis is the rational choice theory according to which, people calculate the costs and benefits of any action (including ethnic attachment) before engaging in it (Scott 2000; Brittain 2006). It is these calculations that determine/construct the shape and direction that ethnicity takes.

Scholars such as Epstein (1958) and Gluckman (1960) noted that in some situations, such as in labour relations, appeals to class solidarity dominate appeals to ethnic identity; in other settings, such as during elections, appeals to ethnic interests dominate those to class solidarity. These findings were later confirmed in studies by Wolpe (1970) and Melson (1971) and gave rise to the notion of ‘situational selection’. This notion implies the idea that ethnicity is invoked according to circumstances; it is context-related (Forster et al. 2000). They provided a point of entry for rational choice theory to approach the study of cultural politics.

Rational choice theories hold that individuals must anticipate the outcomes of alternative courses of action and calculate that which will be best for them. Rational individuals choose the alternative that is likely to give them the greatest satisfaction (Coleman 1973; Heath 1976: 3; Carling 1992: 27). As such, “a particular set of preferences within a fixed array of possible choices shapes the expectations of actors about the outcome in a search for the greatest benefits” (Jeong 2008, pp.66-67). In Hempel’s view, “individuals will consciously self-identify on the basis of ethnicity when ethnic membership to one or another group is perceived to be instrumental in accessing valued goods” (cited in Coetzee 2009). Choices of ethnic affiliation are based on rational awareness, not closeness, but the need for protection of common (and sometimes selfish) interests.

As such, it is the competitive threat that brings people together. Such threats could be real or imagined/perceived. In some cases, “it is not the reality of competition that counts; it is a perception that the out-group wishes to increase its share of valued resources and statuses at the expense of the in-group” (Bobo and Hatchings cited in 293 To be explored later.
Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007, p.80). The competition around which calculations are made could be about jobs, political positions, and economic interests. It is important to look out for and examine these dynamics in the context of Kibaale, especially because there is an indication that the tension rotates around political positions, socio-economic status, and land.

The individual understands the community as an instrument for achieving his goals. These bonds of an individual to a community are characterized as cool-headed, formal, intentional, purposeful, requiring conscious loyalty and formed on the basis of choice, but also as vague, temporary, intermittent and routine (Bacova 1998, p.).

Thus, with regard to ethnicity, ethnic identification would be based on the perceived benefits and costs. This manifests ethnicity as a resource to be mobilised, or an instrument to be used, by particular groups and individuals in pursuit of their political and economic ends (Smith 1994; Coetzee 2009). As in the social contract theory (to be seen later in this section), members of an ethnic group tacitly consent to belong to the group in anticipation of some benefit. These benefits are weighed against life outside the group. In such an arrangement, allegiance to an ethnic group is on condition that the reasons for belonging to the group are respected. Short of that the membership loses meaning and some other sort of re-organisation would have to be sought.

Through ‘situational selection’, people organise their perceptions and choices depending on how an issue is framed. Ethnic identities are not eroded but rather retained; supplemented with new identities, such as that of a worker; and, in some settings, activated (Posner 2004). When class solidarity is valuable, ethnic differences are set aside; when competing for the spoils of office, they are re-affirmed. Viewed from this perspective, ethnicity can be seen as a choice or a strategy (Smith 1994), the instrumental value of which varies with the situation.

In this situational context of ethnicity, it is important to note the behaviour of leaders/elites who seek to mobilise collective action or support. As Posner (2004) demonstrates, such leaders tend to choose purposefully, assessing the relative advantages of ethnic mobilisation against other means of recruiting political support. Such Machiavellian294 elites sometimes manipulate otherwise peaceful, cooperative populations into ‘ethnic frenzies’ or less intense forms of ethnic conflict when they have the desire and the opportunity to do so (Hale 2008). In such cases, as observed by Mamdani (2001) and Guest (2004) in the case of the Rwanda genocide, ethnic tension cannot be said to be caused by ethnic passions per se. Rather, ethnicity is simply “a discourse that guilty elites invoke to obscure the real, venal causes of violence that they incite” (Brass cited in Hale 2008, p.25). In studying ethnic tension therefore, it is important to pay keen attention to the role of elites in shaping ethnic relations, especially in the political dynamics of the context being studied.

Hale observes that the ‘elite manipulation’ argument begs some very important questions. The first is: “If ethnicity has no inherent meaning for individuals, why do followers follow the elites’ calls to ethnic battle?” (p.25). To this he points out

294 For Machiavellians, the end justifies the means used to achieve it.
explanations that have been put forward by various scholars. Citing Snyder’s *From Voting to Violence* (2000), one of the possible explanations he gives is that because elites tend to control/dominance mass media, they can very easily control how people think. It is also possible that, in the event of inter-ethnic violence, the masses expect to benefit somehow. This could be through opportunities to loot, revenge on a neighbour who happens to fall in the category of the enemy, exercise greater power personally or/ and to reap material or political benefits through massive ethnic patronage networks led by the elite.

The second question is: “Since the ways people can be categorized are nearly infinite, why is it that elites so often invoke ethnic themes as their way of rallying or coordinating the masses?” (Ibid. p.27). Why would ethnicity be the ‘master narrative’ amidst several possible others? This question suggests that there could be something emotive about ethnic identity or that there could be some sort of utility that people derive from merely belonging to an ethnic group. However, as argued by Mamdani (2001), the significance of ethnicity is historically constructed and, often, legally and institutionally reproduced as opposed to being instantly available for manipulation. Hale is also not right in insinuating that elites ‘more often’ invoke ethnic themes as their way of rallying the masses. We note that the identity along which to mobilise is often situationally selected. In India, for example, it is more along the lines of religion and caste (Nussbaum 2007), and in other contexts it could be on economic class lines – depending on the circumstances and what has been historically or at the moment shaped to be the important social identity.

However, social constructivism through the rational choice approach bears one important weakness that this study is keen to isolate from its constructivist foundation. It underrates the role of the affective element in ethnic ties. Some people identify with and pay strong allegiance to their ethnic groups even when there are no political or/ and economic benefits in sight. “Choice cannot be reduced summarily to maximising utility, but may be influenced by habit, custom, a sense of duty, emotional attachment, etc” (Brittain 2006, p. 158). It can still be argued that such disinterested ethnic attachment is socially constructed but not necessarily around calculated interests.

In extension and reinforcement of the social constructivist theory, this study widely draws from Shoup’s (2008) *theory of conflict and cooperation in counterbalanced states* which more specifically engages with the concepts and relations that we focus on. Although his explanation mainly attempts to explain inter-ethnic relations at state level, as we illustrate here, we also find it instrumental in understanding local levels such as in Kibaale. We tailor Shoup’s theory with Mamdani’s analysis of post-colonial ethnic dynamics in *Citizen and Subject* (2004) and in *When Victims Become Killers* (2001) where he explains ethnic conflict in the context of the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

Shoup defines a counterbalanced society as one where one ethnic community demands political priority on the basis of ethnic myths of indigenousness while another ethnic
group that is ‘not indigenous’ controls the majority of the economic assets. Myths signify beliefs held in common and often regurgitated as truisms (Mamdani 2001) by a large group of people that can give action and events a particular meaning. These would therefore also include real historical events that have capacity to generate a particular effect on the practices and worldview of individuals. In the context of Kibaale, the Banyoro would constitute the indigenous category while the immigrants (Bafuruki) represent the economic group that have strongly established themselves in business and trade. But this is not to claim that all immigrants are expected to be in an economically stronger position than all the Banyoro. Rather, it is only to generically indicate the comparative economic salience of the immigrants as a group in relation to the Banyoro. This categorisation forms the springboard for operationally positioning the two groups but without assuming that there is uniformity of perception, motivation and action within each of the groups. The possibility of intra-group diversity is acknowledged.

Shoup argues that the state of counterbalance harbours opportunities for political extremists and/or opportunists to exploit both the economic gap between the groups and, perhaps more importantly, possible fears of ethnic domination in order to achieve their political objectives. As argued by the rational choice theorists above, such political exploitation nests serious risks of ethnic conflict, even violence. But is political manipulation always bound to succeed in clashing ethnic groups for political scores?

It is here hypothesised that ethnic conflict is “... a function of both the latent social dissatisfaction necessary to influence individuals to ethnically mobilise and the institutional incentives that are sufficient to allow ethnic extremists to exploit such mobilisation” (Shoup 2008, p.15). Mobilisation along ethnic lines finds fertile grounds in the presence of a shared sense of anger or indignity brought about by differences in group status. In the tension that might ensue, individual people rally behind the identity of the group whose interests they identify with, hence increasing ethnic consciousness (Soeters 2005). This reactive cohesion within the group tends to be in direct relation to the growing sense of animosity between the groups in tension. However, as Mamdani (2001) argues, the connection between threats to group interests/ constraints and conflict is not a necessary one. The choice people make in response is rather mediated through how they understand and explain these constraints and the resources they can garner to change them. This therefore calls for a careful analysis in approaching explanations for conflict based on competition for resources. It is imperative to examine the intricate circumstances and dynamics in competition that determine the nature of outcome in inter-group relations.

The indigenous group will most likely seek political control as a way of maintaining both a sense of group dignity and ethnic survival. This is even much more likely in a post-colonial setting characterised by a colonial legacy of politicising indigeneity as a basis for rights and a mode of citizenship that denies full citizenship to residents it brands as ethnic strangers (Mamdani 2001). Conflict is bound to result when such
political control sought by the indigenous group is either put or perceived by the indigenous community to be at risk of being usurped by the immigrant group (‘ethnic strangers’). More importantly, whatever the threat, it does not have to be real or pressing, what is significant is how it is perceived. Thus we are reminded to pay special attention to perceptions.

The immigrants on the other hand are bound to seek to protect their property rights and other entitlements from being violated by the indigenous group. To this effect, in the event of a ‘threat’ (real or imagined), they will also seek to solve their problems through political mobilisation so as to acquire sufficient political strength to address the threat. But this will come with the effect of equipping the indigenous group (or factions of them) with ‘evidence’ that their fears of being dominated are justified and, probably, result into conflict. Soeters (2005) predicts that under such a situation, group binding becomes stronger on either side implying an explicit antithesis between ‘us’ and ‘them’, often with attendant stereotypes being solidified and given more social significance. Auto-stereotypes (about a group as seen by themselves) tend to put the group in a self-serving positive light while hetero-stereotypes (about the other group) will contain negative connotations, even when the behaviour is the same.

The foregoing theoretical explanations suggest the need to make a keen interrogation of the history of the ethnic relations in the context of Kibaale. In this, there is a need: to understand the dynamics that have both led to co-existence and to conflict over the past; the claims and counter-claims in the narratives of both groups; and the different players and how their agency shapes the ethnic relations. Since apparently what mainly shapes the relations are the perceptions of the people in the context and their instrumentalisation, we suggest that any meaningful study into ethnic relations should start with accessing these as the building blocks for further analysis.

One important question remains unexplained by the above projections. That is, what then determines inter-ethnic co-existence and cooperation? The case of Kibaale indicates that there are periods when the different groups have peacefully co-existed (Schelnberger 2005). What circumstances enable this phenomenon?

In some ways, both the indigenous and the immigrant groups need each other. Shoup argues that this utilitarian consideration offers some minimal incentives for cooperation. The indigenous group will make claims to political dominance which necessitate the immigrant group to take a politically subordinate role but have a free rein in the economy. In such a setting, the immigrant group will count on protection of their property rights and a conducive environment for prosperity. On their side, the indigenous group will realise a development boost, increased tax revenues, and welfare benefits produced by a well-functioning economy. For such relations to hold, there should be no threats in the picture which would equip and send either side (especially their extremists) into mobilising along ethnic lines. However, the above circumstances for cooperation seem very delicate, especially within a democratic arrangement. The assumption that the immigrant group will accept to stay out of
politics once they get assurance of their economic interests is apparently overstretched/ asking too much and requiring more investigation. There is also a possibility that the indigenous group could use its political position to marginalise the immigrants despite the economic gains from them. Nevertheless, in investigating the possibilities for pluralism in Kibaale, the viability of the arrangement suggested above needs to be inquired into. It is indicated above that immigrants are already active in the politics of Kibaale and that this has resulted into bouts of tension and violence. It thus seems relevant to study how immigrant groups motivate their pursuit of political positions. Is it simply out of an urge to participate in the administration of the area like others, or/and a move to counter perceived and/or real threats to their well-being as a group? And, whatever the motivation, it is also important to establish how the immigrants’ entry into politics is perceived by the indigenous group, the influence of such perceptions on inter-ethnic relations, and, if in any way, how the two groups are engaging with such realities for co-existence.

Shoup idealises that, to reinforce and sustain cooperation, there should be both state and non-state mechanisms to prevent problems associated with opportunism. Among the non-state mechanisms, intergroup cooperation would be enhanced by the expectation/ correct assumption that guilty parties will be punished by members of their own ethnicity. Fearon and Laitin (1996) refer to this as ‘in-group policing’. In such an arrangement, through their social networks, groups are supposed to monitor and sanction their own members. This suggests that, to ascertain the spaces for pluralism, it would also be essential to investigate the presence or absence of in-group policing mechanisms, the circumstances under which they arise or not, and their effectiveness for co-existence.

However, in-group policing must go together with inter-group engagement for conflict to be avoided. Varshney argues that “… if communities are organised only along intraethnic lines and the interconnections with other communities are very weak or even non-existent, then ethnic violence is quite likely” (2001, p.363). There has to be inter-ethnic civic engagement both in associational forms and everyday forms. Associational forms include business associations, religious clubs, NGOs, sports clubs, trade unions, professional organisations, and cadre-based political parties while everyday forms consist of simple, routine interactions of life such as families of different ethnic groups visiting each other, eating together, and children being allowed to play together in the neighbourhood.

Varshney views associational forms to be of greater influence that everyday forms (although the latter are often crucial for the emergence of the former), especially in facing up to political manipulation of ethnicity. It makes it hard for politicians to polarise ethnicity. Such forms of organisation are vital in policing neighbourhoods, killing rumours, providing information to local administration, and facilitating communication between communities in times of tension. We therefore find it necessary as well to study the role of civic life (in both associational and everyday forms) in Kibaale in facilitating inter-ethnic engagement for co-existence. Civic life is
investigated in the family, religious, political, business, and education spheres which are identified as the key aspects in the social life of the people of Kibaale.

At state level of conflict prevention, Shoup postulates that political institutions that insulate the political authority of the indigenous group without fully alienating the economically dominant group tend to produce more stable long term outcomes than institutions that allow the economically dominant group to ‘encroach’ on the political sphere. This would indeed be a difficult balance to strike, especially because it goes counter to republican democratic ideals on which Uganda’s system is based. In Shoup’s suggestion there is an implication that the rules of democracy are insufficient to enforce the norms underlying inter-ethnic bargains. Mamdani puts it even more categorically that “by itself, majority rule provides no guarantee for [numerical] minorities that fear majority domination ... Majority rule can be turned into a bedrock for the domination over fragile minorities ... – a democratic despotism” (2001, p.281). Shoup thus emphasises the need for affirmative action policies for the indigenous group to minimise the utility of ethnic manipulation by extremists. Such policies would include: Expansion of higher education opportunities, language policies that favour the language of the indigenous group, economic incentives that promote economic ventures by the indigenous group, openings for government jobs and state economic enterprises.

Even though Uganda operates under a decentralised structure, it would be very challenging to grant differential citizenship rights to different groups in different areas of the country. Whereas the above suggestions could be of significance to pluralism, at face value they raise questions as to whether they may not spark other imbalances/injustices with the effect of narrowing spaces for pluralism. The assumption that the numerically dominant economic/ immigrant group will simply look on as the indigenous group is given unconstitutional favours seems to hope for too much. There is bound to be a feeling on the side of the immigrant group that they are being discriminated against, and this will most likely breed tension and limit negotiation possibilities.

The above explanations and assumptions provide an insightful starting point for interrogating the dynamics of cooperation/pluralism and conflict in an ethnic context, especially in view of the players, processes, and possibilities. More specifically, some of these claims need to be examined on the basis of empirical data from Kibaale District.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have argued that Uganda is characterised by a complex ethnic landscape. Taking the case of Kibaale District I have demonstrated how the current ethnic relations between the native Banyoro and immigrants from other parts of Uganda are mediated through Kibaale’s history of marginalisation by both the British and the Baganda and manipulation by opportunists (especially politicians) from both sides of the ‘ethnic divide’. I have also argued that the tension in Kibaale is allowed to persist by Government’s weak and sometimes ill-thought out interventions.
However, the complexity is not meant to indicate that co-existence is impossible in the area. It is manifest that there have been periods of harmonious living in Kibaale for over thirty years. This observation provides the hope that pluralism is possible despite the angularities that may come with ethnic difference. Since it is my contention that social realities are constructed through people’s engagement with each other, I recommend that to understand the possibilities of pluralism in Kibaale research should be done starting from people’s own perspectives as they are the meaning makers. It is important to know what allowed them to co-exist in the period of over thirty years so as to understand what triggers the tension and how it can be meaningfully addressed. We can go beyond their meaning and ideals but cannot ignore them as the fundamental starting point for engagement.

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6. Intolerance, Stigma, Exclusion and Persecution of People with Albinism in the Elgon Region

UGANDA NATIONAL NGO FORUM

Abstract
The Uganda National NGO Forum recognises people with albinism as one of the marginalised minorities in the country. The forum intends to focus its work towards uplifting their socio-economic situation as part of its advocacy and inclusion work and as a platform organisation for all NGOs in Uganda. A study was therefore commissioned, with support from the Pluralism Knowledge Programme, to establish the situation of people with albinism in the Elgon sub-region.

The study indicates that the extent of inclusion of persons with albinism in disability structures and interventions is largely dependent upon perceptions by people with albinism themselves, and people with disabilities, about whether or not albinism is a disability. While most of the persons with albinism interviewed perceived themselves as persons with disabilities, less than half the persons with disabilities perceive them as part of the disability fraternity. It was generally reported that the attitudes of service providers across sectors are negative towards people with albinism. This is compounded by the lack of information about albinism – many service providers think it is contagious and some respond by stigmatising people with albinism. The study established that there are no customised interventions to address the specific needs of people with albinism. In many cases, they access mainstream services – without specialist care to meet their health, education and other needs.

Recommendations include the conduct of research to determine the prevalence of albinism in the region for evidence-based advocacy; strengthening group formation and capacity building for people with albinism for self-help as well as advocacy purposes; creating community awareness of the rights of people with albinism; promoting education for people with albinism in both formal and informal education systems and training service providers, particularly health service providers and teachers, in counselling skills to improve the self-esteem of people with albinism.

INTRODUCTION

Background
The Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF) was formed in 1997 as an inclusive national platform for NGOs to come together in their diversity, in pursuit of a collective agenda of engagement with government and other development actors. From fewer than 50 registered members in 2001, by the end of 2008, the organisation counted more than 400 members drawn from NGOs working in Uganda - local, national NGOs/NGO networks and international NGOs. The National NGO Forum membership represents
the diversity of the NGO Sector in Uganda. The membership comprises organisations active in service delivery and advocacy, and in some cases a combination of the two. The size and geographical scope of our membership varies from those employing in excess of 100 staff and volunteers to those employing less than three. Some of our members operate across districts and others in a small location within a district. There are 6 thematic areas under which each of our members’ activities falls.

UNNGOF recognises people with albinism as one of the marginalized minority groups in the country, noting that this group has been given little attention in the disability movement and thus their needs have not been brought aboard the disability agenda. UNNGOF intends to focus its work towards uplifting the socio-economic situation of people with albinism as part of its three year strategic plan to facilitate them to realize their full mainstreaming in the broad disability development agenda and the broader civil society movement for positive social change.

UNNGOF therefore commissioned a study to establish the situation of people with albinism in the Elgon sub-region (comprising the districts of Mbale, Sironko, Manafwa and Kapchorwa) to obtain information that will form a benchmark for programme intervention.

The specific objectives of the baseline were:

1. To establish the extent to which the needs of people with albinism are addressed by the existing disability structures in the sub-region
2. To find out the attitudes of service providers (with specific reference to HIV/AIDS, rehabilitation and education) about people with albinism
3. To assess the availability of appropriate and trained service providers that can handle the unique conditions of people with albinism
4. To find out the attitudes of other people with disabilities (PWDs) about people with albinism
5. To establish the extent to which people with albinism are organised to conduct effective advocacy and lobbying for mainstreaming their conditions in the disability movement agenda and that of the broad civil society
6. To establish the form of support provided to people with albinism by development agencies in the Elgon sub-region
7. To map out the priorities of people with albinism that require intervention by development agencies
8. To recommend practical programme interventions which UNNGOF can undertake over the next three years to contribute to improving the conditions of life for People with albinism in the region

Causes and types of albinism

Albinism is a rare group of genetic conditions that causes a lack of pigment. It occurs in both genders, regardless of ethnicity, in all countries of the world. Persons with
albinism lack pigmentation in their hair or skin or eyes or in all three. In almost all cases a significant visual impairment is involved. It can affect only the eyes (ocular albinism) or both the eyes and skin (oculocutaneous albinism). Most types of albinism are inherited when an individual receives the albinism gene from both parents. The exception is one type of ocular albinism, which is passed on from mothers to their sons.

The outward signs of albinism vary depending on the amount of pigment a person has, and many people with albinism have skin much lighter than that of their family members. People with albinism also may have white or pale yellow hair, and light-coloured eyes. Sometimes the eyes look pink because they contain no pigment to mask the red of the blood vessels in the retina. Albinism is an inherited condition that can be caused by a number of different genes:

- Type 1 albinism is characterized by almost no pigmentation and is caused by a defect in a gene for an enzyme that makes pigment.
- Type 2 albinism: People with Type 2 albinism usually have some pigmentation; this type is caused by a defect in a gene called the “P gene”.
- Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome (HPS): A different defective gene causes Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome, which is a form of albinism characterized by easy bruising and bleeding and a susceptibility to lung and bowel disease. Skin, hair, and eye colour vary from person to person with HPS.
- Ocular (eye) albinism: This form of albinism affects mainly the eyes; hair and skin may not look unusual.

Most people with albinism are born to parents without the condition, but both parents must carry a copy of the defective gene and both must pass on that copy to their child. Albinism is a recessive trait: if a person inherits even one good copy of the gene, he or she will not have the condition. Each time parents who both carry the trait have a child, there is a 25% chance that the child will have albinism regardless of whether it is a boy or a girl.

There is a rather high prevalence of albinism in East Africa (one in 1,400 people according to leading geneticist Dr. Murray Brilliant). Extrapolating from this statistic, the prevalence of albinism in Uganda is crudely estimated at some 22,714 people. Though low in comparison with other major health problems, these figures and the even larger numbers of indirectly affected persons, qualify albinism as a public health issue deserving further attention to increase the awareness of and information about this condition.

**Challenges faced by people with albinism**

Despite the seemingly low prevalence, the intensity of stigma and exclusion makes the conditions of people with albinism grave, resulting in several major challenges due to social ignorance about the genetic condition. These include:
• **Lack of access to low vision aids** such as glasses, magnifiers and specialized computer equipment. People with albinism have problems with vision (not correctable with eyeglasses) and many suffer from low vision. Vision problems in albinism result from abnormal development of the retina and abnormal patterns of nerve connections between the eye and the brain. It is the presence of these eye problems that defines the diagnosis of albinism, where the main test for albinism is simply an eye examination. The degree of vision impairment varies with the different types of albinism and many people with albinism are “legally blind” but most use their vision for many tasks including reading and do not use Braille. Some people with albinism have sufficient vision to drive a car.

• **Epidemic rates of fatal skin cancer** due to the lack of protective sunscreens, wide brimmed hats and proper clothing. People with many types of albinism need to take precautions to avoid damage to the skin caused by the sun, such as wearing sunscreen lotions, hats and sun-protective clothing. While most people with albinism are fair in complexion, skin or hair colour is not diagnostic of albinism.

• **Widespread social discrimination** fuelled by deep beliefs in superstitious myths on albinism. This can affect any person with a disability, but is similarly pertinent to those with albinism. Because of a lack of public awareness around albinism, myths flourish, such as: albinos are evil or a curse from God; people with albinism never die, they just vanish; they are born to black women who have slept with white men; and albinism is a contagious disease.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Scope and design of the study**

The contents and scope of the baseline was derived from the objectives of the study. The subsequent sections of the report therefore provide evidence on each of these objectives. In terms of geographical scope, the study covered 4 districts in the Elgon sub-region, namely Mbale, Manafwa, Sironko and Kapchorwa districts.

A range of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were applied, adopting a multifaceted rapid assessment approach. The data was triangulated to address the critical questions and issues of the study.

The study was mainly conducted with people living with albinism, as well as the district and sub-county leaders in the selected districts. Leaders of the Albino Association of Mbale (AAM), service providers as well as opinion leaders in the communities selected were also interviewed. In each of the districts, a total of at least 10 questionnaires were administered to people with albinism. At community level, the study team selected at least 10 parents or care takers of people living with albinism to take part in focus group discussion sessions.
Methods of data collection and analysis

The study was conducted in 2012/2013, and employed the following methods:

- **Document review:** This involved a review of existing and relevant literature on people with albinism to capture the national demographics, overall situation of albinism situation with a focus on service delivery and policy, and service delivery gaps, and information on what has been/is being done in addressing the gaps and by whom.

- **Key Informant Interviews:** These were held with officials from district local government both the politicians and technocrats, service providers, selected heads of organisations of people with a disability (DPO), rural based sub-county officials.

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** These were held with intended project beneficiaries in the communities and involved parents or care takers of people with albinism in the study districts.

- **Questionnaire:** these were administered to people living with albinism themselves and touched on a number of study issues.

A broad checklist was designed to cover the key baseline criteria per district, and these were later broken down per respondent and methodology for the respective district study teams.

The lead researcher crosschecked data for accuracy. The questionnaires (quantitative data) were analysed for easy use in the MS Word report. Informant Interviews for each topic was then done. This analysis was useful in identifying the major issues for each of the study themes and sub-themes. It also enhanced comparisons and contrasts of participants’ views across the study districts.

**Validity, reliability and limitations**

The study findings are generalisable to communities and/or people with albinism in the Elgon sub-region since the districts were randomly selected to provide a snapshot scenario of conditions of people living with albinism.

Scanty or inadequate information and literature on the situation of albinism both in Uganda and internationally meant that the study team had to rely on an internet based literature review. The lack of a project logical framework made this baseline fall short of providing specific benchmarks for subsequent evaluation. Nevertheless, some of the quantitative and qualitative information in this report can be used retrospectively to determine the specific benchmarks once indicators are developed.

**PRIMARY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

**Extent of the needs of people with albinism and how they are addressed in the Elgon sub-region**

The limitation of the local definition of albinism complicates the provision of
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medical services, education, and other forms of care. This alone alienates persons with albinism from social services and protection. Even though some persons with albinism have visual and hearing impairments, they have not been actively supported through mainstreaming services for the rest of community members. Thus, the extent of support to persons with albinism by AAM is dependent upon the service-seeking behaviour of such persons. In a situation where a group of people are not yet approved as members of AAM, their quest for services must be through an organised voice demanding support. Though about 14% of the people with albinism who responded to the questionnaire reported seeking assistance from AAM, only half of them reported that they actually got any support.

If findings revealed that there are hardly any services offered by AAM to persons with albinism in the Elgon sub-region, there are however other sources of support for persons with albinism in the region:

- The Uganda Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities (UPACLED) supports children with learning disabilities but also works with children with other disabilities. UPACLED advocates for education and other rights of all children with learning disabilities. This is premised on the tenet that education improves the lives of such children. UPACLED provided logistical support to people with albinism during the launch of the Elgon association for persons with albinism in May 2010 and also during the election of the executives of the association. This contribution is important, as marginalised groups need to organise themselves into a uniform voice to be able to demand their rights and be included in other development fora. UPACLED - Mbale branch has invited parents of children with albinism and sometimes adult people with albinism themselves to attend workshops on stimulation and care, lobbying and advocacy and other training programmes during its community programmes.

- The Uganda National Association of the Blind (UNAB) was cited as having supported a few people with albinism with visual aids - especially those in school, but these were isolated cases and the support did not last long.

- Other organisations. The study in Kapchorwa established that the needs of people with albinism in the district have not been addressed to any large extent. Most people with albinism only benefit from the mainstream services that are provided by government e.g. treatment in health centres, free education in schools, etc, but do not have services that specifically cater for their needs. Some of the officials representing the Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) e.g. the development officer of Kapchorwa District Union of Persons with Disabilities (KADIPU) stated that they did not know that albinism was also a disability:

“We have a list of disabilities but albinism has not been considered as one. I think we look at albinos as complete people who have everything and there isn’t anything that deters them from performing except for their skin colour.”
Similarly, the acting Probation and Welfare Officer of Kapchorwa stated that

“There are very few people with albinism; you may go to one sub-county and not
find any person with albinism; also, when programming for different sectors, in
most cases they are left out because their needs are not seen as urgent.”

This view was shared by the sub-county chief of Kaptanya. Other respondents like
the District chairperson pointed out that albinism was a new thing to them therefore
they have not done anything with regards to addressing their needs. He went on to say
that since they were now aware that people with albinism are also disabled, they are
actively going to include them in their programmes. Generally, however, nothing was
in place to address the needs of people with albinism in Kapchorwa.

In conclusion therefore, the needs of persons with albinism have not pro-actively been
addressed by DPOs, for several reasons: key among them being ignorance about the
link between albinism and disability. Any efforts to get support should therefore be
preceded by creating knowledge about albinism and the different challenges persons
with albinism encounter with regard to social and environmental factors that preclude
their ability to perform daily functions – akin to other persons with disabilities.

Existing perceptions and attitudes towards people with albinism

This study was in part meant to find out the attitudes of service providers (with specific
reference to HIV/AIDS, rehabilitation and education) about people with albinism.
There was also an effort to unearth the attitudes of people with albinism towards
themselves, as well as attitudes of other PWDs and the wider community towards
people with albinism. These are elaborated below.

- HIV/AIDS service providers Through in-depth interviews, most respondents
said that people with albinism were receiving services like any person from
the community. This finding was backed by interviews that indicated the
provision of equal treatment to people with albinism. The Red Cross Focal
Person in Kapchorwa affirmed this when he said that “they are not given
special attention like PWDs”. The Programme Officer of Action Aid also
pointed out that, as an organisation, they do not discriminate anybody in
terms of colour and tribe. They treat them as they do non-disabled persons
and they benefit equally. Some respondents however tended to focus more on
the provision of general health care and not HIV alone.

- Perception of HIV service providers towards people with albinism Though
people with albinism access these services, some of the respondents noted
during FGDs that they are stigmatised and badly treated when they do so.
They decried the act of usually making them wait longer than others. One
person remarked: “we are treated badly at health centres. I am often abused
and called an animal or a pig”. As a result, they now fear to access these
services and some are forced to use herbal medicine or send their relatives
with a normal skin to obtain some of these drugs for them when they fall sick.
Another respondent living with albinism explained that it was his brother who bought drugs for him when he fell sick and his brother had a friend who is a doctor. When he needs to be examined, this doctor comes and treats him at home. Similarly, an inspector of schools in charge of special needs education said:

“people with albinism fear going to where people are. They feel that they are not part of any group so they go there quietly and stealthily. Some of them go to health centres, others to clinics but they go with a lot of fear”.

Several respondents mentioned that some of the service providers simply attended to them because they see that they have to do it or they want the money, but not willingly. Some service providers at times refuse to even approach them while others attend to them but do not specifically know how to meet their needs. A district Diseases and Surveillance Officer noted that, “service providers consider people with albinism like any other person but they are afraid of their skin colour and the scaling on their skins. As a result, most of them usually put on gloves when examining them even when there is no need to”.

The specific needs of people with albinism, such as treatment for skin complications and reactions, and sight problems were not catered for in most health centres.

- Rehabilitation service providers
  In Sironko, it was noted that significant delays are common in the health sector since people with albinism are meant to wait and be attended to after everyone else. Reasons given include ‘complicated’ skin problems, difficulties in taking a blood sample or in giving an injection; and on many occasions, they go un-attended to. In certain instances medical practitioners send them off, claiming they do not have medication to take care of them.

Nevertheless, a sub-county chief and a Community Development Officer in Sironko were emphatic that all human beings - albinos or not - are supposed to access the mainstream social services. The Community Based Rehabilitation Programme therefore fights stigma and discrimination so that opportunities are equalised. Albinos are people whose rights must be respected and have unique concerns warranting attention. This uniqueness is brought about by the complex nature of their skins, hurting eyes and considerable allergies – all calling for extra attention in the mainstream services because specialised services targeting them would further isolate them.

It was therefore recognised by many study participants that people with albinism are part of communities and need to be appreciated, but communities must realise this. Participatory community development approaches were noted as an effective engine for development and getting people with albinism out of stigma and poverty. This is so because these approaches view disability as a cross-cutting human rights issue. In a similar vein, all people are targeted, including those living with albinism. A sub-county chief added,
“We believe that people living with albinism are endowed with skills and if tapped into they can become better people, self-reliant and stigma will automatically reduce”,

However, limited resources to actualise this was singled out as a major drawback.

- Education service providers Data collected indicated that children with albinism were accessing education services offered by government, with 86% of the school going age bracket reporting they were attending school and 14% who said they were not attending school due to challenges like low/impaired vision.

It was further noted that education service providers in many instances consider children with albinism to be different from others, which cements segregation. During physical education lessons for instance, learners with albinism were not allowed to participate due to their being seen as weak/inactive or scaring other children. This lowers their self-esteem and fosters the acceptance of myths and social exclusion. The attitude of other children towards children with albinism is very negative, especially at primary level where they are stigmatised and called all kinds of names. The assistant community development officer in Kaptanya sub-county mentioned that in school most of the other children do not want to move near those with albinism because they feel that they are not human beings like them.

- Perception of education service providers to learners with albinism Much as education service providers are aware that children living with albinism have visual impairments, no attempt is made to ensure that they sit in the front seats or that letters are written legibly for everybody. Worse, the service providers make no special attention to sensitisate the rest of the children about the vulnerability of children with albinism and thus the need to accept them both at school and to sensitisate the communities to which these children belong.

In addition, this study noted that much as people living with albinism have unique needs, such as allergy to aspects of the environment, education service providers have no interest in cooperating with parents of children with albinism, for instance in relation to weather. Thus, much as these children come to school dressed in hats, long sleeved clothes and trousers, teachers tell them to take them off and parents suffer the effects of poor clothing when such children fall sick.

- Perception of other people with disability towards people with albinism The study revealed that community members do not consider people with albinism as disabled. They are often viewed as non-disabled – simply with a skin discolouration, and therefore seldom included in PWDs’ programmes. In some isolated instances, PWDs also viewed people with albinism as outcasts.
The PWDs interacted with understand disability as inability to see, talk, hear; restricted mobility or total immobility, and having mental health challenges. An overwhelming 93% of the respondents argued that people with albinism were not viewed as falling in any of these categories. The blind argued that people with albinism have their sight while the deaf were quite sure that those with albinism could hear whereas the physically handicapped looked at people with albinism as lacking any life-threatening challenges.

A development worker at a District Union of People with a Disability confessed that they did not know that albinism was actually a disability and that they had never considered it in any of their programmes. Besides, some district and sub-county PWD Councillors argued that albinism is not a disability because these people are able to do operate on their own. The study team concluded that this attitude has been influenced by the way the rest of the community views and treats people with albinism. An acting probation and social welfare officer in one of the districts gave another reason as to why people with albinism have not been considered to be disabled arguing that disability-related interventions have always been inadequate. PWDs therefore want as much as possible to reduce the number of beneficiaries; as adding people with albinism would mean creating additional resource burden for them.

- Do people with albinism perceive themselves as PWDs? Data collected revealed that most people with albinism believe that they are disabled and explain that the challenges they face with their skins and their eyesight hinder their performance levels in a number of activities. While many people with albinism interviewed are aware of their rights, they also know that society puts them in situations which are quite hard to live in, that often a community does not see and appreciate them. This worsens stigma.

People living with albinism further cried for acceptance within their respective communities. The only reason people with albinism attributed to their persistent seclusion from the public was because society makes them feel misplaced and not supposed to interact with other people. One teenage respondent with albinism complained that

“We feel rejected and never accepted at all, society wants our own parents to kill us. In schools children without albinism beat us up and the teachers never protect us, in class we are segregated by our own teachers. The truth is that life is hard”.

- Community members’ perceptions of people with albinism: Communities consider families with albinisms to have been cursed, they segregate such families and look at them as having bad luck and do not want their relatives to even marry into such families. Communities also abuse people with albinism by giving them disparaging names. This partly explains why they live in hiding in fear of being abused. Community inflicted stigma was evident in the voices below:
“When my daughter eats on a plate or cup no one ever touches it, no one except me eats on that plate - they believe that albinism will catch them” - a mother in Sironko.

“During play time the parents of other children never want them to play with my children with albinism”- Parent of an albinism in Manafwa

“...we the parents of children with albinism are undermined, they say that we were sexually used by demons and therefore cursed that is why we give birth to children living with albinism”.

“...people with albinism originate from a “ghost” that came from Bugisu” – a respondent in Kapchorwa.

The study team also noted that currently communities not only do not offer any psychosocial support to the parents of children with albinism but also further tell the parents to kill their children they are a curse and always bring bad luck to the communities. A mother of children with albinism in Sironko confessed that

“My first born was an albino and I killed him, my second born was an albino and I killed him too. My third, fourth and fifth born were also albinos and I did not kill them because after becoming “born again”, I realised that it was the plan that God had for me, my albino children are good and I am proud of them”.

Thus, this study concluded from its community interactions that people with albinism are not recognised as people who are disabled but instead looked at as normal people who do not face any challenges that affect their performance in life. The generally agreed and held misconception about albinism is that it is associated with curses.

**Interventions to handle the unique needs of people with albinism**

In Manafwa district, it was noted that the district had for the first time received the disability grant from Central Government. The funds are supposed to be given to organised groups of persons with disabilities – to support with income generating activities. Unfortunately, as noted by the District Education Officer of Manafwa District, other persons with disabilities in the community do not regard persons with albinism as part of them. Instead they see it as another demand on a minimal budget allocated to disability issues.

The study indeed discovered that there were no interventions to handle the unique needs of people with albinism (e.g. sun screens, etc), except the mainstream service provision outlets. This was confirmed by people living with albinism, their parents, district leaders and political leaders who reported that much as people with albinism are presented with unique, broad, urgent and unmet needs, there is no single intervention in place to address their unique needs:

“This is a virgin area, how will you access these people because they are unheard of much as they are there? There is no single organisation I have heard
of supporting people with albinism, actually you are the first people I have heard finding out about these people. Honestly these people are marginalised and left out, development agencies should actually take them on” - a Community Development Officer

A review of the district and sub-county plans also revealed that people with albinism were not recognised as part of the marginalized groups and as such could not benefit from the funds meant for the youth, elderly, children and PWDs. It was further noted that even the release sheets from Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to the community department neither do nor cater for people with albinism under interventions for marginalized groups. This implies that there is a need to popularise and push for the inclusion of the concept of albinism among marginalized groups.

As a result of an omission during planning and budgeting processes, the services at the district are not targeting a specific group of people but everyone as whole. For instance, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) funds provided by the government have been accessed by all, including learners with albinism.

- **Availability of functional, appropriate and skilled service providers** The existence of functional, appropriate and skilled service providers to address the unique needs of people with albinism was another concern. Field based findings indicate that there were no special personnel tasked to take care of people with albinism. In all service delivery points, especially health and education, service providers assume that people with albinism should be treated like other people, not knowing that they have certain specific health issues that need to be attended to by a specialist (e.g. vision and dermatological conditions) trained in albinism. This omission was also tracked to the training institutions that do not pay attention to the issues of people with albinism. As a result, parents of children with albinism often find themselves unsure as to how to help their children. A mother narrated to the study team an incident in which she almost lost her child due to the ignorance of the health personnel to handle her albinism child:

  “Joan almost died in June 2010 when we went to hospital. She had an acute fever because of malaria, the medical personnel failed to trace the veins to put her on drip but eventually when the vein was found, it was black hence the medical worker got scared and ran away.

Throughout the Elgon sub region, 72% of the respondents felt that service providers did not possess the required skills to handle the unique needs of people with albinism. The inspector of schools in charge of Special Needs Education also mentioned that competence is lacking in the education sector. Most of the personnel have not been trained to handle issues of people with albinism. Rather, teachers are trained to handle the special needs of children with other disabilities.
Similarly, the DPO personnel and leaders are not able to handle people with albinism because they too lack the skill. The issue of albinism is new to them, as mentioned by the chairman of the Uganda National Association for the People Disabilities (UNAPD). Most of the personnel are skilled to carry out their general work, but do not have skills to handle health challenges that are specific to people with albinism for example they do not have skin or eye doctors, eye. Most people with albinism are therefore forced to move to either Mbale or Kampala for treatment.

According to the District HIV/AIDS focal person, the districts have gaps with human resource because of the restrictions on the number of staff districts are allowed to hire. However, the programme officer of Action Aid argued that these health professionals are well trained to handle any human being regardless of their skin colour. He believes that people with albinism are just like any other human beings and the personnel do not require any special skills or training in albinism. He however doubted their degree of competence which he said was inadequate, especially within DPOs whom he believes may not have the competence or staff to handle albinism.

This study therefore highlights the need for the identification of the health, education and other critical needs of people with albinism in relation to the available staff with necessary skills to meet these needs, and to train staff to meet the identified gaps.

- **Form of support provided by development agencies.** People were emphatic in stating that there was no development agency which had offered them any form of support whether economic or social. They struggle to uptake the existing social and economic services provided by the mainstream government. However, this presents another challenge because, given their colour and unique appearance, they tend to be isolated, rejected and they are attended to last, if at all. Such rejection was however denied by other stakeholders who argued that isolation was most likely a psychological feeling and not a reality.

The study also discovered that the people with albinism have been encouraged to join community based organisation groups and have been registered under the NAADS programme (agricultural support programme) through these groups. Besides NAADS, Manafwa town council has been able to encourage them to participate in vegetable growing by giving them some seeds.

As already noted, the DPOs do not consider people with albinism as part of them and therefore do not involve them in their activities. Further, it was reported that even other development partners have not supported or highlighted the plight of albinism in the district. People with albinism are usually treated like other people and the challenges that they face have been overlooked.

The only semblance of provision of support to people with albinism was reported by district officers who noted that partners like TASO (The AIDS Support Organisation) and The AIDS Information Centre (AIC) with some NGOs have been able to address
some of the health needs of some people with albinism through their numerous outreach activities. In spite of these efforts, however, a majority of people with albinism were not aware of these interventions specifically directed towards their welfare.

- **Challenges in accessing services in the mainstream service delivery points.** People with albinism find it hard to compete for services with other people due to a great deal of stigma they suffer. In an FGD session, it was reported that communities inflict stigma on persons living with albinism due to held perceptions that they were outcasts. In most rural settings where services are delivered under poor structures including in the open, people with albinism had to grapple with the challenge of direct sunshine which affects them. It was reported for instance that most services including health programmes are provided under the sun, people have to queue in long lines under to access them. In such cases, people with albinism are forced to take shelter under a shade to avoid skin burns and by the time the heat reduces, the service providers are equally tired and thus offer less attention to them.

- **Extent to which people with albinism are organised to conduct effective advocacy.** The extent of involvement of persons with albinism in effective advocacy is dependent on their level of organisation. 100% of the people with albinism interviewed said they were not aware of any organisation supporting them to advocate for their benefit. Most have not been organised into groups and have not been involved in advocacy. A number of them are quiet and reserved. In an interview with the programme officer Action Aid, it was explained that it was difficult to form groups since people with albinism were scattered and few in number. Other factors attributed to the inability of people with albinism to engage in effective advocacy were related to poverty, stigma, low level of education making it difficult to identify advocacy approaches, and lack of transport to facilitate the would-be leaders to penetrate the hilly terrain of the Elgon sub-region.

“...we have always wanted to advocate for our plight through disability groups but they never accept us, we are not organised into any groups and that is why I had to leave Manafwa district to come and mobilise people living with albinism in Sironko District. It is hard for us because we are never sure whether our issues will be considered” - A mobiliser of people living with albinism

It is also important to note that whereas some people perceive albinism as a disability, others do not seem to see it that way. The only group in the region involved in advocacy is the Elgon Foundation of Persons with Albinism, which is trying to mobilise persons with albinism. This group had a launch event in May 2010 but no group activities have yet been started due to lack of funding. They indicated their desire to use the media to advocate for issues affecting them. The membership of this group is not yet clear as most people with albinism in the sub-region are not aware of its existence due
to low mobilization. This notwithstanding, most people with albinism (90%) strongly felt that it was important for them to engage in advocacy as a means of ensuring that their issues are brought to the policy agenda. 46% of the respondents interviewed felt that organised groups of people with albinism would lead to effective lobbying of improved social services while 20% felt it would lead to reduced stigma. 22% were of the opinion that it would lead to support for income generating activities.

- **Priorities of people with albinism that require intervention by development agencies.** Through in-depth engagement with various stakeholders, including people with albinisms, the study team identified several needs of people with albinism which people with albinism interviewed reported were not being addressed. The priorities that emerged are presented below.

Education of people with albinism is one of the areas that need urgent intervention. It was noted that most people with albinism have not gone far in education and that this explains their inability to compete favourably for various jobs both in government - nationally and at district level – and within NGOs/civil society organisations. With more education and empowerment, children with albinism will learn to co-exist with others, to stand and say that they are part of that community and that being a person with albinism does not deprive them of anything possessed by other people. This in the long run can translate into people with albinism engaging in competitive politics as part of a broader strategy to push their cause into the national policy agenda. This study therefore suggests a deliberate move by development partners to sponsor the education of children with albinism from the lower levels to higher institutions of learning. Facilitation to enable people with albinism access vocational institutions with viable and marketable trades/vocations will also be prudent.

Medical care and treatment for both children and adults with albinism also need to be put in place. Health practitioners interacted with mentioned a lack of knowledge of how to handle people with albinism and argued that there were no specific guidelines in relation to dealing with them. Children especially require proper care and feeding and advice on how to manage themselves; say, their skins. This treatment calls for the provision of skin products and sun-glasses or spectacles. Self-management is a priority area warranting intervention. Because of long-standing neglect and stigma, several people with albinism do not know much about self-care.

Medical and social workers as well as disabled people’s organisations and development agencies also should help to officially categorise people with albinism as PWDs, requiring special attention to ensure that their voices are heard. People with albinism have very little knowledge and information about the disability movement and national and global developments in this field.

There was an emerging discourse in the field which sought to push for the representation of people with albinism in the decision-making processes, including Parliament. This stands out as an advocacy priority area. All actors should focus on
massive sensitisation and demystification of the person with albinism as an outcast in order to assist reduce or eliminate stigmatisation and create respect. We have seen that people with albinism suffer low confidence levels; others are still in situations of denial. The study team was repeatedly reminded of several cases where they do not have access to the environment outside their homes. Exposure is therefore lacking for this category of PWDs. Psychosocial support should be considered, they are isolated and they end up being traumatised. Counselling is required so that people living with albinism are accepted and appreciated and so that people living with albinism accept their condition.

Poverty is another area which needs to be addressed among the people with albinism, as it worsens the discrimination experienced by people with albinism:

“I am a single child and my mother passed away when I was 6 years old. My father, who rejected me as his child, claiming that his clan does not bear children with albinism, also passed on. I was completely rejected until I was taken on by my mother’s parents who tried to educate me up to senior four. However, I have attempted to sit the Uganda Certificate of Education twice but failed because my relatives cannot afford the examination fees. I am finished: my skin and body cannot manage agriculture, you can see how wounded my hands got when I tried. We have delicate skins, we have many requirements for good health but we cannot afford” - A teenage male with albinism.

People with albinism therefore need to be trained in various income generating activities, so that they attain skills to sustain themselves. Respondents during the FGD suggested projects like grinding mills, and animals rearing, such as cows which they say will provide them with milk which will not only be sold to earn a living but will also be provided to the children hence improving the delicate health conditions of these children. In addition, economic independence will enable them to meet their unique costly medication and clothing needs.

People with albinism also need protection from witchcraft that has led to the death of several people with albinism within East Africa – all mysteriously done in the hope of magically acquiring wealth by sacrificing certain body parts of these people. Though not common in Uganda, people with albinism said that they often felt scared whenever they hear of colleagues in the region having been sacrificed:

“There is a belief that when you sacrifice some of their body parts you get rich. I can never leave my little son lying down alone in my absence. My brother-in-law told my mother-in-law to shave my son’s hair so that it is taken to Tanzania for sale at 3million shillings. My mother-in-law, being “born again”, refused. He then said he would steal this child so he could get rich after selling him. I now live in fear. Victor is only 2 years, but I don’t know whether he will grow up. I don’t do much digging because he cannot stay in the sunshine. I cannot leave him at home because his life is threatened.” - A mother in Sironko
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This baseline study leads to the following conclusions:

a. There are currently hardly any development agencies providing support to people with albinism in the districts of study. People with albinism have struggled to survive on their own and no one, including disability organisations, offers services to them.

b. Problems faced by people with albinism are not receiving adequate attention. Most of these have been overlooked and no effort has been made to identify these problems and how they can be tackled.

c. Most PWDs do not consider people with albinism as disabled, but either as non-disabled people or outcasts. This perspective has been influenced by the ill-informed opinion of members of the community at large.

d. The staffing levels in most of the health facilities and in schools is inadequate and not sufficiently skilled to handle issues of albinism. Health personnel are for instance not trained to handle the particular health challenges, such as with eye sight and skin. They usually assume that they should be treated like other people.

e. People with albinism have not organised themselves in groups. Most of them are scattered and they living individual lives without receiving support. This has therefore contributed to their being marginalised, as they are in any event few. It is only this year that they have attempted to form the Elgon Foundation for People with Albinism in Mbale, but few are members of this Foundation, no activity has yet been carried out and much still needs to be done.

In the light of the above, there is a need to:

1. Conduct research/surveys to determine the prevalence of albinism in the country. There is also a need for civil society organisations of people with albinism and the entire disability fraternity to coordinate with government to find out who the people with albinism are, their number in the districts and where they stay. This will help both government and development partners to plan for people with albinism and meet their needs.

2. Based on research information, develop appropriate strategies for assisting people with albinism that include:
   - Integrate albinism awareness in the school curricula, especially to correct misconceptions about the condition
   - Educate counsellors in schools about albinism
   - Train health care providers about albinism and the effects that exposure to the sun can have on this condition
• Encourage community self-help support groups
• Implement programmes to aid people with albinism in finding indoor occupations

3. PWDs should be made aware that people living with albinism have visual impairments, problems with their skins and hearing challenges, which constrain their performance of daily tasks, compared to other people. This also causes discrimination and stigma from society and they must therefore be accepted in the disability fraternity.

4. Sensitisation of the community and various service providers about the plight of people with albinism should focus on the fact that they are not unique people, they are like ‘normal’ people and therefore should not be targeted for human sacrifice. Attitudes need to change and people with albinism need to be treated with respect. More importantly, they should be sensitised about their rights and be informed that they too are disabled.

5. People with albinism should be encouraged to go to school and study up to higher institutions of learning so that they can acquire survival skills. Those that are already old enough and are willing to go back to school should be enrolled in vocational institutions to attain marketable trades like catering or teaching among others, so that they survive on their own.

6. It was suggested by the parents of the children with albinism that service providers be trained to handle issues of albinism. In the area of health, they recommend that government train a special group of service providers and post them to areas where people with albinism are concentrated so that they can be received and attended to whenever they go for treatment in the health centres. They should additionally be trained on people’s relations skills and on appreciating and taking care of the needs of people with albinism.

7. Other service providers, particularly health service providers and teachers, need to be trained in counselling and listening skills, especially in the area of albinism. This will equip them to help instil self-esteem in the lives of people with albinism and to mitigate discrimination by the community. These service providers will also be better able to help them to accept their situation, particularly in the case of the children.

8. Respondents recommended that, when highlighting the plight of persons with albinism, development partners need to work with the Local Councils I, II, III, community-based organisations, and the CDOs to ensure that they are all are mobilised and brought on board. Chief Administration Officers and Resident District Commissioners also need to network with NGOs that have a local presence and have a number of volunteers who are willing to help. One Assistant Community Development Officer also suggested that there is a need to work with elders who have been enlightened on albinism.
9. People with albinism need to get organised in groups like any other community of people who have special interests. This will enable them to express their needs and demands, to reach out to the community and to more easily identify their requirements. With the formation of groups, people with albinism will also be able to push for inclusion during job recruitment and other service delivery points.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience
7. Community Conversations on Restorative Cultural practices in the Mt. Elgon Area

RONALD ELLY WANDA

Abstract
This chapter explores the characteristics or ‘nuts-and-bolts’ of the epistemology of afrikology as a universal scientific epistemology that goes beyond Euro-centricism or other ethnocentrism using cultural case studies from East Africa. Looking at three case studies, it makes an attempt to find out what Afrikology looks like. The author argues that the liberal paradigm imposed on African communities has undermined the hermeneutic power of Africans to interpret the world through their own symbols - which has led to a crisis of meaning, of life, persons, and community. In realising the falsity of dichotomisation of complex human relations by certain restraining epistemologies, communities are attempting to correct this under a system of restorative practices that include; justice, medicine, and cross-border restorative cultural activities under the platform of afrikology. Through practical means and community-centred interactions, the author tries to demonstrate how communities are moving away from the perspective of African “victimhood” and cultural pluralism by experimenting with cultural clusterism adapted to the epistemology of ‘thinking from the heart’ as an approach towards renewed community-centred empowerment and restorative cultural intellectualism. It is from this position that the author also offers a critique of pluralism as a school of thought and its relevance in the local context.

INTRODUCTION

“Natural resources supply raw material for getting the work of the world done. Cultural resources organize co-operation among people for getting the work of the world done.” - Dani Nabudere, 2006.

The foundation of our talk in this chapter is the timeless supposition that we are culturally more together than we are alone. Our theme aims to explore the practicalities of culture in peace creation and the workings of afrikology as an epistemology in East African communities, or to put it simply, afrikology and cultural clusterism in action. What does afrikology look like? What is the DNA composition of cultural clusters in Mt Elgon’s cross-border communities?

To begin with, the first articulation of Afrikology declares that: “it is a true philosophy of knowledge and wisdom based on African cosmogonies. It is afri- because it is inspired by the ideas originally produced from the cradle of humankind located East Africa. It is not afrikology because it is African, but it is afri-because it emanates from the source of the Universal system of knowledge originating in Africa. The philosophic product is therefore not relativistic to Africa but universal in essence
with its base in Africa. It is also –(ko)logy because it is based on the logos-the word, which was uttered to set in motion the Universe in its originality. It was from that word that human consciousness first emerged and it was from that consciousness that humanity emerged as thinking and acting agent with language from the word as the active cultural achievement. As Dani Nabudere, the epistemological and philosophical grandmaster of afrikology, in one of his last books (before his sudden death) *Afrikology: Philosophy and Wholeness* (2011) illustrates:

*Afrikology is not African-centric or Afrocentric. It is a universal scientific epistemology that goes beyond Eurocentricism, or other ethnocentrisms. It recognises all sources of knowledge as valid within their historical, cultural or social contexts and seeks to engage them into a dialogue that can lead to better knowledge for all. It recognises peoples’ traditions as a fundamental pillar in the creation of such cross-cultural understandings in which the Africans can stand out as having been the fore-bearers of much of what is called Greek or European heritage as fact of history that ought to be recognised, because from this fact alone, it can be shown that cross-cultural interactions has been a fact of historical reality.*

Professor Nabudere argues meticulously that for centuries the African personality has been bedevilled by the burden of foreign domination that has thus affected her self-understanding. Subsequently, Nabudere urges that the process of re-awakening and recovery in Africa has to be one of a historical deconstruction, what he calls “consciousness raising,” not by others, but by Africans themselves tracing the origins and achievements of their civilizations. This, he insists, requires the adoption of Afrikology as an epistemology that recognises orality as a valid source of knowledge. He therefore, encourages researchers and practitioners alike to adopt a holistic approach towards recognising that orality can only be interpreted under a platform that accommodates multi- and interdisciplinary approaches. Appropriately enough, this is what he calls ‘act locally, think globally.’ Implicit in this epigram is the belief that it is local struggles in the villages that can guarantee African-rebirth, resurgence and renaissance and ensure that local communities reject neo-traditionalism that had been instituted by the colonial state. However, Nabudere at the same time warns that this should not be seen in isolation but in solidarity with other local groups elsewhere in the world. The argument here seems to be that if the driving force towards globalisation is domination, then globalised resistance based on “global consciousness” ought to be its antithesis. The imperative, as such, for the authentic liberation of Africa, as argued by another revered philosopher Mogobe Ramose, requires neither a supplicative apologia nor an interminable obsequies in defence of being African. “The African must simply be an African, that is, a human being second to none in our contingent but complex universe.”

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epistemological, curricula’s, governance etc.) imposed on communities denotes that this is essential.

THE DIALECTICAL IMPACT OF COLONIALISM IN AFRICA

For Africans the world over, the advent of colonialism by Europeans was a tragic experience. In 1885 during the so-called ‘Berlin Conference’, Africa was scrambled up among occupying powers with the sole aim of violently looting as much as they could in their areas of influence. Thus African states were created to facilitate and ease the efficiency of rapid colonial exploitation. The colony became a laboratory of caprice where all sorts of clinical trials (political, social, and cultural) were performed, causing untold suffering to African communities-effects of which still remain visible this present moment. The dialectical inter-phase that occurred during colonisation also left Africa ruined psychologically and intellectually. The experience left two broad “legacies” on Africa; first was the denial of African identity and second was the foisting of western thought and cultural realities and perspectives on Africans. In Egypt for instance, the late Palestinian-American academic Edward Said has observed that when the British ruling class tried to assume political power over Egypt, it did so by first establishing British ‘knowledge of Egypt’.” Said further elaborates that:

The British were initially not concerned principally with military or economic power over Egypt, but their knowledge of the Orients, including Egypt, was conceived as a form of power. The objective was to have such knowledge about the “distant other” in order to be able “to dominate it and (exert) authority over it.” This in effect meant denying autonomy of knowledge over the object of domination since to do so would have recognised the existence of knowledge of the object over itself. The object’s existence could only be recognised, in the words of the Colonial representatives, in as much “as we know it.”

As such, the current cultural value crisis among Africans is the result of the impact of liberal philosophy and its associated discourses. For so long the liberal paradigm has undermined the hermeneutic power of Africans to interpret the world through their symbols. One common factor among liberal theories is the value that they place on individual freedom to pursue interests and goals. This is perhaps why classical liberals such as the British philosophers John Locke and John Stewart Mills placed strong emphasis on freedoms from social control. From this foundational value of freedom follows the welfare state, wealth, and power manifestations of a mind-set centred on individualism. Therefore, the concept of the world and manner of living which informs Western societies can best be described as materialistic. This way of life has captivated the Western civilization ever since and has been aggressively exported to

297 Wanda, R. E., Comprehensive Report on Community Sites of Knowledge, (Unpublished work), MPAU, Mbale, Uganda, November 2010, p.4

all parts of the world where their civilization has gone in search for material resources and fulfilling its expansionist philosophy.

**Epistemological dependency culture in Africa**

Today in East Africa, in spite of flag independence in the early 1960s, the state is still dependent on Western political constructs, socio-legal ideas, and judicial and epistemological philosophies. Like elsewhere in Africa, this is because the structures of all nation-states (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi) oozes from an engineered political metaphysical past, where people never dialogued their differences as a basis for federating. They were simply conscripted into geopolitical constructs that they neither chose nor bargained for. Therefore, colonialism as such, designed and inspired many of the problems our communities face today; this includes those now being rooted as universal rights and the deliberate portrayal of women in Africa as victims of traditional culture and in need of rescue.

The identification of African women as subordinate victims, devoid of any form of agency to resist or challenge oppression, has roots in historical, economic, social, cultural and political structures designed and defended by Eurocentric philosophies. Ugandan scholar Mukasa Luutu has argued elsewhere that this perception of African justice systems implies that indigenous Africa was insensitive to human rights and as such, the concept of human rights and its protection originated from Western civilization. On the same basis, human rights have been misappropriated and patented as an organic attribute of Western society and values; this has portrayed the West as the mode, the yardstick and arbiter over human rights concerns in the world.

One other key problem characterising the post-colonial state in East Africa has been its tendency to fragment its own communities into hostile factions. Instead of politically uniting its people within and across its borders, the African political elites have resorted to colonial tactics of ‘divide and rule’ and the ideology of ‘neo-tribalism’ by exploiting the ethnic diversities of their communities to their benefit and to the detriment of unity in the so called ‘state’. It is commonplace in East Africa to be asked by state operatives: *We, toa kipande* or *kitu kidogo* or at times if you are very unlucky *toa kitu yote* (produce your identity card, or money). Instead of utilising the rich ethnic and cultural diversities of communities as building blocks to a people’s African unity, they use these diversities to divide the people even further in order to, yet again, enrich themselves. In so doing they perpetuate neo-colonial domination and fall prey to powerful global force. They are therefore deliberately failing to deconstruct the exogenously hegemonic agendas wearing economic, religious, charitable and other guises programmed into the colonial state, preferring instead to reconstruct it in every way the former colonialist would have wanted - one that supports them and not communities.

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Under the liberal heritage (that has guided European thought on development and human rights for the last four hundred years) that has since been hurriedly imposed on African communities, by exogenous forces in collaboration with local elites, African thought and society has subsequently experienced a crisis of meaning, of life, persons, and community. This is because this liberal heritage imposed on Africans its notion of the world, values, and manner of living. According to this heritage, social evolution constitutes the basic principle of the world and its main assumption is that technical knowledge is therefore the only key to human development. This Western view of development is based on the idea that humanity moves in a linear fashion and that this movement or progress is unidirectional and irreversible. One implication of this view is that there is and can only be one path or direction that humanity can take, and that this is the one provided by advanced Western countries. And as Malawian Philosopher Harvey Sindima has pointed out, this is the understanding behind the concepts of ‘modernity’ and ‘progress’. Professor Sindima rightly concludes, that “centuries have shown that the alliance between progress, science, and technology has not eliminated misery; on the contrary destitution has emerged and the future of all creation hangs in the balance”.

The legacy of liberalism on African ‘intellectuals’ and policy makers

Nowadays in East Africa, Eurocentric ideas are still very prevalent and their liberal notions pervade all aspects of life, particularly in urban areas. ‘Modernity’ or ‘catching up’ with the West: its technology, infrastructure and even way of life seem to be the primary objective towards which many countries are busy striving. This precarious mentality has been worsened by a brigade of natives under diverse name tags such as “intellectuals,” “change agents,” or even “modernists,” euro-centrically trained, it seems, in the fine art of social, political, and worst of all cultural banditry. They tend to reject and at times even deny Africa’s own cultural and intellectual achievements. In another arena, one critic captures this self-denial psyche well: “It was African scholars who were affected by Eurocentric education or who had not been exposed to the rich cultural history of Africa that denied the existence of African philosophy during the “Great Debate” of the seventies and eighties.” Sadly, there are certain writers such as the Ghanaian Kwasi Wiredu in his 1980 publication *Philosophy and an African Culture*, who have busied themselves with the appalling task of watering down the insulting language of Eurocentric writers and their condescending attitudes towards African tradition - by supporting their fundamental insinuation that Western tradition of thought is essentially superior to the African tradition of thought. They have gone even further by saying much more than this. Their conclusion is that Africans may never develop any respectable tradition of thought unless and until they can copy western paradigms.

300 Arif, Nasr ibid p.6
302 Sindima, ibid p.30
Cultural rootless leadership and community fragmentation in East Africa

Today, one pertinent problem that continues to characterise our so-called states in East Africa is their tendency to fragment their own communities into hostile factions. Instead of politically uniting their people within and across its borders, our political elites have resorted to colonial tactics of ‘divide and rule’ and the ideology of ‘neo-tribalism’ by exploiting the ethnic diversities of our communities to their benefit and to the detriment of unity in the so called ‘state’. In so doing they perpetuate neo-colonial domination and fall prey to a powerful global force.

It is fair to point out, as such, that the current economic, political and intellectual elites suffer from an acute sense of cultural relevance before the generality of their people. Thus they espouse visions and programmes of modernity and development driven by imported cultural benchmarks. This is a direct result of the impact of western ways of thinking and doing things and its associated discourses on them, which instils an allergic instinct against African cultural rootedness which is fashionably castigated as ‘backwardness’, ‘ignorance’, ‘superstition’, ‘primitive’, ‘parochial’ etc. In a word, the African state can be summed up as what Professor Patrick Chabal has called ‘non-organic state’. Chabal argues that the African state is both ‘overdeveloped and soft’. It is overdeveloped because it was fastidiously and artificially put into place. All the textbook institutions of a state and its government are present. It is soft because, although powerful, it cannot administer welfare. This observation later gave rise to his other book *Africa Works* (1999) that Chabal penned with Jean-Pascal Daloz, in which he argued that, after all, there might be a way of perceiving Africa as quite efficient - if only we were to remove a western lens.304

THE CHANGING GLOBAL POLITICAL CULTURE: FROM GLOBALISATION TO GLOCALISATION

All over the world today, there is something taking place, a ‘wind of change’ of some sort if you like. We are seeing a large shift of socio-cultural and socio-political attitudes where communities by and large are retreating to the local as the only source of security in a world where little seems to make sense anymore. With society at the international and national level seen as abstract and unrealistic, the local is increasingly being viewed as real and practical. In a world where once every local phenomenon was examined from the point of view of its national and international ramifications, the reverse is likely to be the case today. British political sociologist Frank Furedi captures this change well: ‘ironically, the more the world is becoming internationalized, with every region brought into an intimate relationship with the world market forces, the more the singularity of the experience of the parish-pump is insisted upon’.305

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304 Chan, S., *Grasping Africa: A Tale of Tragedy and Achievement*. Pp33-34
Social movements and community interactivity

In the Mt. Elgon area of East Africa, this restorative exodus has also caught on. As if responding to Herbert Stein, the American economist’s caustic aphorism “If something cannot go on forever, it will stop”\(^{306}\), Community Sites of Knowledge (CSK - depositories of indigenous knowledge systems) are increasingly becoming nurseries for alternatives socio-cultural and political leadership leading to organic restorative practices, at the centre of which one finds efforts to address persistent questions of marginalisation, discrimination and social and cultural exclusions. This is in large measure a response to the declining political and cultural capacity of the state and triggered by the realisation slowly taking place in the region that democratisation will not come from periodic elections, which political parties have for so long mistakenly viewed as their exclusive domain of operation. Political parties across East Africa, instead of being a force for democratisation, have instead been empty vehicles for tribal barons or cabals of kleptocrats without a committed agenda for cultural restoration or political or social reform. Political parties have been instruments of convenience for powerful individual politicians. Rather than help forge cultural consciousness they’ve led to further fragmentation of the state that has in turn led to further violence at the heartbeat of communities\(^{307}\).

Newton Garver in his tidy article *What Violence Is* (1968)\(^{308}\) has suggested that violence is not only a matter of physical force but rather that it is also psychological in that it affects one’s ability to make their own decisions. He went on to show that each kind of violence has both personal and institutional forms. It is not my aim to take issue here with Garver’s account but merely to tap into his observations that I think are relevant in the context of our present conversation. Garver’s account is valuable as it stands. It gives a useful way of viewing a vast range of very diverse and often spectacular human behaviour, a way which enables us to see through the diversity and spectacle to certain essential features in respect to Afrikology and its application in communities.

Garver roots his account of violence in a specific moral practice, namely the evaluation of behaviour in terms of fundamental human rights. He argues that we get an even greater resolution of diversity if we focus on the question of what is common to these two basic kinds of violence. Much of who we are depends on our ability to act in concert with each other. This is true of our physical survival. Few of us could live for more than a few days, and none of us would have matured into adults, without the on-going support of various forms of interactions. This interdependence, according to Garver, is also true of our community and cultural life. Our language, our knowledge, our arts, all of our social structures, and even much of our sense of self are a function of our capacity for interactions. I think it is fair to say that most of what we value in life is creatively woven out of our capacity for complex, diverse,

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sustained and systematic interactions. One fundamental purpose of Afrikology is to enhance our ability to interact with each other so as to improve our lives. It enriches us by amplifying our ability to satisfy our desires, power through concerted activity. It is just as clear that diminishing each other’s ability to participate in such forms of interactivity impoverishes us all, sometimes as is the case in most places in East Africa, in violent ways. Afrikology is the art of interactions.

Afrikology in communities

Over the past few years, all the major social science paradigms from structuralism to Marxism, world systems theory and globalisation that had sought to explain the predicament of African societies in terms of structures and epistemologies have been countered and critiqued by a perspective that places primacy and emphasis on the human heart, creativity and resilience, in a word - afrikology. One of the most important features of Afrikology to the epistemological struggle in the academic understanding of social and cultural change in Africa has been its capacity to explode often victimising approaches in exchange for a much more balanced understanding of communities at work in Africa. Commenting directly on the heritage of the social science and humanities’ enterprises in Africa, Nabudere, as part of his intellectual trajectory for the 21st century, and in direct reference to Afrikology, has referred to two diametrically opposed orientations. He characterised one as Eurocentric and subservient to European social sciences and the other as Afro-centric in that it is steeped in African knowledge from the past. He however, makes it clear, as the following case studies will attempt to show, that Afrikology is universal and it is at the core of the creative process of social transformation and cultural restoration, understanding perceptions, ideas, and needs.

ABOUT THE CASE STUDIES

As a way into this conversation, what comes to mind and heart immediately are three recent compelling community accounts. The first is a dialogue in search of meaning that focused on ‘language, culture and women’s rights’ that took place deep in the villages at the heart of communities across Uganda and Kenya. It was through this afrikological podium that we discovered a discourse in which the old traditions and cultures were able to interrogate modernity and vice-versa within their own contexts, which were varied. Such a dialogue between the two worlds had been an on-going struggle and counter-struggle that has to be recognised and understood. The two constituted a dialectical relationship and this relationship had to be interrogated. We came to the conclusion that modernity had not fully managed to contain and destroy tradition, but that on the contrary in some cases the latter had outlasted the former although with the odd modification. This interrogation proceeded along the path that sought to highlight the strategies of survival adopted by traditionalism against the destructive impact of a globalising and universalising modernisation -which offered no new benefits to those affected by modernisation.

There were eight dialogues across Uganda and Kenya, but for the sake of brevity, we have only highlighted the Acholi dialogue that took place in Gulu, northern Uganda.
The second narrative comes from *Iwokodan* community site of knowledge based in Palisa, Uganda as it searches for judicial balance through the workings of restorative justice in redressing inter and intra-community transgressions. This arises out of realisation of the fact that western analytical philosophical paradigms, which inform social sciences and the humanities, tend to polarise situations. This is in a way what dialectics has meant for western thought right from Plato and Hegel. Philosophically, the *Iwokodan* restorative approach has led the community organised as a clan to rediscover its sense of *utu* or humanness cultivated in an Afrikological epistemology that recognises unities and complementarities in relationships between humans and nature in general. The African beliefs, which we find represented in the basic idea of ‘Ubuntu,’ or the need to take into account ‘reciprocal relations’ that guide peoples’ perceptions of themselves are crucially important in defining a comprehensive solution to global and local situations, which in African conditions, happen predominantly in rural conditions such as is the case in the *Iwokodan* community site of knowledge.

The third account captures afrikological efforts by cross-border communities around the Mt. Elgon area in search of collective identities through cultural clusterism organised through a *peace and cultural animation festival* that took place in November 2012 in Kapchorwa on the slopes of Mt Elgon. Cross-border conflicts in the Mt. Elgon area have had many dimensions with various correlated causes and factors. Although land has been a major contributing factor to the conflicts, other social and economic underlying factors have also played a role in fuelling the conflicts. In addition, the conflicts have had negative social, cultural, and economic impacts on all cross-border communities living in the area among them: displacement, physical harm to individuals; the destruction of property; death resulting in a high incidence of orphans and widows; rape and other forms of sexual violence and exploitation; and the resulting food and general insecurity. Furthermore, these problems have presented the cross-border communities already dealing with conflicts of multiple types, from mineral extraction to cattle rustling, to drought, to post-conflict inter-ethnic violence, to the creation of national parks for tourism in both sides of the mountain in Kenya and Uganda. However, until now, there has been no comprehensive effort in focusing on culture as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism as well as restorative practices of cross-border communities as a soluble alternative in promoting peace and regional security in Africa. After all, the concepts of ‘culture’, ‘peace’, ‘security’ and ‘development’ are indeed, intimately related.

**Case Study 1: Community Dialogues on ‘Language, Culture and Women’s Rights’ in Uganda and Kenya**

Having identified the verbal dependency of most African intellectuals and social activists on Western processes of development and its concepts of rights as a major obstacle to Africa’s development, and because of the prejudicial biases that exists within their ‘modern’ inclined psyches, the purposes of our journeys in communities in rural northern and eastern Uganda and rural western Kenya were an attempt
to bring about a meaningful, and productive dialogue between modernity and traditional conceptions and misconceptions of human rights by engaging the so called ‘intellectuals’ representing the modernist view and the ‘uncertificated/uneducated’ rural masses/natives representing their own traditional view.

The objective in part, was to create an afrikological podium that would diffuse the hostility that exists between modernists and traditionalists, both of whom view each other’s motives with suspicion. Modernists tend to view traditionalists as ‘illiterate and backwards,’ whilst traditionalists on the other hand, tend to look at modernists as muzungu (foreign) minded, with imported ideas and in a rush to rid tradition and replace it with modernity. In a sense, similar to Western assumptions where the “barbarian” is inferior to the “civilised”, the rural dweller is accordingly seen as subservient to the developed urban intellectual. Therefore, the verbal distance that exists between the two is, among other things, manifested by their ways of understanding, perceiving, interpreting, and evaluating as well as in their modes of articulation and communication of issues of human rights. The lack of meaningful interface between the two groups appears to be a problem deriving from the issue of language, culture, and meaning.

Thus, this afrikological community conversation was a direct attempt at scratching the fabric and personality of Afrikology, in order to try and understand what is in the heart, not just the mind of those engaged in the conversations. It adopted the use of dialogue as opposed to debate; this is because dialogue unlike debate emphasises listening to deepen understanding. A dialogue draws participants from as many parts of the community as possible to exchange information face-to-face, share personal stories and experiences, honestly express perspectives, clarify viewpoints, and develop solutions to community concerns. Dialogues go beyond sharing and understanding to transforming participants. While the process begins with the individual, it eventually involves groups and institutions. It develops common values and allows participants to express their own interests. It expects that participants will grow in understanding and may decide to act together with common goals. In dialogue, participants can question and re-evaluate their assumptions. Through this process, people are learning to work together to improve relations. Ultimately, dialogues can affect how policies are made. This in effect is restorative learning and unlearning that can only be cultivated by the use of an afrikological epistemology.

The idea of the project, the late Professor Nabudere explained in 2011, came as a result of a regional conference on Restorative Justice and International Humanitarian Law that he had helped organise back in 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya. He informed the conference that he opposed the idea raised by some participants that the question of women and human rights in East Africa were confined to the tradition vs. modernity dichotomy. He instead argued that it was a question of language and culture. “There is lack of interfacing between the researcher and the researched. The ‘NGO expert’ ought to meet with the community and converse the issue of meaning” added Nabudere.
Nabudere argued that language is a guide to social reality, and that it is the medium of expression for African societies. Therefore, from this perspective, experience is largely determined by the language habits of the community, and that each separate structure represents a separate reality. Mukasa Luutu, the Vice-Chancellor of the Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute has supplemented Nabudere by adding that language is a modelling system, and that “no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre, the structure of natural language”. This is apparent in the use of vocabulary and the semantics of words. Clearly, from Nabudere’s point of view, there is no particular language or culture that names everything or catalogues the whole compass of knowledge of the world. Underlying a word, therefore, is its relationship with other words, and the goal of analysis is to discover vocabulary sets that carry the underlying semantic components of the language and a people’s culture.

Luutu has pointed that all education in East Africa has been colonially oriented; it had delinked people from their communities and societies. “Education as such has been presented to us as modernity, which has created a further distance between individuals and their rural community”. These days, the script is clear. The state through the constitution imposes cultural restrictions under the auspices of the human rights law - i.e. you are allowed to do all you want culturally as long as it is not repugnant, in some cultures homosexuality is considered repugnant. The law criminalises this. Good conscience is considered good Christian values. Polygamous relations are prohibited but having many mistresses is allowed.

A community dialogue, with 12 community researchers, was held in the Acholi region to focus on two key issues, viz (a) Bride Price and (b) Gender Based Violence. This dialogue was of particular importance because of the northern armed conflict between the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony (now a fugitive from international justice) and Uganda’s national army that ended in 2006 as a result of a peace agreement signed in Juba, in the then Republic of Sudan. It was one of the longest armed rebellions in Uganda’s history and one of the world’s worst humanitarian disasters. It began soon after President Yoweri Museveni usurped power in 1986 also through a five year armed-guerrilla war. It led to the deaths of thousands while at the same time leaving around two million people internally displaced. The 23 year civil war also led to a near collapse of family and traditional structures; communities in this area registered high levels of poverty and crime rates, they became dependent on the state and the donor community. It also led to the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the area. As is mostly the case in conflict situations, of all the structural and physical violence that this community experienced, it was women and children who suffered the most.

A first dialogue question was “who was Kony’s mother?” asked by a local woman Councillor, in perhaps trying to understand Joseph Kony’s background, and maybe to also reach her own sense of closure. This triggered a heated discussion on African
femininity and the role of mothers in conflict resolutions. Riming well with an observation made earlier by Nabudere that one cardinal requirement of afrikology is the feminine principle in African consciousness and existence. This has been an aspect, he has pointed out, which Western epistemology has tried to undermine and side-line in advancing their patrilineal cultural values in Africa. The discussions continued into women’s participation in decision-making about war and peace, it was agreed by most participants that Acholi women were part and parcel to the initiatives that led to the end of the war and that their role has been pivotal in post-conflict reconstruction of their community.

Calls to involve women in matters of war and peace have begun being taken seriously in other societies around the world as well; this follows the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which returned women’s role to the forefront of peace activities. The conference suggested that governments should be encouraged to increase the participation of women in the peace process at the decision-making level, including them as part of delegations to negotiate international agreements relating to peace and disarmament.

Violence as such produces enormous insecurity and requires one to tread carefully when asking questions concerning those affected such as those in the Gulu forum. People living in contexts of open violence - as have community members in this dialogue - tend to watch constantly for their personal and collective security. They search for ways to feel and be safe, and to find protection as insecurity has the capacity to create the permanency of feeling uncertain.

It was explained that uncertainty goes hand in hand with the experience of unpredictability. In seeking safety, we have tended to suspend trust in what was happening around us. To be insecure has meant no longer having a clear sense of self and having to suspend trust in others. This is the plight facing Acholi children today, especially those born at the apex of the conflict, as well as those who grew up in the camps. “Our youths especially males are very bitter”.

It is widely recognised that periods of war or disaster can produce ruptures or crises within societies from which new orders can emerge. The Acholi community has clearly not been an exception. Through the dialogue, it was agreed that War, urban displacement, inter-tribal and international presence, NGO interventions, government development projects, women’s and children’s rights promotion – were all identified as having had a dramatic impact on the Acholi community in particular kwo town – the Acholi community living in and around Gulu town, and how they perceive issues of rights.

There were mixed reactions from some participants when it came to discussing the catalysts of the cultural transformation that has taken place in their community. This led to some ambivalence and controversy over the meaning of the social changes that have taken place in their community. For example, one person took a modernist
view and argued that for some, especially women and young men, town life, despite its material hardships, has been the foundation for a world that is modern and global, unlike restricted rights for women under traditional and local arrangements. In spite of a cry from elderly men in the dialogue, rising to object her views, she argued that Acholi elders and chiefs have largely lost their power of social regulation, as Acholi women are liberating themselves. Economically, women have gained access to loans, both individually and through groups. They own property in town, such as buildings, vehicles, and land, and businesses. Women also express satisfaction at having learned to sell agricultural produce and save money. Socially and politically, women pointed out the number of women who are now in positions of authority in prominent NGOs and in the local government system. Women are achieving higher levels of education and undergoing training by NGOs and government on health and other issues concerning their rights.

Three women in particular objected to these modernist observations, accusing them of exaggerations. Modernity, they observed, has had a significantly negative impact on women’s quality of life. Because many men have died, joined armed organisations or abandoned their wives, women in large part have been left with the primary responsibility for providing for their families, which have often expanded to include a number of dependents in addition to their own children. Water, firewood and grass for roofing are hard to come by, women are now forced to go out and earn money so that they buy land and or rent a house; they must also pay for their children’s school fees and other medical facilities that are often inadequate and very expensive. Another negative consequence brought about by “town life”, they pointed out, was the methods of making money that have emerged in the context of, and which they constantly drew attention to, specifically prostitution for women and thievery for men.

For many older Acholi participants, however, this dominance of ‘NGO moneyed culture’ in town was an unmitigated evil, a corruption of Acholi society and its cultural values. As one elderly man pointed out, “before the war, wealth was not held in money, but in cattle”. As a result, money itself was widely perceived as a symptom and agent of the destruction of Acholi society, as it replaced tangible, rooted resources. All money-oriented economic activity was seen by some elders who spoke in the dialogue as a betrayal of the values of Acholi culture: “Gulu town had given birth to a lost generation of Acholi, addicted to material riches, disconnected from their roots in the land and without even basic cultural knowledge”.

In pre-war Acholi society, significant authority was held by a lineage- and clan-based structure of patriarchal, generally gerontocratic. This structure was brought into crisis by the civil-war and displacement. Many elders died, and the civil war presented bigger problems for ‘traditional’ leadership to resolve. The authority of this lineage-based structure has also been undermined by the creation of the Local Council system, which has taken over many of the conflict resolution roles previously held by ‘traditional’ authorities. Their disempowerment has been further intensified
by NGO initiatives which tend to favour women and youth. Finally, displacement itself has had a significantly negative impact on lineage-based leaders, as clans have been dispersed; restrictions on movement have made clan meetings difficult and land also difficult to access, the dialogue noted.

The dialogue then returned to the primary subject matter and delved into the issue of meaning. The Acholi community attaches so much significance to the marriage ritual, that failure to marry is considered a curse (or an abnormality) and it is common for the elders to be called in to monitor events. Childlessness is also counted as one of the most serious misfortunes to befall a couple, with women typically taking all the blame. In such cases, the marriage could be dissolved or the husband be allowed to marry another wife. Polygamy is regarded as a normal arrangement.

A young man chiefly depends upon his lineage to get both the permission to marry a girl and the ability to provide the material goods required to pay her indispensable *ot-lim* (bride price). Although marriages were sometimes organised without the consent of the boy and the girl in the past, such scenarios are increasingly rare today, with most people embracing the modern ideal of freedom of choice. Because it was often the father’s wealth that afforded the boy the *ot-lim*, there was little he could change. The items to be delivered as *ot-lim* (which is a practical way of saying thank you to the girl’s mother) are discussed and a specific date set for the delivery. Instalments are often accepted. *Ot-lim* can take the form of cattle, goats, sheep, household items or money. Often, the girl’s *ot-lim* is not spent but saved to offset her brothers’ *ot-lim* when it is their turn to marry and pay. Refunds are made in the event of a divorce.

Participants then engaged in discussions centring on *ot-lim*, what it meant from a traditional point of view and how it is being perceived in modern times. It was observed that “traditional marriages but *ot-lim* is too expensive and this is why we are seeing our boys running away from their responsibilities by impregnating girls and absconding”. A participant argued that parent demand a hefty *ot-lim* if their girl is ‘educated’. A girl ought to be a girl in spite of educational attainment, he stressed. Another thought that the problem with *ot-lim* was the distorted meaning. “*Ot-lim* traditionally meant appreciation; but nowadays it literally means paying or buying a wife (bride-price). This traditional custom established good relations among families and legitimized the children born in the marriage. But today, some women are given away to the man who pays more.” This, in a way, can be seen as the commodification of women or forced marriage, which was not the original intention of *ot-lim*.

Another argued that the problem in part lies with old men that are modernised – urbanised, “these men”, she observed, “tend to demand a lot for *ot-lim* and they also impose items that are not supposed to be part and parcel of the *ot-lim*”. And “*Ot-lim* is not bride price, we should strive to remind those confused about this definition that *ot-lim* is a token of appreciation to the bride’s family and in particular the mother. We are not selling our daughters! In the old days *ot-lim* used to be shared communally. These days it all commercialised, people even do electronic cash transfers and people
One blamed Acholi community in the diaspora. “They are the problem as they are the ones disorganising our community. They disregard our traditional customs when marrying and see things in terms of modern rights and law”, he said.

The dialogue then turned its attention to the issue of divorce and inheritance. It was observed that the purpose of marriage was unity, and argued that in Acholi culture divorce was very much discouraged - all things possible were initiated to prevent a couple from getting divorced.

Drawing from the community conversations, it is logical that governments in East Africa, in one way or another, try and make decisions about the legal and political position of both tradition and modernity in their social and legal systems. Most of the crises that local communities are facing have been expounded by the recommendations that these communities have received from foreign and local “experts” on human rights and development. The concept of development has its roots in the notion of progress, which is fundamentally a materialist philosophy bent on unlimited growth or exploitation and accumulation. The African bureaucrats and political elites have been unable to draw on their concept of community when taking decisions on national policies.

Women’s rights, no matter how we eventually refine the concept, demand that residents old and young, male and female in the urban as well as in the rural centres are heard, and not pushed aside. Rural people, commonly referred to as the “illiterates” or the “uneducated” in modernist lingo, who make up the majority of the African communities, need to gain a ‘voice’ in the parlance of contemporary community, cultural or political studies speak. Whether we use the older language of “empowerment” or the current speak of the epistemology of the ‘heart’ as defined by Afrikology, the philosophical language of the moment, the message is clear. People cannot plan and/or speak for others; people must be given a chance to participate in meaningful ways in resolving the challenges of discrimination whether man-made or natural. Solutions must be inclusive not exclusive. As a result, these dialogues about modernist verses tradition conceptions of women’s rights have depended on thinking about the world in organic, incremental, bottom-up terms rather overarching, top-down abstractions. It has also been about accommodation and accumulation of small-scale change that adds value to our communities in how community members view women and the discourses concerning their rights. To paraphrase the late professor Nabudere’s horizontal concept, there can be no single ‘centre’ that will determine the existence of all human beings everywhere because ‘one-size fits all’ will no longer be allowed to dictate global or local development. All human beings have to assume responsibility for their own survival and abandon the unilinear epistemology of looking at complex and diverse realities in a one-dimensional manner.

In the course of these dialogues, a consensus built up in most participants that traditional role models of men and women defined their behaviour and how they
perceived rights and entitlements. This was a help for both of them. For instance, it was agreed that most disagreements could be settled in the homestead, rather than making the matter public and going to court. The rules in the village were simple for everybody. The statement: “*in the old days, there were not so many options in life as there are today*”, as one participant in the dialogue put it, indicated that participants and the community at large were suspicious of the new freedoms perpetuated by modernist advocates.

Women participants in the dialogue recognised the importance of women’s organisations in raising their voice and providing them with a space in which to come together and discuss their problems. Most of the organisations they referred to are those oriented around small income-generating activities or give out loans. As one woman group leader in the dialogue explained, women’s voices are now heard in public, whereas before ‘women were not supposed to have a voice’, demonstrating the value placed by women on having a voice, being heard, both as an individual and collectively as a community. In all the dialogues most women resonated the need to have a voice as a key feature to the resilience of a community and its sense of identity. Having a voice, for them, means defining their own future, thereby repositioning the feminine principle as a core constituent of afrikology.

**Case Study 2: Iwokodan Community Site of Knowledge**

Post-conflict communities are increasingly turning their attention to the legacy of indigenous practices of dispute settlement and reconciliation. The argument is that traditional and informal justice systems may be adopted or adapted to develop an appropriate response to a history of civil war and oppression. *Iwokodan* community site of knowledge based in Palisa, eastern Uganda captures well this change.

At this site, organised as a clan, the community has incorporated strong elements of modernity in order to preserve their traditional justice system and traditional clan governance structure. The Iwokodan Clan is modelled on a modern government structure, it has a written constitution, with modern governance structures. It has opted for restorative justice in the event of conflict adjudication, recognising that modern courts are not able to deal with an increasing number of criminal cases. This has led to increased cost and delay with self-evident injustice being caused to individuals and hence a feeling of injustice. The other problem, Iwokodan’s local government minister Mr. Joseph Okwalinga pointed out, is that criminal litigation is particularly dependent on individual memory. Documents that can objectively refresh memory ordinarily play a small part in the usual kind of criminal case. Witnesses must rely solely on their recollection. When it takes more than a year, and sometimes three years, for a case to come to trial, memory becomes suspect. There are a number of inter and intra-communities murder cases that the Clan has resolved cordially without reference to the high courts. Consequently, there is an increasing demand for afrikology’s holistic approach to justice among communities across the east African
region, which seeks to shift the focus of the trial from the battle between the lawyers to the discovery of truth by modifying the complex rules of evidence, encouraging the defendant to contribute to the search for truth, and requiring full and open discovery for the prosecutor. For defence lawyers, under the current adversarial system, courtroom victory usually translates into obtaining an acquittal, and consequently they regard discovery of the truth as incidental or even irrelevant to this pursuit. There is a dichotomy that is normally created between the need for justice and the need for reconciliation. Yet these processes are in fact two sides of the same coin. The answer this, as the Iwokodan cases vividly demonstrates, is a new afrikological system that can ensure speed of trial while ensuring that the truth will prevail and the restorative justice approach offers the best result that can integrate the process. The modern courts alone cannot ensure that justice prevails in all cases as experience has shown that modern courts tend to be overwhelmed by criminal cases. It is the primary responsibility of the people who have caused conflict or harm to each other or to society to face the consequences of their actions and try to address the harm done. It is the duty of society at large to provide them with the opportunities and institutional arrangements to enable them to do so. This is what the Iwokodan community site of knowledge is attempting to do.

Case Study 3: The first Mt. Elgon cross-border community festival: the road to cross-border peace - overcoming the legacy of bordered identities, cultural fragmentation and unresolved conflicts.

Today's real borders are not between nations, but between powerful and powerless, free and fettered, privileged and humiliated. Today no walls can separate humanitarian or human rights crises in one part of the world from a national security crisis in another310... Dr. Kofi Annan

Cross-border communities in the Mt Elgon area of East Africa, as is the case elsewhere in Africa, have gone through such untold violence and indescribable grief that the clamour of the victims is still heard, and the sounds of the silenced-guns, sharp-spears and pangas (machetes) still reverberate in the minds of the ex-fighters as well as those who lived through the conflict experience. The scars of the conflicts are still visible not only on the bodies and souls of the older generations but also on the young - the continuing stigmatisation of widowed women as ‘husband snatchers’ and their children as cultural orphans is one case in point. Community conflicts in the area have had many dimensions with various correlated causes and factors. Although land has been a major contributing factor to the conflicts, other social and economic underlying factors have also played a role in fuelling the conflicts. In addition, the conflicts have had negative social, cultural, and economic impacts on all cross-border communities living in the area among them: displacement, physical harm to individuals; the destruction of property; death- resulting in a high incidence of

orphans and widows; rape and other forms of sexual violence and exploitation; and the resulting food and general insecurity. Furthermore, these problems have presented the cross-border communities already dealing with conflicts of multiple types, from mineral extraction to cattle rustling, to drought, to post-conflict inter-ethnic violence, to the creation of national parks for tourism in both sides of the mountain in Kenya and Uganda.

As Kenyan scholar Robert Simiyu has pointed out, the rhythmic nature of land-related violence in the Mt Elgon area, as often coinciding with general elections and other critical moments in Kenya’s national politics, indicates that there may be more to it than just land disputes or pure intercommunity hatred. He argues that there is a possible political motive for the chaos. This is borne out by the fact that in some instances, state agencies have been implicated in the conflicts, while in others the state has remained ambivalent. The result, Simiyu argues, is that many conflicts remain unresolved, some years after they first started. It is important to note that the land problem has persisted since colonialism, and successive regimes have been unable to permanently resolve the land question to the satisfaction of all community members. In short, the valleys and slopes of Mt Elgon bare testimonies of the severity of the conflicts faced by cross-border communities that have been caged in imagined political boundaries.

To overcome these cross-border divisions created in the area, which threaten further fragmentation of communities and clans, we tapped into professor Nabudere’s wisdom and created a situation in which we encouraged cross-border cultural-linguistic communities to regroup as much as possible into ‘clusters’- for instance, linking the Bamasaba with the Samia and Babukusu or the Sabiny with the Sabaoti and Pokots or the Iteso with the Karamojongs and so forth, so that they become strong nations capable of defending and voicing their local interests and concerns globally.

It is against this background that the Afrika Study Centre (ASC) and the Mt Elgon Residents Association (MERA) with the help of Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute/University and other stakeholders organised the Cross-Border Peace and Cultural festival that took place in November 2012 in Kapchorwa town on the slopes of Mt Elgon in Eastern Uganda.

The social concept and cultural context in which we undertook the cross-border cultural ‘integration’ tried to imagine and invent new ways to enable communities to break out of their encirclement first by the global system and then by African elites who control state power that continue to marginalise communities. The festival is an on-going afrikological endeavour by the ASC and local cross-border communities to deal with the destabilising effects and consequences of western colonisation and domination. After all, there has been no comprehensive effort in focusing on culture

as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism as well as restorative practices of
cross-border communities as a soluble alternative in promoting peace and regional
security in Africa.

For cross-border communities to undertake this transformation, ASC selected
four members (two female and two males) in April 2012 from each cross-border
community in both Uganda and Kenya (they included: Bukusu, Samia, Sabaot, Sebei,
Benet, Iteso, Bamasaba, Pokot and the Karamajong) to undergo a one month intensive
‘Cultural Animation Training Programme’ at the Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan
Institute/University in Mbale, Uganda. Course participants (animators) underwent a
process of self-conscientisation through restorative cultural learning and unlearning
paradigms and cultural memory methodologies.

Upon completion of the training, animators returned to their respective communities
to mobilise, learn and prepare their communities for the festival. They were tasked
with the responsibility of observing their cultures with deeper interest, learn and
contribute to the revival and strengthening aspects that communities were keen on.
Overall they were also expected to initiate some learning and documentation centre
that will gather materials archived in practices and procedures of their cultures and
languages. This way, a socio-cultural treasury of grassroots experiences, mechanisms
and technologies of sustainable environment, food and human security systems would
be gathered and showcased at the cultural festival and beyond it.

In this, they followed the following principles: Learning by seeing, listening and
observing-then practicing; Adopting a doing, using and interacting approach;
Acquainting oneself with holistic understanding; Critically adopting trans-disciplinary
skills in learning; Adopting Afrikology as a trans-disciplinary way of knowing, being
and relating to the demand for knowledge, truth and justice; Learning to work with
culture at the University Campus and the community; Learning and innovating as
you work in the community.

The three-day festival was the culmination of a ‘People to People Reconciliation’
linkages and activities that begun in 2006. The basic objective of the festival activities
has been to enable each of the cross-border communities to present their culture
including foods, traditional medicines, handicrafts, songs, dances, social practices,
building technologies and other material cultures in one another. This constituted
a learning experience and demonstrated to them the similarities and breaks in
their cultural heritages and therefore became a firm basis for restorative peace and
transformation. The festival explored the following themes: (a) ‘Food (in)-security’
and regional security; (b) ‘Cross-cultural spirituality’ and African traditional cultures;
(c) Remembering Dani Nabudere, the “people’s Professor”. These themes were
spread over a three day festival activity schedule.

Day One was dedicated to matters of ‘Food (in) security’ and regional security -
showcasing different cultural foods from each of the Mt Elgon communities. The
overall objective was to stimulate interest and revive the culture of traditional ‘granary model’ needs; indicating the common convergence of strategies to respond to and address the common problem of food vulnerabilities and approaches to common collaborative culture of sharing of produce and seeds within the communities.

Day Two was dedicated to matters of ‘Cross-cultural spirituality’ and African traditional cultures, thus creating a space for the recognition of cultural jurisdiction at play in which dialogue about intentions, values, and assumptions were brought out and negotiated. This included awareness building and understanding in which at last dialogue on issues of the ‘African feminine principle’ were revitalised and knowledge and benefits discussed. This was intended to help find ways of better linking modern sciences to the broader heritage of human kind and indeed contribute to scientific knowledge of universal value.

The final day of the festival was dedicated to remembering the “people’s Professor”, the late Dani Nabudere without whom, the festival would not have taken place. The day thus reflected among other activities, Professor Nabudere’s community work in the region, the continent and beyond, it featured: Food security; Peace; Cross-border solidarities; International political economy; Pan-Africanism of peoples; Defence of the commons; Cognitive justice and Community Sites of Knowledge; Restorative governance, economy and justice.

WHAT ROOM FOR PLURALISM IN THE AFRICAN CULTURAL WORLD?

It is our considered view in this section that any discussion on cultural pluralism ought to be centred on the suspicious enterprise of modernity whose dogmatic track is that any cultural progress that comes later is inherently better than what was there before. The concepts of rationality, objectivity, and generalisation can be considered to be the theoretical bases on which the current plural project is erected.

Subsequently, we affirm the following as considerations to be given weight. Firstly, pluralism appears to be a cultural franchise of globalisation aimed at bringing together previously isolated people together voluntarily and involuntarily into new and ever closer neighbourhoods by the increasing integration of markets, the emergence of new regional political alliances, remarkable advances in telecommunications, and transportation that have prompted unprecedented demographic cultural shifts. The resulting confluence of peoples and cultures is an increasingly global, multicultural world brimming with tension, confusion and conflict in the process of its adjustment to pluralism.

Secondly, as radical witnesses of centuries of alienation and what has been termed the legacy of one-sided cultural solutions to life and sanitised stereotypes, we are beginning to see the link between what is a mono-cultural model being propagated as pluralism. For instance, Rothkopf in 1997, examining the cultural ambit of

education’s relation to foreign policy pointed out that the very real prospect of education is now serving as a fourth pillar of Western cultures, in particular American foreign policy in which foreign policy says ‘no’ to revolutions or any change that is not favourable to the U.S while aggressively marketing the culture of the west as cool, as the most just, the most tolerant, the most willing to constantly reassess and improve itself, and the best model for the future. Furthermore, for communities in Africa, the school environment has been the cultural site at which one begins being cultivated by the systematic denigration of one’s identity, the site at which one learns how to laugh at his own gods while being instructed to worship other people’s gods. School education, although now a human right issue and as such compulsory, is considered to be the place in which the fostering of plural ‘cultural democracy’ is promoted and advanced widely. So, contemporary education in its simplest form can be seen as foreign cultural capital being transmitted via instructions in schools, and institutionalised by the certificates issued by the educational systems. But, despite these shortcomings, as we have discussed earlier, communities especially in the Mt. Elgon area are moving away from the perspective of African “victimhood” and cultural pluralism by experimenting with cultural clusterism fused to the fabric of epistemology’s ‘thinking from the heart’ as an approach towards renewed community-centred empowerment and restorative cultural forwardness.

Thirdly, the wide gap between the pace of economic globalisation sitting atop a pile of unresolved historical grievances on the one hand, and the reality of a tense, mistrustful, and anxiety-haunted African society on the other, thrusts into our conscience a new, pungent, and ambivalence-filled human situation we can no longer escape from. A leading indigenous knowledge systems expert and culturalist Professor Catherine Odora Hoppers has painted an acute picture when she observed:

As nations and communities big and small rummage about in this confusion, one detects various degrees of hankering for a lost age of social harmony, cultural homogeneity and commonly-shared values – occasionally confusing the past state of things for a vision for the future. In the meantime, the perceived fragmentation of society, concerns about crime, persistent undercurrents of racism, and growing distrust of neighbour and government, have strengthened the attraction of many to the numerous affinity groups mushrooming everywhere.313

Odora argues that in situations in which large immigrant communities find themselves surrounded by a mainstream culture, the percolation tends to encourage antipathy toward those outside the ‘shared loyalty’ while fermenting a hankering for the familiar though geographically distant safe-haven of a back-home of a fictitious undisturbed social harmony. Out of this emerge a form, content as well as rationale for the sustenance of a parallel, quasi resistance, proto-protest sub-culture right in the heartland of a mainstream culture.

The fourth aspect of pluralism we take battle with is its promotion of individualism at the expense of wholeness as understood in Afrikology or from the cultural personhood of an African being that constitutes his or her identity. The African concept of a person as wholeness does not deny human individuality as an ontological fact, or as what the legendary professor Michel Foucault called an ‘analytic finitude’ but ascribes ontological primacy to the community through which the human individual comes to know both himself and the world around him. On this Afrikological reasoning, it can be said that there is a greater wholeness to which the single individual person belongs, though in themselves individuals can be seen as partial cultural wholes. Holism is therefore the starting point of the African concept of a person. This derivative concept of a person is apparently alien to those advancing the pluralist canon. This distinction comes as a result of the difference between the holistic and the individualistic conceptions of a cultural person or community. Pluralism accords primacy to individualistic derivative whilst ‘cultural clusterism’ that we are advancing here places importance on Afrikology’s wholeness. The traditional African view of a person denies that a person can be defined by focusing on his or her physical or psychological characteristics alone. It instead places emphasis on how he is defined in relation to his or her cultural world. This primacy is meant to apply not only ontologically, but also in regards to his epistemic accessibility. The reality of personhood in most communities in East Africa as such is therefore one but it has got many aspects to it. In cultural and philosophical terms, emphasis has been placed on the primacy of the greater environing wholeness over that of cultural individualism or for that matter, pluralism.

That said, the global climate of cultural change and acute cultural vulnerability has raised new challenges for all communities in our on-going pursuit of universal human, animal, environmental and cultural rights. Appreciably, in the wider sociological sense, tolerance as advanced by pluralism carries with it the understanding that intolerance breeds violence and social instability, and has therefore become the social term of choice to define the practical rationale of permitting uncommon social practice and cultural diversity.

CONCLUSION

As has been illustrated in this article, the first step on the road to constructing cultural defences of the mind, outlined through our cultural conversations in this chapter, is the creation of other concepts and meanings besides what colonialism has bestowed. The ordeals of imagination undergone by culturally violated communities that have survived colonialism, cultural genocides, slavery and imperialisms should find space and inform our understanding of human solidarity under impossible conditions. By incorporating Afrikological notions of human solidarity which are based on the assumption that all people share a common underlying humanity, we looked further and pictured the symbolic cultural and social resources such as clusterism for negotiating a politer human identity. As we take this further, a more profound form

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of tolerance emerges which resides in the capacity to develop respect, understanding and mutual recognition of others because it simply makes good cultural sense.

Our attention would not normally be drawn towards community narratives as holding the promise, potential or epistemological lessons of afrikology and restorative cultural action in communities. Yet our experiences, these settings and people hold seeds, buried and unnoticed, but pregnant with life-giving energy that instructs our cultural and epistemological inquiry. The very nature of a seed, we have tried to demonstrate, is a living-dormant container that simultaneously is fruit and promise, draws our attention towards the natural characteristics of afrikology’s collective well-being and the qualities of cultural resilience that contribute to healthy communities not only in East Africa but all over the world.

These conversations have been a long travel down the community-lane in realising the falsity of dichotomisation of complex human relations, by certain restraining epistemologies; this as we have attempted to demonstrate, can only be corrected under a system of restorative justice, restorative agriculture, and restorative cultural practices that afrikology offers aplenty. Through practical means and community-centred interactions, we have demonstrated that communities are moving away from the perspective of African “victimhood” by adopting the epistemology of thinking from the heart as an approach towards community-centred intellectualism and social as well as cultural activism.

Afrikology stands for manoeuvring space within and interaction with social, economic and political structures that are external to and at the same time part of the community itself. Afrikology is about doing justice to communities’ capabilities to reflect and act without losing sight of the structural circumstances that enable and at times constrain them. It is about the people’s strength. It is about making a difference. It is about creating an indigenous dialectical space for communities to reflect on its social and cultural values and thereby create a connecting relationship between itself that allows room for reflexivity and reflectivity that then reveals the inner soul of the community to the world at large. In the Upanishads of Nabudere, the epistemological grandmaster of afrikology, we can equate the fundamental nature and universalism of afrikology as a passage that speaks to how those who become wise lose the Great Oneness, the way rivers all flow into the sea. In the transformation from the solitary to the communal, there is a mysterious physics that each generation has to relearn and advance regarding how we are more together than alone. In the hard-earned experience of Oneness, we all have the chance to discover, through love and suffering, that we are at heart the same. The task for us today is to restore connections that history has shattered. Making cultural education a lived experience for many cross-border learners around the Mt Elgon area is not possible in the present regime of culturally isolated knowledge production. The symbolic languages used in current educational systems are not learnt at an early age by a large percentage of children in the area. For them, education especially cultural, its language, its methods and its packaging represents an alienating experience both culturally and epistemologically.
IV. PLURALISM – AN ACQUIRED VALUE
8. The Family: At the Heart of Managing Cultural Diversity - Conversations with 35 Ugandan Leaders and Rural Women and Men

EMILY DRANI, VUSIA SANTA IZAMA

Editor’s preface

This paper explores the role of the family in nurturing the value of pluralism in Uganda. It presents a new and interesting perspective on pluralism in the knowledge program network. The paper is based on empirical research conducted by Emily Drani, who is the Director of the Cross Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU), and coordinator of the Pluralism Knowledge Programme in Uganda, as well as Santa I Kayonga, who is researcher of CCFU. As a civil society based organisation, CCFU promotes the recognition of culture as vital for equitable and sustainable development. It carries out studies in this domain which incorporate cultural dimensions and uses its research output to create more awareness among policy makers and practitioners about the role of culture in development.

The authors research the significance of the family as “a space for nurturing the value of pluralism in Uganda”. They argue that there may be “good reasons to study the role of the family and the broader community when attempting to understand the meaning and the challenges of pluralism within African contexts, especially since collectivity may play a different role than assumed in the Western world, where many of the pluralism concepts originate”. As a point of departure, they refer to the description of pluralism as formulated by the Harvard Program on Pluralism at Harvard University, which is one of the notions of pluralism used in the knowledge program. Central to the Harvard definition is the idea that pluralism requires more than passive tolerance, but instead involves people’s active engagement with difference. The authors state that – given Uganda’s history of strife – even tolerance should be regarded as an achievement, but that a notion of ‘active engagement with difference’ potentially introduces new and viable perspectives to manage the complex diversity that exists in the country.

The research focused on two categories of respondents. The first group consisted of Kampala based urban professionals who were selected because of their personal and professional experience in dealing with religion, ethnicity and politics. They were asked to share their personal experiences within their families and their perception of pluralism in the broader society. A second group was identified in the rural districts of Mayuge and Moyo. Mayuge, in Eastern Uganda, was included because its communities have remained ethnically relatively homogenous. In addition, there is a high rate of polygamy which, as the authors suggest, could be an important element to understand managing conflict and diversity at the family level. The Moyo district, on the border with Sudan, experiences high levels of migration and hosts refugees.
This situation too challenges families in particular ways to deal with the differences among the communities in the area.

The research addressed the subjective views of the respondents, drawing on their personal perceptions and lived experiences of tolerance and pluralism. Four broad interview topics were identified which revolved around (1) pluralism in respect to the manifestation of and dealing with difference in the family; (2) the inculcation of values within the family; (3) the evolving concept of family; spaces and drivers of pluralism in a family environment and finally (4) the influence of the workplace on promoting pluralism in the family.

The authors notice that the family in Uganda is changing. They state that “circumstances, such as civil strife and displacement, terminal illness (AIDS), education, and religion have resulted in mobility and a shift in roles and power relations, which challenges the traditional family”. New emerging types of families go beyond those with parents of similar ethnic, religious, occupational, social background, and include those with “single parents, parents of mixed ethnicity, mixed religions, diverse political affiliation, polygamous families, “modern” urban well-travelled and exposed families, as well as less travelled rural ones”. The paper concludes that while the family remains an important point of reference, source of identity and space for nurturing values in Uganda, it is also evolving. New types of families emerge in which “participation, consultation, negotiation, equality and freedoms – principles that foster pluralism”, increasingly play a role.

The final part of the paper offers a number of recommendations to civil society organizations which are involved in pluralism and development concerns.

With this paper we hope to encourage a new dialogue on pluralism from a different and fresh angle. We wonder how the ideas on the relationship between family and pluralism as expressed in the paper, compare with those in the other regions in the Knowledge Program network and beyond and certainly welcome your comments and questions in this regard.

Caroline Suransky

INTRODUCTION

Pluralism and the family in the African context

Civil society is globally faced with the growth of various forms of intolerance rooted in ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, social class and nationalism, among other expressions of identity. On the African continent, different ethnic groups often attempt to co-exist harmoniously – not always successfully: diversity needs to be managed in a context where different cultures and cultural values dictate how “the
other’ is perceived and engaged with. Development actors are however not always well equipped to address this reality which, to varying degrees, interferes with the progress of development initiatives, for example when patronage associated with ethnicity or political affiliation influences communities’ access to public resources.

In an effort to address challenges related to diversity and pluralism in the south, an international initiative, the Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Programme (PKP), brings together several organisations in Indonesia, India, the Netherlands and Uganda. The programme reflects a desire by academics and civil society-based actors to generate knowledge and develop new insights into the appeal of fundamentalisms, and to comprehend divergent experiences and views on pluralism. In particular, the PKP aims at generating new knowledge; intensifying linkages between development practitioners and academic researchers; and translating acquired knowledge into strategies for promoting pluralism in practice.

The Programme’s appreciation of pluralism is premised on Diana Eck’s definition, which highlights four main points. First, pluralism is not diversity alone, but the energetic engagement with diversity. Diversity is a given, but pluralism is not; it is an achievement. Pluralism is therefore not just tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference. Tolerance is a necessary public virtue, but it does not require one to know anything about one another and does not remove our ignorance of one another, leaving in place stereotypes, half-truths and the fears that underlie old patterns of division and violence. Third, pluralism is not relativism, but the encounter of commitments. Pluralism therefore does not require us to leave our identities and our commitments behind. It means holding our deepest differences, not in isolation, but in relationship to one another. Fourth, pluralism is based on dialogue and encounter, on give and take, criticism and self-criticism - a process that reveals both common understandings and real differences. In other words, dialogue does not mean everyone at the “table” will agree with one another. (Eck, 2006)

The PKP in Uganda chose to use this definition as a point of departure, given its fit with the complexity of the country’s diverse ethnic, religious and political composition. Uganda’s history of strife has shown that, although tolerance itself can be regarded as an achievement, the emphasis on the necessity for engagement across difference introduces a relevant and necessary emphasis on managing this complexity, and takes the discourse on pluralism to a practical and potentially productive level for national co-existence. Uganda’s post-colonial history has also shown how diversity, particularly ethnicity and religious diversity, has been used as a tool to manipulate allegiances to meet political ends. This has resulted in the current and common perception that cultural diversity represents exclusion to the detriment of the collective public good (Kayiso, 2009). Furthermore, across the continent, both diversity and the community are considered a ‘given’, implying inclusiveness within diversity. According to Mbiti, for instance, “Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people” (1989: 106). Further, “African societies still exert a great
influence upon individuals and communities, even if they are no longer the only final source of reference and identity. With the undermining of traditional solidarity has come the search for new values, identity and security, which for both the individual and his community, were satisfactorily supplied or assured by the deeply religious background ...(ibid.:256)

Nkemnkia (1999: 171) elaborates: “African identity and culture are founded on the intimate and vital unity with the family, the tribe and God. The “I” is not the point of departure, but the “You”, the “We”, the collectivity of the community and the tribe.[...] The individual cannot organize or fulfill himself outside the community, clan or tribe; he would be like a fish out of its water [...] A similar condition favors a communitarian pluralism, which is opposed to individualism, the superiority of the “I” as opposed to the primacy of the “We.”

The family in an African context therefore revolves around the collective: “In traditional society, the family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers, and sisters who may have their own children, and other immediate relatives. The number of family members may range from ten persons to even a hundred, where several wives belonging to one husband may be involved. It is the practice in some societies to send children to live for some months or years with relatives, and these children are counted as members of the families where they happen to live. The family also includes the departed relatives, [...] “the living dead” as well as [...] the unborn members who are still in the loins of the living” (Mbiti, op. cit.:104-5). Shorter (1988: 84) explains: “the extended family is a group of relatives extended in space and time, and including the deceased as well as the unborn. Usually, members see themselves as belonging exclusively to either the paternal or maternal line. Members cooperate in a family community and accept mutual responsibility across generations...”

Within this family, the household is the smallest unit, consisting of the children, parents and sometimes the grandparents, what one might call ‘the family at night’. If a man has two or more wives, he has as many households, since each wife would usually have her own house erected within the same compound. Shorter (op.cit.:83), complements this definition, stating that “the family is a minimal effective group of relatives by blood and/or marriage and analogous groups. This means that a family is the smallest group of relatives that can operate effectively by itself in a given society. Analogous groups refer to families in which members are not related by blood or marriage, for example, adopted children, or step children ...

With internal challenges and external influences, the concept of family and the role of the extended family are evolving. According to Otiso (2006: 97), “...the role of families and clans in socialization has largely been taken over by schools where children spend their youth away from both parents and grandparents.” [...] “The advent of the modern cash economy often forces one parent, especially the father, to spend considerable amounts of time away from the family, thereby further weakening the socialisation process [...] many grandparents are also increasingly disconnected from their grandchildren by language barriers that are engendered by the modern
school system. The increased separation of the children from the parents and grandparents is to a large degree responsible for the rapid increase in the number of maladjusted, unproductive, and lawless youth.”

**Studying the family at the heart of cultural pluralism in Uganda**

This report is based on research that set out to establish the significance of the family as a space for nurturing the value of pluralism in Uganda. The preceding section suggests that there may be good reasons to study the role of the family and the broader community when attempting to understand the meaning and the challenges of pluralism within African contexts, especially since the collectivity may play a different role than assumed in the Western world (where many of the pluralism concepts originate).

Culture remains an essential point of reference – whether explicit or unspoken - for both urban and rural Ugandan communities. It determines community and individual values, how we see ourselves and others, as well as our worldviews, which in turn inform responses to social, political and economic factors in the environment. In one way or the other, identity is founded on cultural diversity that includes, but is not limited to, ethnicity, religion and gender. Culture however evolves, fuelled by beliefs, expectations and experiences: its custodians (within and outside traditional cultural institutions) are exposed to external influences and worldviews that may challenge their own belief systems and practices, thus creating room for reflection, accommodation of the new, transformation and/or appreciation of diversity.

Further, different African cultures attach diverse social values to relations with ‘the other’ (often as a result of intermarriage or migration) that may or may not promote pluralism. The African concept of family and community is generally premised on the principle of inclusiveness, on identifying and creating spaces for convergence rather than divergence in individual aspirations and thought. It must however be kept in mind that conforming to the norm, rather than seeking to be recognized as different, is also an important aspect of this collectivity, thus departing from the assumption that collectivity involves unbridled freedom for the realisation and expression of diversity.

This research explores the role of the family in managing cultural diversity. The family is perceived as the space where acculturation begins and where difference in terms of ethnicity, religion and gender, among others, is defined, understood and managed to foster (or not) harmony from the smallest unit of a household to the wider community. Inculcation of values, old and new, often takes place within a family setting where they are translated into the daily lives of children. These values are reflected in the selection of friends, schools attended and interaction with those who are ‘different’. Pluralism or the lack of it is then seen as nurtured from the very early stages of individuals’ lives and thereafter manifests itself in the way in which they relate to difference in their adulthood, knowingly and unconsciously.
In Uganda, while some research has been conducted on family relations and the upbringing of children in respect to rights, gender roles and responsibilities (Raising Voices, 2005), there has been limited examination of the value of tolerance, attitudes towards this, and even less in respect to pluralism. Little is known therefore about managing diversity within families, its link to the value of equity and how this informs the upbringing of children, and how the shared values of discipline, respect, and tolerance may manifest themselves in pluralism (or the lack of it) within and outside the family setting.

The research

For purposes of this study, a family refers to immediate relatives (the household living together semi-permanently or permanently) who are directly involved in influencing and determining the values that the family upholds. The extended family is also taken into account as an important social group, which in the local context includes relatives of common ancestry / lineage, with shared goals and values, with long-term commitments to one another, and residing in the same dwelling place.

In Uganda, the family is however changing in ways that affect its members’ perceptions and lived reality of diversity. A number of circumstances, such as civil strife and consequent displacement, terminal illness (AIDS), education, and religion have resulted in mobility and a shift in roles and power relations, challenging the traditional family as described by Mbiti (1989) above. The emerging types of families go beyond those with “ordinary” parents (of similar ethnic, religious, occupational, social background) to those with single parents’, parents of mixed ethnicity, mixed religions, diverse political affiliation, polygamous families, “modern” urban well-travelled and exposed families, as well as less travelled rural ones. Some families exhibit several of these elements combined, while others have experiences in more than one country/or location, often as a result of conflict, displacement and trade. This variety of family backgrounds provides information on different worldviews, values, and experiences of transmitting the values of tolerance and intolerance and on the factors that lead to and reinforce such differences. Such changes also result in the disruption of traditional socialization processes and in exposure to alternative ways of life, making the accommodation of diversity an increasingly relevant concern. This research therefore seeks to explore families’ worldviews, their perceptions and lived experiences of tolerance and pluralism.

The research focused on subjective views, based on life stories, emphasising the account of individual perceptions and interpretation of events; it also focused on pluralism in relation to ethnicity, religion and politics. Four broad areas were identified and questions developed to explore how difference is managed in the selected families and how values are passed on. Discussions revolved around pluralism in respect to the manifestation of and dealing with difference in the family, the inculcation of values within the family; the evolving concept of family; spaces and drivers of pluralism in a family environment and finally, the influence of workplaces on promoting pluralism in the family315.

315 Respondents’ names have been masked throughout the text to respect their privacy.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

The scope of the first leg of the research was limited to Kampala-based individuals. The sample was small, with 14 key informants (5 women), mostly prominent personalities in their professional fields (in respect to education for adults and youth, health, gender, religion, family affairs and governance). They were drawn from urban or semi-urban backgrounds, educated and exposed Ugandans from various walks of life, institutions and organisations to demonstrate different dimensions of pluralism from a political, ethnic and religious perspective. Because of their professional background, these interviewees are in contact with a wider Ugandan public, in this case women, children, youth, rural community groups, adult learners and religious congregations. They were selected because of their direct experience, personal and professional, in dealing with issues of religion, ethnicity and politics, and asked to share their personal experiences on pluralism (within their families) and their perception of pluralism in society. Two non-Ugandan respondents were included to provide an outsider’s perspective on how Ugandans relate to one another.

A subsequent phase of the study was undertaken in two rural settings, in Mayuge and Moyo districts. Mayuge, in eastern Uganda, was identified as a district where rural communities have remained ethnically relatively homogenous, with a high rate of polygamy, an important element to understand managing conflict and diversity at the family level. Moyo district, bordering Sudan, has an experience of movement in and out of the country and hosts refugees. This has exposed local families to diverse groups of people and ways of life and therefore provided them with an opportunity to manage diversity. 23 (11 men, 12 women) individuals were interviewed, reflecting particular types of families with a diverse range of experiences and views, including polygamous families or relationships, mixed/unique ethnic parentage, religious backgrounds, and individuals in families with a high or low educational status. Individuals involved in business or trade, subsistence farming or leadership positions were included.

This report is divided into three main chapters, the first being this introduction to the study. The second describes the findings, with detailed responses in respect to managing difference in the family, transmitting values within the family, the influence of workplaces on promoting pluralism, the evolving concept of family, and spaces and drivers of pluralism in a family setting. Differences in the family are examined according to (i) Ethnic identity (ii) Religious identity (iii) Social status, and (iv) Political affiliation. For each, manifestations of difference and its management are examined. Finally, chapter three focuses on conclusions and some recommendations to civil society organizations involved in addressing issues of pluralism and development concerns in general.

The outcomes of this research are meant to inform civil society strategies to address issues of intolerance that manifest themselves in the family in different forms and to identify resourceful spaces to mitigate intolerance. The research may also prove useful to contribute to discussions on supporting the restoration of functional families; on understanding the accepted parameters of tolerance in the local cultural context.
and on identifying what needs to be done to nurture a responsible, conscientious and tolerant population for a dignified and harmonious society.

**FINDINGS**

**Acknowledging difference in upbringing**

The research first focused on tolerance as a key dimension of pluralism, and as an initial step towards managing diversity - acknowledging and accepting difference and thereafter engaging with it. The outcomes of mapping studies carried out under the Promoting Pluralism Knowledge programme in Uganda, indicate that religious and ethnic identity as well as social status and political affiliation are key factors of intolerance (Kayiso, 2009, Maraka, 2009). This section therefore examines varying degrees of tolerance and intolerance in relation to ethnicity, religion, nationality and political affiliation.

**Religious identity**

Religion is a key source of diversity in several families interviewed and the degree of tolerance, especially between Catholics and Protestants, depends on the depth of their religious conviction. The Protestant, Catholic and Baha’i respondents all encompassed a willingness to be inclusive of the other, even when confronted with the reality of a family member’s choice to marry a person of a different religious persuasion. Efforts were made to accommodate the other, illustrating that in some instances family loyalty superseded any intolerance inspired by religious persuasion. Although there were instances of co-existence between Muslims and adherents of other religions, intermarriage often required conversion, which conversion was understood by some as a change of ethnic identity.

According to four urban respondents of Catholic and Kiganda background, during their upbringing, discrimination against Protestants was pronounced. In spite of this, their families were however open to friends from different tribes and races, and were not class conscious in their choice of friends, or less privileged relatives. They testified that having parents with the same religious background reinforced common values and principles in their children.

For two urban respondents born of parents of similar ethnic and religious identity, prayer was a strong part of the children’s upbringing, with some joining the seminary or becoming priests/pastors. Even where they did not follow this vocation, they testified that this influence shaped their identities. Religion (in this case, Catholicism) was much valued, although a prejudice against Protestantism was also emphasised. Among the rural families, religion was emphasised and expectations of family members with regard to religious observances and loyalties were pronounced. Thus, loyalties and acceptance on the basis of religion blurred the boundaries of other types of differences, for Catholic, Protestant and Muslim families.

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316 From the largest ethnic group in Uganda, the Baganda.
Two urban respondents were of Bahá’í faith, which they found appealing because of the openness, freedom of association and inclusiveness the faith promoted. As one respondent recalls, “My father said, “I will take you to a home where the children do not fear Africans.”” Conversion from Christianity to Bahá’í faith did not cause significant tensions or conflicts within the wider family.

**Tolerance**

In urban families with parents of different religions, a high level of religious tolerance was exhibited. One respondent for instance said, “My mother was Protestant, my father was Catholic and we (children) were confirmed Catholics, but on Sunday each family member went to worship in a church of their choice, Catholic or Protestant.” According to another respondent from a Catholic headed home, “there was no pressure for conversion as all the religions were respected and accepted.” In the rural areas, families with different religious backgrounds gave mixed signals in terms of tolerance of different religions. In as far as it meant interacting with people of other religious persuasion on a social basis or even marriage, there was some tolerance between the Christian religions.

An urban Catholic respondent who married into a staunch Anglican family said that his parents were not comfortable with his wife being of a different faith. He however did not demand her to convert although, after a few years in marriage, she chose to convert to Catholicism of her own free will. In Mayuge district, at least three Protestant women had converted on marriage to Catholicism, while at least two did not convert but worshipped in the Catholic church. Gentle force was used, trying to convince the women to convert and it was also said by at least 3 of the respondents, both women and men, that it was alright and expected for women to convert to their husband’s religion. One of the women who declined to convert also baptised her older children in the Protestant church while her husband was away but now prays in the Catholic church with her younger children who are baptized Catholics, giving a hint of conflict in this situation. In terms of choice of religion, the most accommodating view was linked to change as a result of marriage.

In another urban family, four different religions (Muslim, Protestant, Catholic and Seventh Day) coexisted, and it was only on one occasion that an Islamic marriage required conversion. In general, the choice of religion and decision to convert was by conviction rather than convenience and did not meet resistance. In both Mayuge and Moyo districts, there were instances of Muslim men married to Christian women, who had not insisted on women converting to Islam. Nevertheless, one had ‘converted’ unofficially while the other continued to worship in her church. One respondent in Mayuge had a daughter-in-law who was the daughter of a Hajji but who had become a Catholic. He viewed this as normal since she was a woman converting to her husband’s religion. However, the family adopted practices that would make her comfortable by not eating pork and ensuring all animals were slaughtered by a Muslim. There was at least one family in Mayuge that had ‘intergenerational’ Catholic
and Muslim members, i.e. Muslim grandfather, Catholic father and mother, Muslim son and Catholic sons. The family took this as sign of unity and supported each other in all their activities, be it Islamic or Christian.

One urban Catholic respondent, who is looking after his nephew (born of a Muslim father), chose to expose him to both Catholic and Muslim faiths and to allow him to choose his path. He takes the boy to church, encourages him to join in church-related activities, including leading Catholic prayers at home. His nephew also participates in Islamic teaching sessions organised by Muslim neighbours. Another urban respondent was however of the opinion that what is interpreted as tolerance of the other may actually be reluctance to question, engage in meaningful debates, and challenge the status quo. As a result, there is limited objectivity, and acceptance of things that are “wrong” because they remain unquestioned.

In both Moyo and Mayuge districts, a high level of religious tolerance was also exhibited in terms of social interaction amongst the different religions. All respondents who were in close proximity to Muslims for instance ensured that they did not eat food considered unclean. The Muslims in turn were generally comfortable interacting with Christian in-laws and neighbours.

Polygamy was cited as providing a space for pluralism. As one urban respondent narrated, “My father was a chief who had several wives, some of whom were Catholics and Protestants, and they all co-existed harmoniously. He visited the different homes without remorse and all his wives were treated equally. Material things and food were divided equally amongst the homes and this was culturally accepted.” The chief in this instance was a staunch and active Christian, but the contradiction between the Christian principles of monogamy and his lived reality as a polygamous man went unquestioned. Polygamy had become a space where differences had to be managed consciously, providing experience of engaging with difference and tension. Tolerance and engagement often had to be nurtured between the women and children and systems for resolving differences identified and accepted. All the respondents from polygamous families highlighted the importance of arbitration and dialogue to resolve differences, as well as the importance of treating wives and children equally. One respondent in Mayuge was quick to observe that polygamy worked better in well-off families that could afford to treat members ‘equally’. The tensions brought about by differences in behaviour and in status within the polygamous homes, if not managed adequately, often led to break ups and accusations, including of witchcraft, engendered difficulties in sharing resources and promoted cliques.

In Moyo and Mayuge, examples were given by a woman and a man where ‘co-wives’ discussed and took a common stand to address their husband’s ‘misbehaviour’. In these and other kinds of marriages, the extended family is important in fostering conflict resolution. For instance, a woman married to a polygamous man said she valued how her cousins and uncles are available to arbitrate in conflicts between her and her husband.
Intolerance

Within urban families, there were several instances of religious intolerance too. Two Christian respondents recalled that their families were open to friends from all backgrounds, with the exception of traditional believers who were labelled witches and wizards with whom they would not interact, visit or share food. In the rural areas, many of the respondents were reluctant to see their children join or convert to another religion, including respondents who themselves had changed their religions, which tended to occur as a result of marriage (women converted) or, in one case, of school attendance. One respondent mentioned that her children had to have the religion of their father because ‘that is how it is meant to be’. In a chance encounter with a Muslim woman married to a Protestant, she explained why she converted to Protestantism: ‘the children were getting confused, seeing their mother go to pray on Fridays and their father with them on Sundays’. Her interest was to bring some uniformity to her children’s religious experience as they grew up.

Several urban respondents cited tensions between Catholics and Protestants as situations of pronounced religious intolerance. One respondent from a Catholic family shared the sentiments of her family members when her sister chose to marry a Protestant man: “At least she would have married someone from a different race not of different religion!”

In the 1960s and 1970s, Islam was seen as a total way of life and conversions to Islam were likened to even changing one’s ethnic identity. According to two urban respondents, a Muslim was not considered a true Muganda or Madi – it was an entirely new identity. One respondent narrated how her Protestant grandfather opposed his son’s (her father) conversion to Islam, and changed his will because he could not visualise his heir being a Hajji. As a compromise, he requested him to allow one of his sons to remain non-Muslim so that he could be appointed heir, and he obliged.

To conclude, one can observe that, in some instances, the religious relationship with the other goes beyond simple co-existence, but rarely to the extent of understanding the other’s values or belief systems. There are attempts to enhance peaceful and respectful co-existence, but a reluctance to question or challenge the other. Rather, these values and belief systems are taken as a given and actively observed, as an element of interaction and coexistence with the other.

Compared to ethnic and racial intolerance, the ‘advantage’ of religious intolerance is the room for negotiation, even conversion, while ethnicity and race are not subject to this kind of flexibility and potentially hold a greater threat of deep-seated intolerance. Instances where religious intolerance supersedes ethnic intolerance are highlighted when bridging of deep ethnic and racial divides is preferred to any form of conversion or intimate overtures to the other.

317 A person from Buganda.
Ethnic identity

Diversity based on ethnic identity manifests itself in the form of language, marriage, social relations and perceptions of the other. Appreciating ethnic diversity requires a degree of assimilation, and unlike conversion from one religion to another, it demands a greater effort to understand and agree with the other, to seek commonalities, to compromise and negotiate for inclusion. Unlike universal of ethnic beliefs and practices are a potential source of difference requiring a greater commitment to be managed. Nevertheless, the ‘boundaries’ of ethnic identity are made porous by intermarriages and to an extent, prolonged exposure and interaction often lead to assimilation or adoption/adaptation of some practices, creating a closer link with the other. They may also have the opposite effect. For the following generation, while the patrilineal system assures the dominance of the father’s ethnicity, allegiance to the mother’s widens the circle of acceptance.

“Amongst the Baganda, family identity is very important. The Baganda are often interested in finding out the origin of the other. ‘Who are you? How do I relate to you? Are we related? Do we share totems?’ This is to avoid the embarrassment of treating a person inappropriately, a term commonly referred to as ‘kufa nsonyi’ (‘one would die of shame’) if, for instance, s/he did not greet a visitor appropriately, says one respondent. Amongst the Basoga and Madi, the Bagisu, Japadhola, Moru (Sudan) the importance of relations with each other was emphasised in the way children were socialised to interact with and treat people with courtesy and kindness. This applied despite any religious and ethnic differences and was taken as a yardstick of good upbringing of all children across the different ethnicities. Behaviour was one of the most common measures on which decisions regarding the choice of friends were based, surpassing ethnicity and religion in importance in the rural areas of Mayuge and Moyo districts.

Differences within the family evidently manifest themselves in intermarriages between people of different ethnicity. Two urban respondents in such marriages said the advantage of being issued from a mixed family was the opportunity to learn several languages, although it was often the father’s language that was spoken in the home. In some instances, the parents did not deliberately choose a single language for communication in the home, and children opted to speak English. This was also attributed to peer pressure and exposure to external influences.

Tolerance

According to an urban respondent, “it did not matter if a woman of another clan or tribe married into the clan. As long as she bore children with a Muganda man she was eligible to become part of the clan. Boys were known to bring in “foreigners” through marriage and in Buganda, family ties with in-laws and relatives were maintained by visiting and exchanging gifts’. In Mayuge, the areas visited were ethnically diverse. Respondents had no choice but to interact with each other and took it in their stride as part of their experience. The settlers in the area were conscious of the need to
interact and understand each other and took the initiative to do so. Intermarriages were not questioned on ethnic grounds. They were accepted, according to some respondents, without reservation and reinforced by traditional sayings, such as “there is no tribe without good people and there is no privilege of goodness vested in one tribe”. There were a number of mixed ethnic marriages, in which - as in Buganda - a woman joined the man’s clan. The situation in Moyo was similar in terms of a range of ethnicities. In addition, Moyo residents have for several years interacted with and had migrants from Sudan, to add to migrants from the Ugandan districts of Arua and Yumbe.

One urban respondent explained that having worked in various parts of the country, and being involved in the business of fishing and trade in spare parts, her grandfather was open to people of diverse backgrounds. He had a big home and family, welcomed people to visit and stay overnight. Another respondent recalls his mother allowing workers of diverse ethnic backgrounds to occupy the family house, treating them as members of the family. This, the respondent said, was in line with Kiganda culture, which has open-ended clans. Through an initiation ritual (omukaago) a person from a different clan or ethnicity (in the past this also applied to slaves) could be accepted into the clan. In addition, his family accommodated students (Japadhola and Acholi) who came to study in Kampala but found it difficult to return home for holidays because of long distances and financial constraints.

The influence of education, occupation and exposure was pronounced in both Moyo and Mayuge. One of the respondents, chosen because of his long education experience, could trace the influences of exposure to his grandfather, who went to school and became a ‘clerk to the council’ and whose home was open to people of all categories. The respondent also learnt other languages to engage with people of different ethnicities and was open to his children’s choices in terms of change in religion and marriage across religions and ethnicities. His children are now exposed to a very diverse range of people, including people of different races. In Moyo, education and occupation was also an important factor in linking families and individuals to people of different ethnicities. Just as in Kampala, one of the respondents, a farmer, accommodates the friends of his children and keeps their property during holiday time: ‘I now take all people as belonging to one country… people need to sit together to understand each other, otherwise tribal tensions will continue’.

In Moyo, one respondent, a retired policeman and ‘Jack of many trades’, explained how conflicts were dealt with while he was growing up… by sitting down ‘as brethren’ and resolving issues […] ‘women do not sit to resolve issues, instead each person is told to ‘put a finger in the wife’s eye’; meaning, talk to her seriously if she is involved in conflict; thus leaving the individual member to deal with the aspects of the conflict stemming from their home. At times a conflict is wider and requires the ‘Vurra’ or representatives of the whole clan from the different areas to sit. …. The respondent noted that, these days, girls are also involved in resolving conflicts.
Sometimes socialisation against discriminative behaviour is explicit, as one Muganda respondent recalls being told “our home has no roads going through it”, meaning people who visit the home do so intentionally and are not just passing by on their way to some other destination. They should be treated with hospitality. The visitors to one of the rural respondents’ home are asked to be accommodative and tolerant. Families in Mayuge and Moyo all said they call upon their children not to discriminate against other people, through instruction, discussion and example, as well as story telling by the older generation. In some cases, fear and stereotyping however become part of the message in the process of impressing upon children the need to treat others equally because dire consequences are promised if the counsel of the older generation is not followed, such as expecting ‘Moiba’ (said to come from the Sudan to ‘eat’ or ‘carry away’ children with bad behaviour), thus instilling fear and prejudice.

Interruption between Ugandans and people of other nationalities tended to reduce the degree of intolerance. One Catholic respondent thus recalled her parents overlooking her proposed husband’s religion (Protestant) because he was a foreigner (with an entirely different culture). Couples were however warned about cultural differences and challenges, exemplified by experiences where one respondent’s uncles (Ugandans) expected to receive a dowry which was not forthcoming; or where a wife of foreign origin could not understand why she was referred to as “our wife” and why her family was expected to accommodate her husband’s extended family.

Intolerance

One urban respondent recalled how intolerant her father was towards people from Northern Uganda, speaking openly against them and discouraging his children from associating with theirs, making friends with them or bringing them into his house. This respondent, who insisted on maintaining her friendship with northerner friends, invited them home but had to introduce them to her parents by pseudo names to permit their visits.

Another urban respondent of mixed ethnicity was brought up by her paternal grandparents and recalls how her grandmother frequently begrudged her for being different, blaming all her mistakes on the fact that she was of mixed origin, deprecatingly described as “omusayi onutabule!” (with mixed blood). Her grandmother referred to her as being of lesser importance than her relatives of Buganda origin, which resulted in resentment towards her elder. Another respondent explained how her mother, a Lugbara, was blamed for her father’s (a Langi) death by his relatives because she originated from West Nile, which her in-laws associated with Idi Amin.

According to one urban Muganda interviewee, if someone in the family behaved inappropriately, s/he would occasionally be said to be behaving ‘like a Munyoro’. There were proverbs portraying the Banyoro negatively, as blood enemies. Despite this negative attitude, the Banyoro were recognised in Buganda culture. Of the 12

318 From Bunyoro, a neighbouring region to Buganda.
clans of the bushbuck, a seat was always left empty for the Banyoro because it was believed that rebels from Buganda settled amongst the Banyoro.

A number of stereotypes were found to reinforce prejudices and intolerance. One Mutooro respondent said that although his family was generally inclusive, they tended to exclude the Bakonzo and Bamba as inferior. There were also songs and proverbs that reinforced this prejudice. According to others, the Baganda were stereotyped as dishonest, discriminative and arrogant, while the Rwandese were universally seen as refugees or migrant workers. One respondent said he only realised that some Rwandese did not fall into these categories when he met some at University.

Echoing this report’s introduction, some urban respondents asserted that a family is built on commonalities rather than differences. Common principles form the basis upon which they make choices, but if parents are of different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds, they tend to have disagreements about “what is right” and if this is not effectively resolved, the children take advantage of these differences in values and opinions – running from one parent to another for consent, encouraging duplicity. In marriages between people of the same ethnic background, especially where the couple were of the same social class, fewer disagreements were experienced with regard to upbringing, cultural norms, values and principles to inculcate in their children. Families with parents of differing values and social status however struggled to manage these differences.

According to one urban respondent working on issues of violence against children, sexual and other forms of physical abuse are manifestations of intolerance that result in the miscarriage of power over the vulnerable (often children and women). Often, as corroborated by another respondent, relationships of mixed ethnic and religious backgrounds tend to require assimilation. This may however be resisted by the spouse who is labelled an outsider, and thus causes intolerance. Such intolerance can also take the form of ‘subversion’ as in the case of a rural woman who baptised her children in the absence of her catholic husband: ‘I was tired of staying with children who were not baptised and so I had to baptise them’.

To conclude, hospitality emerged as an important value shared by various ethnic groups. On the one hand, various experiences, proverbs relating to accommodating others, and initiation rituals to accept a “foreigner” into the clan reaffirm the principle and importance of the collective - where a distinction is not made of the other but an effort is rather made to include him/her. On the other hand, where inclusion entails a digression from the norm, from commonly held values, for instance in relation to power and social status, a high degree of intolerance, generalisation and stereotyping is demonstrated.

Social / class relations
Discrimination based on social class or status emerged in the experiences of various respondents. On the one hand, the privileged appeared to be tolerant and
accommodating of the less privileged, while on the other meting out unequal and undignified treatment to them. In a few instances, discrimination was consciously guarded against through parents’ deliberate effort to demonstrate equality in the family.

Two urban respondents born of parents of similar ethnic backgrounds, narrate differences in their parents’ values as a source of tension in the home. One recalls disagreements over a contentious grey area regarding alcohol consumption, where one parent was against the habit and the other brewed and consumed alcohol: because there was no cultural or religious (Catholic) guidance on alcohol consumption, it was a regular source of conflict. Another recalls being discriminated against within his uncle’s home, “I was brought up the hard way like my father. My uncle had a huge compound with geese and dogs and I was responsible for them. I worked, unlike his children, alongside the labourers at home and often retired to bed late at night because of the many household chores.” A third urban respondent described her parents’ marriage as a near master-servant relationship, which she grew up to resent.

By contrast the family of a non-Ugandan respondent, born of parents of the same racial identity, chose to adopt the local (Ugandan) culture of the extended family, accommodating 8 non-biological dependents from different ethnic backgrounds and co-existing with them harmoniously. The parents do not pretend that these children are the same as their biological offspring, but treat all equally, provide for them and are involved in their lives to varying degrees. The children are also encouraged to maintain relationships with their biological parents, where these are still alive. Within the home, the value of respect of others is emphasized, including respect of the house helper.

**Tolerance**

Several respondents interviewed in both the urban and rural areas felt that mobility due to occupation or education has enhanced their ability to interact with people of different nationalities. This has exposed them and taught them to deal with prejudices and suspicion. In several cases, religious principles informed their interaction with those who were different.

Intemarriages in the rural areas were also seen by some as a way of “getting new relatives and developing new relationships”, as a teacher in Moyo emphasised. She observed that her son was married to a Kuku (Sudanese) and could speak Arabic. The family’s experience of bringing up children in the Sudan at the time of conflict in Uganda exposed them to differences and gave them a greater understanding of various peoples and cultures.

One non-Ugandan respondent said he felt accepted by ordinary Ugandans and did not experience feelings of exclusion. He attributed this in part to his occupation as well as to adopting forms of communication that illustrated his understanding of the local context. Local people appreciated this.
Intolerance

Two urban respondents recalled attending predominantly Indian schools where Indians were rough and discriminative towards Africans. In one instance, the interviewee learnt to interact with them because her mother had business dealings with Indian women and had Indian friends. Her mother often rebuked her and her siblings for referring to Indians as “Bayindi.” The other respondent's father would not tolerate this discrimination, expressed his displeasure to the school administration and asked for redress.

Intolerance as a result of class was not very evident in the rural areas. There were examples given of ‘workers’ in the home, but these became ‘part of the family’ and in some cases, were even buried by the family, as in the case of migrant workers. Elements of class discrimination were however felt in the area of education. For example, in polygamous families, the status of education of the wives was considered a factor in conflicts and feelings of superiority or inferiority. Many of the respondents did not stay long in school and felt disadvantaged by this fact. Those who did not go to school at all had a feeling of loss. Nevertheless there were no examples of direct intolerance towards those who were less educated or uneducated. The respondents who felt deprived by a lack of education said that “educated people have an easier way of making a living” and focused on ensuring that their children did not have the same experience.

Overall, social discrimination based on differences in social status and values manifested itself in the relationship between a family and servants, husband and wife, host family members and less privileged extended family. Depending on how these relationships are managed, they resulted in resentment and intolerance but, where a deliberate effort was made to break down these barriers, an appreciation of equality emerged. Social status and values could be enhanced through education (formal and informal) and exposure. With such changeable forms of identity, this type of intolerance may not be long lived or very deeply rooted.

Political affiliation

A number of urban and rural respondents indicated that their families were not actively engaged in politics and that this therefore was not a significant source of tension or intolerance in their homes. A couple of respondents however indicated that while their families were not actively engaged in politics, they were conscious and critical of both national and international news; and considered themselves to be critics of politics rather than politicians.

Some urban respondents’ involvement in partisan politics was influenced by religion. For instance, respondents of Bahá’í faith noted that they are not allowed to participate in partisan politics and are advised to take a position of obedience (though possibly critical) to authority. Another urban respondent recalled how his Catholic parents supported the Democratic Party but, with the coming of the National Resistance
Movement (NRM), new but mild tensions arose, as the NRM’s offer to provide opportunities for women to access resources, political authority and recognition in development appealed to some women. In some cases, political affiliation was determined by personal values and it was often assumed that the family would follow the father’s choice, as one respondent asserted: “my children are likely to share the same political ideology as I do, based on values rather than personality. I always emphasise patriotism rather than divisive politics based on short term achievements.”

A woman party member in Mayuge, whose husband is a local NRM party leader, was averse to her children interacting with members of the opposition party FDC and could not fathom maintaining a relationship with her son if he joined the FDC, while a respondent in Moyo, who had changed her religion from Catholicism to ‘Mungumema’ (a “saved” group), made a cryptic remark, whereby even if her son took up a different political affiliation, “it is not wanted that NRM should fail”.

Because of a generally lukewarm attitude towards politics in the homes of many urban and rural respondents, there was limited demonstrated intolerance, although one respondent said her grandfather constantly warned against three things: “joining partisan politics, becoming a tailor or a carpenter because these were the trades of liars.”

Generally, in all the conversations held, political affiliation did not emerge as a significant course of conflict, only resulting in mild tension. This could be in part attributed to religious principles, family values and the extent to which political affiliation contributes to the survival of the family. Partisan politics having been only recently re-introduced in Uganda, it is possible that its relevance at family level has yet to become apparent, with less energy invested in political differences. Further engagement with politics is often seen as a means to acquire material and other benefits, rather than an accommodation of the rights and aspirations of the people.

**Transmitting values within the family**

Respondents indicated that values were inculcated in the family in different ways; these included freedom to discuss differences at home, freedom to associate with the other, orientation by instruction or observation, choice and influence of schools and finally freedom to construct one’s identity.

**Freedom to discuss difference**

All respondents in the urban areas indicated that their children (and to some extent themselves) were free to discuss a wide range of topics, ranging from HIV/AIDS, rape, sex, sexual orientation, justice, rights, national and international politics, among others. This provided spaces to question practices and people that are different from oneself. Three urban respondents however indicated that, during their upbringing, sex was a taboo subject, while for others difference in sexual orientation did not come up because it was a practice that was not visible. In the case of some respondents

319 The party currently in government, led since 1986 by President Museveni.
from Mayuge and Moyo districts, discussion of religious difference was only meant to ensure that there was no digression from the path that the family had chosen. This was the same for Muslims and Catholics. As one respondent put it, her children “... did not even know that there was a choice” in terms of changing religious identity.

All the respondents in the urban leg of the research (with the exception of three who were entirely open minded and receptive to their children’s aspirations) said their children were free to discuss and choose different lifestyles but within certain parameters, in accordance with their religious values and principles. A clearly negative position was taken on the practice of homosexuality which was perceived as wrong, against religious values, and unnatural - children were generally guided away from this. One respondent narrated how one of the family’s dependents, a 6 year old, returned from his first term at a new school with stories of witnessing homosexuality amongst the older boys; he was immediately withdrawn from the school. Other unacceptable forms of exposure were to violence and nudity. The same attitudes were expressed in the rural leg of the research, with similar caveats on matters of choice, depending on the values attached and promoted. An additional area of importance for some of the respondents was the traditional values held by the family, which also had to be taken into consideration.

**Freedom of association**

Most respondents of different ethnic and religious backgrounds stated that their homes were open to people of all walks of life and children were free to invite friends from different backgrounds, with the exception of one father who distinctly disliked northerners and another who opposed traditional believers. In two instances, urban respondents said they were warned as children against associating with families that were known for sorcery and witchcraft and were discouraged from sharing food or drinks with such people lest they were poisoned. Others still hold prejudices against certain tribes such as the Bakonzo and Bamba for the Batooro. Amongst the respondents in Mayuge and Moyo, who were of Busoga, Teso, Bugisu, Japadhola, Madi and Sudanese origin, restrictions were not present, except in as far as fears for the safety of the children were concerned, including the fear of child sacrifice and therefore the need to protect them from strangers.

In the rural areas, the trade or business premise and the family home are important spaces where exposure to people of different kinds takes place. Thus exposure to people at the family level is significant. In Mayuge district, the diversity of people in the area has led to acceptance and tolerance, as well as active seeking of interaction ... children are taught to tolerate and to be friendly and open and not to discriminate. In Moyo, exposure to people of different origins, tribes, communities and countries and exposure to different religions led to two different responses, a much valued tolerance reinforced through dialogue; and stereotypes about groups of people e.g. Muslims referred to as Lugbara and vice versa.
Several respondents in both urban and rural areas encouraged their children to make friends prudently – establishing the value of the friendship (e.g. education advancement) and not to discriminate on the basis of identity traits such as ethnicity, religion or social status, but to avoid people who were lazy, dishonest, promoting the politics of hate and abuse, or practicing homosexuality. Rural respondents were particularly opposed to the influences of videos, dancehalls and gangs, which they saw as leading to the adoption of anti-social behaviour, such as smoking marijuana, sniffing glue, and taking up mannerisms seen in films. One of them raised concerns about schools and their negative influence in terms of homosexuality, where ‘children are being recruited’. One urban respondent, a Muganda, said she encourages her children to associate with friends of diverse backgrounds. Her children’s best friends are Rwandese and Langi and the children visit and sleep over at each other’s homes. As a parent, she would expect her children to tell her if one of their friends was gay and they would discuss this choice and its consequences.

According to one urban respondent, it takes a deliberate effort by parents to understand children’s perspectives and eventually benefit from entertaining their independent positions. If in future children however choose to divert from the norm and choose a different religion or identity, this would be stressful, especially after the effort put into socialising them (going to church, holding discussions, purposive exposure, etc.) Nevertheless, all rural interviewees, except 3-4, would not treat their children differently as a result of the choices made, although they still maintained that some choices are unacceptable, for instance, a Mugisu man would never allow his son to have a choice on whether or not to get circumcised, because ‘it would affect the health of his grandchildren’- this was a given. He also would never allow his daughter to marry a Mugisu man who is uncircumcised, even though she could marry any other uncircumcised man from any other ethnicity without objection. Some of these choices are therefore premised on beliefs, be it ethnic or religious, and on implications that parents try to protect their children from. They also lead to inflexibility. Thus, two rural Muslim respondents indicated that the Quran does not allow marriage with a non-believer and that children in such a relationship could die, while another mentioned that it was unacceptable for a Muslim to change religion. Such a person could be cursed. Another Muslim respondent, while emphasising that she would never allow her children to convert because they would be ostracised, nevertheless pointed out that the family continued to interact with a member who became a Christian and a pastor, as a result of a healing experience he underwent, following prayers by a Christian group. He continues to observe the Muslim rituals.

**Orientation to social behaviour and values**

Urban parents of diverse backgrounds opted for various ways to orient their children and expose them to difference. By treating all members of the household equally, one respondent emphasised that there is no great difference between people. She demonstrated and instilled in her children respect for elders and other people’s opinion, including the house-help whom she treated as a family member. Observing
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

Parents and elders make decisions and respond to problems based on personal values and religious principles was also highlighted by several urban respondents as part of their orientation to accept difference. Reading the Bible and teaching children helped to ingrain Christian values in their lives. One respondent intentionally passed on values of respect and tolerance to his children, encouraging them to be open to people who are different, and not to limit their relationships to people of the same religion or tribe.

Another urban respondent made a deliberate effort to expose her children to her family and her husband’s family of different ethnic origin by spending holidays in their respective villages, visiting grandparents and inviting relatives and grandparents to visit their home. One respondent holds discussions with his children on various issues, including justice, ethnocentrism and the distinction between the “-ism” ideology which connotes superiority, while claiming an openness to listen to the other.

Creating spaces to talk regularly to children and tell stories were identified as common means through which parents communicate values. These conversations illustrated the values of responsibility, self-control, discipline, self-management, hard work, respect, wisdom, decency, honesty, and integrity among others. Other stories were related to the history of the tribe, such as dealing with famine and relationships with other groups. However, in one instance, stories were told that portrayed Arabs as “bad people” because of their involvement in the slave trade – these were often told to deter young children from bad behaviour. These spaces, according to respondents, enabled parents to listen to and understand how their children think and relate to others, and give them guidance on values and principles. In Moyo district, the idea of family meetings or ‘paranja’ (a gathering around the veranda in the same way as people used to sit around the fire), is utilised by some of the respondents to guide their children, to provide an opportunity for children and wives to have a voice, avoiding the case of the subsistence farmer who recalled how his mother never had an opportunity to convince her husband that her children needed to go to school.

One urban respondent who was orphaned at an early age said the extended family provided important spaces for learning, although interactions with them were loose.
There was no particular person responsible for passing down values or particular cultural information; conversations were often general but allowed the younger generation to learn from the elders. In the experience of another orphan in the rural areas, the extended family provided an avenue to engage with difference because it exposed her to a different kind of life from that of her nuclear family where her parents were of the same ethnic and religious background.

Two urban respondents were very systematic in exposing their children to knowledge and skills to reinforce the foundation of values and principles they upheld. Children were exposed to music, dance and drama classes to enhance their creativity, self-confidence and expression; and to short training in basic technical skills, in reading science related material, physical training and discipline.

Choice and influence of schools

In most cases, the choice of schools for children was informed by academic performance; in cases where the school fell short of expectations, children were withdrawn. Exposed and well-travelled respondents tended to appreciate schools that offer a holistic approach to education (academic and extracurricular), a space for children to grow and express themselves, and exposure to multinational and multi-ethnic environments.

Academic performance – Accordingly, urban respondents selected children’s schools purposively based on academic performance, serious administration and management, provision of a balanced extra curriculum programme, learner centred teaching, promotion of values of humility and respect for authority and freedom of worship. Such schools were considered harmonisers of society, deemphasising difference and allowing children to discover commonalities. In both Moyo and Mayuge, the overriding consideration was the standard of the school, followed in equal measure by proximity and cost and, in two cases, by religion.

Prestige – In the 1950s and 1960s, Mengo Secondary School and Kings’ College Buddo were prestigious and at the heart of Buganda’s education system, so children from prominent families went to these schools. In Mengo Secondary School, the staff were European and students of mixed ethnicity, including non-Baganda, Lubgara, Sudanese, Acholi, Bakiga, West Nilers, and Rwandese. This is where one urban respondent began to form stereotypes: “the Sudanese were friendly and cool, the West Nilers social, while the Bakiga were difficult and rebellious, often taking the lead in school strikes and fights, and standing out as aggressive and loud.”

Religious background – In some cases, the Christian religion was, without question, the first consideration in determining the choice of school, as this was considered a means to build upon the religious foundation initiated in the home and to reinforce Christian values. In other cases, the quality of the school and its performance was given priority over religion, as one respondent narrates: “My father, a staunch Catholic, risked being prohibited publicly from some sacraments for taking his children to secular schools but he insisted.” According to one urban respondent and
a handful of rural ones, guidance in good conduct and etiquette were also important considerations to inform the choice of schools. One Catholic respondent was of the opinion that exclusive Catholic orientation was not sustainable and sent his children to secular schools although grooming according to Catholic values and principles continued at home. He was of the conviction that managing diversity is a basis for success today - a vital life skill.

Proximity – For some urban respondents, choice was influenced by the proximity of a good quality school to their homes. This often limited their exposure to people with similar ethnic and religious backgrounds. The question of tribe seldom arose and if it did, this was not perceived as a problem. Proximity and cost went hand in hand in the rural areas.

Secular and social status free – two urban respondents chose schools that provided their children with an “ordinary” school experience, void of division according to social status, encouraging them to appreciate others for their personality rather than social or financial status. Another respondent deliberately avoided schools such as Namagunga and Gayaza, perceived as schools to groom girls into the wives of chiefs, and imposing Christianity. Among the rural interviewees, a Muslim woman, interested in the standard of her son’s school, allowed his going to a school with a lower standard because it had a place in which the boy could say his prayers, which the other school did not. This was a decision by the child which she respected, after he was challenged by his paternal grandfather to maintain a prayerful life. A teacher who studied and converted from Protestantism in a Catholic school preferred to send her children to just such a school ‘because of the good behaviour that is taught to the children’.

Construction of identity

For several respondents, the choice to construct one’s identity is open, but with an expectation that decisions will be made within the framework of the orientation (religious and cultural mentoring and counselling) received from their parents. Most urban respondents said that, if their children diverted from the expected course, they would initially allow space for the phase of growth to pass, or make attempts to influence their choice. If this failed, they would be disappointed but would not disown them. Few of the rural respondents expected to change their attitudes towards their children on account of their choices, however disappointing these may be.
In general terms, political affiliation does not seem to have much influence on peoples’ lives, at least while they are not involved in campaigns and elections. Identities in the rural areas were not tied to politics, although, for a few exceptional cases, this assumes an overriding character. Political affiliation, though not significant from the conversations, nevertheless could be very influential. Some men expected their wives and children to automatically join their parties, while some expressed rigidity towards choice of political affiliation for their children.

One urban respondent narrated encouraging his children to construct their own identity as citizens of the world who identify as human beings first, founded on their religious faith. ‘The identity of the soul has no gender and is based on a foundation of the human family’, he said. He encouraged his children to be patriotic rather than nationalistic, using education to dispel ignorance about the other. In Buganda, children have a clan identity into which they are systematically oriented. According to one respondent, an annual event is organized every January 1st to pass on information to the youth about their origin, history and important values and practices of their clan. During such events, the youth learn how to relate to death, witness the age-old twin ceremony, clean their ancestors’ graves and learn how to relate to others. Strangers (other Ugandans and foreigners) are allowed to witness and participate in these events, which may include initiation into the clan if they so wish.

As mentioned earlier, the only form of identity that most respondents in the urban area (with the exception of three) strongly opposed was homosexuality. A number indicated a reluctance to deal with this, partly because they had no point of reference, and it went against their religious and cultural values. Some indicated that reading about human rights and tolerance have helped them to understand the practices from a rights perspective and feel that homosexuals should not be ostracised as long as they do not infringe on what is considered acceptable to others. Three urban parents were particularly liberal and encouraged their children to be free spirited. The families had diverse friendships including homosexuals and saw no harm in associating with them. They provided mentoring and advisory support to their children, but did not impose their will and aspirations on them. In some cases, this was a form of rejection of the strict boundaries that had been imposed on them as children. In the rural areas, other than one mention of homosexuality as a negative influence that can be picked at school, none of the respondents made reference to it.

Where consistent monitoring and mentoring of adults was absent, individuals tended to construct their own identity, set of values and worldviews. One urban interviewee for instance recalls that his parents were surprised and disappointed at the choices he made in terms of profession and choice of wife, considering the conservative cultural background in which he was born. Another urban respondent deliberately selected a church that promotes spontaneity, self-expression of needs and respect of individual choices, allowing its members to develop their own identity and political affiliation, guided by fundamental principles. Another said that being able to construct his own
‘self’ made him appreciate the possible existence of diverse identities inspired by different values and experiences and therefore avoid being judgmental of difference.

To conclude, openness to discuss difference indicates a willingness to deal with it within the family. Free association with others reinforces this willingness and enhances children’s confidence to engage with others outside the home. Overall, there appeared to be an increasing desire to allow children to make some choices within the home, thus enhancing their sense of self-determination and confidence. This however requires patience and a deliberate effort on the part of parents who may not have had the same opportunities while growing up. In most cases, such a conscious effort to expose children to difference through orientation at home and by their choice of schools was necessary. Academic performance was a key factor in the selection of schools but it was evident that schools that provided support for the child’s character development were given high priority by the urban and some of the rural interviewees.

In most families, therefore, significant energy was invested in providing a firm foundation of values and principles for the children, with the anticipation that the children would make the “right” decisions within the framework provided, although room was made for transgression. This may be considered an indication of flexibility within the family, allowing for some individualism within the confines of collective societal expectations.

**Manifestations of tolerance at the workplace**

Most of the respondents indicated that exposure to knowledge and people at their places of work contributed to their degree of tolerance in other spheres of life. In some cases, this was explicit through organizational culture, programmes and policies; and in others through implicit rules. Several urban respondents however noted that, up to the 1980s and early 1990s, ethnic identity at the place of work was not an important issue. It only became prominent more recently when identity has become increasingly associated with access to resources and opportunities.

Respondents’ organisations host staff of diverse backgrounds and have to deal with issues that require objective engagement with difference at an interpersonal level. The workplace also offered spaces where the ability to manage diversity supported by values of respect, equity and tolerance are encouraged. Exposure to new work related knowledge (e.g. human rights, women and children’s rights) and experiences (in practically promoting these rights) influenced perceptions and values of staff who may be influential members of a family and thus in position to translate and promote some of these values in the families.

For many of the rural respondents, the focus was on the values that informed their interaction with people outside the home. These were influences and values learned from their parents (actively inculcated) or in some cases learned in spite of their parents’ practices.
Profession – exposure to knowledge and people

Exposure to knowledge on human rights fundamentally influenced a number of urban respondents’ outlook on life in respect to interpersonal relationships, rights and equality. It helped them to transcend stereotypes and to enhance tolerance and respect for human beings in their diversity. Occupations that involved travel within and outside the country provided opportunities for some respondents to engage with difference at a professional level, meet new people, and appreciate diverse perspectives and competences to deal with various contemporary challenges. Working abroad on issues related to violence against women exposed one respondent to gender discrimination and intolerance, and inspired her to found a local organisation to champion equal opportunity for women in Uganda.

Three urban respondents, who worked in women-dominated organisations dealing with women related issues, stated that despite differences in ethnic and religious backgrounds, they work well together. They disproved the common perception that women cannot easily do so. Differences in religion and ethnicity are discussed openly and they support each other professionally and privately.

In the rural areas, those who manifested and promoted tolerance at the workplace were business people and a boda boda (motor-cycle taxi) rider, whose exposure to a diverse family background had taught him the importance of tolerance. His immediate family had both Muslim and Christian members who had learned to appreciate and support each other, while respecting their differences. He was able to arbitrate in cases where his colleagues fought over passengers and inculcate in them the patience to ‘deal with ‘difficult passengers’.’

Organisational culture

The emergence of ethnic associations, such as Nkoba za Mbogo, Ssebantu and others at one’s University was considered an indication of the growing desire to build solidarity and a sense of belonging among students of particular ethnic backgrounds. A risk was however seen of students becoming ethnocentric – creating rivalry and exclusion, especially amongst the Baganda who tend to assume a position of superiority over smaller ethnic groups. One of the urban respondents said that she encouraged students to look beyond their ethnic identity and to appreciate being Ugandan and global citizens, if they are to relate effectively with others and in turn be appreciated.

Two urban respondents had to work deliberately at breaking the stereotype of a “foreigner boss”. They established clear policies on equal treatment of staff and defined organisational operations on a day to day basis to divert the focus from their personal identity and to foster an effective work ethic. Both individuals made an effort to assimilate in their manner of greeting, showing interest in individual personalities, sharing information about themselves openly, highlighting commonalities in cultures and promoting a spirit of fairness and openness.
Organisational programmes and policies

In some instances, development programmes were designed with a diverse local context in mind. Some urban respondents for instance reported the inclusion of diversity in their programme designs in terms of regional representation and sensitivity to diverse languages and targets (people with disability, living with HIV/AIDS, victims of conflict, age, gender, and religious and ethnic backgrounds). In one case, a baseline was used to establish the priority challenges to ensure that the programme design is informed and sensitive to the diverse local context. One respondent thus noted that Muslims are a closed community and therefore, unlike Christians who reach out for help, victims of domestic violence who are Muslim often do not, and therefore require a different approach to enable them access redress.

In some instances, a priority in recruiting staff was given to competence (although affirmative action was offered for certain marginalised categories), followed by considerations of ethnic and religious diversity. In some organisations, the diversity of staff was informed by the need for diverse cultures and languages to meet the needs of clients. In a few cases, ethnic and religious diversity was accidental, as priority was given to competence only. According to a respondent working at a university, policy is very clear in respect to admission on merit, but provision is made for district quotas especially for marginalised districts, although it is silent on ethnic minority groups. Another organisation deliberately recruited foreign (European) volunteers to enhance multiculturalism, to contribute to the professional growth of staff and to enhance tolerance in day to day management. The composition of the Board of Directors was, in some cases, deliberately diverse to bring national and international perceptions and experiences on board. One respondent observed that diversity within an organisation, if well harnessed, provides alternative perspectives on resolving problems.

A clash between individual and organisational values sometimes arose: one respondent narrated how a staff member opposed a programme to support sex workers and sexual minorities, judging them sinners according to her religious beliefs. She resigned from her job because she felt the organisation was promoting evil. After this, tasks were assigned according to the staff’s readiness to promote organisational values, publicly and otherwise.

In the rural areas, organisational attributes were of relevance for teachers and some civil servants, such as a policeman, who had worked in various organisations. Most of the respondents related their experience to values they were able to utilise in their professional life or in managing their businesses. The most important attributes for the teachers and other formal workers were hard work, non-discrimination, unity and dialogue. One of the head teachers utilised dialogue and meetings as a management tool. The traders and business people valued honesty, friendship and thrift. Some individuals, such as a boda-boda rider, valued the ability to arbitrate and mentor his colleagues as well as people from the village who support them to undertake a trade of their own. Team work was valued by teachers and a local leader. Other important
values learned and utilised included neutrality, particularly in relation to politics, but also other forms of non-discrimination, cooperation and mutual support.

The place of work, through its culture and opportunity to acquire knowledge, thus enables employees to enhance their professional and interpersonal competence. Translating this knowledge (often for programmatic objectives) to a family situation however requires a deliberate effort, a willingness and commitment to change. Workplace exposure is often limited to one family member who then has to introduce new values to the family, demanding ‘buy-in’ from members who may not be similarly convinced. In town, public (professional) and private (family) lives are often divorced and therefore ideas from the work place may not necessarily apply in the home situation which are often dominated by religious and ethnic values. In the rural areas on the other hand, the place of work and the family dwelling place are often combined or in close proximity: ‘workplace experiences’ then directly influence the family.

The evolving concept of family

One respondent observed that “Pluralism is based on the principle of individualism, while the African concept of family is premised on the collective, on convergence rather than divergence” While the family is crucial in respect to values, it must, as already noted, be understood within its given context.

The family as a space for nurturing values

A number of respondents confirmed that the family is an important space where values are nurtured and good habits acquired before a child is exposed to other influences. Formal schools, workplaces and informal communities (churches, social functions) also provide spaces for learning and reaffirming values and basic rules or etiquette in respect to relating to others.

One urban respondent thus saw the family as the first of four layers for nurturing and protecting children, followed by the clan, the community and the state. In the ideal Ugandan families, parents have time to interact with their children, the fire place still exists (though not always literally) and the extended family plays a significant role in grooming the youth in respect to traditional values, norms and heritage, fostering a sense of belonging, dignity and respect.

Evolving concept of the family and inclusiveness

We have seen above that the concept of the family is changing for various reasons in Uganda, and these changes affect the transfer of values and the opportunities to be in contact with people and spaces that reinforce these values. Interviews suggest the following:

Identity construction – a breakdown in the systematic grooming and orientation of children, coupled with increased mobility, exposure, and interface with foreign values, is resulting in an independent construction of identity based on choice; on choosing
values and the type of family life, rather than what is inherited from tradition. Further, children’s rights have often been translated into a “mind your own business” attitude and freedom to do as they wish. While kith and kin remain an important element of the family, individual aspirations are increasingly being negotiated.

Dysfunctional families - According to some urban respondents, there are more dysfunctional families today than in the past. Increasingly, children are growing up without fathers, relationships between parents are influenced by money. With women’s empowerment, power dynamics within the home, where not well managed, have led to men’s irresponsibility and domestic violence, pushing women into public spaces to fend for their families, leading to deficiencies all round. Another urban respondent said that increased disillusionment in the marriage institution has led to relationships where men and women want children but are not willing to commit to a spouse – the recognition of agency, freedom of choice and availability of one’s own resources are informing this stance.

There is also a tendency to prefer smaller families, focusing on the immediate family and current generations. This has meant the loss of guidance and support from the wider family on values, cultures and as a strong means to socialise children. Migration into other communities is another factor of change, in terms of family size, composition and interaction with the extended family. Another kind of family is also emerging, where grandparents are responsible for the lives of their grandchildren.

Moral degeneration – A growing tendency towards sexual networking was also mentioned, with serial monogamy (women and men who have one partner after another), men with mistresses and informal polygamy. Increased infidelity and alcohol abuse leave children open to mistreatment and exploitation both within and outside the family. Promiscuity and alcoholism have led to growing numbers of neglected children. This in turn has resulted in the emergence of a mass of poorly educated job-seekers with a ‘survival for the fittest’ attitude, and a desire for quick financial gains at any cost, often referred to as the ‘boda boda culture’. Recent instances of child sacrifice, where children are kidnapped and killed for ritual offerings by witchdoctors promising wealth or other benefits, have also raised concerns amongst parents about the safety of children. Parents then restrict the space provided for their children to interact with communities and their peer.

Unguided children - Children are no longer the collective responsibility of the community. As one respondent in Metu mentioned, the attitude is ‘instruct the one you gave birth to’. This attitude, coupled with the inevitable difficulties of making a living for most people, translates into children left to their own devices even at times when guidance is crucial. Children on their part, seek various forms of support, responding to peer pressure and relying on the media for information and guidance. This is contributing to loose morals in society. Where guidance of children is still available at home, the community or environment in which they live still have much impact.
New World Order – One urban respondent asserted that the family is undergoing a cycle of change (just as religion, nation states and the world do) with the decline of the old and the emergence of a New World Order. It is therefore anticipated that efforts will have to be made to find new ways of doing things. In this process however, some of the original values will remain and the family will continue to be at the centre of this transformation. According to another respondent, it is not possible to solve Africa’s problems without tackling problems within the family which is at the centre of leadership, decision making, collective child upbringing (omwana akuzibwa kyaró), health and food security. Issues of participation, consultation, negotiation, equality, and freedoms will need more emphasis than in the past.

Profession vs. parenting
Increasingly, parents spend more time on their careers, education and work-related relationships, and are too busy to spend time with their children, often sending them to boarding school at an early age. Parents also tend to pay more attention to their children’s academic, material and health needs and less on character development. This then leaves the responsibility of grooming entirely in the hands of teachers, whereas schools often see their role in academic terms only, leaving a vacuum in respect to values and life skills. For the respondents in the villages, parenting challenges also stem from poverty and lack of time to spare. They have to balance their children’s schooling and the useful labour the children can provide at home and in the fields. A parent in Moyo tries to accommodate this by ensuring that her child is not involved in such work during weekdays.

The extended family and emerging challenges
The extended family - In the local context, the concept of family includes the nucleus and the extended family. Thus, one urban respondent said he was discouraged as a child from asking questions about relations to avoid creating distance between relatives and possibly discrimination. All relatives were to be treated equally and where preferential treatment was necessary, children were informed. One could therefore have several fathers, “tata omuto” each accorded the same respect and with the same fatherly responsibilities.

The extended family provided spaces for sharing, learning, and passing down tradition – hence strengthening social networks, social protection and capital. According to one respondent, the extended family is founded on mutual dependence, where one party provides shelter, food, school fees, clothes, and medical care, and the other provides labour, looks after the home and young children, respects elders, and upholds family values. Another element of the extended family does not necessarily depend on the symbiotic relationship of provider and helper, but rather thrives on ascribed roles to relations, who are responsible for particular social and traditional functions concerning their kin and kith. Hence, when there is a family conflict, a particular set of ‘uncles’ is responsible to manage and resolve it; when there is a marriage, specific roles and responsibilities are prescribed for individuals on the basis of their relationships. For
instance, amongst the Moru, a respondent noted, ‘a woman was assigned her brother-in-law to help her and address her issues, not her husband, although she may consult with the husband’.

Emerging challenges – Changing values - While a number of respondents inherited their parents’ generous disposition towards the extended family and continue to provide support, this was said to become increasingly difficult. Today, the extended family is overstretched by the increasing demands of overwhelming numbers of orphans, the result of HIV/AIDS and poverty. Relationships are no longer as reciprocal, but now rely more on one-way material and financial support. This changes the power dynamics in the extended family where one is no longer looked upon as a daughter/son but as a financial provider or recipient, significantly reducing the social value of these relationships. According to one respondent, the values of generosity and hospitality by the family members receiving support are replaced by jealousy, dishonesty and corruption. An interviewee cited the example of people living abroad who send money for investment to Uganda through their own immediate family members, money which is then ‘diverted’ to other uses.

Economic costs and benefits - The extended family is also increasingly perceived as expensive, restrictive and often providing limited added value. This might explain the emergence of new networks that are not based on kinship and occupy more space than the extended family, for instance, school associations (old girls / boys), Charity / Rotary clubs, workplace / profession-related associations – where meaningful friendships are established by virtue of spending more time together, thus leading to a re-evaluation of the extended family’s importance.

Increasing individualism - According to one respondent, there is also a tendency to imitate western values of individualism. Typically, single-headed households make support to the extended family difficult, as parents struggle alone to support their immediate families. Families then tend to come together only occasionally, for instance for a funeral. The mushrooming children’s homes and orphanages are an indication of the breakdown in social protection and networks within the cultural context. Where individuals feel obliged to support the extended family, material and financial support is provided, with very few willing to take on the responsibility of accommodating, grooming and socialising those in need.

Weakening social networks - Today parents are reluctant to allow their children to spend extended periods at their relatives’ homes for fear of child abuse, and are also reluctant to receive relatives for fear of the same in their own homes, hence reducing the opportunities for exposure to others.

Generally, therefore, the Ugandan family is transiting from the collective to the nuclear, although both types remain interwoven with relationships with first cousins, nephews and nieces, and restricted to a couple of immediate generations rather than several generations back. The family however still provides an important space for nurturing values and though this has been weakened, it still holds the potential of
being the most influential space in the formative years of children, as it is family
guidance that will most often determine how individuals will respond to the other
spaces they are exposed to.

Nevertheless, with increasing numbers of individuals left to construct their own
identity in the absence of a supportive social system as a foundation, there is a
likelihood that individual aspirations, lifestyles and worldviews will be so established
and guarded, hence the move towards individualism that has so far been attributed to
western influence. The relevance of pluralism in such a context will be brought to the
fore: a new sense of self within the collective may be developed or the collective may
have to redefine its boundaries to accommodate the evolving sense of community.

**Spaces and drivers of pluralism in a family setting**
Most respondents said pluralism should be holistically addressed in the family, schools, workplaces, cultural, religious and social spaces.

**The (functional) family**
All respondents agreed that responsible parents are key drivers in nurturing values in
the family, although their roles and the concept of family is evolving and this process
needs to be managed with support from various stakeholders. There is a need to review
the requirements of good parenting in a modern era, to analyse and strike a balance
between profession and parenting, to deliberately recreate spaces (the fireplace) to
orient and groom children and avoid “signing in” in children’s lives.

**Schools (beyond academic performance)**
A number of respondents also considered schools as important spaces where
children are nurtured, especially schools that place equal emphasis on academic
performance and non-academic growth. Youth spend a significant amount of their
lives in a school environment and this impacts on their worldviews. Schools were
also considered spaces where negative perspectives can be deconstructed, values
inculcated, and diversity experienced in real terms. According to one respondent,
however, the mainstream education system is programmed to a point that it does
not allow creativity and freedom to construct one’s identity. Nevertheless, teachers
are key actors because, consciously or not, they communicate values that inform
how students respond to their environment. Teachers often know the children better
than their parents by virtue of the amount of time they spend with them and monitor
their behaviour. Unfortunately, many of the teachers in schools today take up the
profession as a last resort. Teachers then have a negative influence on children –
verbally and physically abusing them, often leaving long lasting psychological scars
and laying a foundation for intolerance and stereotyping. This points to the important
nurturing role of families to make the most of the opportunities offered by schools,
while preparing their children to withstand some of the negative influences that can
be expected.
Cultural spaces (positive values and relevance)

Language is an important element through which values are communicated and nurtured. Proverbs, stories of traditional practices and ceremonies are useful tools to enhance the appreciation of identity and difference. Culturally knowledgeable people such as ssengas (aunts) and traditional healers can provide conducive spaces for socialisation, to appreciate different cultures and gain self-understanding.

Religious spaces

Religious centres are spaces for influence, as are programmes such as the initiative by the Uganda Joint Christian Council to promote values of child protection and parenting. While some religious centres and leaders have a strong influence on their congregations, their prayers are sometimes aggressive, on the verge of violence and may lead to indoctrination. Religious spaces in the rural areas are an important space for learning values and imparting tolerance. Religious leaders and communities are frequently identified as those who can support and mediate in family conflicts, supplementing the role of the extended family members, which is however still significant the rural communities, particularly during conflicts and ceremonies, as well as at the time of death.

The media

In the past two decades, the media (written word, music, film industry and electronic media) have developed significantly and are playing an important role in influencing perceptions, values and behaviour in Ugandan society. Children are increasingly exposed to this in the absence of attention from parents, placing the media in a good position to meet their social responsibility to project positive societal values that foster tolerance and social transformation. Currently, the mass media is quite money driven, this orientation determining the messages they disseminate and the values they promote.

In the rural areas, few of the respondents appreciated the positive influence of the media. It was recognised as an important socialising avenue, but often demonised as the avenue through which children learned and copied strange behaviours. Nevertheless, a positive aspect was information on HIV/AIDS to the youth to deter them from making costly mistakes. Cinemas and ‘foreign videos’ were considered the hallmark of immorality and necessitated care so that children are kept away from them… since it ‘corrupts their minds completely and turns them away from school’.

Political leadership and role models

The fundamental responsibility of enhancing tolerance in society is vested in the State to attend to matters of culture, family values, national history and identity. The key drivers of pluralism in society therefore are leaders (political, technical, social, cultural) who hold influential positions and are able to articulate particular visions and ideologies. Currently, the most prominent role models in Ugandan society are
managers because they are visible and have a strong influence on people’s perception of life, especially for the youth. Men and women who are celebrities in Uganda are regarded by many as heroes and heroines, regardless of their conduct.

According to one urban respondent, as the world gets smaller, it hosts citizenship that is not patriotic but rather driven by the power of money. People vote with money and not their conscience. Power lies in the hands of corporate brand values; consumed by self-perception and preservation: “What is trendy? How does the world see me?”

The workplace
Exposure through sharing knowledge, training and learning events creates spaces for tolerance, challenging perceptions of the self and stereotypes about others. This allows individuals to recognize the ability of others and strive to excel. In the rural as well as urban areas, exposure to difference, to values and skills in managing diversity benefit the workplace, be it a separate space or part of the family space. The workplace is an important space where the skills of pluralism and the management of diversity are put to the test. Exposure through travelling locally and internationally also fosters learning and enables people to appreciate others, and to become more accommodative of difference. It also increases one’s network of friends, and triggers interest in exploring the other, which often influences one’s outlook on the world.

External environment
According to one respondent, globalisation is a double edged sword – on the one hand exposing people to diversity, on the other destroying originality and creativity and laying a skewed ground for engagement where communities that are less technologically advanced are overwhelmed and influenced by others.

To sum up, there are various spaces and drivers, old and new, to enhance pluralism in the family environment, but all need to be reviewed in terms of their relevance in the current context. Different spaces provide various levels of exposure and appreciation of pluralism, but they need to be consciously linked to ensure a continuous process of reinforcement of the relevant values and principles. These need to be visible and lived through culture and religion (at home), schools, the workplace, media, as well as the practical examples of decisions and actions taken by role models and opinion leaders. In the local context, this may be difficult; the discussion about what is and what should be ideally therefore returns to the family as a point of reference and assurance. This in turn depends on its ethnic, cultural and religious roots and experiences, to inform how it relates to different and differing stimuli, all vying for attention and allegiance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Principles of pluralism in the family
From the onset, it was noted that a number of respondents, especially the urban-based, debated the concept of pluralism as one of Western persuasion, divorced from
Pluralism has its roots in Western philosophy and thought, stemming from human identity and doctrine that promotes the individual and autonomous self. This, they noted, is contrary to the African concept of a family that is premised on collective identity. Some respondents were of the opinion that pluralism is a skill that can be learnt while a couple disagreed saying, “Appreciating the other is a value. It is caught, not taught. It is not a skill that is learnt.”

We suggest here that an appreciation of ‘the other’ is indeed a value, a conscious choice that requires commitment and resilience in the face of perceived or real differences. Having said this, to promote this value, one needs to gain exposure to difference, be ready to compromise and negotiate and, if necessary establish boundaries, recognise the benefits and challenges presented by a given context. This requires willingness and self-confidence to engage with the other, without the fear of losing one’s own cherished identity, which in turn requires a deep appreciation of ‘self’ in its entirety, delving into and appreciating the origins of one’s values and their significance, and viewing them in relation to new knowledge. Such a process of exposure may involve learning new knowledge and skills which leads to the perception that pluralism is learnt.

The outcomes of this research indicate that some of the principles of pluralism as defined by Eck were met to varying degrees. Most families demonstrated tolerance in relation to religion and political affiliation, but there were limitations in respect to “active seeking of understanding across lines of difference.” Families of mixed ethnicity or religion as well as polygamous families indicated a willingness to accommodate the other as different and a few attempts were made towards an “energetic engagement with diversity” witnessed in intermarriage, traditional initiation ritual into clans and learning different languages. With regard to “the encounter of commitments” that “does not require us to leave our identities and our commitments behind”, this could in part be illustrated by that fact that, with the exception of Islam, in the urban areas, there was no indication of coercion to convert to a different religion, to adhere to a political affiliation or to speak a particular language (in respect to intermarriage). In the few instances where a conversion did take place, it was a matter of personal choice. Amongst the rural respondents, the pressure of social expectation played a part in leading to conversions amongst Christians, specifically on account of marriage. There were conversions too, between Christians and Muslims, which went both ways and, despite the expectation that conversions would be ‘ordained’ in favour of Islam, there was no evidence of coercion here, other than the same pressure of social expectation, which was not always succumbed to because some (women) were able to retain their religious identities. Nevertheless, part of the drive for religious pluralism is the ethnic construction and perceptions of gender roles and status, that often give a higher premium to the values of the male spouse.

In a country as diverse as Uganda, it may be useful to consider the acceptance and promotion of pluralism as an incremental process with a number of stages. In the local context, families deal with diverse sets of difference in respect to religion, ethnicity,
social status and political affiliation. To manage this diversity, families must first acknowledge difference; accept and respect it and thereafter engage with it. The research findings suggest that many families are at the stage of acknowledging and accepting difference, with varying degrees of confidence, and of secure entrenchment in particular identities (religious, ethnic, political) influencing their willingness to participate in “the encounter of commitments” without the fear of being subsumed.

To recapitulate, all respondents identified forms of diversity in relation to ethnicity, religion, political affiliation or social status that impacted on their lives and continues to have impact on the lives of their children. Ethnic and religious identities were found to be the most significant sources of difference. Managing ethnic identity expressed itself through language, cultural practices (polygamy) and social relations. This required a degree of assimilation, an effort to understand and agree with the other, to seek commonalities, compromise and negotiate for inclusion. With regard to religious identity, uniformity was desired, although digression from the norm was tolerated. The findings also show that current family generations, especially in urban areas, with education and other forms of exposure, are more receptive to ‘the other’ and tolerant of diversity than earlier was the case, when digression from commonly held values, in relation to power and social status, often resulted in a high degree of intolerance.

Secondly, the workplace offers opportunities for exposure to difference in respect to interpersonal relations, beliefs and ideology based on different ethnicity, religion, political affiliation and social status. In some organisations, practical steps were taken to manage diversity (policies and programmes). Exposure to new knowledge such as human rights (children and women’s rights) influenced perceptions and attitudes of parents and family members. Organisational cultures also provided spaces for self-expression in a multi-cultural context. In urban areas, it was at times challenging to bridge the distance between this and the home, while the proximity (or confluence) of the home with the workspace in rural areas made this connection easier.

With regard to the evolving notion of the family, a breakdown in traditional social systems was noted, resulting in poorly guided younger generations and dysfunctional families. Weakening social and cultural networks, alongside the emergence of “new families” with different values, perceptions and worldviews are challenging the relevance of the extended family, a main source of cultural orientation and inculcation of values in the recent past. Mbiti (1996) and Shorter (1998) emphasise the importance of the extended family in an ideal traditional setting, but this appears increasingly threatened in Uganda, where the value of extended family, especially amongst urban families, is waning, as is suggested by Otiso (2006). Meanwhile, dysfunctional family settings expose children to diverse upbringing which by default may trigger a desire to be accepted as different and therefore accept others who are different.

If the African definition of the family and identity emphasises collectivity as an important value, this research suggests that there are new emerging centres of collective identity outside the family setting that increasingly influence the self.
With growing freedom of choice of association and the challenges faced by families mentioned above, the traditional value of collectivity and the need to conform to the “norm” are challenged, although the family remains an important point of reference in respect to all important ethnic identity.

The findings thus concur with Mbiti’s assertion that African societies are no longer the only source of reference and identity and that the search for new values, identity and security undermine traditional solidarity. Contrary to Nkemnkia (1999), the findings also reveal that while the individual may desire to retain a sense of collectivity, this may not necessarily be around the community or tribe only, but around new, emerging centres of organisation.

The family as a space for nurturing pluralism

While the family remains an important point of reference, source of identity and space for nurturing values, it is therefore evolving from old to new – where the latter demands participation, consultation, negotiation, equality and freedoms – principles that foster pluralism. The research suggests that this change needs to be efficiently managed to retain the benefits of the collective:

The value of parenthood – the responses obtained indicate that decisions made by parents regarding schooling, as well as freedom of choice and association, significantly impact on the individuals’ future decisions in their social and professional lives. The pressures that families in the rural and urban areas have to contend with are similar, though different in intensity and magnitude; and are persistent. With changing circumstances, parents however need to re-evaluate their parenting role in the modern era, strike a compromise between this and their professional aspirations, going beyond being providers of material sustenance, to include providing key points of reference and assurance for their children. If not, they risk losing the valued position accorded to them in the Ugandan traditional context and will have to contend with being professionals and / or financial providers, with limited social relevance to their children.

Emerging spaces for growth – through formal education and occupations, new spaces and actors are filling the vacuum left by the traditional systems. On the one hand, these spaces offer new opportunities to interface with difference and new values are acquired that are attuned to an individual’s professional or academic life. On the other hand, these changes increase the social distances within the family, further weakening traditional social networks. The added value of relatives, particularly in urban areas, is questioned, as individuals ascribe to values that may not necessarily be shared by their family. The spaces provided by intermarriages and the forced ‘clash of ethnicities’ due to migration, political conflict, displacement and mobility as a result of education and economic progress, all have an impact in the rural areas and continue to nurture heightened interaction across lines of difference and diversity, opening up opportunities for tolerance and acceptance.
Freedom of choice to construct identity – increasingly dysfunctional and asymmetrical families, in towns and to a lesser degree rural areas, also provide opportunities for individuals to construct their own identity. Absentee parents, weak extended families, coupled with uncensored exposure to information and knowledge, on the one hand leave the individual with limited traditional points of reference. On the other hand, the individual has a wide range of values and principles to choose from that are relevant to the prevailing situation, resulting in a sense of self-determination that leads to individualism; individual choices nevertheless continuing to impact on the rest of the family. With more self-determined individuals, the “campaign” for individualism will be strengthened as the appeal for boundary-free identity grows and finds acceptance in the wider global context. The move towards individualism is happening amidst a palpable sense of loss of values that anchored families, but that retains relevance, particularly to rural families.

Having drawn the above conclusions, functional families, the household unit, and to some extent the extended family, probably remain the most suitable spaces for nurturing values, reinforced by cultural reference points. While there are new spaces that appear to be overtaking that afforded by the family, they tend to address goal-specific knowledge, skills and values, hence leaving grey areas and vacuums in terms of social skills, values and knowledge that are not addressed. The family therefore ideally provides basic and holistic principles that guide responses to all elements in an individual’s environment. This guidance is often rooted in the tradition or experience of the extended family, with no other agenda than the holistic development of an individual. Thus, a functional family remains the most suitable space to nurture values that may later be reinforced in school or at work and that will provide the basis to deal with other values and experiences. Significant differences in the identity of parents, if well managed, expose children to the first-hand management of diversity, while families with a greater degree of commonality might reinforce commonly-held values of hospitality but would need to desist from reinforcing common prejudices. Significant ethnic differences in the community nurture another level of ‘first-hand management’ of diversity that reinforce the family’s skills and capacities to engage with and manage diversity.

Recommendations

Revisit the concept of family – with a view of retaining the positive aspects and strengthen social protection and capital, development actors need to re-examine the role and responsibility of adults in grooming children and in providing relevant points of reference from which society can develop a basis for taking decisions.

Enhance knowledge on engaging with difference - formal and informal training and deliberate exposure to difference as well as knowledge and skills to manage difference are imperative. Children spend much time at school, where they have ample opportunity to engage with diversity (age, religion, ethnicity, social background). Educational programmes to inculcate values of appreciating and respecting others
can easily be demonstrated and reinforced in the controlled environment of schools, thereby reinforcing the values that are promoted in the family or supporting children to develop values that may not be fostered in dysfunctional families

*Enhance institutional competence* – teachers first need to appreciate pluralism as a value and then demonstrate this through their relationship with students / pupils. Training in dealing with conflict, reconciliation and negotiation would enable teachers to anticipate challenges that may emerge as a result of difference. It would also equip them to identity ways to integrate activities that promote engagement across differences. Schools (and other development organisations) should be sensitive to diversity within themselves and establish specific policies to enhance intercultural/religious/nationality interactions.

Finally, *the use of informal spaces* such as the home, storytelling, family outings, family meetings and a child-friendly environment allows parents to observe their children’s behaviour, to discuss and assess topics they find interesting or repugnant and how they relate to others. Religious principles are useful to guide tolerant and respectful engagement with difference. Deliberate exposure to the creative arts, other skills and sports also provides opportunities to compete and interact with a wide range of individuals, based on talent and competence rather than on the basis of one’s ethnic or religious background.
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9. The Element of Pluralism in Schools, its Management and its Effect on Schooling

DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF INDIGENOUS VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Abstract

This is an abridged report of a study motivated by the fact that, while almost all secondary schools policies in Uganda contain at least a phrase embracing “diversity and/or equal opportunities”- the reality is different. Bullying, discontent among teachers and students leading to strikes, favouritism along ethnic lines, emphasis on codes of behaviour based on religious grounds, poor academic performance and dropping out of school because of lack of finance, all are commonly reported. All point to problems of inadequate diversity management and lack of equal opportunities that embrace pluralism.

This study therefore investigated school policies, programmes, personnel and practices as well teacher and student attitudes to establish how they reinforce equal opportunities or trigger intolerances, discontent, and favouritism among teachers and students. The study was carried out using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative study revealed that some schools have elements of promoting pluralism which can be reinforced to protect the minorities and broaden the scope of affirmative action. Examples of such elements include elaborate and practical school missions and visions, admission policies that embrace diversity and the co-existence of students and staff from diversified ethnic background. The quantitative study revealed an appreciation, valuing, and readiness to implement pluralism among both students and teachers in all categories of schools.

However, most schools assessed lacked the capacity to promote pluralism due to limited human resources, streamlined guidelines, and procedures. It was observed that documentation with regard to managing diversity was either not available, not elaborate, or not known. Despite the existence of school regulations to counter sexual harassment in schools, the practice was reportedly widespread. Additionally, teacher education, at either pre-service or in-service stages, has not provided systematic programmes to promote pluralism.

At policy level, the conclusion is that Uganda’s educational system lacks a philosophy for a multi-cultural pluralistic output. There is no systematic mechanism of disseminating the types and levels of diversity of teacher enrolment. With regard to teacher training, in some instances, the majority of students, particularly those pursuing science courses, complete their education course without studying a single intercultural course.

The study recommends strategies for enhancing pluralism in schools, including mission statements that promote equal opportunities, and comprehensive plans for recruitment/retention activities that focus on enhancing co-existence among...
staff and student populations. Other recommendations include in-service training for teachers, principals, tutors and management authorities on how to promote pluralism in schools; curriculum review to ensure that the content, the materials used and the teaching methodologies embrace pluralism; disseminating good practice; evaluation mechanisms and tools to enable an assessment of pluralism in admission policies, school plans and codes of behaviour; and a dissemination strategy to ensure that policies, practices and outcomes in education are adequately assessed from a pluralistic perspective, and by all stakeholders.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA) has been working with different communities in Uganda to understand and appreciate how the social, economic political and cultural environment affects their living. A lot of work has been done in the education sector to help stakeholders (parents and local leaders) and children benefit more from government programmes under a diverse setting, but at the same time appreciating our historical approaches to school going children. DENIVA’s work has concentrated on factors affecting poor performance, especially under Universal Primary Education (UPE). The current system verifies performance especially through exams and little has been looked at on the effects that accrue from diversity. This prompted a study focusing on secondary school education to investigate elements of pluralism and how diversity is managed in such a school setting, facilitated by the Pluralism Knowledge Programme (PKP).

The PKP is an international initiative triggered by concerned civil society organisations in the south that signalled increasing forms of intolerance manifested in religion, ethnic affiliations, nationalism, social class, gender and other identities. In Uganda the programme is a collective undertaking by a number of civil society organisations and academic institutions whose objectives among others include; research to identify pluralism related issues that are pertinent to Uganda, engaging with local communities, bringing them into conversation and documenting local perspectives on pluralism.

The study therefore was informed and guided by the philosophy of the PKP Programme in Uganda which describes pluralism in a local context “as building on diversity for equitable and peaceful co-existence; diversity as “difference in togetherness”; and democracy as “equal opportunity and freedom to participate in economic, social, and political processes.” According to the PKP, pluralism is not only about tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference. Furthermore, pluralism is a compromise between the extremes of segregation and assimilation. It is an engagement with diversity, which diversity is natural and exists. In a pluralist society, the dominant group permits the minorities to thrive, so long as they conform to those practices necessary for the survival of the society as a whole.

With Uganda's increasing population growth, comes a student population that continues to grow as well, with diverse cultures. Our schools need to be capable of
dealing with these different cultures. Not everyone has the same culture and teachers need to understand that. Teachers also need to make sure that all cultures are taught, learned, and respected by their students. In trying to do this, it is imperative that teachers have a good understanding of what multicultural is and how to make a school more multicultural. Rosado (1995) defines multiculturalism as “a system of beliefs and behaviours that recognises and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organisation or society, acknowledges and values their social-cultural agreements, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organisation or society”. Although broad, this definition does give an interesting perspective, as being multicultural involves both understanding and respecting cultures different from our own. Rosado also added that it “entails acknowledging the validity of the cultural expressions and contributions of the various groups”. This applies everywhere, in the workplace, in communities, and most of all, in our schools. The question is how to tell if our Ugandans are multicultural.

There are many factors to consider when deciding whether or not our schools are multicultural. It is incorrect to say that our Ugandan schools are multicultural, based on the fact that children of different cultures attend them. In fact, “the mere presence of an ethnically and racially diverse student population due to legal, moral, or social imperatives does not make our Ugandan schools multicultural”. It takes much more than just having different cultures present in Ugandan schools. It involves everyone working toward the same goal of trying to make students aware of the different cultures surrounding them. Just as there is no set definition of being multicultural, there is also no set way of implementing it. Each child has his/her own unique learning style and it becomes tough for teachers to accommodate different cultural groups in a single classroom. Teachers and students live and work in a culturally pluralistic and diverse society. Fundamental challenges facing today’s educators include their abilities to respond to an increasingly diverse nation, workforce, and student population.

Today’s general education classrooms are becoming more and more diverse with both students with disabilities and students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Classroom teachers, who are subject to the pressures of growing student population diversity, must therefore be prepared to formulate lesson plans culturally relevant to our students in an attempt to provide sensitivity to global perspectives and the celebration of agreements while embracing cultural dissimilarities. Cultural pluralism and diversity are important elements to the success of multicultural education and the encouragement of unity among school communities rather than separation.

Multiculturalism, in this version, is the doctrine that (a) everybody belongs to a culture, (b) all cultures are of equal value and deserve their place in the educational system, and (c) this place is not taken but must be demanded; amidst this, children live in harmony with each other. A school is chiefly about sharing but the sharing must be equitable and fair. Uganda is unique in that there are so many cultures present. This is why it is so important for schools to become multicultural. Every teacher needs to
take this issue more seriously than ever before. Then, and only then, will we see an actual change in our schools. This change will result in all schools becoming more multicultural.

**Problem**

This study was motivated by the fact that while almost all secondary schools policies in Uganda contain at least a phrase embracing “diversity and/or equal opportunities” - the reality is different. Bullying, discontent among teachers and students leading to strikes, favouritism along ethnic lines, emphasis on codes of behaviour based on religious grounds, poor academic performance and dropping out of school because of lack of finance, all are commonly reported in the Ugandan mass media and statistical reports. All point to problems of inadequate diversity management and lack of equal opportunities that embrace pluralism.

What could be the cause of the above problems? It is possible that schools neither have strategic plans that articulate values, visions, missions, and activities for building inclusive educational and workplace environments nor do they have the capacity to identify opportunities to improve school performance through a range of diversity initiatives. It is also possible that schools lack diversity initiatives for incorporation into their workforce planning, recruitment and retention strategies, leadership mentoring and professional development. School strategies for managing diversity could also be linked to lack of room for Equal Employment Opportunities aimed at achieving a workforce that reflects the diversity of the broader community. A school might also be lacking diversity strategies that enable target groups who experience disadvantages to have increased access to learning opportunities.

Another cause of the problem could be the absence of a sound pedagogy. Children are inadvertently taught to become careerists and consumers rather than sensible, mature individuals capable of making critical, independent acts of judgment. There is also a challenge with the pace of cultural change, which makes knowledge obsolete. Rather than learning facts by heart, children should be encouraged to learn techniques for learning.

With Uganda’s increasing population growth, comes a student population which continues to grow as well. While the private sector has been successful at responding to the educational needs of Uganda’s growing student population, it is not clear how the needs of an increasingly diverse student population are being addressed. Information is scanty about attitudes of teachers towards pluralism and diversity in developing an educational environment responsible and responsive to a diverse student population. The level of understanding among Ugandan students concerning diversity issues and inclusion is not well known. This means that critical analysis is lacking to create a viable, more informed plan to insure that students from diverse backgrounds, e.g. cultural, intellectual, racial, ethnic, sexual preference, feel both welcome and comfortable in schools on arrival and during their tenure in schools.
Therefore, the challenge of knowing how diversity and equal opportunities are managed in Ugandan schools called for an assessment of school policies, programmes, and practices. The challenge also called for an assessment of teachers’ attitudes and current student knowledge toward issues related to diversity and equal opportunities.

**Purpose and scope of the study**

Little research has been devoted to the examination of school policies, programmes, and practices as well as the perceptions of teachers and students regarding pluralism. Once the perceptions that teachers have of pluralism are known, teacher education programmes can be re-designed to better address the cause for social and academic justice. This study is based on one important assumption - a long-range goal should be to institutionalise the broader and more inclusive concepts of pluralism and equal opportunities in Ugandan schools. If prospective policy makers, teachers and students do not understand concepts of pluralism or see their role, this will never happen.

The schools that were assessed for the study are presented in the table below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Schools status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kibuli SSS, Bishop School Mukono and Mackay College Nateete</td>
<td>Government Mixed and Religious (GMR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iganga SSS</td>
<td>Government Single and Secular (GSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namilyango College</td>
<td>Government Single and Religious (GSR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirojo College</td>
<td>Private Mixed and Religious (PMR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasubi SSS, Nakasero SSS and Kampala International</td>
<td>Private Mixed and Secular (PMS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubanga Girls</td>
<td>Private Single and Religious (PSR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significance and limitations of the study**

This research was undertaken to investigate how differences (social cultural, ethnicity, status) are managed in the different secondary schools in Uganda to create or not to create a harmonious relationship between children and children, between children and teachers. Much as some research work could have been carried out on the aspect of cultural diversities in schools, little had been done to compare this diversity across schools with different cultures and norms.

Ideally, this study should have been conducted in a larger sample of schools covering more students and teachers in the entire country. However, the study provided data useful for generation of ideas and expansion of the debate.

**Application of the research findings**

DENIVA will use the research findings to engage stakeholders especially government on the key findings of the research. Emphasis could be put on the shortfalls of the school curriculum that does not allow open learning.
Organisation of the report

The first section of this report presents the background of the study, problem, scope of the study, study limitations, and application of the research findings. The next section presents the theoretical framework that guided the study; section three presents the methodology, section four the findings, and section five constitutes the conclusions and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework for the qualitative study

According to Rosado (1995), what makes a school multicultural is whether or not its implements “Five Ps”: Perspectives; Policies; Programmes; Personnel; Practices to implement the following four imperatives:

1. Reflect the heterogeneity of the school and the dynamics of affirmative action;
2. Are sensitive to the needs of the various groups comprising the student population and the dynamics of valuing agreements;
3. Incorporate their contributions to the overall mission of the school and the dynamics of managing diversity;
4. Create a cultural and social ambiance that is inclusive and empowers all groups in the school and the dynamic of living diversity.

These four imperatives form the basis of multicultural education. This is an approach to education and curriculum construction that acknowledges and respects the contributions which the various racial/ethnic groups have made to society, and incorporates these contributions in an overall programme of instruction which meets the needs of an ever-changing society and is sensitive to the personal and social development of all persons concerned.

Perspectives according to Rosado (1995) refer to a vision without which education as well as a school perishes. A vision is the ability to see what lies ahead (farsightedness), as well as the various impediments in the present (near-sightedness), and how to avoid them in order to arrive at the future. A sense of vision and mission will lead to appropriate policies, the guarantees that make known the intents of the school. Policies give rise to programmes that put in action what education is all about. But effective programmes cannot be run without the right personnel, reflective of the diversity in the school. The last one is practices, the actual conduct of the school, its staff and administration. Of these five Ps, according to Rosado (1995), the most important one is the last one, “practices.” A school may have the best perspectives, policies, programmes and personnel, but these are only cosmetic until practiced. And it only takes a small number of personnel who in their practice refuse to go along with

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a programme or fail to implement policy, for an otherwise well designed plan to be sabotaged.

Looking at religious pluralism, Mwesigwa probed the current syllabuses, aims and content of Christian Religious Education (CRE) and Islamic Religious Education (IRE) for secondary and primary schools and suggested that their main intention of promoting the spiritual growth of students is inappropriate for implementation in multi-religious schools. The study contended that the introduction of Islam, Anglican and Roman Catholic Christian religious traditions in Uganda not only presented alternative religious systems to the existing African traditional religion but ushered in an era of competition for converts that subsequently led to religious conflict. The study questioned the government’s proposed exclusion of RE from the education curriculum and its replacement with Moral Education. It suggested that while Moral Education could be a subject on its own, Religious Education needs to be maintained but re-designed to address the multi-religious context.²

Theoretical framework for the quantitative study

Schools with a rich multicultural focus share a variety of foundational dimensions, says Banks (1993)²¹. The first dimension, content integration, is the extent to which teachers use examples, data and information from a variety of cultures to illustrate the key concepts, principles, generalisations, and theories in their subject area. It is the positive interaction and integration of cultures into school subjects. Teachers who understand and respond within this dimension are able to extrapolate and infuse contributions from many cultures into their teaching.

The second dimension is knowledge construction process, which encompasses the procedures by which social, behavioural, and natural scientists create knowledge in their disciplines. “A multicultural focus on knowledge construction includes discussion of the ways in which the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the construction of knowledge”. This dimension provides for discussions about the effects of stereotypes within our society.

The third dimension, prejudice reduction, focuses on the characteristics of children’s racial attitudes on strategies that can be used to help students develop more positive racial and ethnic attitudes. Cultural pluralism is accepted as the best model for the school and is applied through a democratic and equitable process.

The fourth dimension, equity pedagogy, is evident when teachers use techniques and teaching methods that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse


²³Mwesigwa, Fred Sheldon (2003), Religious pluralism and conflict as issues in religious education in Uganda.
racial and ethnic groups and from all social classes. It includes a variety of teaching strategies designed to encourage participation and achievement from all students. An understanding and appreciation for cultural agreements is infused throughout the curriculum.

Finally, the fifth dimension, an empowering school culture and social structure, requires the restructuring of the culture and organisation of the school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups experience education equity and a sense of empowerment without marginalisation.

In this study, these dimensions were used to construct a theoretical framework for analysing the attitudes of teachers, and student knowledge. The constructs (Appreciate Pluralism, Value Pluralism, Implement Pluralism, and Uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity) of the survey selected for this analysis have emerged from multicultural literature and modelled the dimensions associated with Uganda’s schools pluralism and diversity focus. The Value Pluralism subscale dealt with issues about integration and interaction of diversity. The Implement Pluralism subscale focused on the infusion of differing cultures into the curriculum and educational processes. The ‘Uncomfortable with Diversity’ subscale was intended to bring to the surface prejudices and resistances that may impede a democratic and equitable school environment.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research design**

The study was carried out, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study employed the triangulation research technique - the application of two or more research methods to obtain data in the same domain which increases reliability and validity of qualitative data. The triangulation techniques included school literature review, key informant interviews, observations, and PADAA (Pluralism and Diversity Attitude Assessment) survey among both students and teachers. The school literature review was used to gather information on documented school elements and practices that embrace pluralism. The broad objective of key information interviews among teachers was to elicit information from teachers regarding diversity management, how they co-exist among themselves and with the diversified student population and the envisaged implications. The PADAA survey and observations were used to validate the findings from the literature review and, key informant interviews. The PADAA survey utilised Stanley (1992, 1996) whose survey instrument was originally developed to assess the attitudes of teachers toward pluralistic education.

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The PADAA includes 19 statements that can be separated into four subscales (Appreciate Pluralism, Value Pluralism, Implement Pluralism, and Uncomfortable with Diversity). Each teacher and student selected for the sample received a self-administered PADAA questionnaire including two additional demographic questions (gender and teaching level). The reported attitudes of teachers and students to the 19 statements included on the PADAA were analysed using baseline frequencies percentages, and Pearson chi-square analysis.

**Data collection**

Data collection tools which were developed and reviewed included: a questionnaire designed to gather general information about appreciation, valuing, implementation and comfort with pluralism in schools among teachers and students; and a document review and observational checklist for gathering information on school elements that embrace pluralism.

To conduct the survey, four research assistants (RA) were recruited and trained. The RAs visited the head teachers for debriefing on the purpose of the study and activities, and following the agreement of the schools heads, the RAs reviewed the relevant school policy documents (school curriculum, regulations, and profiles) including staff background and skills in promoting pluralism in schools. Thereafter, using the questionnaire guide, RAs interviewed the respective teachers recommended by the heads of the schools to get their qualitative perception and validated the interviews with teachers through observations.

**Data Analysis**

**Qualitative analysis** The study coded all findings in the literature review, results from key informant interviews and observations and ranked those that emulated pluralism and equal opportunities, and those that were not in favour - stratified by school and findings. Schools with only the presence of results favouring pluralism on 0-2 indicators were ranked as poor, those with 3-5 positive results emulating pluralism and equal opportunities were ranked as average/adequate, and schools with the presence of positive results according to 6 indicators and above were ranked as good.

**Quantitative analysis** A 6-point Likert-type scale, as originally developed by Stanley (1992) was used as the response mechanism. Teachers and Students were asked to select one reply for each statement: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, and 6 = strongly agree. The reported attitudes of teachers and students to the 19 statements included on the PADAA were analysed using frequencies, percentages, and chi square analysis. Statement items 1, 5, 7, 11, and 15 were compiled to form the scores for the “Appreciate Pluralism” subscale. Statement items 2, 6, 12, 16, and 19 were compiled to generate the scores for the “Value Pluralism” subscale. Statement items 4, 8, 10, 13, and 17 were used to produce the scores calculated for the “Implement Pluralism” subscale. Statement items 3, 9, 14, and 18 were assembled to form the “Uncomfortable with Diversity” subscale.
RESEARCH FINDINGS
The report presents the general findings on various elements of pluralism in Ugandan schools generated and assessed in ten schools. The findings are grouped for convenience of discussion into two: a) School Elements that embrace Pluralism; and b) teacher and students’ i) appreciation of pluralism, ii) value of pluralism, iii) implementation of pluralism, and; iv) comfort ability with pluralism.

Qualitative study findings - School elements that embrace equal opportunities
Based on Rasoda (1995), pluralism was conceptualised as the presence and/or availability of school policies, programmes, practices and personnel that embrace equal opportunities among both teachers and student. Therefore, the questions answered through the qualitative study included; i) what school policies, programmes, and practices promote equal opportunities? ii) are there school personnel trained and guidelines available for them to use in promoting equal opportunities?

a. Schools’ visions, missions and mottoes
The ranked indicators on school perspectives that stand out for pluralism were derived from the literature review and included the schools’ vision; mission; and motto. According to these rankings, some schools have visions, but without missions. Other schools have visions, but without mission statements. However all schools had motto.

A further detailed qualitative evaluation of school perspectives recognised to be embracing equal opportunities are summarised in the following tables:

i) Visions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IGANGA.S.S</td>
<td>“The epitome of Holistic Excellence.”</td>
<td>Holistic Excellence demonstrates some elements of pluralism</td>
<td>Not elaborate and not vivid among staff and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAKASERO.S.S</td>
<td>“Providing the highest quality educational programme to students for quality performance, participation in society.”</td>
<td>Participation in society demonstrates some elements of pluralism</td>
<td>Not vivid among staff and students, and there are no signs e.g. on walls or in classrooms to promote it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACKAY MEMORIAL</td>
<td>“Striving for Excellence”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Does not demonstrate any connection with school diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE NETEETE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUBAGA GIRLS</td>
<td>“To become a centre for academic excellence for the girl.”</td>
<td>Promotes the girl</td>
<td>Being a girls school co-existence with boys is a challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIBULI.S.S</td>
<td>“To be a leading school in academics, sports and Islamic ethos.”</td>
<td>Extra-curricular activities related to sports is a good avenue of promoting pluralism across the diversified student population</td>
<td>Emphasizing Islamic ethos is a setback in building co-existence and appreciation of religious diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISHOP SENIOR</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing a present and future diversified student population without a vision implies lack of both of farsightedness, and near-sightedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIROJJO COLLEGE</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KISUBI.S.S</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL</td>
<td>To educate today’s children for tomorrow’s world</td>
<td>It demonstrate what lies ahead (farsightedness), as well as the present (near-sightedness),</td>
<td>Not vivid among staff and students, and there are no signs e.g. on walls or in classrooms to promote it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMILYANGO COLLEGE</td>
<td>To develop intellect and Character by providing a challenging education</td>
<td>Intellect and Character demonstrate some elements of pluralism</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: School Literature review, Key informant interviews and observations*

**ii) Missions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IGANGA.S.S</td>
<td>“To provide quality and diversified Education opportunities to the Girl child and children with special Needs.”</td>
<td>Recognition of vulnerability due gender and disability</td>
<td>Emphasis on the girl child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAKASERO.S.S</td>
<td>“To provide a safe and nurturing community where diversity is celebrated, mutual respect among adults and students is practiced.”</td>
<td>Diversity is appreciated positively</td>
<td>Not vivid among staff and students, and there are no signs e.g. on walls or in classrooms to promote it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### iii) Mottoes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Motto</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IGANGA.S.S</td>
<td>“Aim to serve your country.”</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Not elaborate regarding promotion of equal opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAKASERO.S.S</td>
<td>“Education for life.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not elaborate regarding promotion of equal opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACKAY MEMORIAL COLLEGE NATEETE</td>
<td>“Temudda Nnyuma.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Its documentation in local language (Luganda) makes it Sectarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. School policies

According to established norms, schools are required to have an admissions policy and this must provide for maximum accessibility to the school. The board of management must ensure that the admissions policy respects the principle of Pluralism. It must prepare a school plan, which must state the objectives of the school relating to Pluralism of access to and participation in the school. It must also set out the measures the school will take to achieve these Pluralism objectives.

There are a number of provisions in other education legislation that are relevant. Schools have a number of duties under the Education Act. They must promote Pluralism of opportunity for male and female students. This would include sports and extracurricular activities. Schools are also required to use their available resources to ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with a disability or other special educational needs are identified and provided for. Schools are required to have an admissions policy and this must provide for maximum accessibility to the school. The board of management must ensure that the admissions policy respects the principle of Pluralism.

**Source:** School Literature review, Key informant interviews and observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RUBAGA GIRLS</td>
<td>“Enlighten for the future.”</td>
<td>Not elaborate regarding promotion of equal opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIBULI .S.S</td>
<td>“Seek knowledge.”</td>
<td>Not elaborate regarding promotion of equal opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISHOP SENIOR</td>
<td>“Love and work.”</td>
<td>Not elaborate regarding promotion of equal opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIROJOJO COLLEGE SCHOOL</td>
<td>“Trust God and toil.”</td>
<td>Not elaborate regarding promotion of equal opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KASUBI .S.S</td>
<td>“Strive to excel.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL</td>
<td>Every aspect is embodied in the mission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMILYANGO COLLEGE</td>
<td>Without God we toil in pain</td>
<td>Not elaborate regarding promotion of equal opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kasubi</th>
<th>Kirojo</th>
<th>Rubaga</th>
<th>Mackay</th>
<th>Nakasero</th>
<th>Kibuli</th>
<th>Bishop</th>
<th>Iganga</th>
<th>Kampala Int.Sch</th>
<th>Namilyango</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. The School management boards ensures that the admissions policy respects the principle of Pluralism through documented guidelines

2. School management boards has documented plans, which state the objectives of the school relating to inclusion and co-existence

3. Resources to ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with a disability or other special educational needs, are provided for

4. The school has code of behaviour which states that sexual harassment is prohibited and has set out policies and procedures to prevent and respond to such harassment.

5. The school promotes opportunities for male and female students through sports and extra-curricular activities

### Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kasubi</th>
<th>Kirojo</th>
<th>Rubaga</th>
<th>Mackay</th>
<th>Nakasero</th>
<th>Kibuli</th>
<th>Bishop</th>
<th>Iganga</th>
<th>Kampala Int.Sch</th>
<th>Namilyango</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Not Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1-2 of the indicators present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average/Adequate</td>
<td>3-5 of the indicators present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>6+ of the indicators present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Source: School Literature Review

**i) Admissions policy**

In all private sector schools visited such as Kampala International, Kasubi, Kirojo,
it was observed that school admissions policies appreciate diversity / admission of all irrespective of ethnicity or religion. However, socio-economic status could be exceptional in schools such as Kampala International School as discussed in later sections.

**ii) Documented regulations relating to inclusion and co-existence**

Besides Kampala International, other school management boards did not have specific plans relating to inclusion and co-existence. The literature reviews of Kampala International school documents indicated that the school has 58 ethnic groups of students.

**iii) Availability of resources to address gender and disability issues**

In all schools, it was observed that separate toilets exist for boys and girls, but besides Kampala International and Kirojo College, other schools did not have resources to ensure that educational needs due to disability or other special educational needs are provided for.

**iv) Extra-curricular activities**

We also observed that although schools might not be aware of what they are doing regarding pluralism, in essence they are promoting inclusiveness through enrolment of the disadvantaged, Music Dance and Drama (MDD), extra-curricular activities including games and sports. However it was noted that such programs “are carried out in all schools not consciously to promote pluralism, but purely as entertainment events with no much attachment to building co-existence”, as stated by one teacher.

**v) School curriculum**

The Table below focuses on elements of the curriculum identified to be embracing pluralism in the schools. Besides Kampala International school, the indicators on the curriculum in respect of pluralism could be described as poor among other schools assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Kasubi</th>
<th>Kirojo</th>
<th>Rubaga</th>
<th>Mackay</th>
<th>Nakasero</th>
<th>Kibuli</th>
<th>Bishop</th>
<th>Iganga</th>
<th>Kampala Inter.Sch</th>
<th>Namilyango</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school curriculum contains material for multi-cultural education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The school curriculum at certain levels contains material focusing on personal and social development, particularly on education for citizenship, social and political education.

The curricula include components on gender pluralism issues.

The school has exploring masculinities programme designed for use among both sexes; is concerned with enabling boys and girls to critically examine masculine identities and behaviour in order to foster balanced personal development.

IT programme exists in the school curriculum to provide teachers and students affirmation and support, as well as providing personal development and other educational outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The school curriculum at certain levels contains material focusing on personal and social development, particularly on education for citizenship, social and political education</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>1-2 of the indicators present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The curricula include components on gender pluralism issues</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Average/Adequate</td>
<td>3-5 of the indicators present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school has exploring masculinities programme designed for use among both sexes; is concerned with enabling boys and girls to critically examine masculine identities and behaviour in order to foster balanced personal development</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>6+ of the indicators present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 5 2

Key

| Available | Poor | 1-2 of the indicators present |
| Not Available | Average/Adequate | 3-5 of the indicators present |
| Good | 6+ of the indicators present |

Source: School Literature review, Key informant interviews and observations

It was noted that English is the main medium of instruction. It was also noted that schools have incorporated “Luganda” as the only indigenous language in their curriculum, but with a danger of being a barrier to inclusiveness, since other indigenous languages are not taught. Other schools such as Kibuli and Namilyango offer French and Germany as foreign languages.

Kampala International School offers an internationally recognised curriculum which includes the International Baccalaureate programme (IB) that takes Primary, Middle Year and Diploma programmes. The IB has come to be known not only for academic excellence but also for promoting pluralism - an understanding and appreciation of other cultures, languages and points of view.

However, besides Kampala International School, other schools have neither a curriculum that includes components on promoting pluralistic issues, nor do they
have programmes designed for use among both sexes to enable boys and girls to critically examine masculine identities and behaviour in order to foster balanced personal development.

It was observed that all schools have curriculum containing material focusing on personal and social development, particularly on education for citizenship, social and political education. The presence of social studies and political education courses testifies to this.

Although school guidelines exist on countering bullying, including reference to issues relating to sexual harassment, their enforcement is weak. Interviews with teachers indicate abundant evidence of bullying and harassment of students in mixed schools. In addition, interviews with teachers found evidence of abusive behaviour by students from the dominants groups that included racist/tribalistic comments and threatening written messages sent anonymously. Teachers also expressed uncertainty as to how they should handle overt individual racism, such as comments made in class. Finally, there was also evidence that teachers may inadvertently exclude some students from minority ethnic groups due to perceived academic performance or a lack of training or support in how best to help these young people. Some students described experiences of bullying, harassment, mockery as a sense of having been rejected by both peers and teachers. Bullying was associated with student leaders - who reportedly demanded service delivery –(washing of their clothes, plates etc.) from the less privileged and vulnerable students in exchange for providing them with protection against bullying by other students. Male students who appeared rather masculine were more likely to bully than small ones. Bullying was also associated with ethnicity – students from certain ethic groups being actively involved in bullying.

Also found lacking in most schools, were exploring masculinities programmes designed for use among both sexes enabling boys and girls to critically examine masculine identities and behaviour in order to foster balanced personal development.

In selected schools such as Kampala International, it was observed that IT proactively promotes pluralism among students/teachers through online exchange of academic information, lessons or submission of assignments. However, some teachers interviewed in other schools pointed out that an IT gap does exist, and it is often a bigger problem when it comes to an illiterate IT teacher and literate IT student. Teachers also mention that either lack of or limited availability of computer facilities in schools either limits access or denies an opportunity for the average teacher and student to enjoy the benefits that go with IT. Only 25% of all teachers who participated in the study knew how to operate an e-mail and some internet surfing, but with no knowledge of other computer software operating systems. Promoting inclusiveness in schools is partly fuelled by a lack of IT hardware facilities and appropriate skills among teachers and students.
c) School programmes

Selected school programmes were analysed to establish how they embrace pluralism. The table below shows the ranking of school programmes in respect to pluralism. The day-to-day programmes in all the ten schools assessed can be described as good enough in promoting inclusiveness and peaceful co-existence as demonstrated in the Table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Kasubi</th>
<th>Kirojo</th>
<th>Rubaga</th>
<th>Mackay</th>
<th>Nakasero</th>
<th>Kibuli</th>
<th>Bishop</th>
<th>Iganga</th>
<th>Kampala Inter.Sch</th>
<th>Namilyango</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientations programmes to welcome freshers in schools promote inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective student participation in the routine school sanitation and hygienic programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-house sports and games promote inclusiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>School social clubs ensures peaceful co-existence</td>
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<tr>
<td>School gardening Programs promote inclusiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student feeding menu program is uniform regardless of student status</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher get-together festivals ensures peaceful co-existence</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Not Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Ranking**

Poor  
1-2 of the indicators present

Average/Adequate  
3-5 of the indicators present

Good  
6+ of the indicators present

**Source:** School Literature review, Key informant interviews and observations

As indicated in the Table above, it was observed in all schools that there are: i) orientation programs to welcome fresh boys and girls in schools irrespective of ethnicity, thereby
embracing inclusiveness; ii) inter-house sports and games promoting peaceful co-existence; iii) students being involved in school social clubs (debating, Red Cross etc.) thereby ensuring peaceful co-existence; iv) uniform feeding menus regardless of student status; v) school gardening programmes that promote group learning thus inclusiveness and vi) teacher get-together festivals which ensures peaceful co-existence among teachers.

d) School personnel

As indicated in the Table below, the key informant interviews with teachers showed that only Kampala International School had teachers specifically trained in promoting pluralism and multiculturalism education among all the schools assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Kasubi</th>
<th>Kirojo</th>
<th>Rubaga</th>
<th>Mackay</th>
<th>Nakasero</th>
<th>Kibuli</th>
<th>Bishop</th>
<th>Iganga</th>
<th>Kampala Inter.Sch</th>
<th>Namilyango</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The schools have teachers trained in managing diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools have teachers trained in managing multiculturalism education</td>
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<tr>
<td>School teachers received skills in managing diversity through pre-service training</td>
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<tr>
<td>School teachers received skills in managing diversity through in-service training</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school has a teachers’ orientation programme for managing diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school has guidelines for use by teachers in managing diversity</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Not Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Ranking**

- Poor   1-2 of the indicators present
- Average/Adequate 3-5 of the indicators present
- Good   6+ of the indicators present

**Source:** School Literature review, Key informant interviews and observations
Additionally, teacher education, at either pre-service or in-service stages, has not provided systematic programmes to manage school diversity. Furthermore, besides Kampala International, all other schools assessed neither had teacher orientation programmes nor guidelines for use by teachers in managing diversity. This is exemplified by such statements from respondents, as ‘I do not know whether to agree or disagree because culture and co-existence are not part of me’ and ‘What is all this about beliefs and practices? Are they going to add the student any mark/score in class?’ Practically such a person cannot promote co-existence and managing diversity unless taken through an orientation or sensitisation.

**e) School practices**

The Table below presents finding regarding school practices in respect of pluralism based on: school literature review, key informant interviews and observations. Apart from Kibuli, and Namilyango, all indicators in other schools assessed point to some adequate school practices in respect to pluralism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Kasubi</th>
<th>Kirojo</th>
<th>Rubaga</th>
<th>Mackay</th>
<th>Nakasero</th>
<th>Kibuli</th>
<th>Bishop</th>
<th>Iganga</th>
<th>Kampala Inter.Sch</th>
<th>Namilyango</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers operating environment does promote cultural pluralism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The learning environment positively promotes diversity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Efforts are in place to appreciate religious diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>School academic programme does not promote marginalisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>School fee structure programme does not prohibit admission</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Not Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average/Adequate</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** School Literature review, Key informant interviews and observations
In all schools assessed, the teachers operating environment does promote cultural pluralism. Teachers from diverse tribes teaching together in the same schools and sharing residential quarters by both male and female teachers are all indicators that testify to the above.

Additionally, the school learning environment in some selected schools assessed suggests appropriate management of diversity. In mixed schools, girls and boys of different tribes, and in single schools, student of varying socio-economic background sitting in the same classroom, sharing text books, and dining halls were identified as hallmarks embracing pluralism in schools. ‘However some students especially those with impairment expressed dissatisfaction on the treatment they receive from fellow students. One girl with an impairment said when she does better than other students with no disability in exams, there is always a feeling that she was given answers and she feels disturbed’.

It was observed that selected secular schools have made efforts to manage religious diversity. The presence of Muslim corners where Muslims pray, allowing fellowships for Pentecostals, and Church goers to go for services on Saturday and Sunday are testimonies to this. However, intolerance (including intolerance of code of dressing) in religious founded schools was widespread, with students having a different religious background treated less favourably. One teacher revealed on condition of anonymity that students had been suspended from one school for performing unauthorized work on the day of worship, a sign of non-compromise for segregation. It was also observed that schools that have the objective of providing education in an environment which promotes certain religious values admit persons of a particular religious denomination in preference to others; and may refuse to admit a student who is not of that denomination.

In all ten schools assessed, the academic programme was observed to be problematic to students in a number of ways. Some schools assessed have instituted compulsory beginning-of-term examinations, whose sitting is contingent upon having paid all school fees. Designed to promote early school fees paying, the above school practice has led to the marginalisation of poor students whose parents or guardian cannot afford to pay fees early enough. Other schools such as Kibuli, Kampala International and Namilyago administer regular exams at short intervals - putting pressure on average students who often lack resources (required stationary etc.) to cope with the situation.

Marginalisation is also a possibility where students from well-to-do families are at times treated differently by teachers because they can pay extra money especially for coaching or extra work. The impact of the home environment and disadvantaged living conditions on children’s participation and progress in school was widely recognised. This issue was also of relevance for those asylum seekers who are recent arrivals and who live in designated accommodation, which are crowded and inappropriate for families. In some schools such as Kirojjo, Iganga, Bishop School,
Namilyango and Kibuli such social classes are automatically formed by the students which differentiate them from each other (the rich and poor families), and they rarely associate with each other. ‘Family background influences the way students behave even when in schools’, says one teacher. “Family social classes are still prominent in schools whereby students from rich families want to associate with their own class, and those from the poor families associating with fellow student, a situation I dislike”, says a student.

The fee structures of some schools assessed such as Kasubi, Iganga, and Kirrojo was observed to be the average fees paid by other schools – possibly within reach of the average parents. However, it was observed that whereas the fee structure of Namilyago College was twice as much as that of Nakasero SSS, Kasubi, and Mackay college, the fee structure of Kampala International was three times that of Iganga SSS. This means both Namilyango and Kampala International are attended by a “social class” of students from well-do-families, a situation that could be termed as “financial segregation” among schools.

4.2 Quantitative study - PADAA analysis

The PADDA study among students sought to answer the following four research questions.

- Do teachers and students appreciate pluralism?
- Do teachers and students value pluralism?
- Are teachers and students willing to implement pluralism into their classroom processes?
- Are teachers and students comfortable with diversity?

The PADAA included 19 statements that were separated into four subscales (Appreciate Cultural Pluralism, Value Cultural Pluralism, Implement Cultural Pluralism, and Uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity). The Survey statements were modified to reflect local conditions. For convenience of the discussion, the analysis of students and teachers response to PADAA has been grouped according to schools status as indicated in the Table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Schools status</th>
<th>No. of students interviewed</th>
<th>No of teachers interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kibuli SSS, Bishop Mukono and Mackay College</td>
<td>Government Mixed and Religious</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iganga SSS</td>
<td>Government Single and Secular</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussions of the PADDA findings

The conclusions arising from the teachers’ and students’ PADDA responses in this study as well as their representative scores on the four subscales can be summarised as follows.

- Teachers and students believe that all students should be provided with equal opportunities for educational success.
- Teachers and students believe that educational systems are able to assist diverse groups of students.
- Teachers and students believe that diverse cultures make positive contributions in our society.
- Teachers and students believe that pluralism and diversity should be preserved and recognised as a positive educational resource.
- Teachers and students believe it is appropriate for students to feel pride in their cultural heritage.
- Teachers and students believe that students should learn to respect themselves and others

Both teachers and students appreciate the ideals of pluralism. Based on this positive finding, it is concluded that these teachers have the ability to respect diversity and individual student agreements. Teachers and students appeared to understand that there might be more than one appropriate way to behave (Stanley, 1992). Both teachers’ and students’ appreciation of pluralism however does not indicate or measure his or her willingness to discuss this attitude in the classroom environment. Therefore, this appreciation, while an excellent foundation for growth, does not necessarily indicate that these teachers and students practice what they believe.

A teacher’s value of pluralism score, according to Stanley (1992), explains the value given to pluralism and individual expressions of cultural influences. This score illustrates a teacher’s and student’s willingness to express value for pluralism.
However, it does not indicate a value for changing teaching methods, among teachers or behaviour among students. A higher proportion of teachers and students appeared to express a value for cultural pluralism. They were accepting diversity agreements, but may or may not be willing to alter their behaviours.

Implementation conveys the teacher’s desire to adapt and use a variety of teaching methods applicable to the needs of individual learners (Stanley, 1992). Teachers showed some resistance to implementing educational strategies that would include methods conducive to pluralism. Some possible reasons for this reluctance may include lack of appropriate educational preparation for dealing with a variety of cultures within one classroom, lack of appropriate materials and resources, and lack of administrative assistance and support.

‘Uncomfortable with Diversity’ illustrates a teacher’s comfort level with students from culturally-different backgrounds and experiences. However teachers and students appeared not to experience some uncomfortable feelings regarding diversity. A highly significant proportion of students (P<0.001) and a moderate sample of teachers (P<0.05) expressed comfort with living in diversified school communities. However, this study did not identify specific areas causing this comfort.

Educational Stakeholders’ Involvement in Pluralism

To enrich the study, input was solicited from the relevant stakeholders that have included; i) the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES); ii) the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC); iii) Teacher Training Institutions

Ministry of Education and Sports

The following questions guided the discussions with MoES; Does MoES have a philosophy of pluralist student and teacher’s education? Does MoES have knowledge about the types and levels of diversity among staff groups? Does MoES have knowledge about the types and levels of diversity among student? Does MoES provide information to parents about their rights and those of their children and how these rights can be enforced? Does MoES provide information to parents of their duties, and those their children in respect of others; Does MoES have financial incentives to address economic barriers to enrolment? Does MoES disseminate good practices related to its mission? What are MoES’s efforts of removing the barriers experienced by some groups in accessing education?

The mandate of MoES is to “plan, formulate, analyse, monitor, evaluate and review policies, provide technical support and guidance, and set national standards for the Education Sector.” The mission of MoES is to “provide technical support, guide, coordinate, regulate and promote quality education and training to all persons in Uganda for national integration, development and individual advancement”. Under
the MoES, there are different support institutions that include NCDC (National Curriculum Development Centre), UNEB (Uganda National Examination Board), National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), and National Council of Sports (NCS), each charged with different responsibilities of achieving the MoES mission.

There is no doubt that Uganda’s education system is characterised by a diversified composition of students and teachers with respect to nationality, ethnic origin, and religion. This calls for MoES philosophy of pluralistic student and teacher’s education system in Uganda which unfortunately is not in place at the moment. Given the diversified nature of teachers and students, one would expect the Uganda MoES to have a clear-cut pluralistic philosophy of student and teacher education end-product. Such policy could guide the above institutions to handle the diversified teacher and student communities, and could eventually enhance mutual understanding among students and academic achievement of disadvantage groups. The philosophy of a pluralistic student and trained teacher where practical, is mainly the outcome of voluntary efforts by selected individual schools. The issue of being practical without a pluralistic philosophy for the education system deserves special attention.

During the teacher recruitment exercise, normally through the Teaching Service Commission, new student teacher candidates provide bio-data with details concerning their socio-demographic background. However, how this exercise translates into equitable enrolment across schools and regions is not clear, as there is no systematic mechanism of disseminating the types and levels of diversity of teacher enrolment.

MoES knowledge about the types and levels of diversity among student communities has generally been demonstrated when releasing the final year examination results at primary and post-primary levels. Usually final year examination results are disaggregated by gender, region, and performance, although the idea of displaying the best student has been discarded for political reasons. However, how these results inform and guide future subsequent MoES interventions for improved outcomes is also not clear, as high academic performance continues to be confined within selected regions and schools.

Uganda introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997; more recently Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007 to eliminate poverty by 2020. Through a capitation grant, UPE and USE are designed to improve equitable access to basic education by removing the burden of paying school fees, and enhancing the quality of primary education by providing schools with resources necessary to run them. Besides the quality issues that are being challenged, other shortcomings include both UPE and USE strategies being less responsive to poverty issues, particularly on issues related to school lunch which adversely contribute to absenteeism and eventual school dropout, according studies conducted in Uganda.

Among all MoES policy and guidelines observed, there is no systematic document focusing on the rights of parents and those of their children. Parents in particular
and their children at large have no recourse when their children face such unequal educational opportunities in schools. To illustrate the point, while schools have instituted beginning-term exams, whose sitting is contingent upon having cleared schools dues, children of parents who cannot afford to clear the fees at the beginning of the term are denied an educational opportunity. While, up to now, the MoES has turned a blind eye to this practice, the poor parents have no recourse, perhaps because of lack of direct mechanisms in place.

Apart from the school regulations, the MoES has not instituted any deliberate policy to provide information to parents on their duties, and those of their children in respect of others. This means the responsibilities of enforcing discipline and good morals have been left to the few teachers - who sometimes also lack the knowledge and skills. To some extent, parents have exhibited unbecoming behaviour in schools, to a level of harassing teachers in front of students.

The National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE) is a form of assessment under UNEB and is used to certain national levels of achievement in target subject areas and to monitor changes in achievement over time. The objectives of NAPE are to:

- generate accurate information on what pupils know and can do in curricular areas; evaluate the effectiveness of reforms in the education system;
- provide guidelines for the improvement of instruction and learning;
- evaluate the effectiveness of inputs and processes employed in the educational act
- provide guidelines on variables that affect achievement;
- provide data that can be used in planning and research.

NAPE uses two types of instruments notably the criterion referenced tests of Literacy and Numeracy, based on the national curriculum. The NAPE questionnaires and/or interview schedules are administered to pupils who have sat for the tests, teachers who teach the English and Mathematics in the target grades and head teachers of the schools in the sample, to obtain contextual information.

The categories of audience targeted for NAPE information comprise teachers, the Education Standards Agency (ESA), District Education Officers (DEOs), District Inspectors of Schools (DISs), National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), UNEB, Teacher Training Colleges, education planners and policy makers, parents, students and the public at large.

NAPE information is normally disseminated via the internet and newspapers, whose accessibility is still not within reach of the average parents, students and the public at large. Furthermore, the emphasis of NAPE to only disseminate Literacy and Numeracy results fits with the Education Policy Review Commission report (1989) which stated that: “The education system places less emphasis on promotion of moral
values, practical skills and participation in social and cultural activities. The teaching in schools is geared towards the achievements of good marks in examination subjects at the cost of other important education objectives.”

Based on MoES’s conceptualisation of promoting equal opportunities, inclusion, and peaceful co-existence, several policy documents have been developed, some of which have already been disseminated to schools, and others are being integrated into a single handbook for distribution. Some of these policies include:

- Basic Education Policy for Educationally disadvantaged Children, 2006
- National Physical Education Policy
- National Policy for Older Persons ageing with Security and Dignity, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
- The Persons with Disabilities, Simplified Version
- Support UPE, support your child’s future

Other efforts:

- The MoES already has a department of children with special needs headed by a commissioner of special needs for children
- The primary school curriculum is embracing some elements of inclusion, and peaceful co-existence (teaching of free and fair elections, good citizen in primary schools)

The National Curriculum Development Centre

NCDC was established by statute (the NCDC Act Chapter 135). The Vision of NCDC is to be a centre of excellence in developing quality curricula for sustainable development. The mission is to develop relevant curricula and instructional materials for quality education that promotes national development. Interaction with NCDC was guided by the following questions; does the NCDC take into account the students’ diversity? Are the NCDC efforts assessed for what it develops about diversity? Are the NCDC activities related to pluralism shaped with the views of stakeholders? Have teachers been supported to promote NCDC content?

NCDC has made deliberate efforts to design curriculum contents for the diversified religious, and ethnic student communities in order to promote inclusion, and peaceful co-existence. For example, there is a curriculum for CRE, Islam, and Luganda. The curriculum for Luo and Lunyankole–Rutoro are in draft form. The primary five-Islamic Religious Education curriculum has been revised to emphasise conflict resolution, establishment of a democratic state, need for a democratic state, and purpose of elections.

The CRE curriculum for primary five has also been revised to include; the Constitution of Uganda; the role of both polling and returning officers in handling free and fair
elections, electoral approaches, and elements of having faith in electoral authority. The revisions in Islam and CRE are now assessed. The above curriculum elements are being extended to secondary school level, with a curriculum draft ready for review by theme experts and stakeholders. A national stakeholders’ workshop was held in which stakeholders that included relevant NGOs and others attended and provided input on the proposed draft curriculum review of secondary schools. Subject matter textbooks have also been developed to support teachers involved in intercultural subjects.

**Contributions of Teacher Training Institutions to Pluralism**

Given the increasing culturally diversified Uganda student community, the interaction with lecturers and student teachers sought to answer the following questions; do teacher programmes encourage student teachers to acquire a critical understanding of the cultural experiences of their students?. What is the legitimate pluralism knowledge as viewed by student teachers who are the future teachers?

The typical response from lecturers of student teachers when discussing their intercultural preparation of student teachers is that not all courses include subjects that are sensitive to student differences. A detailed review of the course structure of the major diploma/degree courses suggests that many students are not given adequate preparation for teaching in a culturally pluralistic school. In some instances, the majority of students, particularly those pursuing science courses, complete the course without studying a single intercultural course.

The extent of intercultural preparation of students who do not choose multicultural or indigenous education subjects depend on three factors: their choice of main subject disciplines, their choice of elective subjects, and the interest of their lecturers. Students being prepared as secondary school teachers have to study two disciplines. Some disciplines such as history / social studies, and language incorporate studies of a variety of cultures as well as intercultural issues in the Ugandan context. Other disciplines, particularly those in scientific, mathematical, physical education and business fields, tend not to be designed in a consciously cultural framework, and rarely incorporate intercultural issues. Thus, in these disciplines, the extent to which intercultural issues are studied depends on the interest of the lecturer.

The same is true for the compulsory professional subjects which prepare teachers in the sociological, psychological and pedagogical aspects of education. These offer topics on the educational implication of gender, curriculum methods, psychological development, political policymaking and other contextual matters. The implication of ethnicity and culture are included in most of these contextual subjects, but generally only as a small component of the semester-long timetable. Some lecturers may devote one or more lectures to this topic, while others may only devote part of a lecture. The perceptions of student teachers interviewed support these observations. As one student stated: “I don’t think that subjects in the teacher education programme
provide any specific knowledge and skills to implement a multicultural curriculum. The only knowledge and skills I have has been at my own expense and time prior to joining this institution. The knowledge that we are given at this college is generally very broad”.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions
The qualitative study revealed that the schools’ perceptions, policies, programmes and practices to great extent exhibit elements of managing diversity in schools. Testimony to this lies in some elaborate missions and visions, school enrolment policies that embrace diversity, co-existence of students of diversified ethnic background, availability of resources in school to address gender and disability issues, extracultural activities, human resources to promote pluralism and multicultural education in some schools, and co-existence of teachers of diversified ethnic backgrounds.

The quantitative study revealed an appreciation, valuing, and readiness to implement pluralism among both students and teachers. A higher proportion of students and most teachers expressed comfort with living in diversified school community. Specifically on culture, almost 85% of the respondents were not willing to abandon their culture (whether minority culture) in favour of the dominant culture for mutual co-existence. The reasons expressed were that some cultures are bad, hostile and non-accommodative (whether minority or dominant).

However, most schools assessed lacked capacity to implement pluralism in terms of human resources and streamlined guidelines. School documentation with regard to managing diversity was not elaborate, not known to teachers and staff; and not widely disseminated. Also found lacking in most schools, were exploring masculinities programmes designed for use among both sexes enabling boys and girls to critically examine masculine identities and behaviour in order to foster balanced personal development

Despite the existence of school regulations to counter bullying, the practice still exists. Bullying was associated with student leaders who reportedly certain services from the less privileged and vulnerable students in exchange for providing them with protection against bullying by other students. Male students who appeared rather masculine were far more likely to bully than small ones. Additionally, teacher education, at either preservice or in-service stages, has not provided systematic programmes to manage school diversity. Furthermore, schools neither have teachers’ orientation programs nor guidelines for use by teachers in managing diversity

Intolerance in religious founded schools was reported with students treated less favourably than other students because they have a different religious background.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

Boarding schools were preferred to day schools because children stay longer together thereby learning to manage diversity and understand one another in depth. Mixed schools were preferred to single sex schools as students learn and appreciate one another as boys and girls. It was also pointed out that some students who are against co-existence and tolerance have never been told/taught the opportunities it has.

The quantitative study revealed an appreciation, valuing, and readiness to implement pluralism among both students and teachers in both government and private mixed and day and religious, founded schools. A highly significant proportion of students and a moderate sample of teachers expressed comfort with living in diversified school communities.

At policy level, the conclusion is that Uganda’s educational system lacks a philosophy for a multicultural pluralistic output. Additionally, issues surrounding how the MoES’s teacher enrolment system translates into equitable enrolment across schools and regions are not clear, as there is no systematic mechanism of disseminating the types and levels of diversity of teacher enrolment. Despite the continued poor academic performance both at primary and post primary school levels in selected regions, there is no deliberate effort surrounding how such poor results inform and guide subsequent MoES interventions for improved results.

Although UPE and USE are designed to improve equitable access to basic education by removing the burden of paying school fees, and enhancing the quality of primary education; both strategies are less responsive to poverty issues, particularly on issues related to school lunch which adversely contribute to absenteeism and eventual school dropout. Apart from the school regulations, MoES has not instituted any deliberate policy to provide information to parents on their rights and duties, and those of their children in respect of others. Worse, MoES information is normally disseminated via the internet and newspapers, whose accessibility is still not within reach of the average parents, students and the public at large.

The typical response from tutors of student teachers when discussing the intercultural preparation of student teachers is that not all courses include subjects that are sensitive to student differences. The course structure of the major diploma courses, suggest that many students are not given adequate preparation for teaching in culturally plural schools. In some instances, the majority of students, particularly those pursuing science courses, complete the course without studying a single intercultural course.

Recommendations

a) **Strengthening school policies, programmes and practice for equal opportunities**

The following specific suggestions and examples are provided as strategies to strengthen school policies, programmes and practices for increased equal opportunities: (i) developing a school-wide philosophy statement that promotes equal opportunities;
ii) analyse the cultural diverse staff and student composition on campus and set goals for enhancing equal opportunities; iii) conducting research on best practices/programmes/activities that promote recruitment and retention of culturally diverse staff and studentship) developing, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive plan for recruitment/retention activities that focus on enhancing cultural diversity on campus among staff and student populations.

i) Developing a school-wide philosophy statement A good beginning for addressing equal opportunities on a school campus is to adopt a mission statement overtly embracing equal opportunities. This mission statement should emphasise a campus philosophy/climate that is open to equal opportunities. Potential examples of such statements are as follows:

* The mission of the School is to provide a culturally diverse learning environment that promotes personal, intellectual, ethical and spiritual excellence through sensitivity, sound judgment, tolerance and respect for all persons, cultures and ideas.
* The mission of the School is to prepare a multicultural diverse community of learners to live in a society that supports equity and diversity.
* The mission of our School is to promote equity for all students from entry/admissions to exit/graduation.
* Our School seeks to serve societal well-being by advocating diversity and fostering equal opportunity for all citizens to participate in a democratic public sphere.

These mission statements should be publicly displayed, and openly discussed among student groups and staff groups in school if the diversity mission is to permeate day to day campus activities.

ii) Analysing school diversity Schools should become knowledgeable concerning the types and levels of diversity among student and staff groups. If schools truly desire to be reflective of a multicultural society, then each school must begin to collect and analyse data regarding its own campus and cultural diversity. Additional enrolment data might include tribe, gender information, socioeconomic status information, age range, first-generation students, etc. This data could be collected by the Admissions Office, the Registrar's Office, the Institutional Data Office, or other. Not only is it important to collect and analyse enrolment data on students, it is equally important to collect retention/persistence information on students. This could include data on drop-out rates, reasons for drop-out/non-completion, years to complete programmes/degrees, and follow-up data such as employment rates, etc.

Because the visibility of minority staff on campus may act as a catalyst in enticing minority students, schools should collect data on the number of staff as well as on the number of students. The types of information on staff should be comparable to the basic student data collected. In addition, the following information could prove
useful: i) discipline or field of study; ii) years in rank, iii) number of staff by rank, and iii) number who leave - why? This data should reflect a comparative perspective between non-minority and minority staff. Once data have been collected on students and staff, the school needs to address the following questions:

- Do the data complement the school mission statement on cultural diversity?
- Is the school community reflective of diversity existing in society at large?
- Are minorities under-represented at the staff level?
- Are minorities under-represented at the student level?
- Is there a need to target recruitment/retention efforts to increase staff diversity?
- Is there a need to target recruitment/retention efforts to increase student diversity?

Collection and analysis of this data should provide a framework for developing a comprehensive plan to diversify the campus population.

iii) Researching Best Practices/Programmes/Activities In promoting activities and programmes to increase equal opportunities, it is imperative to assess equal opportunities efforts that exemplify best practices. The assessment, in general, is used to reveal whether popular belief is supported by actual data. The key to understanding the impact of these more popular approaches in promoting equal opportunities is accurate assessment. Many activities fit quite nicely into a pre- and post-test design. Programmes structured to change attitudes or perceptions of students, staff and personnel, and the overall campus climate may begin with initial questionnaires. Longitudinal effects of the programme may also be assessed. Multivariate designs could allow for the assessment of individual components. For example, assessment could include which recruitment activities have the greatest impact on the student’s decision to enrol into the college. Close monitoring of statistics for student and staff populations is a necessity, especially as these numbers vary with the implementation of various strategies. Thus, rather than reinventing the wheel, schools should assess existing culturally diverse retention and recruitment efforts in order to develop plans that uniquely fit the needs of their campus.

There are a variety of recruitment efforts that seem to be popular at colleges and schools. Recruitment strategies have included pipeline strategies, outreach programmes, financial incentives and marketing approaches. For the recruitment of students, pipeline strategies have involved encouraging minority youth at the elementary and secondary levels to continue their education at post-secondary levels. Financial incentives such as scholarships and grants are often used when economic barriers to enrolment are present. For staff, salary incentives have been the main method of recruitment. Retention strategies have also been created for minority students and staff populations. Retention strategies such as residential and academic mentoring as practiced in Namilyango College are also encouraged to address self-isolation from the general student population and campus life which is often as one of the main factors that contributes to minority student attrition.
iv) Developing, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive plan for equal opportunities

Once the earlier recommendations have been implemented (i.e. mission statement, analysis of current/existing cultural diversity status, and research on best practices), the school must then look towards consolidating this information into a cohesive and comprehensive plan to promote greater cultural diversity throughout all levels of its structure. After outlining what needs to be accomplished, the school and its sub-units must determine who will be assigned the responsibility of organizing these efforts and how this will be done. These entities must develop working plans with the designed mission statement in mind and use the list of potential practices, programmes, and activities as a basis for delegating duties to other parties. A written plan, which can be disseminated to all school members, allows the duties to be shared, while still giving contact/leadership roles to specific personnel or offices.

School directors, and department chairs can volunteer for or be assigned responsibilities within this plan. Staff and students could be incorporated to increase sources of recruitment and to involve them in retention activities. It is important that whoever leads/directs this plan is given the power to accomplish those steps identified within it in order to promote a campus climate that reflects cultural diversity.

The process for carrying out this plan should be thorough and continuous. The plan should be endorsed and supported by everyone it includes at all levels of the institution. Activity in administering this plan should be on-going. There should be periodic meetings to communicate assignments, delegate responsibilities and discuss anticipated costs and materials. These meetings should also address issues and concerns that may arise and the progress of the plan. Attempts should be made to develop collaborative relationships between units and programs, especially when similar plans can be combined. An appointed coordinator of events is a necessity as this person facilitates collaboration between and scheduling of different projects. Ultimately, the plan should be evaluated to assess if progress is leading to anticipated results. This would include methods of on-going evaluation related to responsibilities, timeline, and other aspects of the process of carrying out the plan, as well as final evaluation of projects as a whole. It is worth emphasizing that in order to ensure the success of a comprehensive plan, there must be a constant cycle of developing, implementing and evaluating.

b) Other recommendations

i) In-service training

In-service training should be provided for teachers, principals, tutors and management authorities on how to manage diversity in schools. Management authorities include those who serve on school boards of management and members of governing bodies in institutions of higher education, as well as staff in all educational institutions who have management roles. Those in statutory bodies and support agencies need to be informed about both their own responsibilities and those of the ‘front-line’ service providers with whom they work. Students and their parents need to be given information about the rights they (or their children) have and
how these rights can be enforced. They also need to be informed of duties they (or their children) have in respect of others.

ii) Teachers and other partners Educators will need to be supported to further develop their knowledge and capacity in respect to Pluralism. The education departments are important in this context, as is the Teaching Service Commission with its role in establishing standards for programmes of teacher education and training, including the continuing training and professional development of teachers. A plan for integrating diversity management into the teacher education curriculum should be developed. One element of this could be an assessment of each teacher’s management of diversity practices in the classroom as part of the appraisal of his or her pre-service teaching practice. Other key stakeholders in education, including patrons, unions, management bodies, parents, students, statutory bodies and support services, all need to have ownership of the above endeavours.

iii) Students education about tolerance of diversity Students also need education about tolerance of diversity. One of the most significant omissions in Uganda’s education is the absence of a strong intellectual tradition focused on Pluralism, human rights and social justice. There is a need for both mainstreaming education about tolerance of diversity across all subjects and targeting particular subjects to include such a focus. Without programmes in educational institutions directly focused on Pluralism, it will be very difficult to create an inclusive environment for different groups. Therefore, it is recommended that education about tolerance of diversity becomes more systematic in educational institutions. Pluralism principles need to inform all programmes taught in schools, regardless of ethnicity, cultural, religious backgrounds. Possibilities for action include building on Pluralism-related modules and perspectives within existing subjects (most obviously within Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) in schools) and developing a strong element on Pluralism and diversity into courses on social and political education in schools.

iv) Integrating diversity management into the school strategic plans Schools should be equipped to develop and implement informed Pluralism policies and plans. This includes access to information, training and resources. The focus for these should cover non-discrimination, reasonable accommodation and positive action as allowed under the Pluralism legislation. School diversity management plans for educational institutions and indicators of achievement should be drawn up by the educational institutions in co-operation with the education partners, local communities (and regional and national organisations in the case of institutions of education that have regional or national remits) and representatives of those who experience inequalities. Monitoring by both internal and external bodies of Pluralism policies and plans of educational institutions at all levels is important, as well as monitoring their implementation. Debates/discussions on co-existence and managing diversity between parents, teachers and students can be encouraged. Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) could be a good framework for this.
v) **Admission and enrolment policies**

Admission and enrolment policies for education institutions at all levels have a role in promoting Pluralism. Educational institutions should identify initiatives in their admission policies to make reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities and should identify positive action measures to address disadvantage and meet special needs (including special needs other than special educational needs). For those students who need support, schools should ensure that the resources are made available to make admission of these students a reality.

vi) **Curriculum content**

The content of the curriculum, the materials used and the teaching methodologies should take into account student’s diversity. The curriculum should be assessed for what it communicates and teaches about groups along ethnic lines. Stereotyping, inaccurate messages and absences of messages about groups need to be identified and rectified. This applies not only to explicit statements, but also to implicit messages, such as visual images in textbooks. The accessibility of the curriculum and the materials used both for those with disabilities and for other groups, should be assessed. This work needs to be done in partnership with organisations representing those who experience inequalities. Any decision regarding the nature and development of syllabi and materials can only be successfully implemented when the views of all stakeholders are taken into account.

vii) **Accommodation of religious diversity**

As the Government makes provision for universal education through its support for Denominational schools, it should ensure that the rights of those who are not of the particular religious belief of the school are respected. This will need to go beyond respecting the right not to be given teaching in a different religion (for example, through withdrawal during religious instruction) to ensuring that those who are of a different religion (or none) are fully equal and appropriately accommodated for in the life of the school.

viii) **Training, recruitment and staffing practices**

MoES at all levels should ensure their recruitment and promotion processes and practices do not contribute to imbalances that currently exist on the gender, disability, age, race, and sexual orientation grounds and modify them where necessary. School at all levels should develop planned and systematic approaches to promoting Pluralism in the employment of staff. Recruitment and promotion processes need to be assessed for any barriers they might present to diversity among staff at all levels. Employment Pluralism policies, Pluralism and diversity training for staff and employment Pluralism action plans are the key elements of a planned and systematic approach.

ix) **Harassment and sexual harassment**

The code of behaviour for schools should explicitly prohibit harassment and sexual harassment; set out procedures for dealing with any such incident that might arise; require behaviour that respects diversity; and identify initiatives to build a harassment-free environment in schools. School policies for preventing and combating harassment and sexual harassment should take into account the difficulties students (and teachers) can experience in schools. These
difficulties may arise because they belong to a minority group or because of their gender. Schools should be encouraged and assisted in taking a proactive approach to address the negative and fearful attitudes that can create a context for bullying behaviour or harassment towards minorities and on the gender ground.

x) Disseminating good practice To address the information deficit, MoES should design and deliver a pro-poor dissemination strategy that enables policies, practices and outcomes in education to be disseminated widely among all stakeholders, including the average parents. This dissemination strategy could focus on staff recruitment; student admission, school perspectives, policies, programmes and practices, including parent rights and duties and those of their children.

In addition to disseminating results about Literacy and Numeracy, MoES should further place emphasis on promoting best practices related to moral values, practical skills and participation in social and cultural activities. As such models of good practice develop, there is a need to ensure that information about such practices is widely disseminated. This would encourage other schools and educational providers to take similar initiatives. Such dissemination should be facilitated through initiatives such as developing a database on models of good Pluralism practice with contact information, etc. A website on models of good practice could be developed. Information could also be disseminated about such practices by organising an annual forum on “Models of Good Practice related Pluralism in schools” in which invitees could include educators and education partners.

The fundamental principle upon which all else must rest is that the family is the primary educator of children and should not delegate that primary role to the public system. Everything in the school’s approach to education must flow from that recognition. The fact that some children may not be taught a particular perspective at school should not become an excuse that all children should be taught such perspectives in a school setting. It is a cardinal duty of MoES to ensure that parents are aware of their duties to ensure a disciplined child right from home.

xi) Supporting and enforcing standards The Inspectorate of schools should develop an evaluation mechanisms and tools to enable an assessment to be made of the Pluralism focus in admission policies, school plans and the code of behaviour. The Higher Education Authority should develop standards and evaluation tools in relation to the inclusion of Pluralism policies and in strategic development plans in all education institutions. Both the Higher Education Authority and the Inspectorate should identify appropriate sanctions that can be applied to education institutions that fail to meet these duties.

xii) Addressing the information deficit Planning for school diversity management and Pluralism in education must be based on accurate information. However, there is a lack of substantive, accurate data about the educational experiences of those who experience inequalities. There is a need to actively address this information deficit. Statistical data relating to teachers and students is collected annually by the
Education Statistics Branch of the Uganda Ministry of Education (MoES). While this does include valuable data, especially on gender, there is a lack of data on others who experience inequalities. The MoES should design and deliver a data strategy that enables policies, practices and outcomes in education to be adequately assessed from a Pluralism and pluralistic perspective.

Research examining the experiences of the education system by certain groups is limited. This needs to be addressed. MoES should develop and fund a research strategy to support a focus on Pluralism in education. This could focus on employment; educational experiences and the development of Pluralism frameworks in particular areas of provision.

xiii) Resources Realising educational outcomes for a diversity of students and promoting a culture in education that is respectful of agreement, both in theory and in practice, requires investment. Inadequate resources, policy framework, programmes and initiatives that are designed to achieve Pluralism in education can lead to disillusionment and frustration with the Pluralism project itself. If Pluralism in education is to be promoted in a substantive manner, resources should be invested in achieving it. This is particularly important when it comes to schools, colleges and the informal sector to develop Pluralism action plans and to implement them successfully. Resources should be invested in proactively removing the barriers experienced by some groups in accessing educational institutions and in securing a presence and participation in education for students across all grounds.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

10. Managing Diversity in African Universities - Living and Challenging Difference on four Ugandan Campuses

VUSIA SANTA IZAMA AND THE CROSS-CULTURAL FOUNDATION OF UGANDA

Editor’s Preface

Over the years, one of the central foci of the Pluralism Knowledge Program in Uganda has been their emphasis on the youth, and more particularly, on how young people in Uganda are able and encouraged to engage with diversity and difference. Earlier research was conducted on the role and the relevance of the family and the school as environments where active pluralism can be created, valued and practiced. The research for the present paper was commissioned by the Cross Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) and carried out by Vusia Santa Izama. Further editorial work was done by CCFU and Kosmopolis staff.

The research of this interesting paper focuses on four universities and examines their policies and experiences with different forms of diversity. The authors believe that as “architects of knowledge’ and learning environments, universities play an important role in influencing ways in which pluralism is lived and promoted” and that “Ugandan universities increasingly engage ‘with diversity through policies and practice, managing multicultural student bodies, as well as diverse academic and non-academic staff, and the theories and worldviews expounded by different faculties.” Empirical research was conducted at four public and private Ugandan universities, each characterised by different features such as its location (urban-rural, relatively peaceful or in a strife-torn region etc.), its world view foundations (secular or religious) and the diversity of the student body composition. The research questions focused on (1) the perception, scope and experience of diversity by key actors at the university; (2) the universities’ practices, policies and codes of conduct; (3) the ways in which they relate to the policies and principles of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) of Uganda and their perceptions and experiences of diversity management and the particular challenges they face.

The paper starts with a brief introduction on the general context in which Ugandan universities are currently anchored as institutes for Higher Education in Africa and in Uganda in particular. Then the paper presents its main research findings and concludes that a number of cross-cutting realities have emerged. These realities and challenges, are thematically reviewed and highlight issues of ethnicity and language, religious affiliation, gender and economic status. The paper is full of quotes from those who were interviewed. These quotes interestingly illustrate the ways in which students and staff in the four universities understand and deal with diversity opportunities and challenges, both from individual – as well as from institutional perspectives. Each of the four universities is more elaborately described in separate vignettes which appear throughout the paper. These descriptions of students and staff personal perceptions
and the more general institutional - and contextual circumstances of each university, give the reader much insight into how they deal with the challenges of diversity and pluralism.

At the end of the paper, the authors suggest several areas where improvement may be possible. They identify five categories for which they have recommendations. The first category addresses ‘policy frameworks and policy implementation’, the second one deals with the realm of ‘curriculum and extra-curricular activities’, followed by the need to actively develop appropriate ‘skills and attitudes’ of students and staff to deal with differences and the enhancement of ‘internal practices’ in which both staff and students engage with each other in constructive ways. Finally, they see possibilities to improve ‘inter-university dialogue’ about pluralism on campus and ways to monitor developments across universities.

Caroline Suransky  
Chief editor of the Pluralism Working Paper series for the Pluralism Knowledge Programme

INTRODUCTION

The Pluralism Knowledge Programme in Uganda

Across the African continent, the intricacy of managing complex polities with diverse ethnic and religious identities, varied socio-economic profiles and political affiliations, is evident. Conflicts, whose roots can so often be traced to the failure of managing this diversity, constantly hit the headlines. Uganda is no exception: it provides a good example of an artificial colonial creation, a country that has struggled since independence to accommodate and engage very diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and political communities, at times with a measure of success, at others with much bloodshed.

It is in this national context that the Pluralism Knowledge Programme (PKP) has been active since 2010. It is a context that has amply shown that engagement across difference introduces a relevant and necessary emphasis on managing this complexity, and takes the discourse on pluralism to a practical and potentially productive level for national co-existence.

Naturally, such engagement needs to rest to a great extent on the values and skills of the country’s youth and the PKP has therefore placed some emphasis on examining the relevance of the family and of the school environment in nurturing the value of pluralism in Uganda. This report, based on research carried out at four universities and examining their experiences in managing diversity, complements these efforts.

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324 See “The family: At the Heart of Managing Cultural Diversity” and DENIVA, “The Element of Pluralism in Schools, its management and how it affects schooling”, this volume.
Research rationale, objectives and methods

As ‘architects of knowledge’ and learning environments, universities play an important role in influencing ways in which pluralism is lived and promoted. They shape the thought processes of young generations who come from different backgrounds, while being influenced by the policy, academic, social and political space that surrounds them. Ugandan universities increasingly engage with diversity through policies and practice, managing multicultural student bodies, as well as diverse academic and non-academic staff, and the theories and worldviews expounded by different faculties. They accommodate growing numbers of students from Uganda itself, from Eastern Africa and beyond. The scope of the curricula has also expanded, with new course units frequently introduced. In brief, universities in Uganda and elsewhere provide important, changing mirrors of the complex diversities and intricacies experienced and engaged with at institutional and individual level, within and between sub-groups inside and outside their walls. They act as the cauldron in which social change is conceived, nurtured and presented. These can at times provide explosive spaces, as different perspectives interact, occasionally violently, while giving to the student the previously unexplored freedom of public expression and formulation of new identities in a ‘free’ environment.

If African universities are faced with the challenge and opportunity to guide the ‘new generation’ towards managing an increasingly diverse national reality, relevant issues have not been much researched, despite the fact that these institutions are acquiring increasingly diverse student and staff populations themselves. These concerns include examining how different categories of students, academic and non-academic staff interact with each other; how their different identities and experiences impact on their university experience and the kind of values they take with them into the world of work. Also open to examination is the management of diversity and the ways in which it affects the learning experience and life of university institutions, the policies and principles guiding them and any deliberate effort to change or maintain the status quo by different communities within these institutions.

The research presented here focuses on the challenges and practices of 4 public and private Ugandan universities in managing diversity. These were selected to reflect different situations: Kampala International University (KIU) is a private institution near the capital city, which has attracted large numbers of students from neighbouring countries; Gulu University is a newly established public institution located in a marginalised and, until recently, strife-torn part of the country; Nkumba University is also recently established but close to the capital city and has appealed mostly to the dominant ethnic group in the country; and the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) has been created to further Islamic-inspired values and education, while welcoming students from other faiths.

The research set out to explore how, being increasingly exposed to multicultural conditions, these four universities are confronted with and managing a diverse range
of students, academic and non-academic staff in their midst. While the research focused on an examination of current challenges and practices, it was also meant to provide an opportunity for the four universities to enhance their understanding of the relevance of pluralism as a concept and to influence their course of action. A number of activities designed to better manage diversity – though not the subject of this paper - are thus currently implemented through an action plan undertaken by each University.

**Research questions covered the following main areas:**

- The perception, scope and experience of diversity at the university by individuals and groups; students’ values, perceptions of ‘others’ and their influence on choices - such as participation in clubs and associations - and their interaction in formal and informal spaces. The manifestation of these perceptions and attitudes in the university culture and sub-cultures, and in any tension and experience of conflict that might arise.
- University practices, policies, codes of conduct, their effect on the management of diversity; ways in which university students and staff experience and engage with these. The extent of university support, if any, for students to engage with difference and their provision, if any, of conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Policies and principles governing the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in the management of diversity in universities and mechanisms available to the Council to support and monitor the management of diversity in universities.
- Universities’ and NCHE perceptions and experiences of the management of diversity and relevant actions, if any, envisaged for the future, as well as any challenges faced in translating perceptions of diversity into strategies for promoting pluralism and any lessons to be learnt in this respect.

The methodology used included a review of national and university level documents, as well as interactions with a range of students, academic personnel and non-academic staff at the four selected universities. Comments were also gathered from two subsequent learning events involving some of the respondents and the PKP Steering Committee in Uganda.

The document review covered national plans, policies and legislative instruments, policy review papers and other reports. At University level, documentation included curricula, codes of conduct, students’ handbooks, and other rules and regulations governing academic and social life.

The main study interaction was through key informant interviews, focus group discussions and paired interviews, in addition to observation. Interactions were held with as wide a range of students and staff as possible, to reflect the diversity present at the different campuses in terms of ethnicity, nationality, gender, occupation, academic
pursuit and position at the university (students, administrative personnel or academic staff), rural or urban origin, and students with or without government sponsorship. Respondents were identified using purposive sampling with a random element. Students selected for group discussions were placed into single sex and mixed group discussions where their background information was checked including ethnicity, religion, age, and type of school attended. Staff and lecturers were selected randomly (those available at the time of the research) while checking their backgrounds and other relevant criteria.

Although the number of interviewees (147)\textsuperscript{325} did not in all cases cover all possible categories at each university, and although the findings cannot claim to be wholly representative of all universities in the country, the study nevertheless provides insights into the practical challenges and realities of managing diversity in a complex and changing African tertiary education environment, as well as on the kinds of opportunities, mechanisms and spaces that exist for managing this diversity. It is hoped that these findings will be of interest to university administrators and policy makers and that they may influence Universities’ practices and their interaction with other institutions, as well as the ways in which they themselves engage with diversity.

Having introduced the research in this Section, Section 2 outlines the context relevant to managing diversity in university institutions, both internationally and in Uganda. Section 3 focuses on the lived reality of diversity, its challenges and its various dimensions at the four campuses. Section 4 examines policy implementation in relation to diversity issues at the universities, the response by individuals to such issues, opportunities for collective engagement and areas where diversity is not or is poorly managed. Section 5 sets out conclusions and recommendations.

THE CONTEXT

From affirmative action to managing diversity in tertiary education

The management of diversity – both in terms of admittance to tertiary education institutions and with regard to equal treatment within these institutions - has been an issue of concern for some decades across several continents. Equal employment opportunities and anti-discrimination legislation was introduced in a number of European countries from the 1960s. In the USA, discussions centred on affirmative action subsequent to the demands of the civil rights movement to tackle injustices and press for equal opportunities between black and white communities. This contributed to calls for affirmative action to access university education and within the institutions themselves, to encourage or force gender parity, racial equity, and affirmative action in relation to disability issues (Vermeulen, 2000).

\textsuperscript{325} The number of interviewees at IUIU was 35 (14 female; 21 male), Gulu 39 (15 female; 24 male), Nkumba 35 (14 female; 21 males) and KIU 38 (17 female; 21 male).
Over the years, the agenda has broadened from affirmative action and equal opportunities to ‘diversity management’, including several dimensions of diversity and concerns that go beyond admission policies to staff orientation, ‘campus climate’, infrastructure and course contents. It has been suggested that diversity management also “reflects an emphasis on a positive perspective on (…) differences versus the negative perspective of disadvantage” (Maxwell et al, in Strachan, ca. 2005). In Britain, the equal opportunities agenda has thus been branded as “formal and minimalist – organisations need only reach set required targets or outcomes; it is externally driven, based on legal or moral arguments (and uses) a white, male, full-time, heterosexual norm and fits other groups into this norm” (Wilson and Iles, in Strachan, op.cit.). Embracing diversity management in the 1990’s has also mirrored an emphasis on organisational effectiveness: one witnesses “a policy shift (to) managerialist driven social programmes (where) the main process (…) is through human resource management policies that link employment diversity to organisational objectives (…) the stimulus for managing diversity will be the continuing search for organisational effectiveness, a clearly different motivation to affirmative action” (Kramar, in Strachan, op.cit).

This evolution is reflected in university settings, both in terms of rationale and method. Thus, increasingly, in the USA, “colleges and universities affirm the role that diversity plays in enhancing teaching and learning in higher education.(…) In various ways, both student affairs professionals and faculty have responsibilities to shape campus environments that work to insure equity of access as well as social and academic success” (Elon Dancy, 00). This reflects the recognition that, “in the 21st century the focus of schools and corporations needs to be on “living diversity” [including] the diversity of thinking systems, from the value systems of which emerge the intolerance toward others” (Rosado, 2006). A US university advertises its competence thus: “More so than ever before, it is clear that technical competence alone is insufficient for today’s graduate. Michigan Tech must prepare its students to live and work in a diverse society (…) In order to graduate students who will create the future, the University must complete its transformation to a multicultural institution” (Michigan Tech, www.mtu.edu/diversity).

On the African continent, the South African experience stands out and mirrors the evolution summarised above, even if rationale and context differ. Norris thus noted in 2000: “Redressing historical imbalances relating to staff appointments and student access is an imperative for South African higher education institutions. (…) One of the strategies that must be applied to accelerate that change process is affirmative action, yet affirmative action on its own is not the whole answer. It is essential that the diversity created by affirmative action be effectively managed, by using a strategic management approach. Norris thus proposes the application of a “diversity framework (that) will ensure that all aspects of the affirmative action and diversity processes within South African institutions of higher education are addressed. He quotes: “Experiencing diversity is a common component of a quality educational
experience; to achieve excellence it is also imperative to achieve diversity” (Loomis and Sharpe, in Norris, 2000).

Notwithstanding the above, when comparing diversity management in higher education in South Africa and Germany, Vermeulen (2000) notes the key role played by the state in the former, at the expense of academic autonomy: “The formulation of higher education policy after the Apartheid era has been rapid and sometimes tumultuous and greatly affected the autonomy of the higher education institutions. The Government argued that such interventions were necessary to correct the inequalities of the past and steering mechanisms had to be introduced. The rapid change in the racial diversity profile of the South African student population over the past 15 years is probably unprecedented in the world. This change did not happen without the intervention by the state”. In Uganda, to whose experience we now turn, Government played a less activist role.

Managing diversity in Ugandan universities – the national context

In Uganda, the recognition of the need to manage diversity within tertiary institutions, if relatively new, has primarily focused on two issues: how to ensure access to university education for poorer students or those originating from distant, rural areas and how to reach a better gender balance, in an environment long dominated by men\textsuperscript{26}.

Debates around these concerns have been taking place at a time of rapid change in tertiary education. The single university at independence, Makerere University, was drawing students from across the region and had established a wide reputation for academic excellence, coupled with a privileged environment for its students. Reflecting on its nature as an ‘academic island’ and on the fact that all expenses were covered by a generous state, one alumnus recently wrote, “It was as though one had walked through a golden-edged door to a detribalised and depoliticised world, whose citizens were joined at the navel by a common goal” (Mulera, 2012).

Since then, university education facilities have quickly expanded, both in terms of admittances and in terms of the proliferation of universities - now numbering 30, many being private establishments. From around 3,000 students at the time of independence, the number of students in the country’s universities had exploded to 174,000 in 2010 (Businge, 2012).

With such growth accompanied by the phasing out of state subsidies in the 1980s and 1990s, new challenges emerged. The first efforts at affirmative action date back to 1990 when entry requirements were lowered for girls applying to join public universities, the so-called ‘1.5 points scheme’. At Makerere University, the number of female students increased from 25% of the total in 1990 to 50% in 2009 (Gender

\textsuperscript{26} While at lower education levels some effort has been expended on improving access for persons with a disability, there has been somewhat less focus on this at university level.
Mainstreaming Division, Makerere University, www.gender.mak.ac.ug). In spite of
this success, one of the architects of the scheme noted in 2009 that this is “a blanket
policy for it treats all girls as having the same education standards. It ignores the
fact that these students go to well and poorly facilitated schools. Those from good
schools stand to benefit better than their counterparts from bad schools with or
without the affirmative action” (Kwesiga, 2009). A recent study similarly noted that
‘those students who do well on the (secondary school leaving) exam usually come
from wealthier families who can afford to pay for elite, university preparatory level
public and private education, or who live in urban areas with better quality primary
and secondary schools’. The report went on to indicate that students from the highest
income group, that represented less than 1% of the total population, took 42% of the
places at Makerere that year (Xiaoyang Liang, 2004).

At the time of independence and for a few years thereafter, students had been admitted
on the basis of a more egalitarian secondary school system than subsequently became
the case. As university entrance became the prerogative of students emerging from
well-endowed, often private fee-paying secondary schools, many of which are
situated in the central region of the country, affirmative action took the form of
“district quotas” first introduced in 2005 to enable approximately 900 disadvantaged
students from distant, rural secondary schools to enlist yearly at public universities
with a government scholarship. In July 2012, a new system was introduced to replace
the flat number of students sponsored per district to a number that better reflects
district population numbers. Given the small numbers of State-sponsored students,
however (compared to universal free university education at independence), those
coveted spaces continue to go to the products of the best schools in the districts. For
a time, the Presidency has also bestowed “State House Scholarships” to university
students, a measure mired in political controversy. 4,516 such students existed in
2012.

The rationale for these measures reflect the country’s 1995 Constitution that
defines education as an entitlement for all categories of Ugandans, recognises
diversity in the form of ethnicities, minorities, and vulnerable groups and prohibits
discrimination on these grounds. The 1992 Government White Paper “Education for
National Integration and Development” and the 2001 Universities and Other Tertiary
Institutions Act provide the main legislative instruments governing universities.
The White Paper aims at “promoting citizenship; moral, ethical and spiritual
values”, while the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act established the

327 This still concerns few ‘slots’ (from 6 in 19 smaller districts to 23 in Kampala district) - New
Vision, 5/6/2012. Some scholarships are also available to people with a disability.

328 See 'The Monitor' and 'The New Vision' newspapers, Kampala, 8/8/2012

329 Other policies which deal with aspects of diversity include the Uganda Gender Policy, the
National Policy on Disabilities and the National HIV/AIDS Policy. The National Disability
Policy requires all public and private institutions to have facilities and services that are accessible
to persons with disabilities and the Gender Policy propounds equal opportunities and equitable
 provision of services without discrimination on the basis of sex. An Equal Opportunities Com-
misson, established in 2007, has barely started work.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) for quality assurance at all tertiary institutions. Among other measures, the NCHE requires new universities to have facilities for the disabled, a gender policy, a strategic plan and specific proportions of staff with stipulated qualifications. These also provide aspirational values for already established universities.

Such measures also reflect a policy effort for both private and public institutions to ensure equal access to quality and affordable education to all, in order to meet the objectives of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan, to achieve Education for All (EFA) and to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. These policies put emphasis on expanding the functional capacity of educational structures and reducing inequalities of access to education between sexes, geographical areas, and social classes in Uganda. They therefore emphasise, in keeping with Uganda’s Constitution, equality of opportunity in a context of differing socio-economic, attitudinal, physical and other barriers in accessing resources and services, including education. They define principles and recommend actions that provide a guide to living in a pluralistic society, principles that provide the ideals that should underpin universities’ practices.

A managerial challenge

Reflecting the realisation that institutions need to go beyond numbers or structural diversity to proactive means of increasing the benefits of diversity, a frequent approach, in a variety of contexts, has entailed the introduction of a ‘diversity management framework’. In the USA, for instance, Michigan Tech, has developed a framework which entails, “developing a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity; creating a welcoming campus climate; recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce and student body; diversifying University leadership and coordinating organizational change to support diversity goals” (Michigan Tech, www.mtu.edu/diversity).

In South Africa, Norris proposes a Diversity Management Framework “that should form part of the strategic management process for institutions of higher education in South Africa”, including a revised organisational culture; ability to change as an organisation; total quality management to improve standards; participative management; resource development and strategic planning, thus stressing that “for diversity to succeed, it must form part of an institution’s strategic management process (and) have the support of the highest ranking official on an institution” (Norris, 2000).

330 Uganda Tertiary Education Sector Report, 2004
331 It also requires 10% and 40% staff to have PhD and Masters’ degrees respectively, infrastructure corresponding to 4 students per square metre, 1 computer per 30 students, ability to raise 70% of the budget, with tuition as source of income equivalent to 50% of the budget, 1 lecturer for every 40 arts students and 26 science students respectively.
332 Now the National Development Plan
333 Education Sector Policy Overview Paper, 2006
Thus, the strategic document “Creating and Managing Diversity at the University of the Free State” (www.ufs.ac.za) while mentioning the “the legislative imperatives”, sets out “the challenges of reconciling equity with excellence”, which it proposed to tackle through a variety of measures, including “attracting and supporting talented academics from designated groups to help raise the level of scholarship and research at the institution”; creating employment opportunities ‘for all South African groups’; improving attitudes, ‘especially of the leadership; improving campus climate and symbols’; staff orientation and training ‘to improve awareness of multicultural issues’; an Advocacy (Diversity) Office; effective mentoring programmes; the review of employment strategies; and the creation of a special fund to put these measures into play.

To what extent does this resonate in the Ugandan context? We can now turn to a description of the different dimensions of diversity and associated challenges among the 4 surveyed universities.

**LIVING DIVERSITY AND ITS CHALLENGES IN FOUR UGANDAN UNIVERSITIES**

All four surveyed universities hosted diverse populations of students, academic and administrative staff. This variously affected individuals and groups, in terms of experiences, opportunities and challenges. Students tended to interact with each other not only as students, but as members of different groups of people with varying identities, individually and collectively, expressed in the form of a dominant or important characteristic. The experience of diversity and tensions surrounding difference at the university were also found to mirror those of the wider society to a large extent, and there were both negative and positive perceptions surrounding different aspects of diversity. Whereas some of the students witnessed instances of difference in the treatment of diverse categories of students, others in the same community did not, as one student interviewee observed: “I see an integrated community at KIU, I have not seen the [different] classes ... everybody associates with each other because they have a common goal”.

Nevertheless, each university faced challenges and these often depended on its status as a public or private institution, as being secular or with a faith-based foundation; as being a well-endowed university or a ‘poor’ one; and in terms of its location, history and culture. For instance, at the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), a major distinction amongst the students and staff was religion. At Nkumba and Gulu universities, issues of ethnicity were more pronounced, while at KIU issues of difference often coalesced around nationality and disposable income. Nevertheless cross-cutting realities emerged.334 We review these in turn in this section, with a particular focus on challenges experienced, in terms of ethnicity and language, religious affiliation, gender and level of disposable income.

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334 The following section examines keys areas of difference. Others emerged, including age, course being pursued and disability.
Ethnicity and language

Ethnicity was found to be an important aspect of difference at all four universities. There were many diverse ethnic groups, from within Uganda (both dominant and minority) and from other countries. These differences were often coupled with regional variances, with students from Buganda, the central region, and Western Uganda, the most populous region, being the largest groups in terms of numbers and representation. Much of the tension that existed resulted from the perceived lack of opportunity for students from other regions.

The university thus supports cultural activities, as evidenced in the way the campus provides spaces in which the ‘parliaments’ of different cultural associations, to which various ethnic groups and nations belong, can sit, complete with permanent garden chairs. These associations focus on the ways of life of the different groups and view themselves as distinct from other clubs at the university, such as course-based clubs. They provide a hub of engagement and showcase cultural diversity. Several students met appreciated the opportunity to associate with their ethnic group, an opportunity provided by these associations and the cultural gala they participate in every year.

An area of tension however remains the perception that one cultural association receives more resources than others from the administration, leading to many students’ resentment. Another centred on some students’ perception that the cultural associations engender exclusion and tribalism. Nkumba University is located in Buganda and an unwritten but verbalised practice is the promotion of Luganda as a local language. This is meant to promote engagement through the use of language, but has attendant challenges, with language often becoming an instrument of separation, emphasising difference and alienation. There was thus emphasis on students making an effort to learn the language, but no concerted effort to popularise it amongst non-Baganda students, who resented being spoken to in Luganda even in official spaces, where ‘ignorance of the language’ was ill-considered. Paradoxically, this has therefore led to the opposite effect from what the university was attempting to achieve. Students who did not understand Luganda, for instance, saw discrimination when some lecturers ‘slip into’ Luganda in their lectures despite the host of students who do not understand it and the fact that lecturers are provided with orientation to be conscious of the university’s multicultural and international nature.

This is in a context where ethnic tensions are present and stereotypes abound. Some students for instance expressed hostility towards colleagues from Western Uganda, because they are associated with a dominant group in national politics, with people who have been embezzling government funds and who have been in power for long. One respondent asserted that students from other parts of the country think ‘every Westerner is paid or favoured by the state’ and that, for instance, they are in their large majority State-sponsored and will get jobs as soon as they finish their course, thus reflecting nationwide tensions. There were many analyses too on the all-important ethnic dimension of elections for the students’ guild. The dominant Buganda group could be self-congratulatory (‘people from Buganda are better than other regions in issues concerning manners and behaviour and associating with others’).

There was visible anger or resignation amongst some of the students on matters of ethnicity. It was observed that students mapped onto others the very same prejudices that they held and expressed openly themselves. Many people were then caught up in comparing how the different tribes are treated. Dominance and privilege was perceived by students who are not from central Uganda to cause some of the tensions, with students from the central region said to be favoured in benefiting from facilities such as access to work contracts including cleaning the grounds, or being members of the university football team. ‘Since Nkumba University pays tuition for sports people … right now the whole university team is made of (one tribe) to the point that ‘most guys go to support the opposite team’.

The students met were nevertheless often found to be conversant with issues of diversity and interested in addressing them, particularly as they affect social justice and the rights of the different groups. The administration in Nkumba also showed interest and provides the support and leadership space for students to express their diversity and engage with each other. There is an active students’ Guild, with leaders drawn from as many different categories of students as possible. The Guild government ‘always’ tries to involve the leaders of the cultural association and every semester, there are two general assemblies where students are allowed to express themselves freely. The lecturers also provide a mechanism to manage diversity through advice and mentoring, but there are concerns about the extent to which they are equipped to deal with students from such diverse backgrounds, in spite of workshops organised by the academic registrar’s office, which discusses how they should address matters of diversity. It was not clear that this facility was extended to the administrative staff, whose attitudes the students complained about much more. Public lectures are also organised, as for a recent lecture given to help students understand issues related to diversity on campus. Ethics is also taught in every school of study.

While this fosters much engagement across ethnic lines, mechanisms however are currently not adequately dealing with existing tensions and sometimes add to them, as with communication and information management inadequacies. There is, in particular, a conflict between the promotion of Luganda, particularly when used in official spaces, on the one hand and the national (and international) character of the university on the other.
minority groups), from several nations in Eastern Africa and from further afield in Africa (Nigeria, Lesotho, Ghana, Mali, the Comoros), Europe and America. Students and staff alike valued their ethnic origin and many times used this as an important yardstick to determine their interactions with each other. Often these relationships were influenced by preconceived notions about ethnicity and these frequently elicited responses focusing on problematic aspects, while positive interactions were not described in terms of cross-ethnic engagement.

It was also observed that students from some ethnic groups often tended to keep to themselves or to socialize mainly with each other, because of similarity of culture, practices and taboos, some of which led to their isolation by other students. Cultural associations often played a role here, as in Gulu, where a student said that ‘Associations […] bring about cooperation between those in the same cultural groups. During orientation, some people helped me so much because they could see I was a Muganda and so they found a Muganda guild official to help me settle down and identify a hostel’. At KIU, segregation amongst Ugandans on the basis of ethnicity was commented upon by several international and Ugandan students. They noted that it was common to find students in their ethnic groups most of the time: ‘Yes [...] within the fellow Ugandans, they ‘discriminate themselves’ according to tribes and are not friendly. It is not directed at foreigners but at other Ugandans. This is shown in the way they interact and talk amongst themselves, which is different from the way they talk to foreigners. I think it has deep roots from where they came from’.

Stereotypes and myths about different ethnic groups were found to be common amongst the students and these caused tension, misunderstanding, even exclusion, mainly through careless comments. Some international students carried with them the ethnic tensions existing in their countries. This was mentioned in IUIU and KIU in relation to Somali students and in Gulu and Nkumba about Sudanese students. In Gulu, we were told that experiences between ethnic groups at the national level also drew personalised conflict, exclusion or confrontation and that this could fuel perceptions of favouritism along these lines, and could for example influence voting patterns for the students’ guild council.

The labelling of some ethnic groups as ‘wealthy’, ‘the privileged’, ‘the rulers’, and others as ‘the poor’, ‘street kids’, or ‘aggressors’ meant that belonging to any of these groups immediately tainted the student or staff. At Nkumba University, some of the students spoke with bitterness about the way they are referred to by fellow students; others went as far as saying they would never be involved personally with students from some particular ethnic groups. Ethnic stereotypes were not much about the culture, language or traditions of the groups concerned, but rather formed as a result of wider current socio-economic and political circumstances. There was thus

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335 Among the sampled interviewees alone, the following ethnic groups/nationalities were represented:

- Achioli; Alur; Aringa; Atesot; Congolese; Kakwa; Karamojong; Kenyan (various ethnicities);
- Kenyan Somali; Lango; Lesotho; Lugbara; Madi; Malawian; Malian; Bafumbira; Baganda; Ba-
  ganda / Nubian; Bagisu; Bagwere; Bahima; Bakiga; Banyankole; Banyarwanda; Banyoro; Basoga;
- Batooro; Nigerian (mixed ethnicity); Rwandan; Sabiny; Samia; Sudanese; Tanzanian.
a frequent perception that ‘Westerners’ (from Western Uganda, whence the current President originates) were rich, in the ruling class, and a group that did not mix with other students; Northerners were considered rude, poor and probably in the “political opposition”; the Baganda (from the central region of Uganda) were considered well-off, arrogant and discriminative; Somalis were also considered rich and did not mix with others; Kenyans were considered rude and loud. There were students who were very sensitive and took offence very quickly when their ethnic groups were mentioned but who were quick to condemn other students on the basis of their ethnicity when they behaved in an ‘inappropriate’ way.

It was also reported that ethnicity, especially in two universities, often influenced opportunities and decisions made. Examples were given of departments dominated by staff of the same ethnic group as that of the Faculty Head and where others felt left out or discriminated against. One respondent caustically commented that it seemed that all the ‘clever’ people who applied to a department in his university were from a single ethnic group. Some students also attributed a difficulty in accessing services (sports scholarships, students’ associations’ trips) to such discrimination.

Language tended to exaggerate differences because it actively excluded, even when there was physical proximity. A medley of languages was spoken by various ethnic groups in addition to the official languages of English, Arabic and Swahili. There were dominant ethnic or national groups whose languages tended to lead in each university, except for IUIU, where ethnic identity was masked by religion. Students observed language being used to ‘gauge where they belonged’ and stated that some administrative staff tended to be dismissive of those who did not know a dominant language. Students who did not speak such languages felt left out and discriminated against. As one observed, ‘the Baganda tend to think [that] everyone is a Muganda, without realising [that Luganda] is not an international language. They speak their language to almost everybody’. The lack of a comfortable medium of communication or its non-use could lead to immediate isolation. As one student commented, ‘language is a factor in determining interactions […] it may be used for exclusion when they do not want people to know what they are saying…’ Exclusion through language was keenly felt, as another student stated: ‘it’s painful when you are amongst a group of people and they start talking what you don’t know; you feel an outcast, out of the group’. Tensions also arose when local dominant languages were unapologetically spoken in official university spaces. Several examples were given in Nkumba, KIU and Gulu, where some students and lecturers used the dominant local language in such spaces. The use of local languages in lecture rooms often occurred while providing examples which were not interpreted into English and the excessive use of a local language limited the ease with which the official language was used by some students. The compulsory learning of Arabic in IUIU was also a source of tension among Christian respondents. The requirement to pass an Arabic exam was said to be difficult for many students, both Muslim and non-Muslim, but the non-Muslim students had the additional disadvantage of attitudinal resistance to
the language. Only a few non-Muslim students took this as an opportunity to learn a new international medium.

While ethnic stereotyping acted as barriers or diminished the quality of interaction amongst some students, on an individual basis, there was engagement. Many students were not affected by ethnic considerations and they made friends with all categories of colleagues. Exposure to diversity had helped in this respect: a student from Western Uganda, who had grown up in and interacted with Acholi students in a ‘mixed’ area for instance stated that he felt comfortable with all ethnic groups and did not have the same prejudices about the Acholi as some of his fellow ethnic group members. An Acholi student who had studied in the central region was equally comfortable in the company of students from central Uganda and, although aware of other students’ negative perceptions and stereotypes about them, she responded to what she knew to be true about her friends instead of adhering to commonly held biases.

Language was also used and perceived as a unifying factor within a particular linguistic group, whose members tended to help each other. This was especially noted in Gulu, IUIU and Nkumba universities. In addition, students who learned languages other than their own were often able to interact freely with other language groups. For some students met at KIU, the value of learning a language to foster interaction was very clear, as indicated by the Ugandan student who undertook to learn both Swahili and Arabic from his Kenyan and Sudanese friends.

**Religious affiliation**

Different religious groups were represented in the 4 universities, but only one of these professed a religious foundation (IUIU) while another, though with an Islamic foundation (KIU), was considered a secular university, with space for different creed to be practiced on campus. Where religion was discussed, perceptions about the problematic aspects of religious beliefs and differences mostly emerged. There were several students who mentioned the positive aspects of religion but on the whole, challenges experienced as a result of religious differences tended to be amplified by the respondents, much more than any positive aspects.

Religious perceptions were influenced by the national or cultural origins of the students (and lecturers), for instance where some of the foreign students were of the view that Ugandans were not committed to their religion, particularly Islam, as several students at KIU stated, ‘there are some core values that you would expect a Muslim to have but here it’s a bit different, there is a lack of commitment and heart to do what’s right’.

Religious tensions were experienced, particularly where there were distinct practices, such as differences in dress code and in the allocation or availability of spaces for worship. Stereotypes about different religious groups and their practices also led to tensions. ‘Born again’ students were for instance reputed to try to impose themselves on others, a sentiment expressed in Gulu, KIU and Nkumba universities. On the
other hand, the expectation that ‘born again’ individuals did not or were not supposed
to sin, put them under intense pressure when they did err. Such misgivings about ‘born again Christians’ could lead to their feeling ‘out of place’ and to relate only to their fellow congregationists. Girls wearing the hijab were also viewed differently as expressed in Nkumba and Gulu universities. One of the respondents narrated how, when so dressed, she gets ‘funny comments’ such as ‘have you been checked at the gate? Are we safe?’ She expressed her frustration, describing her attempts to conform or to express her identity: ‘I have conflicting emotions and pressure within, I try to change my dress, wearing long sleeves as a response and [at] other times I still feel I want to wear a hijab’.

Any form of exclusion on the basis of religion was however limited in three of the four universities, but more perceptible at IUIU, where many decisions and life on campus were guided by Islamic law and religious considerations336. Muslim students were identified as distinct and as ‘belonging’. The others felt they were not enabled to participate in leadership, or express their own beliefs. While they had an opportunity to discuss issues affecting them, they felt that the room for change was limited where these issues concerned Islamic principles. The interpretation of Sharia law affected some students’ prospects, as when pregnancies led to expulsion.

With the exception of IUIU, students were provided freedom and spaces to worship within the university. In two universities, there was space for Christian students to worship together as part of a ‘United Faith’ combining students from other denominations, and therefore providing space to be together despite differences in affiliation, although some Christian students viewed this as bringing together the different Pentecostal churches rather than all Christians. KIU gave Muslim students time to pray at the specified times and at Nkumba University, all creed found the space to pray as they wished, although the university did not allocate spaces for worship but allowed students to identify these themselves, using the university infrastructure they found most suitable.

**Gender**

Respondents recognised gender as a source of distinction in all four universities. There were distinctions in the ways women and men were treated, to the extent of exclusion, particularly at IUIU where young women were not allowed to participate in some activities. A woman’s identity provided the basis for differentiated treatment; they were expected to cover up to ‘protect’ themselves, restricting movement and participation in some activities, while simultaneously being encouraged to achieve excellence in academic pursuits, on par with men. The university is strict on conduct; some spaces are out of bound to female students, such as engagement in field sports outside the female students’ wing, where spectators are also excluded. The application of the dress code to all female students (who had to dress in the Hijab and fully cover themselves at all times) was also often challenging to non-Muslim girls. The mental and social distance created between female and male students was accentuated by

336 Gulu University had a large Catholic community - students from other religious backgrounds and even some of the staff also felt there was dominance by and favouring of Catholics.
rules, such as the prohibition of shaking hands with the opposite sex and sitting or standing in mixed-sex pairs without a third party.

At Gulu University, respondents suggested that, with the recent end of the civil insurgency led by the Lord’s Resistant Army (LRA) for over 20 years in northern Uganda, there had been little emphasis on the empowerment of women. The humanitarian situation in the region was grave and few development activities had taken place. Service delivery came to a virtual standstill and displaced communities lived in sprawling displaced people’s camps. Education suffered, making barriers to girls’ education was even greater than in normal circumstances. As a result, there were few women staff at the University. The region also missed out during this period on gender awareness and sensitisation activities on women’s rights that took place in other parts of the country. Both students and some staff made allegations of sexual harassment and partly attributed this to limited empowerment and knowledge of rights amongst them. There appeared to be no mechanisms to address this issue, or at least a failure to use existing ones, leaving women ‘on their own’. An initiative to carry out a gender study to inform the development of a gender policy had however started and the university had a focal person responsible for ‘gender mainstreaming’ as an added responsibility to that of assistant academic registrar.

Sexual harassment featured as a challenge affecting the university experience of female students in the other universities too, except in IUIU. In Nkumba, for instance, both the girls and boys interviewed referred to the sexual harassment of girls as an important subterranean issue, made worse by the attitudes and fears surrounding it, with a ‘lack of mechanisms’ to address it, although the staff code of ethics and conduct specifies the vice-chancellor and ‘any other person’ as responsible to address this issue. Staff noted that, while there were cases of harassment that have been handled, sometimes students try to get out of tight spots by claiming that they are being harassed. In KIU, there was some experience of ‘woman to woman’ gender discrimination where female students felt victimised by some women lecturers, while some male students thought they were discriminated against by women lecturers too. Some male students also observed that in some male lecturers’ courses, ‘beautiful’ female students tended to pass very highly ‘and the opposite is also true’ (in relation to male students). Elsewhere, differences, such as of religious backgrounds, also affected their respective experiences. Some girls for example were prevented from interacting with students of other faiths (and ethnicity) by the male students with whom they shared these characteristics. Thus, an example was given of a female student pulled out of a mixed discussion group by male students with whom she shared a religious faith, to prevent her from ‘getting spoilt’ or being contaminated with ‘foreign’ ideas.

All four Universities had achieved more or less equal numbers of men and women among their student numbers. Nkumba University practices further affirmative action in favour of girls, and has more girls than boys. Actions to support girls included the provision of a hostel within the University campus and making Nkumba male students
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responsible to protect women, for instance when they return at night to their residence, if outside the campus. These actions can be interpreted in various ways. According to some students, being resident in the Nkumba girl’s hostel means the girl comes from a humble or disciplinarian family. One of the male students emphatically stated that he did not want to be seen near the girl’s hostel, talking to ‘that group of girls’. It is also debatable to what extent the ‘male responsibility’ focuses on traditional perceptions of gender roles and how much in relation to affirmative action, empowerment and transformation of these roles. Concern was also expressed by both male and female students and staff, about the underperformance of girls and the apparent negative attitudes of some girls towards their own education, an aspect of their socialisation. Several pressures faced by the students had gender connotations, for instance, financial pressures on boys to ‘maintain’ girls, pressure to display an identity of affluence or to actively participate and finance social activities off campus.

The University guild is an important space for the engagement of both male and female students in managing difference. At Gulu University, women students were ‘free’ to participate in the guild, both male and female students were leaders, although girls tended not to occupy the higher positions, a situation ascribed by some respondents to the stereotype that women cannot lead – a female student ran for the guild office but some male students clearly stated they did not want to be led by a woman.

Income
Disparities in income were also identified in the surveyed universities as important sources of difference, particularly amongst students on self-sponsorship. The notion that some students were rich, as a result of social inequalities in the country, led to tensions and sometimes disengagement. It was noted by respondents that students on government sponsorship tended to be from well-off families who could afford good schools and therefore had a better chance of getting the grades needed for university entry.

Income and class differences were experienced at different levels. Differences in income translated into disparities in accommodation and general way of life. Students’ hostels thus vary visibly in the standards they offer, but there are also marked differences in the capacity to meet course costs e.g. photocopying, printing, course work resources and other reference materials from lecturers.

Beyond this, in Gulu, social class amongst students was important for some and affected their interactions. Some students made little effort to know students from a ‘different social class’. The students noted that those of ‘high class’ were discernible by their behaviour and appearance, for instance, by how fashionable they were. They tended to relate to others of ‘their kind’, as defined by the amount of money they had. These social class identities brought people of different ethnicities together in both platonic and romantic relationships.

At Nkumba, a distinction was made between ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ students, not only to depict location of origin and upbringing, but also character, and what was
considered backward ‘rural behaviour’ and dress. Some of the students from rural schools had lower expectations and thought they could not compete or fit in with the other students. There was a culture of clubbing which bestowed a status of affluence, popularity and modernity. On weekends, ‘students go to the beaches and those who do not have money are easily tempted to use money that they should have kept for [...] photocopying’. For girls, boys met said, “there is fashion, the latest things, which may force them to get sugar daddies, sex and diseases, in order to keep up with the others. The relationships are exploitative [...] and the boys accept that the girls will have relationships outside”. In KIU too, there was some concern about

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<th>C. Gulu University – Marginalisation and the Management of Diversity</th>
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<td>Gulu University, in northern Uganda, is located in an area that was beset by civil conflict for many years. Founded by the Government to promote science and technology and ‘for transforming society’, it set out to transform the lives of rural communities surrounding it and to ‘serve as a launch pad for equitable knowledge in Uganda’, reflecting its location in a marginalised area. Thus, it was reported that many students admitted to the University do not turn up, partly due to the perception and fear of insurgency in the area, and to a view that the university lacks prestige, compared to the allure of private universities that they can afford to attend.</td>
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<td>The dominant group at the university were the local Acholi students, who formed about a third to a half of the student population and most of the administrative staff. Several instances of stereotypes and prejudices were mentioned, coloured by local experiences. There was a feeling that coming to Gulu, for the non-Acholi, should entail ‘adaptation’ to the local cultural environment. Thus, a member of the academic staff explained that a peaceful environment depends on ‘adopting the core values of the Acholi’, underscoring the dominant position of the ethnic group in the area hosting the university.</td>
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<td>The teaching staff, on the other hand, originated more frequently from the western and central regions, rather than from the North. This fuelled experiences and perceptions of favouritism along ethnic lines. Lecturers from other parts of the country were perceived as different in several ways. Sometimes they were viewed with suspicion, considered mercenary (there for the money, not for the development of the region) and uncommitted (a number of them did not have their families with them and moved back and forth for that reason). On the other hand, lecturers from other areas saw themselves as making sacrifices to work at the university, with much travel between Gulu and their family homes. There was mention of unfair employment practices, along lines of ethnicity, differences in salaries at the same or similar levels and qualifications, limited application of equal opportunity measures and some ‘territorialism’ in relation to newcomers. Some staff felt that they were not being appreciated and that the university did not provide support to lecturers who are working in difficult circumstances, including making policies more responsive to the needs of those who do not have families with them. This was said to affect women more, because ‘it is difficult for women to move with their families’. Women lecturers were indeed few in number. Other reasons included the insurgency and limited women empowerment in the region, resulting in few qualified femalelecturers.</td>
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<td>Cleavages were reinforced by economic considerations. The students sponsored by the government on merit, were often from outside the region, and often from well-off families (having attended good schools). These, according to some respondents, did not deserve state sponsorship meant to cover the poor and marginalised, especially students from the region who studied under difficult social circumstances as a consequence of the war and ended up with grades that did not qualify them for a government bursary and to struggle with paying for their tuition and other expenses.</td>
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<td>These tensions were also highlighted in cultural associations. The cultural associations were by far the most active, involving students from all faculties and departments; they had a significant impact on the students’ outlook and their perceptions of others in terms of engaging with diversity. There was however a perception of favouritism: as one student respondent felt, ‘the Acholi cultural group must always win the trophy’, a feeling underscored by one of the lecturers who argued that ‘If the Baganda think they want to win cultural gala they should take it to Buganda pub not Acholi inn’.</td>
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<td>Diversity issues experienced by the different sub-groups within the university were not systematically tackled, despite being highlighted as ‘silent’ factors in discrimination. The university had established mechanisms for arbitration, for raising the voices of different groups and to foster engagement, but these were not necessarily directed at addressing the management of diversity. The office of the Dean of Students was mentioned in relation to issues faced individually by students, including trauma from events during the war. The students’ guild had been very active in trying to create understanding and resolving issues that divide students and the administration, for instance on the matter of a cut-off point for school fees payments and on conflict around the cultural associations. The students appointed in the current cabinet were of diverse backgrounds and interests ‘as a deliberate strategy’ and the guild constitution stipulates positions for a gender minister and a woman affairs minister, although issues of diversity are not explicit.</td>
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<td>The University nevertheless has a unique opportunity to support the community around it, emerging from insurgency. The Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies has a community outreach programme centred on forgiveness and reconciliation and other students are also encouraged to work with projects that support neighbouring communities.</td>
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affording a ‘lifestyle’. Indeed, in these two universities, affluence was a pronounced value amongst the students: many of those with resources considered themselves as superior and set apart. There were also a number of other pressures for the use of money, including fines linked to academic performance.

A number of the students met linked delays in payment of their allowances to negative attitudes on the part of administrative staff. The sponsored students, including students with disabilities, had problems when their grant delayed and they had no other sources of funds because ‘When your parents know you are government sponsored, that means they do not give you additional resources’. Another consequence of privilege and unequal benefit at university (through government sponsorship) was a degree of exclusion of the better-off students and even some hostility or resentment towards them (particularly if they originated from the Western region). Differences in affluence were often perceived by some students and even by some administrative staff as stemming from an unequal balance of power in the country. Some students were thus said to be ‘in government’, while some regions had poorer students e.g. from the North of the country as opposed to the relatively well-off Central or Western parts of Uganda. The bulk of the students sponsored by government are from these regions, which was perceived as unjust. In such cases, inequalities and potential sources of tension were thus deepened by a faulty application of state resources, ostensibly meant to narrow differences.

Another source of ‘class difference’ was noted between Ugandan and foreign students. The latter find university education cheaper in Uganda than at home and are generally perceived to be more affluent than most local students and treated as such, although a number of them said they struggled with finances. This is partly because of the differentiated fees universities charge national and foreign students, with the latter unhappy about the premium they have to pay. This has resulted in tension and conflict between the university administration and the student body, including a recent student strike at KIU and the suspension of the guild by the university administration. The management of this issue also affected the students’ cultural expression at KIU because, without a guild, the activities of the students’ cultural associations were also compromised.

MANAGING DIVERSITY – SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

At all four universities, communities dealt with theories and practice of diversity management in different professional fields, while handling this diverse group of people in continuous motion, interaction, conflict and tension, engagement and disengagement. The relationships were constantly evolving; views already formed from earlier experiences were being challenged, modified or entrenched as students and staff engaged with different processes and people. Several mechanisms for engagement were identified by the students and the lecturers met, although these were not necessarily directed at managing diversity per se. They included instruments for
arbitration, for raising collective voices within the university, to foster engagement between individuals and groups and to support learning and influence.

Policy implementation

We have seen that until the early 1990s, access to tertiary education suffered from significant gender and social obstacles, with historical and cultural factors contributing to enrolment and other inclusion constraints. Thus, what would be a rich tapestry of cultural diversity often ended up being suppressed, restricting the space for pluralism and engagement. We have also seen that national policies currently recognise diversity and the principle of non-discrimination and provide some guidance on how to address or engage with some issues of difference. Principles are set out and actions recommended that should guide towards a pluralistic society.

All four universities acknowledged the centrality of diversity and the principle of non-discrimination. Values expected of the student and staff body included equal treatment and academic excellence. In IUIU, there was a specific mention of acceptance of diversity and engagement with ‘people of diverse opinions’ as part of the university values. At KIU, the university valued diversity and ‘non-discrimination as a ‘major policy’, diversity being mentioned as one of the reasons several students selected the university for their course of study. Such values also extended to faculty or school-based policies and are made operational through curricula and extra curricula activities.

National policies were however implemented to varying degrees, with occasional contradictions between stated policy and practice. Many rules and regulations focused on conformity, rather than engagement with difference. Policy implementation was vested in diverse organs - the university senate, the office of the academic registrar, the different schools and faculties, the office of the dean of students and the students’ guild. Various codes of conduct, rules and regulations applied specifically to the student body, lecturers or university administration, although some were applicable to the entire university community.

Initiatives that enhanced diversity included scholarships that reached out to diverse categories of students, programmes to engage with community members and debates and learning events to improve information and skills. Sports policies and facilities were important, as well as counselling services and religious spaces in some universities. The curricula also addressed issues of diversity in a structured way.

With regard to gender, the NCHE has put in place regulations and defines minimum standards that a university should follow with regard to women and their well-being, including issues of sexual harassment and welfare. In the four universities, both written and unwritten policies and practices existed in this respect. Some effort had been made to address the discriminatory aspects of gender relations, including instances of sexual harassment and the low participation of young women in guild affairs (through quotas or the reservation of some positions for women). Nevertheless,
equal opportunities policies were generally lacking and gender and diversity issues experienced by the different sub-groups were rarely systematically tackled. Further, the values, rules and structures set up by the university did not always rhyme with and were sometimes subverted by students’ perceptions and actions.

Disability preparedness was mainly limited to the disability allowance provided by government and a few instances of university response to the individual needs of students with disabilities. National level policies and regulations are meant to guide action; all public buildings are for instance meant to be disability friendly (with ramps, sign language facilities, etc.) Persons with disabilities met in the four universities, lecturers and administrators give evidence of a positive response to meet the needs of blind students by the university administrations, but this was as and when the need arose, rather than as part of a systematic drive. Not all the universities’ environment was therefore conducive and disability was not an integral part of their preparedness for service delivery to the students. There was limited evidence according to some of the respondents that the university administration had a policy that integrates awareness on disability and promotes staff understanding and support to students with a disability. Only rarely were respondents aware of efforts to support such students, and to make the universities disability-friendly beyond individual cases.

**Individual responses to diversity**

Students and staff variously responded to difference, to discrimination and to opportunities for engagement. Some judged or were influenced most by ethnicity or class; some deliberately chose not to be unduly informed by such differences; for others difference was not an issue and they did not ‘see’ it; yet others viewed and engaged with difference as an opportunity to understand people or experiences different from their own.

There were thus instances where individuals deliberately chose to ignore ‘their own’ cultural associations, and opted to join those they did not ‘naturally’ belong to, either as a form of protest against discrimination or because they wanted to understand other groups. At Nkumba University and IUIU, such examples were provided of students who belonged to cultural groups outside their own ethnic group, and of patrons to the associations who were not of the same ethnic group as the members. At Gulu University, an example was provided of a male lecturer whose individual response to gender discrimination, particularly sexual harassment, was to provide a ‘hotline’ for students, to which he would respond at any time.

If views about others were often the ‘public generalised views’ of ‘other peoples’ conduct’, many students thus rose above these and made friends with people different from themselves, either deliberately or just as a matter of course. It was observed by some respondents that a student could belong anywhere, especially if multilingual and eager to learn and understand the culture of colleagues, illustrating how pluralism is fuelled by both positive attitudes and proactive steps in relation to others. This could undermine stereotypes. At KIU, for instance, one student shared his prejudice
that ‘the Karamojong were very poor people and wild but when he came in contact with them, there are those who are very friendly, they are very good, they dress better than us and they are better off and others are more educated’. He had struck a friendship with a Karamojong and found something quite different from what he ‘came knowing’.

At the other end of the spectrum, the treatment of some students as ‘different’ elicited reactions such as a drive to fight for their space, pride in identity or a need to downplay it. The former for instance included a student who took up the case of a non-academic staff member who made deprecating remarks about his ethnic group. Some avoided the spaces where their different identities came out prominently and opted for engagements where their other ‘non-problematic’ identities were paramount, often in the academic field. Academic spaces however are not without difference: besides students considered ‘clever’, ‘studious’ or ‘dull’, other considerations included those willing to pay their way through the courses, the course work or for examinations through underhand methods and others who did not seem to care what brought them to the university in the first place.

Students were also categorised according to the courses they undertook.

**Spaces for collective engagement**

All four universities benefited from spaces where engagement took place. Some of these deliberately focused on identity, such as the cultural groups, others on academic pursuits or areas of interest and social responsibilities.

The different groups, such as academic or cultural associations, religious and issue-based clubs provided spaces where members could experience and engage with diversity within a collective environment. The existence of these spaces provided an indicator of the breadth of issues bringing students (and staff) together. It also pointed to the fact that the atmosphere at the university was, or not, conducive to associate. In KIU, clubs often provided the hub of engagement. In Gulu, academic associations – although not much supported by the students’ guild or the university administration - provided important mechanisms for engagement across difference, and were considered by some students as important venues to support the building of long lasting relationships, unity and engagement with all students. At Nkumba University, the Guild government ‘always’ tried to involve the leaders of the cultural associations, as an important constituency for the governance of the student body, and rather less the academic associations and other interest clubs. The university guild was generally responsible for ensuring that associations ran smoothly.

The cultural associations and galas, which had often supported students individually to fit into the university community, were especially popular across the four universities. The competitive element however was frequently understood as elevating some

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338 A staff member at Nkumba University observed that many young students were at the university because it was expected by their parents and society, rather than because they saw it as their route to progress. The mature entrant students were much more serious and committed although they had challenges managing education, work and family, with a more pronounced effect on women.
D. Kampala International University: cosmopolitanism in action

A relatively young University, ‘KIU has attracted and supported a diverse community and is proud of it. It values diversity and non-discrimination is a major policy’. Every country that sends a student to the university earns a place for its flag at the front of the administration building. This courting of diversity was said to be one of the reasons students apply to study at KIU, for reasons ranging from working in international settings to fulfilling pan-African ideals. A number of students met referred to their stay at KIU as an opportunity to learn about others, and gave examples of stereotypes that had been debunked in the process. Some came to ‘make friends from different countries and ethnicities, to learn other languages and to promote understanding…’ A student observed that there were more non-Ugandans than nationals at KIU, that many are refugees and stated: “I see an integrated community at KIU […] everybody associates with each other because they have a common goal”.

KIU had put in place both formal and informal mechanisms that support the management of diversity, including a university-wide initiative to teach English to students emerging from non-English speaking countries. This was designed to avoid any stigmatisation, so it was open to other students as well. Some elements of the university curricula addressed diversity issues, as in sociology, culture and gender, and development studies. Programmes were designed to make them accessible to a wide range of students. The presence of some international staff was seen to bring different perspectives, experiences and skills, although there was limited opportunity for the KIU university fraternity from the different campuses in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania to come together and exchange information, experiences and interests, in the pursuit of pluralism. KIU also helped its students to understand the policy environment by holding discussions and public lectures on pertinent national and international issues, and by providing opportunities for students to question social phenomena in Uganda, Africa and elsewhere. Every Friday, students were also able to interact with policy makers and professionals in the academic and diplomatic world, on matters pertinent to the development of the country, international policy and other matters. Cultural, academic and issue-based associations also provided spaces in which students of different backgrounds interacted. The students were free to form associations on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, and academic interests. The University’s support to cultural expression included an annual cultural gala, in which students competed with each other. There was also a Pan-African club which provided a forum for all students.

In spite of these measures, tensions subsisted. The respondents, students, academic and non-academic staff alike, found that key differences that were challenging at KIU included nationality, language and access to resources, which were all linked. Some students from ‘exclusive ethnic groups’ did not mix easily, unless helped to interact with others from societies that were quite different from theirs. The university did not actively identify the barriers to engagement between categories of students except in as far as public debates spoke to these differences. In practical terms there were no effective mechanisms to identify unique or special student needs. The University had counselling services but these were insufficiently developed (with just one female counsellor). The Academic staff association was not very effective, according to interviewees, and opportunities to learn from each other on matters of diversity were not explored.

International students were seen as better-off and able to meet their tuition fees on time. KIU, being profit-making, thus gave them greater attention than to the Ugandan students, who often had problems paying their tuition fees on time: ‘As the 10% having problems, the administration has limited sympathy’. Money was an important consideration in the scheme of things, for the management, the staff and the students. International and national students had a different tuition fee schedule, which was a bone of contention; almost all the students mentioned this and the staff were aware that this was a sensitive issue. The fines and payments for retakes and for late fees were especially viewed as discriminatory. Students also suspected corruption around issues of payments, retakes, course work and examinations. In addition, with most students being ‘dollar students’, we were told that ‘life becomes expensive in the university…’

The interests of the students and that of the administration often differed and one of the links between the two was the students’ guild. It was also responsible for student related activities, such as the cultural galas, and for overseeing the formation and running of other students’ clubs. The guild discussed issues of difference at the time of orientation but students tended to see this as orientation on how the university was run and what to expect, without giving them the chance to ask questions and to address issues arising out of a diverse community. At the time of the research, the students’ guild in KIU had been suspended. The immediate reason was a students’ strike, but some respondents stated that ‘the leadership was student centred and the administration saw this as a threat’, while others thought the suspension had something to do with the nationality of the guild president, who was Kenyan. Regardless of the reason, an important mechanism to support engagement between students and the university was no longer available.
also provided exposure to different points of view and an opportunity to engage on issues, including difference, diversity and response by different categories of students and staff.

Religious spaces also provided important locations where the university communities congregated not only to worship but also to interact with each other and guide their members on how to relate with others. Many students and some staff based their interest or engagement with others on the tenets of their religion, and a philosophy of love for all that they practised in fellowship with others. Thus, the mosque and activities around it at IUIU played an important role to provide opportunities for Muslim students to discuss issues surrounding differences in outlook, religious denomination and how to focus on engagement with other people. At KIU, flexibility was provided to enable Muslim students observe their prayers five times a day, and for Seventh Day Adventists to observe the Sabbath.

The office of the Dean of Students was mentioned several times in relation to issues faced by individual students. The dean was referred to as a counsellor, experienced in addressing issues troubling students: “It’s the area that can make or break issues of diversity...” Lecturers were also seen to constitute an important mechanism to manage diversity amongst students. However, while a number of lecturers are also counsellors, concerns were expressed about the extent to which they were trained and equipped to deal with students from diverse backgrounds.

**Gaps in managing diversity**

While the universities had rules, regulations and practices directly or indirectly relevant to the management of diversity, some of these did not complement each other or were even contradictory. The space and will to address policy and programme harmonisation, to ensure that these rules, regulations, and curricula foster pluralism was also often insufficient, both at the level of the individual institution and at the overall level of harmonisation of higher education policy with university practices. The following are the main gaps identified; they also provide indicators of the issues that could be addressed.

*Fragmented action:* Efforts to engage with diversity or to promote a pluralistic environment were often ad-hoc, resulting in efforts reaching a few individuals, without affecting the outlook and practice of the universities as institutional entities. Efforts were also insufficient to comprehensively address the different challenges faced by members of the university fraternity in engaging with diversity. There was for instance little interfaculty or intra-university overview of the existence of the diverse communities within each university and how their different perspectives and interests merged (or not) with that of the institution, even though there were some positive initiatives in some faculties, such as an emphasis on ethics or on varied external lecturers. Progress in addressing gender issues was still limited, including in terms of women’s empowerment, and the rate at which opportunities are utilised by
men and women is still skewed in favour of men, as with the low numbers of female lecturers.

**Underutilisation of opportunities for engagement:** There was a limited use of available opportunities to promote the understanding and appreciation of diversity, such as using cultural groups as a conduit to bring students together through joint or complementary programmes. These groups were mainly coming together for competitions, rather than fora for students, lecturers and other members of the university fraternity to learn about and appreciate difference, in addition to being entertained. Similarly, the universities had not made use of or comprehensively supported issue-based and academic associations, which by their nature encompass diverse groups of students and provide natural spaces for engagement.

**Courses/curricula:** Although different departments addressed topics such as ethics, within which issues of diversity may be discussed, there was no uniformly applied discussion and study of diversity and pluralism, pertinent to all aspects of the university learning and social environment. Whereas each university had some programmes, curricula, activities or practices that dealt with issues of diversity, none had identifiable programmes or course units that ran across the different faculties, schools and departments to ensure access to the concept of pluralism by all students. Generally, the use of curricula to articulate issues of diversity and to prepare students to live in and appreciate a pluralistic society was limited.

**University staff limitations:** As a body, academic and administrative staff did not have a ‘considered perspective’ on pluralism as an important viewpoint to engage with the multicultural context of the universities, in which diverse communities co-exist. They recognised the diverse backgrounds of students and lecturers as part of their reality, but did not necessarily use these different perspectives and experiences as positive ingredients for preparing students to engage with diversity. In addition, there were limited spaces and opportunities for the staff to develop skills and experience in the management of difference as an important aspect of their work with students and their interaction with other members of the university fraternity. The staff associations were similarly poorly equipped to provide or promote opportunities for skills development in the management of diversity. Lecturers did not generally receive any preparation on managing within a multicultural setting. Some viewed Uganda as a multicultural society where many people are ‘already willing and able to work with each other’, hence precluding the need for added action.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Conclusions**
The universities visited prided themselves on their multicultural outlook and recruited students and lecturers with diversity in mind. As macrocosms of the wider social context, however, the campuses both illustrated ethnic and other tensions amongst students and staff, as well as engagement and interaction by individuals across lines of divide.
If policies, rules and regulations are important standards by which actions by the different members of the university community could be guided or measured, this did not necessarily lead to understanding and engagement. Rules and regulations have to be buttressed by positive attitudes, interests and opportunity to have an impact on the uptake and appreciation of diversity and its management.

Students and lecturers who were genuinely interested took steps to engage with others. However, for many, stereotypes about their colleagues often stood in the way of positive and continuous engagement, limiting it to sharing the same space and activities set for them as members of the same university community. Nevertheless, the spaces created by university activities are also spaces where students learned to get along with, understand and debunk prejudices about different groups of people.

Each of the universities had dominant groups (either defined by religion, nationality or ethnicity) that had much influence on their outlook and activities. These, as well as the ways in which other students engage with them, provided important sources of identity for the universities concerned, as well as sources of conflict and opportunities for engagement.

While tension between groups was occasionally addressed by disengagement, this also provided opportunities for individual students to choose to engage with people different from themselves or with different worldviews, forcing them to come to terms with differences and to take a stand to use these as platforms for understanding, rather than isolation and disengagement. The study also illustrates how students used different identities at different times in their interaction with different groups. This was sometimes done without conscious intention, deliberately at other times. Identities, such as that of faculty member or scientist, social scientist or humanist, go hand in hand with expectations and ideas that go with them and that lead to the inclusion of some and exclusion of others. These same identities are discarded under other circumstances, when the students become for instance girls, westerners, northerners, Baganda, or Easterners. In some cases, students from ‘privileged’ ethnicities (usually the dominant tribe in the location of the campus, except for Mbale, where the dominant tribe was considered to be the Baganda) decided to leave their group or to join up with another group; where they were accepted.

Whereas pluralism and diversity are important values articulated in different ways by each of them, there was limited action to ensure that a genuinely pluralistic environment is created. Mechanisms to manage diversity rarely dealt with tensions adequately and sometimes added to them (as when the focus was on competition, rather than mutual understanding). There were also contradictions in policy and practice in this respect: internal policies were not harmonised to reflect equality of treatment and non-discriminatory rules and practices, and there were no extensive mechanisms to promote and monitor pluralism and the enjoyment of equal rights and treatment by the student and staff body. The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) has difficulties in providing oversight to the universities to ensure that the standards listed in the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act are adhered to
and to ensure that all the students receive adequate instruction and are not prevented from accessing and benefiting from learning by virtue of who they are.

Many of the tensions were caused by communication and information management inadequacies. The university environment provides an opportunity where tensions, stereotypes, misconceptions, challenges and empathies could all be managed realistically and systematically to improve the overall outlook on difference and diversity, in much more positive ways than was the case. There was at times an inordinate focus on the negative when it came to difference and distinction, sowing the seeds for intolerance, partly nurtured by Ugandans’ personal experiences, the history of the country, and low expectations. While there were a few schools or departments that had established a deliberate agenda dealing with the issues and challenges surrounding diversity in the context of the disciplines taught, and whereas difference is sometimes discussed, university administrations still lacked actions and programmes that adequately focus on the students’ diversity and the opportunities that arise, as well as the challenges this represents in providing an education that supports co-existence, engagement with diversity and the development of well-rounded graduates able to function well in any circumstances.

**Recommendations**

*Policy frameworks and policy implementation:* The universities visited did not directly address the management of diversity and, where a policy framework existed (such as for equal opportunities or to address gender or HIV/AIDS-related issues), this was often incomplete and the necessary management mechanisms rarely functioned. Existing university systems, rules and structures at the very least need analysis with a ‘pluralism lens.’ It was apparent that the universities also needed help to adhere to national requirements, with guidance from the NCHE to harmonise their internal rules and policies and to provide a conducive environment for managing diversity amongst students and staff. The NCHE monitoring role and its engagement with universities also needs strengthening - through the provision of adequate funds and the development and implementation of guidelines, particularly to support universities to implement amendments to the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act that deal with diversity. In particular, it should support the development of policy and strategies at individual university level that address elements of difference, such as gender, disability, and ethnicity.

*Curriculum and extra-curricular activities:* These need to reflect diversity issues: pluralism has to be placed on the university agenda, across all faculties, as one way to ensure the future stability of the country and region. This could include topics on ethics and diversity, linking this to individual, national and regional development. Diversity and its management can also provide a regular topic for papers to be presented at annual university conferences, public lectures and student debates. Debates can also be organised on ‘difference and life on campus.’ Cultural associations provide important avenues for the management of diversity, provided they are helped to move away from any form of particularism; their activities could complement cultural
exhibitions and include talk-shows on pluralism and annual festivals or joint work on socio-cultural topics, emphasising distinct cultural practices as well as commonalities across ethnic lines.

**Skills and attitudes:** The students’ and lecturers’ awareness of the varied cultures, behaviour, and expectations of the different groups and sub-cultures on campus and how they interact with each other needs sharpening. Academic and non-academic staff must be better equipped than they presently are to manage such diversity. Universities could include opportunities for discussions on diversity and its challenges, to benefit both new and continuing lecturers, such as in the form of lecturers’ ‘roundtables’ where they can discuss challenges related to the multicultural academic and social space at the university.

**Internal practices:** These could emphasise the creation of open and trusted mechanisms for students to freely interact with and influence the university staff and administration on issues of concern to them, as well as a system involving diverse second-year students in helping newcomers face matters of difference and engage with them. The contents of orientation weeks at the start of the academic year could also incorporate student sensitisation and the involvement of the academic staff in identifying and discussing how to live and engage with difference. Deliberate efforts could be made to regularly collect students’ ideas and provide an opportunity for discussions on these issues, to ensure that staff and administration are well informed. The students’ guild could actively participate in this respect and students’ ideas and positive experience on diversity could inform these discussions every year.

**Raising the profile of pluralism across university campuses:** This could be achieved in several ways, including sustaining debates on issues of diversity and pluralism between universities, contributing to periodic inter-university communication channels to start a dialogue on their challenges and experiences in managing diversity, and implementing activities to support mutual monitoring and sharing of yearly ‘commitments to pluralism’.
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V. COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO MANAGE DIVERSITY
11. Inter-Religious Action/Collaboration: Myth or Reality? A Comparative Study of Faith-Based Organisations and Inter-Religious Networks Supported by the Inter-Religious Council Of Uganda

KAYISO FULGENCIO, INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF UGANDA

Abstract

Between July and October 2012, the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) carried out research to establish the extent to which IRCU-supported faith-based organisations (FBOs), regional inter-religious networks, and IRCU-coordinated national networks promoted the spirit of ‘inter-religious action / collaboration’ in implementing their activities.

The study covered 24 FBOs implementing IRCU HIV/AIDS programmes in Prevention, Care and Treatment and Orphans and Vulnerable Children programmes (OVC), as well as five regional and two national networks implementing activities in Peace, Justice and Governance. Sampled study sites were located in seven sub-regions of the country.

The research revealed that there was an appreciable degree of inter-religious action in the work of FBOs affiliated to the Institutionalised Faith-Based Organisations, and those coordinated by the IRCU. However, this collaboration was not grounded in the theoretical underpinnings of ‘inter-religious dialogue’. The study recommends, among others, capacity development of religious leaders in ‘inter-religious dialogue’; increased support of IRCU work by senior religious leaders; use of district inter-religious committees to oversee the work of IRCU-supported FBOs within their jurisdiction; promotion of networks and partnership to create synergic relations; and increased resource mobilization as well as joint planning, implementation and evaluation of activities.

Acknowledgements

You will become wise, and your knowledge will give you pleasure. Your insight and understanding will protect you and prevent you from doing the wrong thing (Proverbs 2:10-12).

I wish to thank the Department of Research, Documentation and Strategic Information that carried out an operational research on inter-religious action/collaboration. My special thanks to the IRCU-led team that conducted the study comprising of Kayiso Fulgencio, programme specialist; and Ms Evelyn Sseruyange and Irene Sentudde.
both of whom were external researchers. Thank you for the job well done. Further, I wish to appreciate and thank the Pluralism Knowledge Programme (PKP), an international collaborative initiative of academics and development practitioners in Indonesia, India, Uganda and the Netherlands, that co-funded this research project. Such networking and partnership building is indeed essential to building synergies, avoiding duplication of activities and maximizing outputs.

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) undertook this study in order to establish whether the spirit of inter-religious action - the bedrock of IRCU programmatic interventions and service delivery - indeed existed or was a figment of our imagination. Therefore, the study was carried out in selected faith-based organisations, regional networks and national networks coordinated by the IRCU. I am certain that the research findings will go a long way to create new knowledge to understand and enhance our programming and service delivery. By virtue of its vast structures, the (inter)religious fraternity has an enormous potential to cause social transformation in the country. All this could be achieved by promoting inter-religious collaboration between and among religious leaders of the different faiths, and not least the faith communities over which they have spiritual jurisdiction. There is no doubt that religious leaders live close to the people they serve, and they are invariably held in deep trust and high esteem.

As a follow-up to the research and knowledge generated, IRCU intends to use its training arm - the Peace Institute - to intensify its capacity development programmes for religious leaders with a view of imparting knowledge, skills and competences in inter-religious dialogue. In this way, I pledge we shall be able to render our work to God’s people sustainable.

God Bless You.
Joshua Kitakule,
Secretary General, Inter-Religious Council of Uganda

Foreword
On behalf of the Council of Presidents, I wish to express my appreciation to the IRCU Secretariat for this report. In particular, I commend the IRCU Research and Documentation team that spearheaded this field work. IRCU has lived to its divine mandate of being a ‘voice for the voiceless, poor and marginalised in society’ (Matthew 25:34-40; John 4:20). This research is timely, in that IRCU brings under one umbrella people belonging to different faiths for the purpose of harnessing their energies and resources to overcome common problems. This is illustrated by key concepts such as ‘peaceful co-existence’, ‘collaborative action’ and ‘sharing of knowledge and resources’ mentioned in the organisational mission.

In this context, the research was intended to interrogate the extent to which IRCU lived to its mission. In short, are the people of different faiths collaborating and sharing knowledge to overcome their common challenges? In fact, these questions
must have been in the minds of the founders of the inter-religious framework. It is a legitimate venture, therefore, to rethink and re-evaluate the purpose for which the inter-religious initiative was formed. Is it still on course, or it has deviated from its original mandate, goals and ideals? Thus, the study could not have come at a better time.

I am confident that the research findings will go a long way to inform and improve IRCU’s programming and service delivery. To this end, on behalf of the Council of Presidents, I wish to promise that we shall carefully study the research conclusions and recommendations with a view to deriving policy options that will catapult the organisation to greater heights. I would like to thank the Pluralism Knowledge Programme for contributing financial resources without which the work could not have been accomplished.

God Bless You All
Metropolitan Jonah Lwanga,
Archbishop, Uganda Orthodox Church and Chairperson, IRCU Council of Presidents

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- How wonderful it is, how pleasant for God’s people to live together in harmony (Psalm 133:1)
- Two people can accomplish more than twice as much as one; they get a better return for their labour. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)
- And tell my servants that they should speak in a most kindly manner (on to those who do not share their beliefs). Verily, Satan is always up to stir up discord between them; for verily Satan is man’s foe... (Surat Al- Isra- a 17:53-54).

IRCU is a faith-based not-for-profit non-governmental organisation (NGO) that brings together different religious denominations in the country and is composed of the Catholic Church of Uganda, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, the Church of Uganda, the Uganda Orthodox Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Church - Uganda Union. The main mission of IRCU is to promote peace, reconciliation, good governance and holistic human development through inter-faith action and collaboration. IRCU was created in 2001 as a national response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the one hand, and the armed insurgency in northern Uganda. IRCU is affiliated to Religions for Peace (RfP) and the African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL) headquartered in New York and Nairobi. IRCU is governed by the Council of Presidents who are the top leaders of the five main faith groups in Uganda (Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Muslim Supreme Council, Seventh Day Adventist Union and Church of Uganda).
Background

IRCU is currently implementing a number of interventions aimed at the spiritual, socio-economic and political empowerment of Ugandans through programmes such as HIV/AIDS, peace-building, national reconciliation, good governance and human rights. These interventions are premised on the belief that faith-based leaders and structures have been - and are still - crucial contributors to Uganda’s development process. This resonates with the organisational mission of promoting “peace, reconciliation, good governance and holistic human development through interfaith action and collaboration, advocating for the empowerment of members’ bodies for the common good”.

Faith-based organisations and national development Inspired by their religious values, all faith traditions across the globe are engaged in humanitarian efforts to alleviate human suffering. Empirical evidence demonstrates that today faith-based agencies have developed vast infrastructures to carry out their development interventions and have expanded their mandates to address long-term development needs. FBOs are working on the ground with local communities often in close proximity to one another. In many cases, FBOs have recognised their shared interests and have formed pragmatic partnerships.

In Uganda, the desire of the different religious institutions to work together was epitomized by the formation of IRCU. At the time of its inception in 2001, the IRCU framework was considered a more pervasive and formidable framework to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic than the limited, disparate and uncoordinated efforts of each individual religious institution. Thus the spirit of “inter-religious collaboration” was - and still is - by all means supposed to cascade to the lower religious structures.

Over the last decade, IRCU has used the faith-based approach to implement various cross-cutting programmes through institutionalized religious bodies of the member organisations and FBOs affiliated to the institutionalised FBOs and other independent churches. IRCU programmes fall under two broad areas of: HIV/AIDS, and Peace, Human Rights and Good Governance. IRCU has relied on her well-established faith network for the mobilization of communities. The number of FBOs supported by IRCU has grown from 10 in 2004 to 101 currently, with 11,842 children supported as OVCs, 39,000 receiving palliative care and 10,933 on Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART).

FBOs have sustainable structures for promoting development, the provision of leadership and inspiration among people. They have established and sustained communication channels for reaching out to the faithful and the community at large. Besides, places of worship provide for spiritual nourishment; nurture moral development and spiritual growth in the communities.

339 IRCU Annual Report, 2010
340 NUS (2008), A toolkit for Students’ Unions
341 IRCU (2010) “Unity in diversity: 10 years of dedicated inter-faith service delivery”
342 Annual Report, 2009
Regional inter-religious networks

At the regional level, IRCU has established regional inter-faith networks to improve coordination, advocacy, programme implementation, resource mobilization and capacity building at the lower level. IRCU has divided the country in 12 regions and each of these regions has a network. IRCU has been working with some inter-faith networks especially in the peace programme. These networks, especially those in the northern region, were formed during the armed conflicts/civil war, especially to provide a voice for the voiceless, dialogue and advocate for the end of the conflict through peaceful means, and also to deal with the attendant effects of the conflict such as emergencies, breakdown in health services, education and other socio-economic infrastructure.

The membership of these networks is drawn from the dominant faiths within the region: institutionalized FBOs on the one hand and other religious movements such as Evangelicals/ Pentecostals. The network members have been trained in leadership and management as well as equipped with knowledge on HIV/AIDS, peace, human rights and good governance. They are also supported with logistics and transport to facilitate them and actively participate in regional planning and review meetings. IRCU has also formed district inter-faith committees in 43 districts where it has active programmes to further enhance coordination and networking at the local level, where planning and implementation take place. Since these structures are relatively new, they have been left out of this study. While some of the networks are headed by senior religious leaders such as Bishops, District Khadis and Field presidents, other networks are headed by technical staff.

National networks

There are two national networks coordinated by the IRCU: the Uganda Women of Faith Network (UWOFNET) and the Uganda Interfaith Youth Network (UIYN). The former is a women’s mobilization programme for the IRCU, affiliated to Religions for Peace International. It was created to promote the importance and role of women in communities and hence raise their visibility. Its programmes target women, youth, children and the entire family and this is done by engaging and involving women to make contributions to transform the lives of the target groups. The UIYN was established in response to the Hiroshima Declaration that also mandated the formation of a ‘Religions for Peace Global Youth Network’ at the 2006 World Youth Assembly in Hiroshima, Japan, to harness the energy and commitment of religious youth leaders all over the world and to advance the mission of multi-religious cooperation for peace.

Problem Statement and study objectives

Like other nations, Uganda is a multi-religious entity where more than 95% of the people profess a faith - either as Christians or Muslims. It is globally recognized that religious institutions possess vast structures stretching from the national to the

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343 IRCU (2010) op.cit.
344 Promoting inter-faith cooperation in Uganda: The IRCU experience, 2011
345 Ibid.
346 IRCU (2010), “Unity in diversity: 10 years of dedicated inter-faith service delivery”.
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grassroots. When religious communities recognize their shared values, mobilize their collective assets and work together to solve common problems, they can have a decisive impact where it is most needed. Therefore, the formation of the IRCU was informed by the combined enormous potential of religious institutions, and religious leaders as a vehicle for spiritual, social and economic transformation. The purpose was to create synergy and impact between actions of the religious institutions instead of disparate individual actions.

IRCU uses a faith-based strategy to implement its programmes and deliver services to the people without discrimination. What religious leaders say and do can have an important impact on the faith communities who regularly attend prayer houses; churches, mosques, temples, synagogues etc. Admittedly, the involvement of religious leaders in nation-building and human development is premised on the following grounds that religious leaders: (a) are recognized by the community; (b) can give encouragement to members of their religious communities; (c) can shape social values; (d) promote responsible behaviour that respects the dignity of all persons and defends the sanctity of life; (e) increase public knowledge and influence opinion; (f) support enlightened attitudes, opinions, policies and laws; (g) redirect charitable resources for spiritual and social care and raise new funds for prevention, care and support; (h) promote action from the grass roots to the national level; (i) often have links to other (religious) organisations, people in positions of responsibility in the community, and links to networks at the international level; (j) are responsible for preaching sermons/khotubas on prayer days (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) and hence have a significant role in teaching about and communicating issues related to holistic human development. At IRCU, the roles of religious leaders in the organisation’s programmatic interventions include mobilization, sensitization, advocacy, resource mobilization, spiritual guidance, education and preaching faithfulness.

Although FBOs and inter-religious networks are important structures that are meant to deliver services to the grassroots, improve coordination, advocacy and project implementation, there is still doubt about their effectiveness in replicating inter-religious action and collaboration to the grassroots. Unlike at the national level, it is much less common to find inter-religious initiatives by FBOs and regional networks at the grassroots, where religious leaders belonging to the different faiths should meet to undertake joint efforts in programming and service delivery. It is equally doubtful that the different faiths at the lower levels regularly convene to discuss common challenges and jointly devise strategies to overcome them. This is vindicated by the fact that IRCU is hitherto much less known and recognised at the lower levels. Apparently, individual religious institutions are largely operating independently, outside the IRCU umbrella. In essence, this undermines the spirit of inter-religious action that is supposed to permeate all levels of the IRCU fraternity.


Tearfund (2005), ibid.
Using a comparative approach, this study has attempted to assess the level of collaboration between and among individual religious leaders and institutions at the FBOs, and the inter-religious national and regional networks. Arguably, since the formation of the IRCU ten years ago, there is hardly any empirical study to attest to the effectiveness of these structures in actualizing interfaith action and collaboration within IRCU. This study was intended to fill that gap.

The study therefore aimed at promoting inter-religious action and collaboration between and among FBOs and regional/national networks. Its objectives were to assess the level of cooperation and collaboration between individual members of the FBOs and other organisations, and document cases where people of different faiths have jointly implemented initiatives to tackle common challenges; to establish the benefits and challenges facing inter-religious action and collaboration and to draw conclusions and suggest recommendations to improve inter-religious collaboration.

The roles of religious leaders were summarised as mobilization and sensitization/awareness creation; psychosocial and spiritual support; resource mobilization; advocacy and the initiation of networks and partnerships. The “target groups” included religious leaders (clergy and non-clergy/laity); members of regional/district inter-religious organisations/committees; members of the women of faith network; health workers; members of youth network; and beneficiaries (clients, OVC, care givers).

The word ‘religion’ was understood to derive from the Latin word ‘religare’ (to bind together) and thus supposed to bind people together. Faith was understood as a strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof. In this report the terms ‘religion’ and ‘faith’ are used interchangeably. In the same vein, the terms ‘inter-religious collaboration’, ‘inter-religious action’ and ‘inter-religious cooperation’ are interchangeably used. “Dialogue” was interpreted as ‘word or meaning’. To engage in dialogue is therefore to engage in making meaning through the spoken/written word.

The study covered 24 FBOs, 5 regional inter-religious networks and two national networks all belonging to the five constituent religious institutions of the IRCU. Although not constituent members of the IRCU, Pentecostal churches were included since IRCU works with them at operational level. The study areas were located in seven sub-regions of the country namely central, east-central, eastern, western, south-western, north-central and north-west.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-region</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>FBOs/Networks</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1. Central    | Kampala      | Mengo Hospital (Church of Uganda - COU)   
|                |              | Namungoona Hospital (UOC)   
|                |              | Namungoona Christian Care (UOC)   
|                |              | Kampala Archdiocese (Uganda Episcopal Conf.- UEC)   
|                |              | Masanafu Child & family support (UEC)   
|                |              | Namirembe Diocese (COU)   
|                |              | FOCAGIFO (COU)   
|                |              | Mary Muke Solidarity Fund (UEC)   
|                |              | Meeting point Kampala (UEC)   |
| 2. East Central| Luwero        | Nankyama Foundation (UOC)   
|                | Mbale         | SDA Katikamu   
|                | Iganga/Jinja  | Bugisu Muslim District (Ug. Muslim Supreme Council)   
|                | Tororo        | Busoga Inter-Faith Forum   
|                |              | Mission Outreach Unlimited Ministries   |
| 3. Eastern    | Kumi          | Kumi Hospital (COU)   
|                | Kapchorwa     | UWOFNET   |
| 4. Western    | Kabarole      | Fort Portal Diocese (UEC)   
|                | Kasese        | SDA West Uganda Field (Seventh Day Adventist Church)   
|                | Hoima         | Rwenzori Inter-Religious Forum   
|                |              | Hoima Diocese (UEC)   
|                |              | Bunyoro Inter-Religious Council (BIREC)   |
| 5. Southwest  | Bushenyi      | Ishaka Adventist Hospital (SDAUU)   
|                | Kabale        | Kigezi Inter-Faith Forum   |
| 6. North-central| Lira          | Amuca-SDA (SDAUU)   
|                | Gulu          | Comboni Samaritans (UEC)   
|                |              | ARLPI (UIYN activities)   |
| 7. Northwest  | Arua          | Kuluva Hospital (COU)   
|                | Zombo         | West Nile Inter-faith Forum   
|                |              | Nyapea Family Hospital (UEC)   |

History of inter-religious dialogue

All religions whether from the Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam have the common doctrine of great humanity from the Almighty God, although their ways of salvations differ from one another: They all have volumes of literature of great love for mankind. Unfortunately each religion only can see and feel the goodness of their own religion. Besides, they know little of other religions other than their own.349

The World’s Parliament of Religions (Chicago 1893) launched the modern interfaith

349 Osman Chuah (2011) in: Vendley, W.M. “Responses to ‘In face of conflict: Religion as a force of peace”
movement as a global phenomenon. The global umbrella body was an outreach between representatives of religious groups for the purpose of deeper understanding, cooperation, or collaboration\(^\text{350}\). The event was significant as it brought together representatives of a number of religions (Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, Buddhism - both Theravada and Mahayana - Shinto, Taoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity). While an entire century would elapse before another “Parliament of the World’s Religions” would be mounted, the 1893 Parliament did succeed in establishing a normative model: formal encounters between clergy and scholars of diverse religions, meeting in a spirit of open-heartedness for the purpose of promotion of mutual understanding and enrichment\(^\text{351}\).

A second landmark in the emergence of the modern interfaith movement is \textit{Nostra Aetate} - a decree issued by Vatican II in 1966 which opened the door for heightened Roman Catholic theological rapprochement towards other religions. Anglicans, some Evangelicals, and mainstream Protestants organized a similar theological reflection in the direction set by \textit{Nostra Aetate}, and in some instances went even farther. The consequence has been the articulation and promulgation of a much broader range of Christian theologies of religious difference, thus a much livelier interest by Christians in deeper inter-religious understanding than previously had been the case.

According to Monsher, the third landmark was \textit{A Common Word Between Us and You} - a call for dialogue, issued in November 2007 by an international group of 138 distinguished Muslim religious leaders to “Leaders of Christian Churches, everywhere.” \textit{A Common Word} has provoked numerous official responses from Christian bodies\(^\text{352}\). While the initial desire was to improve conversation between Muslims and Christians, the conversation under this umbrella continues to widen. \textit{A Common Word} deserves a place in the history of the development of the modern interfaith movement because it reminds humanity that bilateral conversations have been, and will always be, a vital aspect of interfaith work. During the 20th century, numerous structures for interfaith encounter have emerged in many parts of the globe and for a variety of purposes\(^\text{353}\). One of these is the \textit{Religions for Peace}, of which the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda is an affiliate.

At the same time, the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) started with the vision of King Bin Abdulaziz, the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques, seeing dialogue as the means to achieve peace and reconciliation and to overcoming the problems facing humanity. On 6 November 2007, the first ever meeting was held between the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Pope. At this historic meeting in the Vatican, King Abdullah shared his vision of an ‘initiative for interfaith dialogue’ with Pope Benedict XVI, who responded positively. In June 2008 the first International Conference on

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350 L.A. Monsher, “Inter-religious relations: History, obstacles, opportunities.”
351 L.A. Monsher ibid.
352 L.A. Monsher ibid.
353 L.A. Monsher ibid.
Dialogue was held in Makkah involving 500 international Muslim scholars, to discuss inter-faith dialogue in Islam and to establish parameters for dialogue with followers of other religions.\(^{354}\)

Then, in July 2008, a World Conference was held in Madrid (Spain) that brought together nearly 300 followers of different religions and cultures, with a focus on human values that unite Mankind. In a final statement, the Conference called, among other things, for a Special UN Session on inter-faith dialogue. On November, the UN General Assembly added impetus to recommendations of the Madrid Conference by affirming that mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue constituted important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and the Culture of Peace. Later in 2009, the Geneva Interfaith Conference upheld the initiative of King Abdullah, for the need for constructive dialogue among the followers of all religions and cultures. It also resolved to promote the spirit of the culture of dialogue, to examine the role of the media and affirmed its support to establish an International Dialogue Centre.\(^{355}\)

Recognizing the importance of the dialogue, the three States comprising the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Austria and the Kingdom of Spain, following the initiative of King Abdullah, signed in 2012 the Agreement for the establishment of KAICIID in Vienna. The Holy See supported the initiative from the outset. In October, the Agreement for the establishment of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue entered into force, followed by the first session of the Council of Parties ten days later. On 26 November 2012 KAICIID was officially inaugurated at the Hofburg Palace, Vienna.\(^{356}\)

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section explores the concept of inter-faith/religious dialogue which should be clearly understood, since it is the precursor of inter-faith/religious action/collaboration or cooperation. This is premised on the understanding that before people of different faiths start to work together, they need to “encounter each other”, to explore areas of common ground that can direct future cooperation.

**What is inter-faith/religious dialogue?**

There are many definitions of inter-religious dialogue depending on the academic shade of the various scholars. Some define interfaith dialogue as a meeting (or series of meetings) of qualified members of different faiths in a formal setting to discuss religious opinions and practices they have in common, usually with the intention of expanding their common ground.\(^ {357}\) Cahill and Leahy defined inter-faith dialogue as “the different faith communities not just living harmoniously side-by-side (though

\(^ {354}\) *Journey to King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogues*. Vienna, Austria.

\(^ {355}\) Ibid.

\(^ {356}\) Ibid.

\(^ {357}\) http://uk.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20110315104231AAnMRJV

this is a good beginning), but actively knowing about and respecting each other
and each other’s beliefs in fair and honourable competition. Fults defines inter-
religious dialogue as a challenging process by which adherents of different religious
traditions encounter each other in order to break down the walls of division that
stand at the centre of most wars. She contends that the objective of inter-religious
dialogue is peace.

In a keynote speech in 2007, Prof. J. A. Camilleri from the Centre for Dialogue
at Latrobe University defined the key aspects of dialogue as a search for truth;
listening as well as speaking; journey as discovery of ‘other’ and ‘self’; valuing
of commonalities, but also valuing of differences; sharing the memory of the past;
acknowledging/experiencing pain of the ‘other’ as key to healing/reconciliation;
and legitimate and humane governance. He noted that creating positive inter-faith
engagements was about developing relationships of understanding and cooperation
between people of different religious beliefs (and sometime non-religious beliefs).
It is about both mutual learning through dialogue and through working together on
common projects.

Why engage in inter-faith/religious dialogue?
As an advocate of the ‘dialogical project’, which he sees as a process for building
understanding and respect in a fractured and divided world, Camilleri argues that
dialogue must aim to “... break through the material and psychological walls that
have been painstakingly built to protect institutional interests and the politics of fear”. Secondly, he contends that such dialogue must deepen not only the appreciation of
diverse civilizational achievements and perspectives, but also the awareness that
such diversity is “the collective heritage of humankind”. This perspective is echoed
by Arinze who posits that inter-religious dialogue is not only the communication
between the two believers at the religious level, but a meeting of heart and mind
between the followers of various religions. To misunderstand, belittle or exclude
any of the major civilizational strands is to impoverish the collective inheritance
and to diminish each of its heirs. Thirdly, he observes the need to understand the
value of both commonality and difference that enables them to co-exist, illuminate
and reinforce each other. These perspectives tally with the Vatican Council II’s
recognition of what is “true, good and holy in other religions and its call for fruitful
dialogue, openness, and collaboration to build a world community of peace, liberty
and justice”.

Camilleri in CMYI (2007). Young people and the role of inter-religious dialogue
Sandi Fults, “What is inter-religious dialogue?” http://globalfaithinaction.org/what-is-interreli-
gious-dialogue/
NUS: Good inter-faith relations on campus: A toolkit for students’ unions. www.nusconnect.org.uk
F.C. Arinze, “Church in dialogue: walking with other believers, Ignatious Press, San Fransisco
1990, 332
Ibid.
“Inter-religious dialogue: Special reference to Hindu-Christian dialogue in Indian context”http://
Conceived in this way, inter-faith/religious dialogue has the potential to enrich and strengthen understanding within diverse societies. This is particularly pertinent in a globalized world where one’s awareness (and fears) of ‘others’ can be heightened by information and opinions disseminated through the mass media. Commentators have argued that inter-faith activities have been established on the assumption that they can address the causes of intolerance based on religion and other identities. There is no doubt that the culture of dialogue is an effective way in the pluralistic world to solve issues and problems, especially to promote collaboration and integration among people of different religions, traditions and customs.65

Levels of dialogue
Kateregga notes that dialogue could be approached at various levels, with each serving a different purpose. The levels are (a) theoretical, (b) practical and (c) spiritual. In (a), people discuss issues of common interest and unlearn misinformation gathered over centuries about one another. In (b), they start to cooperate with one another on projects of common interest which are mutually beneficial to society/community. In (c), they embark on a long spiritual journey together which culminates into holding joint prayer sessions. For the purpose of this study, we shall dwell at length on the practical (action) facet of inter-religious dialogue, since IRCU is at the level where people of different religious affiliations identify and work on common projects/programmes with a view to transforming their social and economic well-being. This is in consonance with the IRCU’s philosophy of considering love and faith as sources of inspiration and motivation that drive the organisation to serve God through service of humanity, especially the poor and vulnerable of society (Matthew 5:34-40; 1 John 4:20; Surah Al-Baqarah 17).

Inter-religious action/collaboration
The world’s religious communities have enormous potential to improve conditions for billions of people worldwide. Therefore, the practical level in inter-religious dialogue is a very important phase as people of different religions begin to work together over issues of common interest. Inter-religious cooperation unleashes the hidden assets of religious communities and is more powerful than the efforts of individual faith communities acting alone. Kessler and Arkush describe inter-religious dialogue as a face-to-face interaction that leads people to better understand one another, whereas inter-religious collaboration is about collaborative action involving people and groups working together to achieve change or social transformation. It is acknowledged that religious communities possess spiritual, moral and social assets that can be brought to bear utilizing the full range of existing structures - leadership, local congregations,

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65 Inter-religious dialogue, ibid.
68 Kessler and Arkush (2008) “Keeping faith in development”.
women’s groups, youth groups and specialized agencies. Knitter observes that inter-religious dialogues often focus on social action and economic development as a privileged occasion for collaboration and productive exchange between religions.\(^{369}\)

According to the Religions for Peace Toolkit,\(^{370}\) when religious communities recognise their shared values, mobilise their collective assets and work together, they can have a decisive impact where it is most needed. For instance, religious communities all over the world have a longstanding tradition of addressing issues of extreme poverty and social injustice in creative and effective ways.

In addition to religious traditions’ moral assets, the sheer scale of religious infrastructures in many countries is of tremendous value in mobilizing large numbers of persons to act. Religious leaders and faith communities are the largest and best-organized civil institutions in the world today, claiming the allegiance of billions of believers and bridging the divides of race, class and nationality. In a time when religion is too often manipulated as a source of division and a false motivation for violent conflict, inter-religious collaboration offers an opportunity for diverse faith communities to work together on issues that remind us of our common humanity.

In the case of the IRCU, emphasis and priority were put on the ‘practical facet’ or ‘social action’ given the factors that defined the organisation’s inception. As noted above, IRCU was basically formed to provide an urgent inter-religious national response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that was ravaging the country. Previous attempts by individual religious institutions to combat the disease were grossly inadequate, scattered and uncoordinated. This explains why the ‘theoretical’ and ‘spiritual’ dimensions of inter-religious dialogue were in the interim relegated to the background.

**IRCU and the faith-based approach (FBA)**

IRCU uses a faith-based approach in its effort to provide services to the people of God. The FBA is a five-pronged model based on the following principles; (i) belief in God as a Supreme Deity, (ii) use of scientific knowledge, (iii) use of faith teachings and best practices from the Holy Scriptures, (iv) use of religious leadership and structures, and (v) use of self-control skills. The organisation operationalizes the FBA through religious structures to deliver vital services to the target groups at all levels. The approach recognizes that people are created with inner power and free will to know what is good and bad. Teaching through scriptures and scientific knowledge enhances individual power and creates skills to recognize the struggle against temptation in order to remain safe from HIV infection, exploitation, crime and other forms of abuse.\(^{371}\)

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\(^{370}\) UNDP (2005): Toolkit for religious leaders and communities, Religions for Peace.

\(^{371}\) IRCU Staff Ethical Code of Conduct, February 2003
METHODOLOGY

Sampling frame, criteria and techniques

A sampling frame was prepared, consisting of all FBOs and inter-religious networks existing in all the regions of the country. FBOs were selected from the five institutionalized FBOs, and four regional inter-religious networks. Selection criteria were regional and religious representativity, time of existence, accessibility and feasibility (in terms of logistics involved and time). The Uganda Women of Faith Network and the Uganda Inter-faith Network were purposively included in the study as they were the only fora that represented women and youth voices respectively in the nationwide inter-religious framework.

The mainstream religious leadership in Uganda is male-dominated. To ensure gender-sensitivity in the study, a number of women respondents were brought on board under various target groups namely, non-ordained religious leaders, programme staff, women of faith and youths. Besides, the inclusion of the Uganda Women of Faith Network was meant to mitigate the impact of the numerical under-representation of women and gender issues within the inter-religious framework.

A number of data collection methods were used ranging from semi-structured questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) photography and review of FBO reports and regional/district inter-religious documents. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to purposively selected key informants from target groups such as ordained and non-religious leaders, programme staff, heads of vocational institutions at FBOs, regional inter-faith networks and committee members of the regional inter-religious networks. The essence was for the key informants to express their views on the inter-faith action and collaboration.

Informal conversations were held with individual community members/clients who benefited from the inter-religious interventions particularly in the programme areas of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment and OVC. The purpose was to triangulate information already given by community service providers such as pastoral agents, peer educators/‘expert’ clients, and community counsellors.

FGDs were organized to collect information from PHAs (Persons Living with HIV/AIDS)/clients, pastoral agents, OVC and care givers on their perspectives of inter-religious action and collaboration. All in all there were four FGDs, one from each geographical region of the country. Reports and official records of FBOs and regional inter-faith networks were used to gather information on the effectiveness of the inter-faith action, including the challenges faced in carrying out day-to day work. Overall, the 420 respondents included ordained/non-ordained religious leaders; women of faith leaders; administrators and health workers in FBOs; youth leaders; and beneficiaries (OVC, care givers, clients).
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

a. Cooperation and collaboration between FBOs and other organisations

Mobilisation and sensitisation

Religious leaders and institutions have a unique ability to reach out and mobilize vast numbers of people. This is because for many people, faith is fundamental to understanding and relating to the world. It was noted that methods of mobilization for HIV/AIDS programmes varied from programme to programme (i.e. Care and Treatment, Prevention and OVC) and place to place. Overall, religious leaders (catechists, nuns, pastors, imams) played a vital role in the mobilization of clients for IRCU HIV/AIDS services. Their efforts were supplemented by local leaders (e.g. LC councillors), counsellors and programme staff. In a few cases, it was mentioned that parents/guardians and friends participated in passing information to their children. Even in instances where clients/beneficiaries received information from non-religious leaders, they had obtained prior information from religious leaders too.

Religious leaders also played the largest role in sensitization and mobilization of people on the IRCU HIV/AIDS OVC programmes. This was in consonance with the IRCU policy which mandates religious leaders to mobilize and sensitize their faith communities. When asked ‘Who helped get enrolled on the school/vocational institution OVC programme?’, 46% of the respondents mentioned religious leaders; 22% local councillors; 18% health workers or programme staff and 13% other people.

In vocational institutions, it was observed that apart from religious leaders, programme staff played a prominent role in recruiting OVC. 72% of the respondents reported that the criteria for selection and recruitment of clients into HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment, and OVC programmes were transparent and non-discriminatory; requiring essentials such as an LC introductory letter, passport size photos, academic testimonials, a recommendation from a former school, and detailed information of the care giver/guardian. This was in agreement with the IRCU principle of ‘representativity’ and ‘consistency’ (IRCU Constitution as Amended, 2011). In some FBOs, selection interviews were administered and visits made to candidates’ homes to cross-check the information. For the OVC, every vulnerable child had equal opportunity to select a course of their choice. Heads of OVC schools/institutions (62.5%) and health workers in Care and Treatment facilities (54.4%) also indicated that one’s religious affiliation was not a basis for one to get enrolled on an OVC programme or to get employment, indicating that most FBOs offered services with minimal religious biases, as the following example illustrates:

My name is John (not real name), I’m 15 years old, residing in Gulu municipality. I’m a Catholic and was orphaned in 2004 by LRA rebels when

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373 According to FGDs held in different study areas.
they attacked my home. Assisted by a local councillor and religious leader, I was enrolled by the Comboni Samaritans of Gulu, a charitable organisation. I’m among the students with IRCU sponsorship. Comboni Samaritans sponsor other vulnerable children irrespective of religious background. Other than education, I’m also provided with psychosocial and spiritual support from a counsellor and a religious leader of my faith. I see other religious leaders come to minister to children belonging to other faiths. Besides, living in a multi-religious setting enables me share ideas and experiences with other people as well as learn social values such as solidarity, humility, tolerance and unity. (OVC interviewed at Comboni Samaritans, Gulu)

For sensitisation, religious leaders used their respective prayer days to reach out to their followers. But since they are supposed to pass messages to include members of other faiths, they used other channels of communication that were inclusive and neutral. For instance, in the prevention programme, they utilized national and international days (e.g. International Youth Day, World AIDS Day) to pass prevention messages. In Fort Portal diocese, they formed local inter-faith committees to enhance inter-religious cooperation. Through the inter-faith efforts, local drama groups were formed to sensitize people of different faiths on HIV/AIDS. Barz has reported on the use of musical performance as a strategy to pass HIV/AIDS messages to communities in Uganda.

**Initiation of networks and partnerships**

There has been great effort by the IRCU-supported FBOs to link with other organisations (secular and faith-based) to build synergies and maximize their efforts to overcome common challenges and thus contribute to the social transformation of God’s people. Partnerships between FBOs are important because by working together they can better address the broad spectrum of human need. It is important, though, that these alliances be respectful of the diverse experiences, and cognizant of the different traditions and belief systems. Empirical evidence demonstrated that some IRCU FBOs had made appreciable efforts to initiate partnerships with local NGOs and other CSOs to enhance performance and service delivery. The rationale was to enable like-minded organisations harmonize their work, strengthen their resource base, tap on new skills and knowledge and learn and share best practices. Successful stories in the formation of networks and partnerships follow.

At Mbale Muslim District HIV/AIDS Prevention Health Centre, the FBO received funding from many Christian organisations such as Compassion International and Child Restoration Outreach (CRO) to carry out development programmes. For instance, at a nearby Bugema Muslim Primary school (Mbale Muslim District), CRO constructed a block of latrines for the school. Further, local Muslim religious leaders

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375 Ibid.
376 IRCU: Promoting interfaith cooperation in Uganda: the IRCU experience
reported that owing to good working relations with local Christian leaders, resident Christians provided the school with a water tank.

At Good Samaritans (Gulu), the FBO collaborated closely with Lacor Hospital and other organisations mainly from Italy to provide health, education and vocational services to the OVC. Until the end of 2011, the ART programme was funded by PEPFAR and Catholic Relief Services. The OVC are attached to Catholic and Protestant institutions (both religions being the most dominant).

At Nyapea Family Hospital, the MoH reported collaboration with Safe Motherhood, Life Concern and Caritas Nebbi to assist vulnerable children. A case in point was a shelter for people affected by HIV/AIDS that was constructed with assistance from Compassion International. Further, the hospital leadership allowed religious leaders of other faiths to minister to their faithful admitted in the facility. Although it is a Catholic-founded hospital, there was a building in the compound where an Anglican priest ministered to his followers, and the Muslim clients attend a mosque adjacent to the hospital.

There were many other reported cases that reflected inter-religious collaboration such as the collaboration between Kampala Meeting Point in Namuwongo and the National Forum For PHA Networks in Uganda in catering for the education needs of OVCs; North Star Alliance’s assistance to Mission Outreach Ministries (Tororo) in resource mobilization. At Ishaka Adventist hospital, PHAs reported getting assistance for socio-economic development from CONVOID- a savings and credit organisation for low-income earners based in Rubirizi district. Other than working with other FBOs, IRCU-supported FBOs also worked closely with government health units (at national and local levels).

**Regional inter-religious networks**

The study sampled five out of the 13 regional inter-religious networks\(^{377}\) and interviewed all the executive committee members to establish the rate of success and the challenges faced in conducting their work. They mentioned the following as the major challenges and ranked them in descending order.

- **Lack/ low level of facilitation.** Eight out of 27 members of the executive committees pointed out inadequate facilitation as a cause of their low performance. This was a true observation since, unlike IRCU HIV/AIDS-supported FBOs, regional inter-religious networks did not carry out direct programme implementation. This rendered their work sporadic and ad hoc as they only carried out activities ‘allocated’ to them by the IRCU, depending on the urgency of the task at hand. As a consequence, infrequent engagement in work/activities undermined the level of interaction (inter-religious cooperation) between the executive committee members themselves on the one hand, and the faith communities on the other. With the exception of the Rwenzori Inter-faith

\(^{377}\) Busoga Inter-faith Forum, Bunyoro Inter-Religious Council, Kigezi Inter-faith Forum, Rwenzori Inter-faith Forum and West Nile Inter-faith Forum
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Forum (RIFF), other respondents reported lack of funds to carry out activities as the major hindrance to inter-religious collaboration. The study noted better performance by the RIFF. Not being a creation of the IRCU, RIFF sprang up as a local, home-grown mediation initiative at the height of the local insurgency. Therefore, its committee was able to mobilize resources outside the IRCU framework and constantly engaged in activities that raised its profile among the communities.

Poor communication and lack of coordination Poor communication and lack of coordination were between them the second highest ranked challenges plaguing the regional networks. With little funding, it was not surprising that communication and coordination were poor. Respondents reported that they lacked funds to travel, let alone air time to communicate between themselves. Further, without an office and office equipment, it was practically impossible to maintain an appreciable level of coordination. To overcome these challenges, one respondent observed the “need for adequate funding to enhance inter-faith activities and frequent meetings among the executive committee members.”

Historical religious differences The challenge of historical religious differences, among others, was mentioned by a 6 respondents belong to KIFF and the Bunyoro Inter-Religious Council. Respondents at KIFF noted that since independence, politicization of religious differences in the sub-region led significantly to social conflict and discrimination of some sections of people, particularly during political electioneering. The two dominant religions in the Kigezi sub-region were the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Uganda. KIFF members reported some isolated cases of discrimination mainly between Catholic and Anglican institutions. Below is a recount from one of the KIFF religious leaders:

A Catholic friend teaching in a COU founded secondary school approached me for assistance. He said he was framed by the school management that he had defiled a girl, and was going to be dismissed. I approached the management and negotiated the teacher’s transfer to a Catholic founded school. From my investigations I learnt that the teacher was innocent. The chair of the management board had sworn not to employ Catholics in ‘his’ school.

Differences in levels of education Some regional networks reported that differences in levels of education hampered the growth of inter-religious collaboration. The level of education of the executive committees varied with some members having junior primary education vis-à-vis others with tertiary/university education. The former were reported to be ill at ease working with their more educated counterparts, not least in comprehending technical and development issues. This observation was made mainly- but was not limited to- among Muslim religious leaders whose education levels were below that of their Christian counterparts.

FBOs versus regional inter-religious networks Unlike FBOs that engaged in HIV/AIDS programmes and hence received direct sub-grants, regional networks operated almost entirely in Peace work and did not receive sub-grants from the IRCU for their
work. As already reported, their funding was ad hoc, intended to implement very urgent but short-term specific activities. Being cash-strapped, they often lacked basic infrastructure such as office space, stationery, transport and communication means, let alone work plans to direct their work. Some complained that their superiors (diocesan bishops) were not doing enough to popularize IRCU at the lower levels. In such circumstances, they were ill-disposed to contemplate initiating partnerships and networks. The financial stress of regional inter-religious networks can be assessed from the remarks of one religious leader on the KIFF executive:

_We can hardly meet since we do not have office space, stationery, means of communication. Members of the executive come from the five different districts that make up the former Kigezi district. They do not have transport facilitation, so how do you expect them to meet regularly? Besides, we do not have a work plan..._

In spite of these challenges, religious network leaders demonstrated the desire to work together and even appreciated the synergic value therein. They reported that it was on the basis of a united front that they managed to accomplish a few outstanding inter-religious activities since they were formed. To demonstrate unity of purpose, 17 of the 25 respondents reported that they rotated leadership of the networks, which meant that each member religious organisation had an equal chance of attaining leadership. Even for the three who reported that there was no change in leadership, this was not because the current leaders did not want to rotate, but because the work of some of the networks was ad hoc and was not attracting competition for power. Further, 19 of 25 the respondents reported no form of religious discrimination within their ranks, save at the lower structures (grassroots) of the inter-religious constituency.

In answer to the question on their achievements, regional networks mentioned their key milestones: in the case of KIFF, respondents mentioned the mobilization and sensitization activities they carried out in the region before, during and after the 2011 general elections. They asserted that their collaborative efforts were vital in defusing the ‘religio-political’ time bomb that threatened to explode and cause havoc in the Kigezi sub-region. The Bunyoro Inter-Religious Council prided itself in its efforts to bring peace between the Banyoro and the migrant Bakiga communities, particularly in Kibale district, and not least their key role in oil politics. The West Nile Inter-faith Forum, Rwenzori Inter-faith Forum and Busoga Inter-faith Forum recounted the successful civic education campaigns and reconciliation efforts that preceded the 2011 elections between rival political groups in their respective regions. Since each politician belonged to a specific religion, religious leaders used this as a trump card to reach out to the rival politicians and mediate between them. A sheikh in Iganga gave his perspective on IRCU’s work thus: “We are happy with the IRCU work but as Basoga say _tusiimabwongerwa_”.

Sensing the importance of oil as a natural resource and potential source revenue, IRCU held meetings with religious leaders in Bunyoro sub-region with a view to empowering them with advocacy skills to demand for social equity in the distribution of oil proceeds.

Literally means, “We are thankful and please give us more” Personal communication during an
Advocacy

Inter-religious platforms can be important to cooperate for confidence building and advocacy. Partnerships designed for explicit projects build trust and create strong relationships. According to the FBO Forum, there are four observations about advocacy the efforts of faith-based and religiously-inspired organisations. First, there is a value attached to collective engagement and the potential for impact when religious groups work together. Second, the recognition among the religious communities that much of what they hold in common - their voices and perspectives - is sacred. Third, their numerical strength and fourth the availability of concrete opportunities to demonstrate collective power through action.

Advocacy by religious leaders to mobilize communities for services is vital. Religious leaders are empowered to engage their respective district administrations to address, say, the challenges that hinder children and specifically OVC to access education, or to mobilize and sensitize communities to access services.

In some FBOs and regional networks, religious leaders held joint talk shows on local FM stations and addressed issues affecting their communities. In Kabarole district, the SDA West Field programme coordinator reported that they aired talk shows on a local FM Radio station belonging to the Pentecostals. In Arua district, a sheikh reported that until two years ago, he shared programmes on Catholic-founded Radio Pacis with other religious leaders. This information was corroborated by the members of the West Nile Inter-Faith Forum who confirmed the spirit of inter-religious collaboration. On the importance of advocacy by religious leaders, a respondent in Kapchorwa made the following remarks:

Religious leaders should use their structures. For instance, if all imams get a message in a meeting, they can convey it to their mosques on Fridays. Besides, people of other faiths can be reached on occasions where they are in mixed crowds such as burials, second funeral rites, wedding parties, and graduation parties. (Muslim programme staff at Kaserem Health Centre)

In Kasese district, the four religious leaders operating under the RIFF reported that they worked closely on governance issues, among them ‘decampaigning’ the government manoeuvres to sub-divide Kasese into more districts. Mission Outreach interview held on 15/08/2012 in Iganga

380 Faith-based Organisations Forum on Multi-religious Cooperation for Humanitarian Relief, Development and Peace Convened by Religions for Peace and Hosted by Islamic Relief-Canada (2009)
383 Personal communication with an SDA programme coordinator interviewed on 13/10/2013.
384 Unfortunately he ran out of funding
Ministries (Tororo) also reported using local FM radio stations to empower the youth and all people of different faiths to use HIV prevention methods such as ‘Abstain, Be faithful and use Condoms (ABC), Safe Male Circumcision (SMC), and to encourage them to use voluntary counselling and testing (VCT). The spirit of unity in advocating issues touching the local faith communities can be discerned in the remarks by the regional chairperson of the RIFF:

> Despite little funding from IRCU, at least inter-religious collaboration has brought about unity: religious leaders of different faiths can now work together. We can now resist politicians who want to use ‘divide and rule’ tactics.

**Psycho-social support**

The word psycho-social is a combination of the concepts of the individual ‘psyche’ and the ‘social’, the community in which the person lives and interacts. Psycho-social Support (PSS) addresses a person’s emotional, social, mental and spiritual needs - all essential elements of positive human development. It has been argued that each person is influenced by the integration of: (a) the mind, thoughts, emotions, feelings and behaviours, which are the psycho or psychological components; and (b) the social world or context in which we live, the environment, culture, traditions, spirituality, interpersonal relationships with family, community and friends, and life tasks such as school and work.

In faith-based OVC institutions and Care and Treatment health facilities, it was established that religious leaders allowed their counterparts of other faiths to offer spiritual guidance to the clients, following their respective prayer days (Saturday for SDA, Friday for Muslims and Sunday for other Christians). For instance, at Nyapea Family Hospital, Ishaka Adventist Hospital, and Kumi Hospital it was reported that religious leaders of other faiths were allowed to visit and offer PSS to their clients in the hospital. Respondents in some OVC institutions reported that religious leaders distributed items to them (stationery, clothes, food stuffs etc.) irrespective of their faiths. Aside from schools/institutions, some religious leaders went an extra mile to pay home visits to OVC and PHAs irrespective of the latter’s faiths.

Clients’ responses to the question, “If you’re sick in the hospital and a religious leader belonging to a different religion is praying for the sick, would you accept him to pray for you?” varied from respondent to respondent on the basis of their religious inclinations. Some accepted and premised their affirmative response on the fact that there was one God and all humanity was God’s creation. Others totally refused to heed such a prayer. Yet others accepted but conditionally: they asserted that they would heed the prayer as long as the religious leader was not using a rosary or commanding

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language such as ‘ninsazamu’, ‘nindagira’; being exemplary and practising God’s work; using a bible (instead of, say, ‘holy’ water); praying direct to God, and not sending prayers through saints such as Jude Thadeo. These varied responses indicated the different doctrinal beliefs that characterized the different faiths. One Muslim respondent contended that all the words in a Christian prayer were good, the problem being that they ended with the phrase ‘in the name of Jesus Christ’. He likened this way of concluding prayer to someone asking a dead grandfather to convey his words to (living) God.

Generally, respondents agreed to attend counselling sessions by a religious leader or person of a different faith. They instanced counselling sessions offered by trained HIV focal point officers whose approach was technical, with hardly any religious biases. It was however observed that some issues were so sensitive that counselling could sometimes prove injurious to some different religious beliefs. For instance, Muslim respondents talked of the Christian teaching on monogamy to promote faithfulness that might not rhyme with the Muslim concept of faithfulness in a polygamous family setting.

b. Case studies of inter-religious collaboration

HIV/AIDS prevention

In Fort Portal diocese, Kabarole district, the Catholic priest in charge of the Prevention programme spearheaded the formation of inter-faith committees in the area which improved inter-religious collaboration between Catholics, Muslims, SDAs, Orthodox and Anglicans. The research team visited Mugusu Mosque where the local Imam had mobilized people of different religions to come for immunization and treatment services by UNICEF at a local mosque. The clients belonging to the different faiths queued up together. Through inter-religious cooperation religious leaders also reported using drama groups and film shows to sensitize people of different faiths on HIV/AIDS.

Virtually all HIV/AIDS Prevention FBOs reported increased collaboration between religious leaders of different faiths. They delivered HIV/AIDS prevention messages to people of all faiths using social functions (weddings, funerals, mauledis, duwas, ordination ceremonies), and education institutions (at parades, assemblies). In today’s increasingly complex and inter-dependent world, it is imperative to acknowledge the existence of other cultures, different ethnic groups and of course different religious faiths. The examples below capture different voices on the role of religious leaders in promoting inter-religious collaboration:

Yes religious leaders work together. When there is immunization, churches and mosques do announce and encourage people to take their children. Additionally,

387 “Ninsazamu” (I cancel, dismiss), “nindagira” (I command). This language is usually used by Pentecostal pastors to demonstrate their spiritual or superhuman powers.
388 FGD held at Mugusu Mosque on 13/102012
389 A. Katende (2013). “Preventing and transforming religious-based conflicts”.

324 Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience
they position testing units at the immunization places and urge people taking children for immunization to test and know their HIV/AIDS status” (A PHA at Mengo Hospital).

Religious leaders have done their best to reach the different groups in the community e.g. the youth, women, the married and unmarried, camp meetings that include all religions where people are counselled and sensitized on HIV/AIDS, and they give spiritual and moral guidance. (Focus Group Discussion in Katikamu)

Religious leaders urge people to go for HIV testing and counsel those infected with HIV to live positively. They encourage us to pick drugs and they visit us at our homes; sometimes, bringing us items such as soap, sugar, and money. They provide spiritual support and give hope to PHA couples that “You are not going to die” and they preach harmony to discordant couples. (Focus Group Discussion in Kumi Hospital)

HIV/AIDS OVC

In the context of HIV/AIDS OVC programmes, schools and institutions indicated that they enrolled children of different faiths. In Lira district, Amuca Primary School was one of the education institutions offering placements for OVC belonging to different faiths. Although it was founded by the Church of Uganda, out of the 10 members of the Parents-Teachers Association, 6 were Catholics and 4 Anglicans. The two important positions of chairperson and treasurer were held by Catholics. Further, out of the 13 members of the management board, 6 were non-Anglicans. Of the 6 school staff, one was Pentecostal, two Anglican, two Seventh-day Adventist and one Catholic. In the school compound, there was a Catholic church, a prayer room used by the OVC irrespective of faiths, and a prayer rostrum where a child conducted prayers for all. As in other OVC education and vocational institutions, different religious leaders visited to minister to their faith groups. In this case, Amuca Primary School exhibited a high degree of religious tolerance.

The level of inter-religious collaboration at OVC institutions was reflected by the 37 OVC and care givers who responded. They stated that although religious leaders played the larger role in providing information and helping the OVC families to enrol in an educational institution, their contribution is surpassed by the combined roles of other stakeholders namely local councils, health workers, programme staff, teachers and relatives of OVC families. This reflected a good working relationship between religious leaders and other stakeholders within the local community. Equally importantly, all these respondents reported that schools or vocational institutions accepted candidates from all religions and gave all OVC equal opportunities. This was a good indicator of inter-religious collaboration:

At Kyampisi OVC project (an outreach of Namirembe Diocese), religion is not a criterion for enrolment on the OVC programme. In fact they take all
OVCs from the different religions. Without discrimination, IRCU provides free of charge books, shoes, mosquito nets, school bags, sanitary pads, uniforms, lunch and drugs. (An OVC pursuing a vocational course at Kyampisi)

OVC care givers

Care givers are the people (mostly relatives) who look after OVC, particularly those who are still young. They play a significant role in their community and they are key contact persons for the HIV/AIDS programmes. Their views and comments on inter-religious efforts and how religious leaders contributed to the welfare and livelihoods of the people affected and infected by the HIV/AIDS also indicated that religious leaders provided information on OVC services to people of different faiths (62.5%), offered spiritual guidance and counselling (54.1%) and support (58.3%) without discrimination (54.1%), and initiated networks and partnerships (58.3%) with other organisations to improve the lives of OVC and care givers. That most of the respondents answered ‘untrue’ to receiving support from religious leaders of different faiths (58.3%) and in joint collaboration in resource mobilization meant that either (a) support was given to OVC belonging to one religious leader’s faith or (b) they simply did not have support (in this case material) to give out. As for joint resource mobilization, previous IRCU researches have indicated that it was a major bottleneck in the inter-religious framework. The example below summarizes the impressions of care givers towards religious leaders:

I lost my son in 2002 and his wife died four years later. They left me with two children to look after. With my advanced age, the experience of looking after the orphans was painful and burdensome. Then in 2009, my local parish priest assisted me to enrol these children at Meeting Point, Kampala. Here you find children belonging to different religions and tribes enrolled and religious leaders of different faiths work together to cater for the well-being of the children. (Anna, a care giver at Meeting Point)

Uganda Women of Faith Network

The Uganda Women of Faith Network (UWOFNET) is an IRCU-based ‘women of faiths’ organisation that promotes women and gender issues within the inter-religious framework. It has been at the forefront of the fight against female genital mutilation (FGM) and fistula in Kapchorwa and Kabarole districts. In Kapchorwa, UWOFNET spearheaded the creation of an inter-religious Coalition Against FGM. The anti-FGM campaign was rated successful, owing to the sense of unity and oneness that brought people of different faiths to work together for the common cause:

The anti-FGM campaign is over 90% successful. In Greater Kaserem, there was only one case of FGM and the success is attributed to the fact that many people have religions, so the inter-religious strategy is wonderful. (A programme staff at Kaserem, Kapchorwa)

See IRCU (2012). “To what extent are religious leaders effective in creating demand for IRCU HIV/AIDS services in Uganda?”
In Kapchorwa, a Catholic Women’s Guild and Married Couples Association integrated their activities with UWOFNET and carried out capacity building and sensitization programmes for the beneficiaries. Being inter-religious in composition, UWOFNET helped the Catholic Association to work with women of other religions, hence removing their past prejudices by forging ties of peaceful coexistence and social cohesion that are indispensable tools for social transformation. Further, the Association established a partnership with Caritas that assisted the former to build the capacity of women by equipping them with agriculture skills that enabled them increase productivity and improve their social livelihoods. In Kapchorwa still, UWOFNET was working with local organisations to raise awareness of the dangers of FGM and fistula.

Uganda Inter-faith Youth Network

Uganda is reported to have the highest population of youth in the region. Any development intervention without youth participation is therefore ‘off target’. Youth in Uganda are faced with a number of challenges ranging from unemployment, abductions by rebels, HIV/AIDS infections, high school dropout rates and illiteracy, drug and substance abuse, human trafficking, sexual abuse, early marriages and all forms of exploitation. The youth have also been trapped in the double role of being perpetrators and victims of violence. It is for this reason that IRCU established the Uganda Interfaith Youth Network (UIYN) as a forum to tackle these challenges.

Currently, UIYN brings together the youth working in different programme areas such as peace and conflict prevention, health, human rights, HIV/AIDS, Gender-based Violence, civic engagement and good governance. The 20 respondents met indicated the rate of success the youth attached to their activities implemented within an inter-faith framework. The most successful programme area was ‘peace and conflict resolution’ (45%), followed by HIV/AIDS (25%) and civic education/awareness (25%). This was not surprising, as these areas constituted IRCU’s niche. Twelve out of the 20 respondents affirmed that there were activities that they carried out with other inter-faith organisations. This was a good practice as it indicated that apart from the IRCU, the inter-faith youth organisations were able to explore opportunities for networking with other organisations with a view to building synergies, mobilize resources and maximizing programme outputs. An overwhelming majority (18) of the 20 respondents agreed that working together under an inter-faith umbrella accrued benefits such as sharing new information/knowledge and ideas, improved performance, and creation of friendship and solidarity among people of different faiths. This tallied with the UNDP report that noted that religious leaders and faith communities are the largest and best-organized civil institutions in the world today, claiming the allegiance of billions of believers and bridging the divide of race, class and nationality.

The UIYN leaders interviewed were found at Makerere University, Kampala University, Gulu Municipality and Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI).

Youth leaders however mentioned challenges that they faced as they carried out their work within the inter-religious framework:

- “Some faiths have so many norms and values that are very hard to follow” (Youth leader from Makerere University)
- “It’s hard to mobilize people when you are not from their religious sect” (Youth leader from Makerere University)
- “Poor means of transport and communication to bring the youth together and inadequate funding from NGOs” (Youth leader from Gulu)
- “Lack of cooperation that creates a communication gap between the youth” (Youth leader from Gulu)
- “Lack of coordination due to limited funding” (Youth leader in Gulu)

c. Benefits of inter-religious collaboration

A case study of Pastoral Agents in HIV/AIDS Prevention (Hoima Diocese) Pastoral agents are non-ordained religious leaders found in Catholic parishes and sub-parishes of Hoima diocese charged with the sensitization and mobilization of faith communities. They are men and women tasked to pass HIV/AIDS prevention messages to households in their vicinity. They visit households and talk to couples on HIV/AIDS prevention issues such as VCT, faithfulness and abstinence in case of unmarried couples. Additionally, they go to prayer houses of other faiths to convey messages on HIV/AIDS and refer clients to health facilities.

They work hand in hand with a local parish priest to deliver messages to people, including irregular Church goes and people belonging to different faiths. Men are provided with bicycles to ease transport and reach far-away households. Use of pastoral agents is considered a ‘best practice’ because it is cost-effective as the medium of communication is free and convenient; recipients of information do not incur expenses to move from their homes to access information.

Pastoral agents know the recipients, their daily routines and speak the same local language, which fosters trust and confidence. The practice is quite innovative because it enhances the spirit of inter-religious collaboration since pastoral agents, who are Catholics, pass information to all the target households, belonging to different faiths. The information flow is fast, as they can easily report back to the local parish priests and vice versa. Information reaches the lowest structures of the religious institution. The innovation has caused behaviour change, with recipients found to be more knowledgeable on matters related to HIV/AIDS, hence increasing the uptake of HIV/AIDS services.

What is more, they reported better ecumenical relations between Catholics and Anglicans. For instance, the two religious groups jointly conducted the Way of the Cross and organized joint Christmas children’s parties. Apart from HIV/AIDS, pastoral agents sensitized faith communities on other diseases and crime, which affected all people irrespective of religious affiliation. On PSS, they prayed to sick
persons, which was appreciated, although they could not give sacraments. They also gave material assistance, especially in the form of food after food harvests. Using this case study in conjunction with other respondents’ views, the following were put forth as benefits of inter-religious action/collaboration:

**Peace and unity** It was argued that collaboration of people belonging to different faiths would enhance peace and unity. This ideal is a cornerstone of Religions for Peace as a global movement embodying inter-religious councils. It is however significant to note that the promotion of unity in diversity does not aim to standardize society, but rather to find the values in people’s communities, culture and identity and promote respect in a rapidly growing global village. Respondents in Care and Treatment health facilities gave an example of the formation of post-test clubs comprising members of different faiths. Once united under one common umbrella, people living with HIV/AIDS engaged in various development activities.

**Knowing each other** Inviting people to attend social and religious functions organized by other religious groups e.g. ordinations (Christians) or duwa (Muslims) was reported to encourage people to appreciate one another. “Interacting with others makes you feel are not alone with a problem.” Kefa and Ombuge (2012) observe that, “An important goal of inter-religious dialogue is spiritual enrichment through knowing who we are and what we believe in. Through exercising objectivity and our ability to look at [our] own faith critically and others in an open and respectful manner, we are able to gain a balanced view and maturity in our own faith.”

Generally, respondents observed that through inter-religious collaboration, they were able to get rid of age-old stereotypes. During a FGD with PHAs at Masanafu Child and Family Support, respondents remarked: “There are some days when we do not meet for medication, but to learn how we can develop ourselves and get rid of past biases against each other’s faith.”

**Friendship and togetherness** Irrespective of religious, ethnic and gender difference, various respondents pointed out that working together nurtured the values of friendship and togetherness. An SDA respondent in Fort Portal noted that although his denomination was numerically inferior, Adventists managed to access services provided by the dominant religious institutions such as Catholics and Anglicans. In Kasese, the RIFF executive committee members reported that, despite belonging to different faiths, they worked together as a team on governance issues, such as the ‘balkanization’ of the district into smaller units. During a focus group discussion at a vocational school in Lira, respondents reported that a Muslim was awarded a contract to build a school for Christians. Further, an SDA vocational teacher mentioned a contract she won to make liturgical vestments for the local Catholic parish priests.

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393 UNDP Toolkit: Faith in action op.cit.
395 A member of the FGD in Hoima interviewed on 26/08/2012
396 Quoting Surah Mumtahina, a Sheikh in Arua noted, “Allah hajakatazamwisilamu ……namadini-mengine. Wewemslilamufanyauzurikwake”.

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Working together can solve small conflicts through interaction; one can understand the cultures of other religious groups. Moreover, when people come together they are able to discuss several issues affecting their lives such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, poor health facilities, bad roads and lack of market information for their agricultural produce. (A respondent at Amuca COU Primary School)

Sharing of knowledge, ideas, skills and experiences

It was noted that through inter-religious collaboration people were able to share knowledge, ideas and skills that led to empowerment and human development. People living with HIV/AIDS gave testimonies of being rescued from ‘death’ by peer educators and counsellors who go to them and encourage them to do HIV/ testing, take drugs and sensitize them to live positively. The OVC cited the different skills (e.g. carpentry, hairdressing, metal work, motor mechanics and so forth) that they had learnt from the vocational schools operated by different religious institutions. At Nyapea Family Hospital, respondents reported that through the inter-religious framework, they were learning much on ‘condom use’, ‘abstinence, the prevention of mother to child HIV infections and ‘safe motherhood’.

It was noted that there was rapid flow of information if a religious leader passed messages to people of different faiths simultaneously. The study established that when religious leaders of different faiths agree on joint action, they communicate to their faith communities on their respective days of prayer and the message reaches all corners of the community. A respondent remarked, “A unified voice is very influential, a Christian receives the same message as a Muslim in a mosque”.

Social development

A number of respondents interviewed reported that through inter-religious collaboration, the level of development was rising. This was attributed to development–oriented international FBOs such as Caritas, CAFOD, World Vision, Care, Lutheran World Federation, ADRA etc. They noted that their local religious leaders linked them to such organisations that contributed to their social and economic well-being. Care givers interviewed at Mengo hospital mentioned income-generating projects.

Respondents also noted that in order to avoid duplication of activities, funders preferred giving grants to one inter-religious group rather than several single-faith groups implementing the same activities. “In a way”, said one respondent at Kyampisi COU HIV/AIDS project, “this helped to develop solidarity and unity amongst us”. Today development agencies and multilateral institutions are recognizing faith-based structures as a cost-effective avenue to channel development and humanitarian assistance to people in the developing countries.

397 Personal communication with a respondent interviewed in Bugema, Mbale on 17 August 2012.
398 Faith in action: Working toward the Millennium Development Goals, 2005
d. Challenges of inter-religious collaboration

In his book titled *Faith and Interfaith in a Global Age* (1998), Braybrooke remarked that in spite of rapid expansion and significant progress, the inter-faith movement was ‘still very weak’. In a number of instances, the challenges mentioned by the respondents tallied with Braybrooke’s ‘weaknesses’:

Proselytism Some people take proselytism, the active attempt to convert to their own religion (or belief) those of another, as an equally vital part of their religious expression. Tensions can arise if one person or party is seen to be aggressively advocating their particular belief over and above those of others present. The study established that there were instances where a religious leader would not offer assistance to a person in need, unless the latter removed his ‘rosary’ or accepted to be ‘born-again’. “A Muslim might tell you ‘First remove your rosary before we can work together’”, complained one Christian respondent. “A Pentecostal can tell a sick person, ‘First remove the rosary before we pray for you’” or “get saved” noted a Catholic respondent. Proselytism is contrary to the principles of IRCU.

Abusive language and false information It was noted that some preachers still use abusive language towards members of other faiths. They also uttered false and derogatory information intended to bring other faiths into disrepute. “Some of the Born Again think it is their responsibility to convert others from their religions. They consider themselves superior and abuse and disrespect other religions”, observed a respondent at Meeting Point HIV/AIDS Prevention Centre, Kampala. It is hoped that inter-religious dialogue and collaboration will go a long way to heal the prevailing religious rivalries.

Inflexibility and fear of loss of identity A common fear which prevents some people from engaging with inter-religious dialogue and collaboration is the fear of losing one’s religious identity. There is always an unfounded feeling that mixing with people of different beliefs will water down their own, or harbour unreasonable suspicion of the motives of people inviting them to dialogue. They might worry that what is sought by the dialogueing partners is some kind of conversion or assimilation to the other group. Some people then become inflexible in their belief, leaving hardly any room to accommodate and tolerate divergent belief systems. In Fort Portal, an SDA programme officer noted that in his field, a number of Adventists were ‘suspicious’ and ‘uncomfortable’ about inter-religious cooperation: “They feared that inter-religious collaboration would lead to adulteration of the SDA faith”. A respondent in Hoima

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400 Personal communication from a Christian respondent during an interview in Fort Portal diocese held on 12/10/2012
401 Personal communication from a Christian respondent during an interview at Kumi hospital held on 21/08/2012
403 A. K. Kefa and M.M. Ombuge ibid
404 Personal communication with an SDA programme officer in Fort Portal in an interview held on 13/10/2012.
observed that some people harboured irreconcilable hatred towards people of different faiths. He termed it the “I-hate-you-because-I-hate-your-religion” attitude. Creating opportunities for meaningful interaction involving people with different religions and beliefs is not about diluting difference: rather, appreciation of distinctiveness is as important as finding common ground

Failure to appreciate and respect different practices During the study, Adventists acknowledged that inter-religious collaboration with other faiths was difficult and very limited, since workshops and meetings were most often organized on Saturday which is the day of prayer (Sabbath). “No sensible Adventist can engage in non-religious activities on Sabbath”, remarked an SDA religious leader. As a result, SDA tend to work in a ‘cocoon’ as this limits them from initiating networks and partnerships with other non-SDA organisations. “You want to join Caritas-funded agricultural programmes in the area, but you find that seminars and demonstrations are organized on Saturday,” complained one SDA religious leader. Arguably, each religion has its own ideals and ideas, hence the relevance and necessity for dialogue.

Muslims on their part complained that inter-religious collaboration was strained by the failure of people of different faiths to recognize and respect their prayer times. They argued that if a Muslim attends a meeting, he/she wants time off to go for prayers. If the mosque is not in the vicinity, a prayer room should be provided by the organizers of the meeting/workshop. Whilst this was observed in functions and events organized by the IRCU, it was still a challenge in the lower structures.

Some respondents reported that religious prejudices and stereotypes were often deeply rooted in people’s minds which posed a serious obstacle to inter-religious collaboration. The study found that some people harboured prejudices against people belonging to different faiths. In particular, Muslims complained that other religious groups believed that Muslims were not educated; they were then left out or marginalized in project/programme activities. Besides, Seventh-day Adventists reported that they were termed ‘uncooperative’ and ‘pig-headed’ because they refrained from attending activities and/or meetings organized on Saturdays.

Doctrinal differences Virtually all Muslim respondents argued that whereas they appreciated a Christian prayer, they expressed discontent with its closing sentence: “We pray in the name of Jesus”. They argued that Jesus (or Issa as he is called in the Quran) was a ‘mere’ prophet like those who preceded him and he had no divine powers. Muslim respondents vehemently contested Jesus’ intercessory role. “Why don’t Christians pray to God (Allah) directly?” mused an imam at Muguju mosque.

Whereas Christianity believed in monogamy, Islam accepted polygamy. During HIV/AIDS prevention workshops, Muslims observed a tendency by non-Muslims of...

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406 Inter-religious dialogue: special reference to Hindu-Christian dialogue in Indian context
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denouncing polygamy as a driver of HIV infection. As a result this created tensions and it was pointed out as an obstacle to inter-religious collaboration. The study established that inter-religious collaboration in the fight against HIV/AIDS was also strained by religious groups that advocated condom use as a strategy to control HIV infections. As a religious institution, the Catholic Church did not support HIV/AIDS preventive remedies that promoted condom use. Further, at national conferences, advocacy for condom use as a preventive measure has always been a contentious issue between senior religious leaders and Ministry of Health and Uganda AIDS Commission officials.

Finally, Christians reported that they were offended by the Muslim practice of not eating meat slaughtered by non-Muslims, preferring to call it ‘haram’. This practice strained relations between the two communities, since the Muslims avoided dining in Christian homes for fear of eating ‘haram’ food, including pork. Further, Christians reported that they were uncomfortable with the Muslim practices of removing shoes and sitting on the floor during Islamic prayers.

Intra-religious wrangles These were mentioned as some of the factors that negatively impacted on inter-religious collaboration. A case in point was the wrangle between Muslims following the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council and those paying allegiance to Kibuli Mosque, which has resulted into having two muftis. Whoever collaborated with either faction was regarded as an enemy. In virtually all IRCU-organized events, the Kibuli faction is left out to avoid antagonizing the UMSC leadership headquartered at Old Kampala.

Selection criteria This challenge was more noticeable in IRCU-supported HIV/AIDS OVC FBOs, where religious leaders were responsible for the selection of candidates to benefit from the OVC services. Aside from losing one or both parents, other selection criteria varied from age, presence/absence of relatives/guardians, their socio-economic status, letter from local leaders and so on. The lack of standard criteria complicated inter-religious cooperation as some religious leaders asked for more or fewer requirements for enrolment.

Poverty Some respondents argued that inter-religious collaboration was partly hampered by the general level of poverty in the country. “Poor people find it difficult to grasp issues”, said a respondent in Lira. To some extent this observation was found true because for collaboration to be successful, an ability to mobilize a minimum amount of resources to generate activities that should necessarily bring on board people of different faiths to work together is required.

Lack of facilitation and administrative constraints Respondents complained that there was inadequate facilitation to move and sensitize religious leaders at the lower levels on the beauty of inter-religious collaboration. This complaint was raised mainly by members of the regional inter-religious networks. “Right now I have no budget to enable me call county sheikhs and imams to inform them of new developments”,
asserted a Muslim sheikh in Arua. Yet, there is no doubt that lower structures are
the spine of inter-religious collaboration as that is where the majority of the faith
communities are based.

Regional inter-religious networks reported that they also lacked funds for the
infrastructure (offices, equipment, transport and communication) needed to coordinate,
implement and monitor activities. Their meetings were sporadic as they did not have
work plans. However, for RIFF, the situation was rather different as religious leaders
exhibited self-motivation and did not wait for ‘IRCU funds’. It was noted that regional
inter-religious groups that were created out of socio-political imperatives (in this case
war) were more self-sustaining and progressive.\textsuperscript{408}

CONCLUSIONS

In the case of the IRCU, inter-religious action or collaboration preceded inter-
religious dialogue as reflected in the organisation’s mission statement. It is likely that
this arose out of IRCU’s proscription of proselytism\textsuperscript{409} if people were left to engage
in theological and spiritual debates. IRCU seems to have attempted to build the boat
while sailing, since at its inception ‘action’ was the overriding factor, if it was to
make an impact on the war against HIV and AIDS, and spur human development
and socio-economic transformation. Thus far, there is an appreciable degree of inter-
religious action/collaboration as evidenced by the different categories of respondents;
programme beneficiaries and implementers. There is no doubt that the inception of the
Inter-Religious Institute for Peace is a deliberate attempt to fill the gaps occasioned by
implementing inter-religious activities/programmes in the vacuum of inter-religious
dialogue.

In the lower structures (e.g. dioceses, fields and deaneries), inter-religious
collaboration was not adequately supported by senior religious leaders (e.g. bishops,
field presidents and heads of deaneries). Indeed, with the exception of the Muslims,
popularizing IRCU was left virtually in the hands of junior religious leaders, such
as parish priests, archdeacons and pastors. This gap was observed during a number
of national conferences with very few diocesan bishops in attendance unlike their
counterparts the Muslim district khadis, who attended in big numbers. Given the
clout bishops have in their dioceses, the IRCU framework was therefore missing a
spiritual tap root in the lower structures of the Christian faiths. ‘Top-down’ support
by senior religious leaders is thus a sine qua non for sustainable inter-religious action/
collaboration in Uganda. Short of this, it was bound to remain a receding mirage.

There were a number of cases where people of different faiths worked together
to overcome their common challenges. However, this depended on the ingenuity,
character and personality of the individual religious leaders. This meant that in the
absence of the episcopal support in a number of dioceses, the mantle of popularizing

\textsuperscript{408} Personal communication from Godfrey Onentho, Programme Manager Peace Institute.
\textsuperscript{409} IRCU Constitution pp.6
and spreading the ‘gospel’ of the IRCU lay squarely in the hands of junior religious leaders whose performance depended on their level of conviction and enthusiasm. A case in point was Fr Robert Mutegeki – a household name in Fort Portal diocese - who pioneered the creation of inter-faith committees at village/parish level bringing on board people of different faiths to work on health and socio-economic projects to enhance human development. With support from their superiors, many religious leaders would be willing to follow suit and openly champion inter-religious action/collaboration in the lower religious structures.

Suspicions and misconceptions over proselytism were still prevailing in the minds of some religious leaders. The study noted that some people were resisting participating in IRCU work out of fear of ‘diluting’ their religious beliefs. Several cases were reported, for instance, of members of the SDA church resisting to work with people of other religions on two grounds. First, that such people did not respect their Sabbath as prayer day, and secondly that IRCU had a ‘hidden agenda’ of adulterating the SDA faith and finally converting them to other religions. An SDA programme coordinator in the SDA West Uganda Field reported cases where, on a number of occasions, he was confronted by members of his faith accusing him of ‘betrayal’ and ‘conspiracy’. These sentiments were likely to linger on, until the ‘gospel’ of inter-religious collaboration reached the grassroots of the constituents of the inter-religious framework.

Furthermore, there were still cases of mistrust and suspicion characterizing Christian-Muslim relations in some places, in the form of beliefs and practices (e.g. halal food, Muslim prayer times and place, removal of shoes before entering a prayer house). Thus promoting inter-religious dialogue and cooperation in a multi-religious environment was perceived, in some quarters, as a ploy to sabotage and cause conflict and tension among the different religious communities. To this end, it could be argued that the search for collaboration among people of different faiths is akin to a wild goose chase. On an optimistic note, however, there were numerous testimonies of people attending religious and socio-cultural ceremonies organized by relatives, neighbours or friends belonging to different faiths. That this trend was unimaginable several decades ago when the country was ferociously polarized along religious configurations, was a commendable milestone.

The spirit of inter-religious collaboration was observed to be stronger in IRCU-supported FBOs than the inter-religious networks (both national and regional). This could be attributed to the fact that FBOs engaged in HIV/AIDS and public health issues received rather large and consistent funding from international funding agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). According to the IRCU-USAID contract agreement, IRCU sub-grants to the FBOs which carry out direct implementation of their activities. On the other hand, IRCU’s regional and national inter-religious networks fall under the Peace, Justice and Governance (PJG) directorate and they do not carry out direct implementation as per the contract agreement’s terms and conditions of the PJG’s funding agencies (i.e. ICCO, UNDP, Kefa and Ombuge(2012). Manual: Inter-religious dialogue. Limuru
Religion for Peace International, African Council of Religious Leaders). The former therefore can only implement programmes as and when funds are availed to them through PJG. Their work then becomes sporadic, targeting mainly emergency situations, thus undermining long term impact. However, regional inter-networks that started on their own (e.g. Rwenzori Interfaith Forum) exhibited better performance, since they were able to mobilize funds by themselves and were not wholly dependent on IRCU funding. In sum, it was the IRCU-supported HIV/AIDS FBOs whose work exhibited an appreciable measure of inter-religious collaboration, rather than the under-funded networks whose work was sporadic and ad hoc in nature.

A myth or reality? To the extent that people of different faiths reported working together and showcased joint projects aimed at improving their health and transforming their socio-economic well-being, this was an important landmark of inter-religious collaboration. On the other hand, there were also a number of voices reporting the pitfalls of inter-religious collaboration owing to the prevailing differences in religious beliefs, practices and perceptions. This showed the ‘downside’ of inter-religious collaboration, making it more or less a mythical enterprise. This perspective is validated by Braybrooke’s remark that “in spite of rapid expansion and significant progress, the inter-faith movement was still very weak”.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE INTER-RELIGIOUS COLLABORATION**

**IRCU Secretariat**

- Expand and build the capacity of the district inter-religious committees in order to popularize and coordinate the work of IRCU at the lower structures and resolve local specific challenges. “If you build a strong district inter-religious committee, you are likely to have strong inter-religious collaboration,” said a Catholic priest.

- Penetrate the lower structures within each constituent religious institution. For instance, for the UMSC, IRCU should find entry through the Muslim district, county (twale) mosque up to the village mosque (headed by an imam).

- Use the Peace Institute to train religious leaders of all levels in inter-religious dialogue and collaboration

- Increase facilitation of regional networks to enable them initiate projects and programmes

- Build the capacity of local religious leaders in communication skills, resource mobilization and entrepreneurial skills to enable local communities eradicate poverty.
Institutionalized Faith Based Organisations (IFBOs)

- Heads of IFBOs should encourage their senior religious leaders (particularly bishops) to support the work of IRCU and the regional inter-religious networks to promote inter-religious collaboration.

Religious leaders

- Preach and practice love, tolerance and peaceful coexistence so that their followers emulate them.
- People should be encouraged to respect one another’s faith/religion.
- Enhance sensitization of their faith communities (especially the youth) about the benefits of inter-religious collaboration.

FBOs/networks

- Organisations seeking partnerships should be sensitive to the religious beliefs and doctrines of individual organisations. (e.g. a piggery project would be offensive to Muslims).
- A percentage of programme staff should be recruited from other faiths and governance organs should have a religious ‘mix’.
- Regional networks should be facilitated with functional offices, equipment and funds to coordinate, implement and monitor activities.

Uganda Women of Faith Network

- UWOFNET should increase its visibility in Kapchorwa by working with the Coalition Against FGM since the fight against FGM and fistula is still raging.
- There is a need for frequent meetings of inter-religious initiatives to bring people together and nurture unity of purpose and cohesion.

Uganda Interfaith Youth Network

- There is a need for more funding for the inter-religious youth activities if they are to make any impact.
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12. Documentation of Pluralism within the Women’s Movement in 
Uganda - Re-echoing Voices of Women Activists

UGANDA WOMEN’S NETWORK

Abstract

Based on selected interviews with women leaders, the author traces in this article 
the evolution of the women’s movement in Uganda and the challenges it currently 
faces in managing diversity, both within itself and in relation to its evolving operating 
environment. By nature, the movement is heterogeneous, in terms of its members’ age, 
educational or professional background, class, religion, party politics, marital status, 
or source of livelihood. Yet it had until recently managed to cut across religious and 
ethnic lines as well as political affiliations. The author notes that, more recently, 
the movement appears to have been a victim of its diversity and failed to develop a 
cohesive voice in addressing women’s concerns, aggravated by competition between 
organisations for donor funding. Pluralism is not being broadly addressed in the 
sense of having women with differing opinions energetically engaging each other. 
Instead, there is avoidance of alternative views; tolerance rather than engagement.

Hence the challenge facing women’s organisations is to harness this diversity and 
galvanise the different synergies within the various categories of women’s groups 
and individuals that would constitute a movement built on a common vision. It is 
suggested that respecting diverse views, energies, talents, capabilities and resources 
could be used as a strategy to build a strong social movement. A mechanism should 
therefore be devised to enhance increased collaboration, to decentralise power and 
decision-making within the movement and share it to include women from all walks 
of life, rural and urban, old and young and women from the formal and informal 
sectors. This deliberate effort of inclusion and active engagement will also need to be 
accompanied by critical and analytical thinking within the movement.

INTRODUCTION

In Uganda the women’s movement is regarded as one of the strongest mobilised 
social movement that has stood the test of time and continuously challenged historical 
cultural traditions and the deeply entrenched patriarchal system. Like all the other 
feminist movements across the world, its emergence was a reaction to the oppressive 
nature of patriarchy that shaped the cultural traditions and practices within most

\footnote{UWONET acknowledges the contribution of Ms. Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi as the resource 
person for this documentation. Special thanks go to all the organisations, women and men in the 
Women’s Movement who provided information for the documentation. Special thanks also go to 
the staff of UWONET-Ms Rita Aciro-Lakor and Susan Labwot who edited the document.}
communities in Africa. Since the earlier religious and social groupings in the early 20th century and the subsequent formation of the women’s organisations in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, the women’s movement in Uganda has continued to question the rules of patriarchy and greatly contributed towards the reshaping of socio-cultural practices and national governance structures.

Given a strong national and pluralistic women’s lobby group, Uganda has been able to register commendable progress in attaining gender equity and equality; establishing mechanisms for good governance, accountability and transparency; and putting in place strategies for the eradication of poverty and conflict resolution. In so doing, issues of social justice and the interests and rights of the poor and those of persons with disabilities, children and other more vulnerable groups, have similarly been addressed. The women’s movement is however said to have recently become polarised and less pronounced and assertive in its operations and pushing for its agenda as a result of the numerous new challenges that range from questioning its credibility as a mass movement to its composition and leadership, which is said to be class based, elitist and largely an urban dominated club of individuals.

The recent democratic processes in the country under the reinstated multi-party politics and the global economic and social networking trends, are also seen in some circles as weakening and fragmenting the women’s voice and hence the urgency to critically discuss the issue of individual identity and pluralism within the women’s movement.

By nature, the women’s movement is heterogeneous with variations ranging from age, educational or professional background, class, religion, party politics, marital status, or source of livelihood. Consequently, there is a lot of diversity in opinions and on the mode of engagement. Some critics perceive such pluralism as a lack of a cohesive voice in addressing women’s concerns and hence a point of weakness for the movement, yet others consider it as a strength that needs to be clearly understood and harnessed so as to create a strong social movement.

The on-going dialogue on strengthening the women’s movement is thus in tandem with the desire by various academics and civil society-based actors that have come together under the Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Programme (PKP) to discuss and understand the concepts of diversity and pluralism. The initiative that is being undertaken in Indonesia, India, the Netherlands and Uganda is aimed “at developing new insights into the appeal of fundamentalism, and to comprehend divergent experiences and views on pluralism”. Basically the programme is working towards generating new knowledge; intensifying linkages between development practitioners and academic resource persons; and translating the acquired knowledge into strategies for promoting pluralism in practice. It is believed that, by understanding the concept of pluralism within the women’s movement, different categories of women will be able to actively engage with each other without fear of losing their identity and autonomy. In this regard the women will also agree to work together on issues of commonality
and temporarily leave out those issues that are potentially contentious and likely to lead to a state of paralysis within the movement.

**OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

On realising the need to rejuvenate the vibrancy of the women’s movement in Uganda and understanding pluralism within, UWONET embarked on documenting the causes of pluralism and how it manifests within the movement. A resource person was engaged to:

a. Carry out consultations on the different types of diversity manifested within the Women’s Movement in Uganda, the causes of the diversities and its impact on the movement and gender equality.

b. Suggest management strategies for the diversities identified for national development.

c. Make recommendations for sustainability of the vibrancy of the Women’s Movement.

The resource person was asked to conduct interviews with six individual members of Uganda Women’s Network who have been at the forefront of the women’s movement. These would include three national level women organisations in Uganda such as Action for Development (ACFODE), National Association of Women’s Organisations in Uganda (NAWOU) and the Department of Women and Gender Studies of Makerere University. The resource person would also carry out a desk review on existing data around the women’s movement in Uganda.

The documentation is based on conversations with 12 women and human rights activists who have been actively involved in the women’s movement, either as activists or employees of some of the leading women’s organisations. The resource persons also reviewed some literature on the history and challenges facing the women’s movement in Uganda. Given the limited financing available for the project, the resource persons was limited to interviewing only those respondents based in Kampala but with wide experience working with the women at the grassroots constituting the women’s movement. The research focused on two categories of respondents, that is senior women with over 20 years’ experience in the movement and the younger professional women currently working with some women’s organisations. The views expressed in this documentation are subjective in the sense that they are based on personal perceptions and experiences.

**DEFINING THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IN UGANDA**

According to a respondent, the existing tensions in respect to the interpretation of concepts and methods of work within the women’s movement have been brought about by the lack of understanding of the broader picture of what the movement entails. The respondent noted that the composition of the women’s movement is very
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

diverse with individuals in civil society organisations such as NGOs, faith-based organisations and professional associations, having different perceptions of issues, a diversity of socio-economic status, class, ideas, culture and educational exposure. Cultural diversity, an example, was cited as greatly influencing how different people viewed certain gender issues pertaining to bride price, polygamy and property ownership, all of which were perpetuating patriarchy.

Many respondents mentioned that what is termed as a women’s movement in Uganda is simply a collection of donor funded organisations that have over the years gradually moved away from addressing issues of patriarchy and become conduits for donor funding and hence portraying a partisan and exclusionary image in the eyes of many Ugandans. Various women’s organisations and individual activists have often convened to define the Uganda women’s movement. However, up till now there is no common definition of what it is or who subscribes to it.

A respondent observed that currently women’s organisations and individuals who claim to constitute the women’s movement do not necessarily share a common vision, mission or value system. The women’s organisations are legally constituted entities with a defined agenda and registered membership. They are governed by constitutions, rules and regulations and structures and systems that shape how they operate. More so, they are driven to act by their respective mandates and ideals of their founders, and not the urgency of a particular issue of concern to the women they purport to represent. In the real sense of a social movement, the structures and systems of these membership organisations curtail the spontaneity of action that is a major characteristic of social movements, which impulsively emerge and rally the public around issues to be acted upon.

Historically, social movements thrive best when the people that constitute them share the passion of addressing a common issue and these movements are sporadic in nature, spurred by the change they desire to see in society. Unlike the composition of the women’s organisations in Uganda, that are based on invitation or a common professional interest, in social movements it is almost impossible to determine the kind of people that join the movement since its urgency attracts and brings on board the ‘riff raff’ of society.

Several respondents pointed out that because of the competition for donor funding, NGOs have made women’s issue that demand urgency to be too abstract. “Donors demand concept notes, statistical evidence, academic research tools and methodologies, and all these drain the energies that would have otherwise been spent on building a social movement” one respondent said. Consequently benefits of a pluralistic women’s movement are not harnessed. “There is no real passion in what is done under the guise of the women’s movement since women’s issues have been NGO-ised and made too academic for the ordinary women and thus detaching them from the agenda being advanced by the women’s organisations”, a respondent observed. She went on to explain that NGOs have adopted working methods that
alienate the majority of women, who would otherwise sustain the momentum in a social movement.

Given that the women’s movement is pluralistic, the challenge facing the women’s organisations is how to manage this pluralism and not to ignore its existence. There are several gender issues that need to be attended to, hence the need to harness the diversity and galvanise the different synergies within the different categories of women’s groups and individuals that would constitute the movement. More so, much as there is an assumed agenda for the women’s movement, there is still a lack of a common vision upon which clear strategies to strengthen the movement can be formulated.

THE STORY OF THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IN UGANDA

What is largely regarded as the Uganda women’s movement was born out of the urgency to confront African cultural traditions that relegated the women folk to subservient roles dictated by patriarchy and the colonial and religious systems that marginalised and disenfranchised women. In the nascent stages of the women’s movement, the establishment of the first girls-only school, Gayaza High School in 1905 and the formation of major women’s groups based on religious affiliation such as the Mothers’ Union in 1908 and the Catholic Women’s Guild in 1952 were started by wives of colonial administrators, businessmen and missionaries as a means of giving women the necessary skills to lead voluntary organisations that were affiliated with national and international bodies. Other secular organisations such as the Girl Guides in 1921, the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) in 1952 and a host of voluntary women’s community clubs emerged in the late 1940s and early 1950s, enabling women to learn basic skills of organising, public speaking, handling money, and literacy.

Initially women who joined the Mothers’ Union were attracted by the objectives of promoting Christian principles of marriage, upbringing of children and Christian living but later they became instrumental in lobbying the chiefs, the colonial administration and husbands to allow women to go for University education. With increased interaction and exposure, women begun to develop a desire to liberate themselves from the patriarchal structures of society and gain access to property rights and possibly better opportunities in education and subsequently be in position to actively participate in decision making process. The women’s clubs became important fora to discuss issues of women’s education, voting, inheritance laws and other topics considered to be contributing to women’s marginalisation in society. Even in the early years of women’s mobilisation they often came up against fierce opposition from the men who felt women were “acquiring foreign ideas, ignoring their domestic chores, gossiping about them, and possibly meeting other men outside the home”.
Towards the end of the 1980s, the Women’s movement changed its character from being basically associational groupings to more dynamic organisations that were committed to influencing public policy and ensuring the recognition of women’s rights. Women’s activism intensified as various advocacy initiatives were undertaken by the women’s organisations such as Action for Development (ACFODE), the Association of Women Lawyers in Uganda (FIDA-U) and the National Association of Women’s Organisation in Uganda (NAWOU). Several achievements were attained in respect to women’s emancipation and empowerment and the protection of women’s rights gained prominence. During this time women’s political representation in the various governance structures similarly increased resulting into the entrenchment of women’s rights into the national statutory instruments.

Respondents noted that much as the women’s agenda in most women’s organisations today has largely remained focused on addressing issues of welfare, income generating and domestically oriented concerns, the post-1986 organisations put emphasis on political participation and women’s active engagement in the public arena. These non-partisan organisations advocated for the improvement of women’s leadership skills, promoting women’s political involvement, lobbying for women’s political leadership and legislative reforms, and conducting countrywide civic education.

At the time of drafting the 1995 national Constitution, women across the country primarily saw patriarchy and the oppressive traditional and cultural practices that denied them equal rights with men as the common foe that had to be confronted. A lot of women’s mobilisation therefore revolved around the demand for socio-political inclusion, economic empowerment and promoting community welfare initiatives as a means of addressing the historic neglect they were experiencing in the mainstream institutions. Women assertively advocated for social and cultural institutions that promoted their participation in the public sphere. In the late 1980s and early 90s, women’s activism got to its peak as they came together to advocate for gender equality and equity and also engage various stakeholders in collaborative ventures, such as the drafting of Uganda’s Constitution and advocating for gender sensitive policies and legislation. Such engagements were mutually beneficial, irrespective of the social and political status of the different women activists and with increased networking they were able to build new bases for solidarity and pluralistic action.

**Roots of pluralism in the women’s movement**

The active participation of women in the armed struggle of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in the early 1980s had a great effect on the organisation of the post-1986 women’s movement. The organisations that emerged after then have continued to offer leadership to what is largely regarded as the women’s movement and they are more heterogeneous in nature than the earlier associational groups formed along religious lines. The new breed of organisations also had greater autonomy in
respect to leadership selection, agenda setting and sources of funding. They include professional associations of doctors, lawyers, journalists, scientists and engineers and women entrepreneurs among others. Apart from addressing professional related issues, other organisations continue to tackle broad human rights concerns of specific interest groups like the disabled women, widows, and even more controversial issues concerning second wives in polygamous relationships and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups.

According to Tripp (2000), the women’s organisations were not only pluralistic in the kind of issues they took up, but they were also internally pluralistic in their composition. She points out that they were built on a premise of pluralism that was informed by different ideologies, professions, class, ethnic groupings, culture and religions. Tripp further observes that one of the most interesting features of women’s mobilisation in Uganda at the time, both at the national and local level, was the extent to which organisations were formed along lines that cut across religious and ethnic lines as well as political affiliations. She further asserts that the expanded educational opportunities for women in Uganda also helped to break the past dominance of specific groups in women’s associations and resulted in the emergence of educated elite women that had both the leadership and technical skills of vigorously mobilising around issues of women’s rights.

Using their autonomy, the women’s organisations tried very hard to minimise their individual differences so as to galvanise their efforts and voices in order to build organisations and coalitions based on common gender concerns, such as eliminating all forms of violence against women, promoting women’s economic empowerment and their participation in politics and in other positions of power and decision making. Being different was viewed as a strength that enriched the women’s movement, rather than a source of weakness and most of the women’s organisations and groups consciously rejected practices that promoted marginalisation in the socio-economic spheres and the politics of “sectarianism”, which was based on religious, class and ethnic identities. By promoting networking and information sharing, women as individuals were able to work towards attaining a common goal as opposed to promoting their affiliation to a particular political or religious grouping. With a view of building a strong social movement women openly discussed the divisive practices that had in the past greatly divided the country, resulting into decades of social disharmony and armed civil conflict.

**PLURALISM AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS**

Diana Eck defines pluralism as the energetic engagement with diversity, based on dialogue and encounter, on a give-and-take basis and allowing room for criticism and self-criticism. She asserts that pluralism reveals both common understanding and real differences and it is not merely tolerating each other but actively seeking to understand the other and having our differences, not in isolation, but in relationship to one another.
Several respondents acknowledged that much as there was diversity within the women’s movement, pluralism has not been critically addressed. They pointed out that in the women’s movement there is diversity brought about by the different perceptions, understanding and interpretation of the key gender concepts and practices, for example the more radical feminists preferred confronting cultural practices head-on while those that are more conservative opted for compromise positions. Pluralism was regarded as something that should not be shunned but be taken as an opportunity that can strategically be used to address women’s concerns and development challenges. The respondents concurred that respecting the diverse views, energies, talents, capabilities and resources within the women’s movement could be used as a strategy to build a strong social movement. There was a shared view that individuals within the different women’s organisations should be in position to actively engage and critique each other without feeling threatened by those holding alternative views.

Bearing in mind the diversities among women, it is impractical to coerce any woman to be part of the movement or an agenda they do not ascribe to and therefore there is need to promote active engagement with the different individuals and interest groups constituting the women’s movement and recognise the differences and look for a common ground upon which to act. One woman activist noted that “we should not shy away from actually saying why we do not support particular issues being promoted by specific interest groups but let us endeavour to understand the issue at hand and avoid being ‘band-wagoned’ or forced to do something or support an issue without being convinced about it.”

In discussing pluralism within the women’s movement, most respondents explained it narrowly by highlighting issues of diversity based on age or generational gap, education, religion, party politics, marital status (married versus unmarried, divorced, single or widowed) and whether one was employed or not. Others mentioned issues of sexuality and physical disabilities as a manifestation of pluralism in the movement. According to most respondents, pluralism was not being broadly addressed in the sense of having women with differing opinions energetically engaging each other on the diversity within the women’s movement. Instead women in the movement, including some seasoned activists avoided those with alternative views. “The way individuals interact with one another is dictated by the wider social, economic and political environment and within the movement you can be ostracised for engaging with someone that thinks differently. In the Ugandan context where people’s livelihood is hinged on family income, women will opt to stay away from engaging on issues perceived to be controversial by society, lest they jeopardise the lives of their families. In an African context you cannot de-link your actions from your immediate and extended family and if you are targeted for being on the ‘wrong side’, then the whole family is at risk”, a respondent explained.

What clearly came out of the discussions with the different interviewees was that within the women’s movement there was more of tolerating each other rather than
actively seeking to understand the other woman across the lines of difference. For example on contentious subjects like politics and alternative sexual orientation, some respondents deliberately blocked their mind to some questions or openly said they did not feel like discussing such a topic, an indication that they were not prepared to know anything about the other, let alone understand the different thinking on certain subjects. In the different organisations identified as the torch bearers of the women’s movement, there is a lot of ignorance about the different thinking even of the members, leaving a lot of room for stereotypes and half-truths, a vice that is causing a serious gap in terms of having constructive dialogue and working together and consequently weakening the movement building. “Most people think being gay is a choice and those practicing it can be counselled, they can get out of that. People say it is not our culture, it is against the Bible and for the lesbians, they call them men haters”, a respondent said.

The lack of forums where women are free to constructively engage each other on particular gender concerns like bride price, abortion, cohabitation and property ownership without feeling threatened by others within the same movement was continuously echoed by many respondents. “As women we are not homogenous. We must learn to be tolerant of each other and allow free thinking and expression of diverse views. Women need to understand that ideas endure, grow and change and the idea of having static thinking in the women’s movement is very pathetic”, a respondent noted.

Another respondent pointed out that it is important to recognise the differences among different women and bring together those that are like-minded and those with alternative views so as to understand each other and let everybody’s views be aired and addressed. As a strategy for a strengthened women’s movement, different actors must acknowledge that where someone is pushing an issue they do not necessarily agree with it is best for them to remain silent rather than openly fighting them. “Women do not have to always agree to work together or share the same opinion on an issue simply because they are in the same group or organisation. When we dialogue, it does not mean that everyone at the table will agree with the other, but we need to learn to listen and appreciate each other”, a respondent said.

“Unfortunately the leaders of the women’s organisations that have arbitrarily assumed the leadership of the women’s movement tend to restrict free-thinking in respect to gender issues and women’s human rights and generally they do not allow free expression of views on gender and women’s rights. This has caused a situation where the public tends to think that those women within the movement are weird and that is why those that are not within the membership organisations are reluctant to be associated with the women’s movement”, one respondent noted. On issues of sexual orientation, most respondents agreed that such issues were not discussed in their organisations since they were not a priority in their organisational objectives. “Most members in our organisations are so ignorant and misinformed about lesbians
for example and when a discussion on LGBT is brought up they straightaway think it is about sex. They do not think lesbians are human beings and actually they do not want to engage with them for fear of being influenced. In such a scenario, it is very difficult to change someone’s perception about lesbians”, a respondent observed.

It was also pointed out that in order to have a stronger women’s movement, efforts should be made to actively engage and acquire more knowledge and understanding of issues, so that different individuals do not have to feel that they are being forced to change their identity. A strong women’s movement will need to be premised on a clear ideology and agreed upon values and principles such as those governing human rights. One respondent pointed out that the women’s movement should be looked at as a chain that is connecting all women working in different sectors and different issues knowing that they are all part of the bigger body.

“Since we are not experts on all issues related to gender, we need to actively engage and support each other”. She noted that, because of the lack of understanding that together all women constitute the body of the movement, there is a tendency to undermine each other and not to look at the bigger picture or the broad vision of the women’s movement. It is important to appreciate that the women’s movement has been informed by different ideologies informed by the different cultures, professions, class system, religion, geographical location, whether urban or rural based, and socialisation.

KEY DIMENSIONS OF PLURALISM IN THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

The age factor
For more than four decades, the women’s movement has been supported and propelled by senior and seasoned women activists that actively participated in the struggle for emancipation at the height of the economic and political turmoil that faced the country in the 1970s and 1980s. The younger women who are the direct beneficiaries of the struggle for women’s emancipation are failing to embrace the women’s movement and they claim to be weary of the way business is conducted by the older women. Various respondents interviewed said that the women’s movement is becoming increasingly difficult to attract and recruit younger women to continue with women’s activism and sustain the gains so far made. “The older women have got to let go of the helm of the women’s movement and refrain from imposing their views on the younger women”, a respondent said, adding that cross-generational dialogue would help in sustaining a vibrant women’s movement.

Another respondent pointed out that the older women dominating most women’s organisations had continued to work in a conservative manner without leaving room for new and interesting innovations such as the social networking media that is more appealing to the younger women, such as the use of Facebook and Twitter. “The
older women need to continuously interact with the younger ones so as to unlearn their ‘out-dated’ views on women’s emancipation and gender and begin to see sense in what the younger women have to say. The women’s movement must provide space whereby it grows with younger women and avail opportunities to freely express themselves”.

The family and pluralism

In the African context, it has been observed that one cannot detach his or her actions from the family or extended family, and in a sense this complicates the context that would support pluralism. It has been noted that different African cultures attach diverse social values to relations with the ‘other’ that may or may not promote pluralism (Drani et al. 2011). More so the African concept of family and community is generally premised on the principle of inclusiveness, on identifying and creating spaces for convergence rather than divergence in individual aspirations and thought. The family has got a very big role it plays in shaping the views of young individuals and determines their perception and what they eventually become as women. A respondent noted that because of socialisation, most women aspire to conform to the norm rather than be identified as different. In some instances intolerance is extended to people of different ethnic groups, political and religious beliefs. By the nature of women’s gender, through socialisation many of them will try to avoid situations or engagements that compromise their livelihood or put their families at risk and therefore conform to societal expectation even they would personally wish to defy.

“Most people are scared to stand up and speak out their mind on political or what are regarded as ‘controversial’ social issues. Unlike in the developed democracies where most people are economically secure, in Uganda the majority of women are struggling to get the basics and they have to know where their bread is buttered. If we desire to see pluralism in the women’s movement then we need to get the women beyond the ‘bread and butter’ syndrome and economically empower them so that they have the freedom and choice of engagement”, a respondent said. Women therefore need to have the right information and civic education, coupled with economic empowerment, if they have to have the courage, perseverance and the time to embrace pluralism and actively participate in political discussions and activities.

Women’s sexuality

Despite claims that the women’s movement is all inclusive, some respondents pointed out that using the pretext of religion and morality most women in the movement are reluctant to discuss issues related to sexuality. As a result the women’s movement, just like the broader Ugandan society has evidently failed to wholesomely accommodate persons with different sexual orientations and accept them on equal terms. “The LGBT persons continue to face escalating violence and state legitimization of homophobia which results into denial of basic services particularly health provisions amongst lesbian women and yet the women’s movement remains largely silent on such issues.
Many women activists will not even want to associate with LGBT women in their organisations and just like the Ugandan government they have failed to live up to the obligations under international and regional instruments, to recognize equality and non-discrimination for all persons and inclusion of health provisions for effective HIV prevention among same sex relations,” a respondent noted. Most women’s organisations were accused of blacklisting women with different sex orientation to the extent of not even wanting them to attend their meetings or activities.

Socialisation and the education system

When discussing pluralism, culture was seen by the respondents as one of the critical points of reference since it determines the values of an individual and the community, in respect to how we see ourselves and others, as well as our world outlook. It was noted that culture informs our responses to social, political and economic relations in the environment. Our identity is shaped by society’s beliefs, expectations and experiences which we acquire through socialisation at the family level, in schools, churches and participating in community activities. Exposure to other influences and worldviews often broadens one’s perception and outlook and may, at times challenge his or her own belief systems and practices, thus creating space for reflection, accommodation of the new or ‘foreign ideas’, transformation and possibly facilitating the appreciation of diversity. One respondent pointed out that in Uganda the family and the education system do not promote critical thinking that would enable individuals to assert themselves. “In our families and schools we have to think monolithically and we do not have room for constructive engagement”.

It was also observed that in Uganda much of the earlier sensitisation and education, which unfortunately has persisted in the women’s organisations and clubs, was geared at transforming African women into better wives of ‘westernised’ African men and hence reproducing western notions of gender, domesticity, morality and household divisions of labour. This has given inadequate considerations of women’s own realities, needs and priorities and has continued to promote activities that have limited women’s engagement and kept them partially locked in the private sphere, depoliticised and passive, such that the majority of women fear or simply do not challenge the status quo. “When issues demand critical engagement most women activists prefer to withdraw to their safe havens in fear of ‘rocking the societal cultural boat’”, a respondent said.

Political participation

A respondent pointed out that given the fragile nature of the women’s movement and the general public’s apathy towards politics, there is strong urgency to mobilise women across the country in order to revive their activism so as to enable them to fully participate in the shaping of Uganda’s democracy and determine the direction of the political change process. She observed that the multi-party politics that was re-introduced in Uganda in 2005 has brought out enormous opportunities for possible
expansion of the women’s political participation, but at the same time generated new challenges and complicated existing ones in respect to women’s active engagement in influencing socio-economic and political processes.

Along the same line, another respondent noted that, with the introduction of the new rules for political engagement, there is an increased need for women to learn how to tolerate and dialogue meaningfully with others of different political views and those belonging to different political parties. She pointed out that the multi-party politics has brought a lot of confusion in the women’s movement because different individuals do not know how to manage diverse interests promoted by the various political parties or even their own party. She noted that women who originally freely interacted and expressed themselves on different political subjects under the ‘Movement’ system or the ‘No-Party system’ promoted by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in the 1980s up to 2004 are now very cautious when discussing issues that are political for fear of offending the other.

“"The broad socio-economic and political environment dictates how individuals interact with one another and has a lot of impact on our lives. You can be blacklisted for engaging with someone that has a different political thinking from the one that is largely seen as acceptable to the powers that be". Across the country there is increasing political intolerance, a vice that is causing some discomfort within some women’s organisations. The repercussions of an individual’s political actions are often extended to one’s bigger family network and this scares most women, who prefer to remain aloof in terms of political engagement so as to keep their families safe in the short-term. If you decide to be politically active and think differently or express yourself, then your business or source of livelihood will be targeted. So why should you engage on contentious issues that will put your family members at risk?"” a respondent asked.

CONCLUSION

Strategies to manage pluralism in the Women’s Movement

In order to promote pluralism in the women’s movement, there is a need to have a coordinated approach in implementing the various activities of women’s organisations and groups in order to exploit the synergies that exist among the different categories of women. A mechanism should therefore be devised to enhance increased collaboration, so as to bring the different women together and harmonise their views and strategies. The absence of such a mechanism partly explains why the numerous efforts of the women’s movement continue to be underplayed as not yielding the desired impact of uplifting the majority of women from the claws of patriarchy and poverty.

Power and decision making in the women’s movement should be decentralised and shared to include women from all walks of life, rural and urban, old and young and women from the formal and informal sectors. This deliberate effort of inclusion and
active engagement will go a long way in erasing the current bias that has been created of an elite urban-based women’s movement and help to strengthen an all-inclusive and sustainable women’s movement. There is a need to encourage a new thinking and bring on board young people to actively engage on the issues being addressed by the women’s movement. The gap between the older women and the younger ones needs to be bridged by having regular fora to discuss what forms the women’s agenda, irrespective of the age differences. These fora should be appealing to all generations with an accommodating environment where young women do not feel intimidated by the older women.

The confrontational strategies currently being used to address gender inequality are viewed as out-dated and simply polarising the women’s movement and creating a situation of intolerance rather than pluralistic co-existence. As observed by a respondent, one does not have to be hyper in order to advance her views on gender inequality. “What we need is for one to have her facts and put them across to other people without shouting and blaming the male gender or those women that are not active within the women’s movement”. The women in the movement need to learn to strategically negotiate in order to convince those people with alternative views and also promote critical and analytical thinking within the movement. Women activists should try to build men’s capacity to speak out on gender issues and attract them to the women’s movement.

As leaders and activists in the movement, there is a need to continuously learn and acquire new knowledge, particularly on issues that may be seen as ‘foreign’ to some people. A vivid example is the LGBT movement which is growing in Uganda and yet the women’s movement is making no effort to understand it or its impact. As one respondent noted “by adamantly refusing to educate ourselves about LGBT, [the] movement will not prevent it from spreading and rejecting it on moral grounds is naïve, since there are so many immoral things happening around us”.

REFERENCES
From Humble Beginnings to a Force to Reckon With; A Documentation on the Women’s Emancipation Movement in Uganda, 2010, UWONET

Abstract
Managing diversity is an unavoidable necessity in all areas of human interaction, especially when communities grow from ethnic groups to nations, regions and the global community. The paragraphs below present highlights of the nature of diversity in the eight African countries of Algeria, Benin, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda and how these countries are managing this concern, as recorded through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

INTRODUCTION
The APRM is a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily acceded to by the Member States of the African Union (AU), through the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as an African self-monitoring mechanism. The mandate of the APRM is to ensure that the policies and practices of participating countries conform to the agreed values in the four focus areas of: democracy and political governance; economic governance; corporate governance; and socio-economic development. In this exercise, each country wrote a Country Self-Assessment Report (CSAR). And, based on this, members of a selected panel from NEPAD (the Country Review Mission) held consultations within the participating countries to extend and supplement the CSAR.

Defining Managing Diversity
Managing diversity appears as cross-cutting issue in the APRM reports, reflecting a challenge in all the countries. With the exception of the Nigerian APRM, the seven reports do not explicitly give a definition of “managing diversity”. However, diversity in this context can be assumed to refer to the interests of different categories of people in the country and the strategies to meet these interests, as well as their implication in terms of national resources and policies. Among the dimensions of diversity mentioned in the reports are differences in terms of gender, age (children, the elderly), race and ethnic groups, religions, refugees, immigrants, and particular groups, such as the unemployed, the urban and rural poor, those in the informal sector, the disabled, those with HIV/AIDS, social deviants, the landless, political affiliation, as well as gays in the case of South Africa.

Considering the need to harmoniously contain all the above categories of people within one political unity, the Nigerian APRM (p.340), describes managing diversity as the identification, acceptance and understanding of those differences and similarities that allow individuals or groups within countries to appreciate others, to become
aware of and fully use their talents and abilities to make unique contributions to work groups and organizations. In essence, diversity management is about good people management.

The Value of Managing Diversity
In the Ugandan, Kenyan, Nigerian and Rwandese reports, managing diversity is presented as a strategy for nation building. It is acknowledged in these reports that colonialism has contributed to contemporary crises associated with diversity: in all the reports, with the exception of Ghana, a recent history of political unrest is mentioned, linked to the marginalisation of sections of the population and making managing diversity a critical issue. The value of managing diversity according to the Nigerian APRM (p.340) is a nation-building process of constructing or structuring the nation using the power of the state. This process aims at unifying the people or peoples within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. This, according to the report (p.339), can involve the use of discourse or infrastructure development to foster social harmony and economic growth. Similarly, in the Ugandan APRM (p.xxxxvii) stresses that through diversity management, Ugandans of all regions, ethnic backgrounds and political orientations can have a meaningful stake in the political system and resolve their differences under democratic processes and rules.

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE DIVERSITY
The reviewed countries attempt to manage diversity through legal frameworks, programmes of action and institutional frameworks:

1. **Constitutional supremacy and the rule of the law.** All reports indicate that the governments have embarked on constitutional and democratic reforms. This guarantees fundamental rights for all, including freedom of expression, association, assembly and participation in elections, equality and freedom from discrimination and prohibition of derogation from particular rights. According to the CSARs, to ensure the implementation of constitutional provisions, the countries have embarked on decentralisation policies to bring services closer to the people, to encourage their participation, to monitor and evaluate these services and to promote human rights. However, despite different programmes and legal frameworks, the Country Review Mission established that they are not so effective on account of lack of logistics and moral authority due to corruption. For example in Benin (p.303) the CRM noted that sometimes the citizens lack legal security under the rule of law. In Uganda (p.69) political parties do not operate freely because often times they are confronted by the police due to restrictions on freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. The Kenyan report (p.22) indicates that several attempts to draft and adopt a new Constitution since 1993 have so far been unsuccessful, in part due to remaining questions as far as its inclusiveness is concerned, both in terms of process and in the areas of political parties and ethnic diversity.
2. **Subscription and ratification of international conventions.** The reports indicate that the governments are dedicated to protecting all categories of human rights through subscription and ratification of African and international conventions that guarantee them. These include the rights of workers, women, children, minorities, and vulnerable groups. Several programmes have been established to implement these conventions. However, the Country Review Mission reports that in some countries (e.g. Nigeria, Benin and South Africa) there is a rampant abuse of women’s and children’s rights. In addition to sexual violence, women have not been freed from oppressive cultural practices such as female genital mutilation in Nigeria and spiritual dedication where some young girls are kept in shrines for the atonement of the sins of their relatives in Ghana. The CRM in Ugandan report (p.104-105) cases of child labour and child soldiers, child sexual slavery and child trafficking.

3. **Protection of ethnic minorities.** The reports do not give much attention to ethnicity as an overarching issue and how it is being managed, although all countries reviewed mention that this is taken care of through their Constitutions. The Kenyan, Ugandan and Nigerian reports however do make a special mention of this challenge. In the Kenya case, they acknowledge this is a challenge and the government proposes to adopt some of the measures taken up in other countries, such as; (1) electoral processes (proportional representation or the reservation of seats on ethnic electoral rolls or special representation in second legislative chambers); (2) political representation through Councils of minorities that must be consulted on legislation and policies of relevance to the ethnic minorities; (3) ethnic balancing through constitutional provisions, (4) recognition of minority languages and (5) devolution.

In the Nigerian report, both the CSAR and CRM stress ethnicity as being among the problems accounting for economic and political tensions but there are no clear policies and programmes put in place to curb the situation. However, the Human Rights Commission has taken note of the Osu minority, who are social outcasts. The Osu are stigmatised and considered socially inferior to the mainstream Igbo society. While the law referred to as the Osu Caste Law criminalises the treatment of the individual as outcasts, the practice of shunning the Osu and excluding them from the mainstream activities persists.

For Uganda (p.111), the report mentions the violation of ethnic minorities’ rights when the government took their land for national parks without compensation. Among these are the Batwa who lived in Bwindi impenetrable forest, the Basongora in Queen Elizabeth National park, Benet in Kapchworwa, and Karimojong for Kidepo national park. These displaced people have been marginalised and lack access to the social and economic benefits available to others in the country. Managing this type of diversity still brings tension, although some initiatives to cater for their interests include: (a) Alternative Basic Education for Karimojong (ABEK) and (b) the United Organisation for Batwa Development that advocates for human rights of the Batwa.
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

The Rwandan CSAR notes (p.138) that ethnicity as the core form of identity was for long promoted in Rwanda at the expense of national identity, eventually leading to national disintegration by denying citizenship to the weak and culminating in genocide. The Government of Rwanda has therefore developed a policy to achieve national stability, unity and reconciliation through the creation of a Rwandan identity, which has no recourse to ethnicity. This is expressed through steps taken by the Government to promote the common denominator of culture, language and a sense of community that has characterised its society in the past. However, on (p.136) it is reported that after the genocide, a lesson learnt is that, although ethnic identities are good for unity and development, it is failure to manage ethnic diversity that sparked off the genocide.

4. Affirmative action. This is a cross-cutting issue to promote women and enhance their participation in public offices beyond domestic work. Although there is slow progress in Benin and Nigeria, the CRM assesses the promotion of women as both progressing and productive in Uganda, Algeria, South Africa and Rwanda. The reports indicate this success through statistical representation of the number of women in public offices such as parliament and managerial positions. In Ghana 40% and Rwanda 30%, of the positions at all political levels are reserved for women.

5. Press freedom and ICT. CRM reports freedom of media in Algeria to bridge the gap between people. The country has approximately 130 publications and 43 daily newspapers. Benin is also reported using ICT to reach its people. In this case, ICT serves to enable social mobilisation.

6. Universal primary education Universal education was reported by the CSAR of Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya and Benin to promote children’s rights. However, it received varied reactions in several countries. In Ghana, though it is compulsory, the $50 contribution per child in addition to other requirements is a deterrent. The same applies to Nigeria and Benin. In Kenya, free primary education was recently introduced and is said to increase enrolment of pupils in schools though it seemed too early to assess academic performance. With limited classrooms and logistics, universal education as a program is not as practical as expected. However, for Algeria, education is free up to tertiary levels; it was assessed positively and said to improve women participation in public affairs. In Uganda, it is assessed as successful although, due to limited logistical support and corruption, its quality is much compromised.

7. Restorative versus retributive justice. With the exception of Ghana, with diversity seen to have caused political unrests, the concerned countries have established machineries to resettle and reconcile the parties that once clashed or are clashing through discourse and restorative justices. Restorative justice mechanisms include: (1) the Standing Committee on Peace, Conflict Resolution and Emergency Relief; an NGO composed of faith-based organisations in Nigeria; (2) the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and the Gacaca courts in Rwanda; (3) Social Re-integration and National Reconciliation in the context of the anti-terror campaign.
in Algeria; (4) South Africa’s Committee to inculcate a spirit of reconciliation in
governance and civil society. South Africa also fosters interaction between public
servants and the people they serve through initiatives such as *Izimbizo* (public
participation and interaction), *Batho Pele* (people first) and multi-purpose community
centres in South Africa; (5) The Peace talks between the Government of Uganda and
the Lord’s Resistance Army and (6) the Post-election violence peace talks in Kenya.
The APRM reports indicate that these are on-going processes and therefore do not
explicitly list the successes registered through these mechanisms.

8. **Provisions for vulnerable groups** According to the South African APRM,
vulnerable groups include the sick, those living with HIV/AIDS, refugees, orphans,
widows, the elderly, the disabled, the homeless and minority ethnic groups. In
other countries, the reports note that, although their protection is stipulated in the
Constitution and international conventions, in Benin, Nigeria and Kenya, they do not
receive much attention from governments. In Ghana the role of NGOs in taking care
of vulnerable groups is mentioned. For Uganda, CSAR reports that such groups are
catered for through the relevant ministries such as the Ministry for Health, Disability,
Youth and Disaster Preparedness. Although they receive political sympathy, due to
limited logistical support, not all are effectively reached. However, stakeholders such
as NGOs, CBOs, cultural and religious institutions try to supplement state support.
In Rwanda, the government established *imigudu* (villages) by providing housing for
orphans and child headed families and established facilities for genocide victims i.e.
orphans, disabled and refugees.

In South Africa, the Department of Home Affairs grants asylums to refugees in the
country and has established a national immigration branch which include a refugees
affairs section. Government also established counter-xenophobia and counter-
corruption units that work to prevent abuse of refugees and asylum seekers. Mention
is made of illegal immigrants who are kept in the Lindela Repatriation Centre for
investigation before they are deported. According to the CRM, it appears to be of
acceptable standard, though the inmates complain of congestion and violation of their
rights by the police.

9. **Recognition of traditional rulers.** Although traditional rulers are said to have
potential in enhancing local stability, some countries do not recognise their presence
and participation in politics and this is reported to bring tension. In South Africa,
traditional rulers participate in local governance and the Country Review Mission
reports this as innovative, and respectful of the country’s political heritage. In
Uganda, though they are recognised and allowed to function, they are not allowed to
participate in politics.
COMPARATIVE REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR UGANDA

1. Managing diversity and sharing the “National Cake”. Managing diversity is essential to share national resources and services equitably and to avoid exclusion leading to conflict. It requires inclusiveness in building people’s potential to become productive members of their community and to contribute towards its sustainability. To avoid conflicts such as the recent attacks on migrants in South Africa, ethnic strife in Kenya, the long standing conflict with the Lord’s resistance Army in Northern Uganda or the Rwanda genocide, the issue of ethnicity in national development cannot be taken for granted. In Uganda, where the Country Self-Assessment Report expressed fears related to people’s allegiance to ethnic, religious and other social divisions, and their implication for the economy and politics in the country, there is therefore a need to tackle issues of equitable distribution within and across the diverse groups, to ensure peace and sustainable development.

2. Ethnic groups and gradual trends to modernity. According to the observations of the Country Review Mission in Uganda (p.110), the issue of the minority ethnic groups (e.g. the Batwa, Benet, Karimojong) remains a challenge to government, because of ineffective or absent measures to address their plight. They remain side-lined, behind “modern” trends. This calls for an anthropological approach to development and special initiatives. On this note (p.111), the Karimojong ABEK approach to basic education is reported as successful for it is designed within the local cultural framework, as opposed to the conventional system of education. The issue of traditional rulers was reported as contentious although, with the exception of South Africa and Uganda, not much is reported on how this issue is being handled in spite of its importance in eliciting emotional responsiveness, which can be tapped for human development through social mobilisation and to foster unity in diversity.

In conclusion, with the value of managing diversity intimately linked to nation building, the Government of Uganda is faced with a task of strengthening democratic processes and institutions. This should be done with the aim of enhancing equitable shares in the production and distribution of services and resources among the various categories of the people as a way of promoting a harmonious country.
References


VI. REFLECTION PIECES
14. Celebrate Plurality

THE RT. REV. DR DAVID ZAC NIRINGIYE, talks to Ute Seela from the Netherlands about diversity and common ground in Uganda, 3 August 2010

US: Bishop Niringiye, you have recently addressed civil society activists, academics, politicians and cultural leaders at the conference “Pluralism: the lived realities of managing diversity in Uganda”. Can you explain briefly how you understand pluralism?

DZN: I would like to distinguish ‘plurality’ and ‘pluralism’. Both terms are derived from the word ‘plural’, meaning ‘many’, ‘diversity’ or ‘variety’. It has to do with identity, and its reflections in behaviour, lifestyle and expressions. Our identities can manifest themselves in for instance culture, religion or social class. While ‘plurality’ is a fact of life – we are different, be it as tribes or followers of different religions - pluralism should be considered a doctrine or worldview.

Pluralism is about the appreciation of the difference without the acknowledgement that there are common norms. Pluralism allows people to express their difference – no matter what. In the Western culture this especially expresses itself in the whole idea of sexuality. Pluralism in this sense suggests that there is no normative way of expressing sexuality. This is the epitome of the idea of pluralism – that there must be ways in which homosexuality, bisexuality, and all other expressions of human sexuality are legitimate; the issue of sexuality should therefore be debated on the basis of human rights. People must be allowed to express who they are or would like to be. Human rights actually enshrine the notion of pluralism. When none of these expressions of sexuality have a claim to normativity, then there is no normative pattern, no normative behavior. There are therefore no common norms, no standards.

US: You are saying ‘pluralism is freedom of choice without boundaries’. However, in my country, individual freedoms are not absolute. For instance, freedom of expression is limited by the obligation not to incite hatred, not to incite violence.

DZN: This definition of pluralism is not my own. The roots of the concept need to be sought in the 16th and 17th century European Enlightenment period, in the era of Descartes and Nietzsche. In the thinking of Descartes everything is derived from ‘who I am’. He said ‘I think, therefore I am’. All you are, your identity, is within you, it is a matter of choice. All ‘what is’ must be verifiable, science is superior to belief and reason is the only way of knowing.

What I disagree with are these roots of the concept, this understanding of ‘what we are’. It is not that I disagree with you that in Western societies choice and rights must not infringe on somebody else’s right, but I think the reason why Europe cannot cope with its Muslims is because the pluralism based on the individual has become a dogma. It only works as long as societies are rather homogenous. Europe has big
troubles applying the same pluralism to the choice of women (be it an individual choice or a collective norm) to wear the veil.

US: You introduced an alternative concept: celebrating plurality. How does this concept differ from pluralism?

DZN: Let me first turn to what I consider the other ‘extreme’: tribalism. Tribalism is the notion that ‘what we know, what we believe, becomes the standard’. And the critical question here is ‘who is the we’. It has to do with our identity, with both fact and belief. But it need not necessarily be blood relations. We could also talk of a tribalism of religion or a tribalism of economics. The trend one can observe is that when people of diverse tribes live together but cannot agree on common norms, they separate the entities.

We have a history of tribalism in Uganda - not of tribes - this is a fact. Ugandan politics, how Ugandan political parties work, is through the identification of a particular group in which they can exercise the politics of patronage. If you go to Western Uganda, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) of President Museveni has come to be associated with the Church of Uganda. The biggest opposition party Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) is said to ‘be’ the Roman Catholic Church. However, in other places it might be the other way round. Our politics is not about ideas, it is about people who do others a favour.

This has been the case even before the British colonized what has become Uganda. Governance was organized around kingdoms that represented related tribes who had similar beliefs or behaviour. Even then relations between tribes were power relations. The most powerful, or most dominant vis-à-vis the other tribes, had the biggest territory. British colonialists realized how powerful Buganda was, they therefore used the Baganda people as an instrument to dominate the others. The project of Uganda has become ‘how do you create strong tribal entities that are able to fight for their space and dominate the others’.

But tribalism is not an African phenomenon. The very idea of the nation state, as it has emerged in Europe, is a construction that is built on tribalism. Look at how small European states are. Most European states consist of one homogeneous tribe. Those few who do not, are federal states that allow differing degrees of autonomy to the different tribes, and thereby enable separation.

Silently, separation is also a proposal in our country. It is this contrast of tribalism and pluralism that I want to point out. In a tribalist system we think that our norms, behaviours and standards must be those of everyone else. In pluralism, there are no norms, pluralism does not distinguish between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. The point I am trying to make is that we need to celebrate our plurality. We must accept plurality as fact and as gift. But in order to celebrate we need to dance to the same tune. The challenge we face is identifying the common ground, our shared values, or shared identity. Although different, we have a meta narrative.
US: Maybe the question is ‘who defines the boundaries?’ Are they a given or do they belong to the territory of ideology, of ideas, which a society needs to debate?

DZN: Boundaries are certainly not a given, it is the encounter that matters, the meeting of the differences. Only then can we find the common ground. And when we have found it, we must realise that the tune is not owned by anyone. We need to think about institutions that promote encounter and relationship, legal processes that seek to create space so that everything thrives because there are common norms.

US: Why would sexuality not be an area where people need to debate and seek understanding in order to find the common ground? Why regulate the bedroom with a specific anti-homosexuality-bill?

DZN: Yes, what happens in my bedroom is my own business! But see, the private bedroom is actually a Western thing. You need it because you spend much time inside, it’s cold… We never used to have a separate bedroom for the couple! Actually, even in the West, sex has ceased to be a private thing. It is shown everywhere, on television, magazines. Young people learn through the media how it works! But private or not, I think we must simply acknowledge what is considered acceptable behaviour in this society.

I don’t really want to talk about the Anti-Homosexuality Bill because the way it evolved – it is a rather complex matter. The Anglican Church says instead of drafting a new bill, the existing Penal Code Act should be amended. The Church particularly wants to protect the vulnerabilities of the boy child, ensure proportionality in sentencing and exclude sexual orientation as a protected human right. Contrary to the proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill, parliament should ensure that the law protects the confidentiality of medical, pastoral and counselling relationships.

This is what the Church says. I don’t say homosexuality is abnormal, or that in a sense we all are somehow abnormal. We all have those elements in us that need to be tamed. Please don’t assume I hate homosexuals. They are people and I love people. What the Church considers important is the traditional family and the male-female relationship on which it builds. This family and its values would be destroyed if homosexuality was to be promoted.

US: Ugandans have sent signs of their frustration with the political process - on whether elections are of any use given the way the country works at the moment. People haven’t seen their expectations in politicians met. Patronage defines who gets what: equal access, equal opportunities are an illusion. How can that sentiment be changed and make use of the momentum and opportunity of the elections next year?

DZN: We should certainly not continue with a policy such as the creation of ever more districts. Our President is saying that an own district is good for tribes who have been ignored. But that way we entrench tribalism in our system, it is simply ‘divide and rule’.
Patronage is not necessarily a bad thing - what I mean is the idea of the master and the servant. In a real democracy, the master is the ideology and we all are the servants. Politicians, even the President, are not more that 'leading servants'. Our politicians need to clarify the ideas for which they stand. Ideas on which we agree to organize. Politics is not about individuals!
15. An Inventory of Civil Society Initiatives for the Promotion of Pluralism and Tolerance in Uganda

IVAN AMANIGA RUHANGA

Abstract

In this abridged version of an earlier paper, the author presents an inventory of the main civil society initiatives in promoting pluralism and tolerance in Uganda. This reveals a wide range of activities, ranging from advocacy (for inclusion), capacity building, protection of human rights, awareness and sensitisation, peace building, and developing national values. While these activities have resulted in some change (such as contributing to building a broader knowledge base about democracy and civic consciousness; and stimulating constructive debate), impact is still limited and challenges include the increasingly contested space for NGOs and the media, an unsupportive policy and legal regime, sporadic funding, and often negative attitudes towards pluralism, reflecting low levels of civic education. The author suggests that there is a need for coordination of civil society activities related to the promotion of pluralism and tolerance, with a clear common agenda, as uncoordinated voices are not given due attention. Civil Society Organisations also need to invest in capacity-building, especially in advocacy skills, budget analysis and capacity to engage in policy processes, in order to strengthen their engagement with Government to do away with legal instruments that promote individualism and dictatorship.

INTRODUCTION

Today Uganda is a divided society, where ethnicity, gender, religion, social class and political affiliation influence people’s reasoning, analysis of issues, attitude and sometimes decision making. Examples such as the way the public analyses cabinet appointments based on regionalism and ethnicity, the cold welcome given to the operation of the multiparty dispensation in Uganda, the restrictive legal provisions for funding of these parties, the minimal levels of debate on these issues and the staffing arrangements at key government agencies such as the electoral commission – all testify to the fact that pluralism is not yet harnessed as a tool for balanced and sustainable development.

THE LEVEL OF CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT AND ITS IMPACT

This mapping report outlines civil society initiatives in Uganda to advocate for, strengthen pluralism and inculcate a culture of tolerance as a requisite for celebrating the country’s rich diversity in ideologies, beliefs, interests and perspectives. The initiatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) are implemented under specific
programmes, programme-based activities and one-off activities related to pluralism and tolerance.

The results of the inventory highlight the fact that there are a considerable number of CSOs focusing on pluralism and tolerance initiatives. While these take many different forms, organisations appear to focus more on six main themes. These are initiatives that:

- contribute to women’s participation in all spheres of socio-economic development
- advocate for political tolerance
- provide legal advice
- promote human rights
- lobby and advocate for minority rights
- advocate for equitable sharing of the nation’s resources

Many CSOs in their constitutions have visions, mission statements, and values collectively aspiring to promote equality, justice, rights. Many lobby for policies that promote inclusion, participation, pro-poor budgeting and in some cases address the needs of specific marginalised groups. The work of civil society in encouraging tolerance and peaceful co-existence has often received negative criticism from Government. Nevertheless, one can recognise that CS has undertaken a variety of initiatives to nurture pluralism and tolerance in many ways including; monitoring government actions, fighting corruption, promoting the observance of human rights, issuing press releases and statements of recommendations, and fighting for its space to play its observatory role in the social, political and economic development arena. As part of the achievements of the struggle, some political commentators assert that the current political space enjoyed by political parties, though in its minimal form, can be attributed to the advocacy work of civil society, which checks the excesses of the ruling government that has demonstrated an anti-competition attitude in many ways and on many occasions. CS has therefore had an impact in terms of creating “liberal minds”.

Civil Society has devoted efforts in uplifting and building the capacity of their colleagues – the media as a channel to disseminate to the public useful information about pluralism and campaigning for tolerance of the diversity that characterises the lives and ways of Ugandans. This is an illustration of the capacity building and empowerment efforts of Civil Society actors. The work of civil society, particularly on human rights, has also led to the establishment of regulatory and institutional frameworks for the protection of the same. For instance, Action on Disability and Development points out it that has contributed to the establishment of a department of disability and for the elderly in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and the Disability desk in the Ministry of Health. These provide mechanisms through which to carry forward related human rights work.

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412 Interview with Lillian Muyomba, Research Fellow – ACODE
CS has also contributed in creating awareness and sensitisation about pluralism and tolerance, and the indispensable role that pluralistic systems can play in championing development in the country. The impact of this work is building civic consciousness in their constituencies as evidenced in the constructive debate on the subject, and this in itself is a strategic medium for information sharing.

**CHALLENGES OF PROMOTING PLURALISM AND TOLERANCE**

“…NGOs, their networks and coalitions are super-imposed upon these (community groups). They are often donor-dependent, with their staff, vehicles, projects and agenda that ordinary people do not feel close to. It is a somewhat fragmented and competitive sector that is often governed by suspicion, and where accountability to donors often takes precedence over accountability to the local population. Nevertheless, there is evidence that it is gradually structuring itself (such as through networks) and attempting to regulate itself too…” (CIVICUS/DENIVA, 2007)

The impact of CS initiatives said and done, the struggle to promote pluralism and tolerance is still incomplete. We still see a Uganda where the media concentrates on urban centres when it comes to matters of participation; community attitudes that are anti-pluralism; a government espousing an attitude of opposition to diversity of ideologies; and, organisations chanting slogans such as ‘pro-poor…’, ‘inclusion…’, ‘gender sensitive…’ but yielding unsustainable impact in their constituencies. The role of civil society in this effort faces a number of challenges as shown below.

**Contested space for NGOs and the media**

There is a crisis of legitimacy that allows NGOs to be increasingly represented as “trouble makers” in some quarters. The notion of ‘NGO’ is further contested in the new era of the multi-party dispensation, and CSOs have on many occasions been regarded as part of the opposition. This may also explain the recent tightening of the legal environment for NGOs (the new NGO Act) that is likely to further impair CS’s fight for its space, as well as Government’s ambivalent attitude on what constitutes allowable advocacy activities for CSOs (especially when they ‘stray’ into what it considers the political arena). It is felt that the incoming NGO legislation has a net effect of rolling back Civil Society activity.

The Government has also increasingly made attempts to diminish space for the media, thus reducing the effectiveness of their information and oversight roles. Government continues to make negative comments about the role of the media in promoting pluralism and tolerance. There have been a number of attempts to gag the media because when you critique, you are looked at as being anti-government. This has had a toll on the level of impact that the media could have made and makes it difficult for Ugandans to harvest socially and economically form the diversity the country is endowed with.
Unitary ideological set-up and negative attitude towards pluralism

Most of Civil Society initiatives to promote pluralism and tolerance fall in barren soil because of the mind-set of large sections of Ugandans. Most individuals and leaders have a negative attitude towards pluralistic systems, and this unitary ideological set-up does not provide a favourable ground for pluralism to take root in Uganda. Seeing religious and political intolerance at community level, actions of the state against the opposition e.g. the limits on assembly numbers and requirements for clearance from the Police, one concludes that attitude is one of the hindrances to pluralism because as it is now, current thinking promotes individualism.

Low levels of civic education

The other challenge that Civil Society faces in its work on pluralism and tolerance is related to illiteracy and low levels of civic education. Communities look at their entitlements as privileges. They still do not comprehensively appreciate their rights and as such, do not know how to engage their leaders to demand what they are entitled to. The civic education that government is mandated to conduct as a continuous process in only done during the election period, and it is confined to voter education. This perhaps explains why rural communities are sceptical about political pluralism, do not tolerate alternative religious beliefs and have ideological intolerance even amongst themselves.

Waning unconditional funding for CS work

Studies indicate that 86% of resources used by Civil Society in Uganda come from donor grants and that donor dependence is very visible (CIVICUS CSI, 2006). There is little funding from the general public and CSOs therefore reflect the priorities of international charitable organisations. The mapping also found out that donors are getting fatigued and there is no sustained funding effort to create lasting impact. As already alluded to above, subjects such as civic education are supposed to be continuous in an ideal situation to deal with socio-cultural, economic and political changes that emerge over time. However, funding for CS work is periodic and dwindling. This is a challenge to the achievement of a lasting impact in related CS initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What can be done to create both an enabling environment for CS to promote pluralism and tolerance, and operational conditions for the celebration of Uganda’s cultural, spiritual, material and ideological diversity?

Streamlining coordination in CS work

There is a need for coordination of CS activities on pluralism and tolerance. Uncoordinated voices of CS are not given due attention and as such cannot influence government to value the messages they seek to deliver. There is also an apparent lack of a clear agenda by CS on what they should be doing. Some organisations try to do
things but find themselves drawn back by a lack of specific focus. It also becomes
difficult for them to measure the impact of their work over time. Actors should be
marshalled towards one common understanding. They should be made to understand
that competition amongst themselves is a liability.

Capacity-building
Civil Society Organisations need to invest in capacity-building, especially in advocacy
skills, budget analysis and capacity to engage in policy processes. The production of
“half-baked” products can be used to undervalue the role of CS in the pursuit of their
goals. Building their capacity will also help the organisations to build the capacities
of their target beneficiaries in matters to do with pluralism and tolerance.

Review of laws and policies
Legal and policy reforms will be useful in interpreting and implementing the
constitutional provisions for the celebration of pluralism in Uganda. Therefore, CS
needs to strengthen their engagement with Government on legal and policy review to
do away with the hurdles enshrined in our legal instruments that promote individualism
and dictatorship. The current legal and institutional regime is not supportive to the
grounding of pluralism in the country and provides room to protect intolerance.

Re-orientation towards constitutionalism
In general terms, there is a need for all stakeholders to appeal to the Ugandan society
about constitutional guidance on pluralism and tolerance. The attitudes of Ugandans
towards people of different ideologies cannot help the country to benefit from the
socio-cultural and political diversity that the country is endowed with. We are in a
society where individual needs take precedence over societal well-being. Cases of
escalating corruption levels in government departments, skewed national and local
government budgets, and tribal conflicts over resources among others attest to this
fact.

CONCLUSION
Whereas CS has had a variety of initiatives for pluralism and tolerance as shown
in this inventory, it is clear that the issue has not been adequately addressed. We
have seen a number of strategies employed to conduct their business and the level
of success attained. Uganda’s CS believes that pluralism and being able to tolerate
our differences and use them as an asset is the way to go for the country. From the
analysis of how CS engages the decision-makers of this country, it is evident that
merely asking government does not work. Actors must look for effective strategies
to engage government on issues to do with respecting diversity. Some of these may
include building coalitions to engage in a concerted movement. Finally, sensitisation
on pluralism and tolerance is paramount, but should go hand in hand with a review of
existing laws to be consistent with the Constitution with regard to pluralism.
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16. Legal Pluralism And Culture In Governance – What Works?

THE CROSS-CULTURAL FOUNDATION OF UGANDA

Abstract
In this introductory chapter to a larger publication entitled ‘Culture in governance – Does it work?’, the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda draws from four case studies to present reflections on the relevance of legal pluralism in the Ugandan context, a context where ‘development’ seems to co-exist with ‘governance deficits’. The paper suggests that there is much to learn from traditional governance systems, as currently still in use and often adapted to new demands, and from examining their potential contribution to enhancing governance as a nation. This is an understanding of governance and civic action that challenges the supremacy of a ‘unique law’ and encourages us to examine the existence of several value systems – legal pluralism.

All the cases highlight the resilience of structures, mechanisms and values that help local communities organise themselves and deal with the problems they face, rather than the existence of the monopoly of a single state-inspired and directed framework representing the totality of responses to governance challenges. Further, not only are ‘traditional’ reference points being used, they are also being adapted to new sets of local circumstances, although the study notes that one must avoid any romanticism about traditional governance systems. The case studies presented here suggest that benefits could be derived from moving from an ‘either or’ situation, to one where the positive aspects of both types of governance perspectives are brought together.

INTRODUCTION
We increasingly recognise that important aspects of our cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, provide important sources of inspiration and learning to address the nation’s current development challenges. And few of us would disagree that one of these challenges concerns the way we govern ourselves to shape our future, including how we manage our resources, our identity and diversity for our peoples’ benefit.

The aim of this report is to suggest a response to the question: can cultural values, traditional governance systems and their current practices help us find a way forward in dealing with the contemporary governance challenges we face as a nation?

In the last decade, Uganda has achieved a period of political stability not witnessed in the post-independence period. The country has also successfully transited from a one-party to a multi-party state, a new Constitution has been approved and elections are regularly held. Official statistics tell us that a growing number of Ugandans benefit from peace, economic growth and prosperity.
Yet, in spite of this progress, do we see a sustained path to ‘development’, fundamentally reflecting people’s aspirations and desire for physical and mental well-being? Everywhere we look, does another side of the ‘prosperity and progress’ coin not call for our attention? A point of departure for this report is that ‘governance deficits’ are one aspect of this reverse side: human and constitutional rights are constantly under pressure (with legal restrictions, or proposed restrictions on the media, NGOs and the right of association); the banning of radio stations and popular ‘chat shows’, such as ebimeeza; a Parliament increasingly controlled by the Executive; and the devolution – or recentralisation - of power to districts and regions the subject of conflict, often accompanied by violence (as in the 2009 ‘Buganda riots’ that cost 27 people their lives and another 800 their freedom). In addition, election processes are questioned; the nature of citizenship is challenged (as in Kibaale and the proposed ‘ring fencing’ of political positions); corruption scandals keep breaking, and impunity seems to prevail. Violence never seems very far from the surface.

In view of this, can culture (and in particular current governance practices derived from our cultural background) give us pointers? The central message of this document is that it can and indeed should. More specifically, it suggests that there is much to learn from our traditional governance systems, as currently still in use and often adapted to new demands, and from examining their potential contribution to enhancing our governance as a nation.

**CULTURE, GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC ACTION**

For our purposes, we can define governance as the evolving processes, relationships and structures by which a group of people organise themselves to achieve the things that matter to them. To do so, people need to make decisions, among others, about group membership and identity, authority, accountability, and enforcement. Governance is therefore as much about people, power, and relationships, as it is about formal structures; and it is certainly not culture-neutral. It is indeed rooted in our cultural values and defines what we consider ‘the right way’ to get things done. In a multi-cultural and artificial colonial creation such as Uganda, we can expect that determining whose way is the ‘right way’ will be contested and the selection of case studies presented here therefore reflects a pluralistic understanding of governance.

If governance is inextricably linked to identity and to the ‘political community’ one relates to, then citizens will act in a space which may not be the nation state: it may be related to religion, ethnic group or other dimensions of locality where ethical principles prevail, where rights and responsibilities are exercised. The case studies therefore offer pointers as to whether non-state spaces, whose rules and values people are intimately connected to, offer opportunities for civic action. Contrary to what is often assumed in the context of rights-based approaches, we therefore highlight the power of individuals to tackle a situation themselves, rather than that of disempowered communities whose claims on the State must be strengthened. At the same time, we recognise that civic change may run counter to democracy, may be racist, sexist,
and segregationist. We need to understand this relativism, and therefore avoid falling into the romantic notion that we must ‘respect the local culture’; or ‘avoid importing foreign models’.

**LEGAL PLURALISM: IS CULTURE ‘OPPOSED’ TO GOVERNANCE?**

This understanding of governance and civic action challenges the supremacy of a ‘unique law’ and encourages us to examine the existence of several value systems, although the State may see ‘its’ system as universalistic (or at least superior) and exclusive of others. This may explain why ‘culture’ and ‘rights’ are often seen as invariably opposed, and why ‘customary law’ is generally considered ‘below’ statutory law.

The tension between the ‘local’ and the ‘universal’, between different sets of values is evident in current debates on human rights, which have become a key theme in the development discourse. International conventions stress the universal character of human rights and, amongst NGOs the acceptance of the universality of human rights is even more widespread than amongst states. Yet, if we consider the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one may question the perspectives of its drafters in 1948 (a group of white men) and, more broadly, what legitimacy the ex-colonial powers, ex-cold war warriors, perpetrators of atrocities, advocates of ‘structural adjustments’, have to dictate to others. At the minimum, we must recognise that legal frameworks are inspired by a cultural context and reflect international power relationships. Can we therefore not legitimately ask whether, if human rights are to be at all universal (as the rights of all human beings everywhere), they must be integral to the culture of all societies, and not only of Western societies? Further, we can recall debates about the pre-eminence of ‘human rights’, versus ‘economic rights: which come first? Can one have human rights in a political instable environment fuelled by poverty: as an observer wittily put it, “Human rights start with breakfast”?  

This discussion finds its echo in debates about Human Rights in relation to “African culture”. African Heads of States adopted the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights in 1981, which mentions the importance of ‘taking into consideration the virtues of their historical tradition and the values of African civilisation which should inspire and characterise their reflection on the concept of human and peoples’ rights.’ and an African Court first starting meeting in 2006 (although to date the court has only heard a single case).

Uncertainties therefore reflect the fact that, as these case studies show, we live in communities of mixed legal spaces, where a single act or actor is potentially regulated by multiple legal or quasi-legal regimes. Communities seek (and create) a wide variety of institutions, and practices to manage this mix. From across the world, we increasingly recognise that ‘traditional’ mechanisms have existed for years, providing a recognised system for governance and reconciliation, outside the formal system
imposed by the State. While the State system associates justice with punishment, traditional institutions seek to combine these elements in keeping with the values of the community. It is therefore clear that the rule of law is not only a legal matter, but also a cultural one and it has therefore been suggested that legal pluralism offers not only a description of the world we live in, but that ignoring the ‘mix’ mentioned above “as somehow not law is not a useful strategy.” Communities that produce these norms - rather than nation-states – therefore provide a useful framework for understanding the diverse sources of values that have become the focus of much current international law scholarship and, increasingly, practice.

**FOUR CASE STUDIES**

This paper is based on the documentation of four cases, in different parts of the country and with a different focus. All illustrate the interface between forms of ‘community governance’, culture and the State. They approach the topic from different perspectives, are based on lived experiences and examine different dimensions of governance: human rights and justice; accountability; access to resources and conflict resolution.

The first case study, “Protecting rights to land, our most precious resource”, examines the work of LEMU, the Land Equity Movement of Uganda, in relation to customary land tenure; a tenure regime that prevails in 80% of the country. LEMU has been animated by a contention that “everyone, women, men and children need and deserve land rights.”

Land is key to our governance as a nation, a critical social and economic issue, whether in terms of access and ownership, population growth, environmental degradation, or in relation to contested legislation. The advantages of customary tenure, its resonance with local cultural values of care and solidarity, its management mechanisms that are accessible to local people, including the poor, are considered. LEMU’s work has helped to re-emphasise the relevance and usefulness of this type of tenure to many millions of ordinary Ugandans, albeit a system earlier seen as a remnant from an earlier epoch to be gradually replaced with freehold tenure.

Two aspects of its work which have contributed to this changed reality are illustrated. The first has been to document, update and publicise the norms and mechanisms to make customary tenure more effective and to ensure that they protect the rights of all in the community, including the poorest and most vulnerable, and in the process revitalise the role of the clans in ensuring that these are adhered to. The second and possibly more decisive action has been on the policy front. As a result, the National Land Policy will, if implemented, reflect the status of customary land tenure as a system that deserves as much recognition and support from state authorities as others, and that can be linked to the state institutions for effective administration.

The second case, “Traditional and modern conflict resolution mechanisms in Pokot”, examines the interface between traditional and state governance systems in conflict resolution, highlighting contradictions between local perceptions of cultural and
human rights and how these are managed by mediators who use a cultural approach to conflict resolution, such as the Pokot Zonal Integrated Development Programme.

The existence of two governance systems in Pokot raises a number of challenges in respect to the limitations identified in both systems, and to managing a productive interface between the two. On the one hand, most people met consider legal procedures as often unfair, slow, and corrupt. On the other, the traditional system, while effective to resolve some conflicts, has several limitations, including poor sensitivity to human and women’s rights, disregard for the marginalised, and lacking in accountability to any other authority.

One area of contradiction concerns perceptions of justice: the traditional system places emphasis on discipline, honesty, accountability, reconciliation and compensation while the state system seeks to establish right and wrong – in the process punishing the wrongdoer but not necessarily compensating the aggrieved. Without understanding these values in both systems, community members are likely to continue dismissing the legal governance system, which ideally provides for the protection of their rights. Having parallel, disconnected systems that aim at the same objective not only results in the ineffective use of resources, but occasionally in the mismanagement of conflict situations.

The third case study, “Isaazi: Elders speaking out against corruption” presents an anti-corruption initiative in Tooro, whose features distinguish it from official endeavours. First, it is the brainchild of a group of elders, explicitly drawing on the ancestral cultural values. Secondly, while it relies on well-established values, it mainly uses modern technology – an FM radio station – to promote its message. Third, it is run on a voluntary basis and is independent of external private or public funds. It therefore presents characteristics that make it replicable elsewhere in the country.

The experience of the Isaazi highlights the potential of culturally-rooted efforts to tackle such intractable current challenges as corruption. In this case, drawing on the legitimacy of cultural values and culturally-recognised persons – the elders and the Isaazi – acceptance and legitimacy have been quickly generated. This has been combined with new technology, the FM radio, to create a powerful, ‘modern’ space for the young and the elders to communicate.

While it may take time to build the trust associated with a new, ‘non-aligned’ structure in all quarters – including the political class - new energy has perceptibly emerged from the Isaazi: “It is a voice for the people because they have no string attached; they can raise anything that they feel is in the public interest.” Other parts of the Tooro region have expressed interest in such a mechanism and are attempting to develop their own Isaazi, as people recognise such a Forum as a uniting factor, going beyond religion, politics, age, and ethnicity.

The final case focuses on “The Alur Chiefdom and managing conflicts in fishing communities” and explores the interface between the traditional and local governance systems in Panyimur, Nebbi district.
The traditional institution collaborates to varying degrees with different local governance actors, all playing a role to curb insecurity and resolve conflict in Panyimur. In most cases the interface is not consistent or systematic but is often considered relevant. Hence the effort made to ensure mutual consultation takes place for a commonly appreciated outcome. Collaboration between the traditional and local governance system is nevertheless ad hoc and flexible, resulting at times in successful and conclusive management of conflicts and at other times in unresolved cases, thus perpetuating conflict. Both systems nevertheless fail to single-handedly deal with drawn out problems, such as insecurity, that divert time and energy for resolution, as opposed to developing the area.

The text points out that, while the traditional institution is likely to remain resilient as a source of cultural identity, its relevance in other spheres of development and in the private and public lives of the local community will largely depend on its ability to reinvent itself by retaining core traditional values and principles, while responding to changes in the wider environment, including the influx of new ethnic groups, the influence of education, religion and trade.

LEARNING POINTS
Having set out some of the key issues in the first part of this text, what can we learn from the case studies?

The relevance and resilience of ‘traditional’ governance mechanisms
All the cases highlight the resilience of structures, mechanisms and values that help local communities organise themselves and deal with the problems they face. We are far from the monopoly of a single state-inspired and directed framework representing the totality of responses to governance challenges. To the contrary, in all cases, traditional systems of governance are sought by local people. Why this resilience?

The most prominent ‘push’ factor appears to be a widespread popular dissatisfaction with statutory mechanisms. ‘Modern’ state structures are seen as commercialised, distant (both physically and in terms of the values they represent), alien (for instance in terms of language and procedures), and incapable of delivering fairness and justice. They then lack credibility, as patronage and favouritism prevail or at least seen to prevail. As the Local Councils (LCs) continue to offer the closest access to such state mechanisms, one may also ask how they are meant to operate in a multi-party system. Can a partisan system deliver impartial justice? We then see people voting with their feet, away from state structures.

Hence a desire to revert to ‘informal’ structures. Here the ‘pull’ factor reflects the mirror image of the above: non-state structures are immediately available, they are familiar and understood because they resonate with local values, and are often considered non-corrupt, impartial and non-partisan. The case studies highlight the ‘usefulness’ of informal structures in certain types of conflict resolution and reconciliation, in securing land rights and in exacting accountability for public resources. Such mechanisms,
institutions, and practices in effect recognise that communities may legitimately wish to use ‘their system’ in particular circumstances.

**Who are the ‘cultural leaders’?**

While the four cases focus on the role of cultural institutions in various aspects of governance, it is the role of elders and clan leaders that emerges in all as determinant, rather than ‘apex’ institutions, such as kingdoms. Often too, it is the values that these leaders represent and promote that make them ‘eligible’ to qualify as cultural leaders. In the case of the Isaazi in Tooro, for instance, the recognised elders are not necessarily elderly, but are distinguished on the strength of their responsibility, exemplary behaviour and knowledge of the culture. Women are often absent as ‘front benchers’ although their influence may be exercised in a less apparent fashion.

**A locally rooted value system open to change**

As already noted with regard to alternative conflict resolution in Northern Uganda, both cases that focus on conflict management propound values that are different from those that emanate from the statutory legal framework. In both Pokot and Nebbi, the emphasis is on compensation and reconciliation, rather than punishment and retribution. Even where there is a less sharp distinction in values, the other cases illustrate the importance of what is considered ‘ancestral values’: in the LEMU case, where customary land tenure is informed by the need for collective solidarity and protection, rather than individual well-being and profit; and in the Isaazi case, in terms of clean leadership and probity. In all cases too, the communal aspect is important: what matters is the well-being and cohesion of the extended family and community, and less of the individual.

Further, not only are ‘traditional’ reference points being used, they are also being adapted to new sets of local circumstances, as several of the cases indicate. ‘Culture’ is in movement, fluid, open to interpretation and contestation, at times challenged by urbanisation and other social changes, but re-emerging in new guises, as the radio replaces the fi replace for the Isaazi and uncertain clan leaders’ judgements are substituted with booklets on customary land tenure management. To this can be added a paradox stemming from the effects of globalisation: on the one hand, communities are exposed to new values and worldviews that threaten the existence of the local culture, and on the other, there is a sense of vulnerability and fear of getting lost in diversity, heightening the need for cultural identity. The survival of traditional culture will indeed depend on the context and the benefits of either being subsumed, or standing out to be recognised as a unique expression of identity in diversity.

**Traditional systems offer governance solutions that do not depend on ‘funding’**

As an article on LEMU’s work observes, “It costs nothing to organise villagers to choose a tree that they will all recognise as a boundary marker and to encourage
people to plant these trees.” Similarly, a traditional court sitting in Pokot or the ‘cultural’ resolution of a fishing dispute in Nebbi is not dependent on public funds. This is because of the spirit of voluntarism that often animates cultural leaders, the local ‘rootedness’ of such mechanisms and the generally undisputed legitimacy they represent. Thus, the Isaazi experience in Tooro demonstrates the importance of the commitment displayed by the elders and the considerable voluntary resource they represent. So long as the young want to learn from their elders, and elders have the urge to pass on their knowledge, such a Forum can present an important instrument to help construct a corruption-free nation, that mostly depends on people’s goodwill. On the other hand, reliance on limited resources, or even on complete voluntarism, opens the way for cultural leaders to be manipulated by the rich and the powerful.

‘Traditional’ systems are by no means flawless…
One must avoid any romanticism about traditional governance systems, as these cases show: clan court judgements may be seen as arbitrary; cultural institutions are generally accountable to none but themselves, they may exhibit a tendency towards ‘big man’ politics that we recognise in other institutions, and may succumb to the power of the wealthy. They may experience a credibility gap, especially towards the urban elite and the mobile, cosmopolitan youth. Cultural leaders are not necessarily among the most exposed and best educated members in a local community and, where this is the case, it may cripple their ability to deal with pressing contemporary issues that do not squarely fit in the inherited cultural frame of reference.

Women are often excluded from such processes, whose leaders may express strong chauvinistic sentiments about the roles and responsibilities of women, ‘hiding behind’ cultural reference points, real or imagined. The LEMU case for instance describes the tensions associated with giving women a strong voice in decisions concerning the sale of customary land. Most often, issues affecting women may not find their way into such public fora and the cultural leaders – overwhelmingly men – often adopt a paternalistic attitude towards these issues, often emphasising the need to ‘protect’ women, rather than to ‘empower’ them.

Finally, the cases indicate that the traditional system is most effective in a largely homogeneous community – with shared beliefs and values. With mobility, intermarriage and exposure, traditional leaders’ influence is also challenged.

A perception of ‘tradition’ opposed to ‘modernity’ and rights opposed to culture still prevails
LEMU’s attempts to ‘rehabilitate’ customary land tenure in the eyes of policy makers and human rights activists illustrate how customary law is still often seen (at best) as subordinate to statutory law, a view inherited from the colonial set-up, which also implies that ‘culture’, in the same way as ‘tradition’ is unchanging. As one document about its work observes, “The problem remains that governments, academics and the urban elite of the NGOs have all inherited the prejudices against native or traditional
culture from the colonial authorities.” All the cases indicate that these prejudices are usually ill-founded: the LEMU case shows how culture can in fact protect women’s rights; other cases exemplify how local justice systems have provided a solution sought by many, though based on a different perception of ‘rights’, informed by culture, and often focusing on the community, rather than the individual.

**Lack of synergy between systems**

With different values - indeed worldviews, traditional and modern governance systems operate in isolation from each other, with little communication, although neither operates in a vacuum. At times, one undermines the other, as illustrated in cases where politicians reverse legitimate decisions taken by traditional leaders. There is a lack of guidance as to how they should link and, where there is interface, it is ad hoc, based on individual preferences and practices. This lack of consistency is inefficient and muddies the extent to which people have the freedom to ‘subscribe’ to one system rather than another. It favours ‘forum shopping’ where conflicts are ‘resolved’ using the system that is thought to be most promising by the strongest party, or allows other issues to remain unconcluded, having fallen ‘between two stools’.

Lack of cross-referencing between the two systems then not only allows for continued human rights abuse, the neglect of some members of the community and the perpetuation of conflicts, it also prevents reflection and learning that could contribute to domesticating a state system that is perceived as foreign by many.

**SO WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

**Linking traditional and modern governance systems**

The case studies presented here suggest that benefits could be derived from moving from an ‘either or’ situation, to one where the positive aspects of both types of governance perspectives are brought together.

Is, for instance, legal pluralism desirable? For a start, while a value conflict among multiple, overlapping legal, or quasi-legal systems is probably unavoidable, this might sometimes be desirable as a source of alternative ideas and experiences that can contribute to the design of appropriate mechanisms, institutions, and practices. As Mamdani notes, “Tanzania is the only former colony that has managed to uproot the colonial legacy of tribal rule and (...) create a single Tanzanian common law deriving from multiple traditions: pre-colonial history, the entire complex of colonial laws (both civil and customary) and the corpus of anti-colonial practices, (creating) the legal basis for a single citizenship.”

More generally, how could ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ governance mechanisms re-enforce each other?

First, overall policy must provide a space for legitimate culturally-liked local mechanisms to co-exist and link up with state delivery mechanisms. An example
of the way forward is afforded by the draft national land policy, which provides for mechanisms not only to recognise the responsibilities of clan leaders in administering customary tenure, but also hold the clan system to account, provide for appeal mechanisms, and ensure the enforcement of judgments.

Secondly, there is a need to create cooperative linkages, rather than competitive ones. One way would be to specify specific roles of cultural mechanisms (as in the customary land tenure case) and to codify elements of traditional practice that are aligned with human rights and other state-led practices. Procedures could entail having joint planning, implementation and review meetings ‘across institutions’ – recognising the contribution of the different stakeholders - not only to discuss, say, disarming exercises and military interventions, but also national and district planning processes, operational plans, budgets and funds allocated. State operators also need to better understand the issues handled by the traditional courts, how livelihood challenges trigger conflicts and how traditional institutions can contribute to conflict prevention. There is a growing interest, for instance, in transitional justice, especially in northern Uganda. Could elders be formally part of LC courts? Could traditional leaders be trained to settle some issues? Could the nature of cases to be dealt with by the traditional governance system be established, beyond which a clear referral process is determined to avoid abuse of authority? Could legal aid providers link the two systems, with legal officers possibly involved in the traditional courts to provide guidance on the legal implications of the decisions that are taken? On the whole, although the existence of two governance systems provides alternative avenues for communities to access justice, it is therefore important that checks and balances for each system are put in place. Communities will need to be well informed of the justice and appeal processes, and referral of cases from one system to another well defined, so that cases can be tracked and conclusively handled.

Third, whether it is federo, the regional tier or ever more districts, we have seen that governance is about people, not structures. Linkages therefore need to go beyond the structural. Thus the principles of integrity and accountability used in the traditional system need to be integrated into the state governance system and the community made aware that it is their right and role to hold government officials accountable. To do this effectively, they need, possibly through civic education, to have access to relevant information and the ability to understand development plans, budgets and funds allocated for implementation to assess whether the development objectives have been achieved or not.

Fourth, state mechanisms need to become fairer and more accessible: the State needs to ensure easy access to courts of law and to increase the number of legal officers to dispense cases efficiently. Courts must also use a language that is understood by the people or use translators for court proceedings, including explaining opportunities for appeal, bond, etc. Where appropriate, compensation must be adequately and efficiently dealt with and where this is not possible, the complainant needs to be explained why this is the case. For the relevance of the state governance system
to be fully appreciated by community, local people need to understand what good governance from a government perspective is; know their rights and understand court proceedings.

Fifth, attitudes will need to change: state governance stakeholders need to take into account the cultural context and the strengths of the traditional system in terms of influence, access to information, and community management. As the LEMU case proposes, a genuine State-clan partnership will need to be forged and attitudes attuned to this, a formidable task. Thus, State authorities must make clear that the boundary trees will be protected as boundary markers by the law, that boundary maps will be respected in courts. When elders in Pokot ask soldiers who have harmed the community to sit under the tree and submit to local justice, this cannot be entirely ignored. On a broader front, respondents in Tooro suggested that the national government should learn from the Isaazi experience and mobilise retired civil servants, politicians, and others into a National Forum “to bring together all these un-expired brains and they would be willing to come and work without pay.”

Modernise and equip the ‘traditional’

This is perhaps the greatest challenge of all. One must accept that the world is changing and that, to remain relevant, customary governance mechanisms, like any other, will need to adapt to change. What would be required?

First, new responsibilities come with new needs. Most of the cases presented here suggest that the capacity of the traditional institutions to play their role more effectively needs to be strengthened. This could take the form of training (for instance on rights) or of documentation. In Pokot, for instance, the traditional conflict resolution system is well understood by the local communities, but its key principles and practices are not codified or documented, impairing any attempt to have these reflected in local by-laws. More generally, information on the law and rights must become more accessible than is presently the case, and work undertaken with traditional leaders to ensure that the communities understand their principles and thus collaborate for peace and justice.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the capacity to adapt to contextual change also needs to be supported. Whether it is responding to socio-economic change and the ‘dilution’ of ethnic identity, to pressure on customary land to accommodate investors, or to growing demands for democratisation and respect for human rights, all these must be accommodated. Fortunately, culture is dynamic and responsive to new changes, but traditional institutions would do well to enhance their ability to identify universal cultural values, open up to inclusion and equal protection for the community as a whole, and resist “the politics of fragmentation” while retaining their strong local ‘rootedness’. They must be seen as impartial and relevant to all within their geographical cultural boundaries, or risk becoming outdated mouthpieces, relevant only to a few. They must also engage with the youth and ‘connect’ with
them (modern information technology offers opportunities, as the Isaazi experience demonstrates).

To conclude, it appears that traditional leaders, if they are to continue playing an effective role in the current context, must indeed have the self-confidence to claim their legitimacy, to resist co-option, to constantly reinvent themselves and ensure that there is no risk of being tainted with any suggestion of adhering to authoritarian and paternalistic values that are ill-fitting with people’s contemporary aspirations.

Only then can they claim the legitimacy to help people reclaim their identity through vibrant local governance systems and ensure that non-state spaces offer continued opportunities for civic action, which these case studies demonstrate is possible. In the process, they can contribute to a more legitimate and accountable exercise of power to the benefit of all citizens, in tune with the vital cultural values that can inform the future of the nation.
17. National Identity Development: Reflections on the Cases of Uganda and Tanzania

CHRISTOPHER TUMWINE

Abstract

This abridged version of an earlier paper presents the author’s attempts to compare the development of national identity in Tanzania and Uganda. Although both countries are economically poor and culturally diverse nations, they have experienced different fortunes in terms of the stability that has been enjoyed by their citizens since independence. The author suggests that the active construction of the sense of national identity by the African Socialism programme the Nyerere Government implemented in Tanzania explains the difference in the levels of national identity between Uganda and Tanzania. The values that the programme stood for and the values of those who spearheaded it kept the country united, while ethnic nationalism and religious differences largely explain the ‘low’ levels of national identity in Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

The phrase national identity is closely linked to the concepts of nation, nationalism and identity. It is important therefore to begin with defining these concepts and showing how they finally give rise to the idea of national identity. However, as I attempt to define these concepts I need to point out that there is lack of consensus amongst scholars that have attempted to define the above concepts. In view of this, I will pick on definitions from scholars whose views rhyme with my earlier personal views about these concepts.

The term nation is defined by Smith (1999, p. 333) as, “a named human population with shared myths and memories, occupying an historic territory and possessing a mass public culture, a single economy and equal legal rights and duties for all members”. Smith (ibid.) goes ahead to define nationalism as “an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’”. Fallers (1961) also agrees with Smith by seeing nationalism as an ideological commitment to the pursuit of unity, independence and interests of a people who conceive of themselves as forming a community. Nationalists see nations as an inclusive categorisation of human beings –assigning every individual to one specific nation. Sasaki (2004) shows that individuals develop their own concepts of themselves by looking at others and comparing themselves to these others. The individual asks themselves, “Who am I?” I am like that other person, but I am not like the next other person (Sasaki, 2004).
When the above happens, the next level of comparison becomes the collectivity. Sasaki (2004, p. 74) points out that this happens as with the case of the individual self. The questions that become important now are, ‘Who are we? And the response would be, we are like those people but we are unlike those other people. With collectivities, the individuals attempt to identity the shared attributes or the similarities around which group members coalesce (Cerulo, 1997; Sasaki, 2004). Such collectivities can include ethnic groups/tribes/races, geographical regions, religious groups, nations and so forth.

Of all the above groups/collectivities, the idea of a nation has obtained emphasis in the recent past with nationalists working to ensure that the nation state comes first, before all the other collectivities/groups that individuals belong to. The nation has been one of the most influential doctrines in the world today and it is emphasised under this doctrine that all humans should be divided into groups called nations. With this doctrine taking firm root, campaigners’ for this doctrine (here after, nationalists) emphasised that national identity –the shared attributes which help to distinguish members of a nation from the non-members, should be the most important of all the individual’s identities. But as we shall see later, human beings do not only identify themselves with the nation but belong to other collectivities, such as religious groups, ethnic/racial groups, regional groups etc.

In realisation of the above, most nationalists attempt to emphasize the kind of identity that looks into the political aspects of life—as if politics can be separated from people’s daily lives. They attempt not to tread into the realm of cultural identity of their nations and when they do they limit their actions to the promotion of a few cultural artefacts as was the case with the Tanzanian nationalists in the period immediately after independence (Blommaert, 1996). The cultural differences that continue to exist amongst the peoples of a given nation act as bases for suspicion and conflict amongst the different groupings that exist within a nation.

After looking at the concepts nation, nationalism and identity I can now attempt to define national identity. National identity refers to the shared heritage of a given group. National identity stresses the similarities or shared attributes around which citizens of a nation coalesce (Cerulo, 1997, p. 386). National identity has to do with the collective identity of a group of people within a given territory. Individual nations are differentiated using a criterion that emphasises a shared language, culture and or shared values; a group of people with nothing in common cannot be a nation.

In this paper, national identity will be taken as the shared attributes or similarities around which citizens of a nation coalesce. These shared attributes will include a common descent, common culture, common language and a common religion. In the entire paper, I will attempt to show how in the two East African countries of Tanzania and Uganda the above attributes have developed, sometimes breeding intolerance amongst the peoples of each nation. In order to take on this task however, I will be
informed by Tafjel and Turner’s social identity theory that attempts to explain the issue of collective identities.

**Social identity theory**

The social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979; 1986) points out that, in addition to having a personal identity, each person has a number of group or social identities. It further points out that there is always a tendency for an individual to evaluate one’s in-group positively in comparison with relevant out-groups (Liu, Lawrence, Ward, Abraham, 2002; Robertson, 1977). Members of a given group tend to regard their own group as somehow special but any out-group as less worthy and may even be treated with hostility. The presence of a common enemy (real or imaginary) draws members of a group together and increases the solidarity and cohesion of the group (Coser, 1956). In relation to this theory, I point out that each ethnic or racial or religious group in a country is bound to evaluate itself positively in relation to the next ethnic or racial or religious group. In countries where there are very many ethnic/racial/religious groups, such as Tanzania and Uganda, therefore forging a sense of national identity would require that the country in question overcomes or minimises the differences that emanate from having many different ethnic/racial/religious groups. In countries where there may be two majority ethnic/racial/religious groups, when the differences between the two groups turn for the worse, the trend that follows is quite unpleasant. This theory therefore will directly or indirectly guide the arguments that I bring forward in this paper later on.

**Descent and national identity**

Shared origins and descent are components of the national identity in most nations. When ancestry is shared among members of a nation, this unites them and sets them apart from other nations which do not share in that ancestry. In Uganda for instance the country can be seen to be divided into two major groups on basis of descent. There is the Bantu speaking groups in the South of the country and the Nilotic peoples in the northern part of the country. At the height of the rebellion by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in 1998, this kind of division became very manifest with the rebels suggesting that they were fighting to create the Nile Republic in the Northern part of Uganda. On closer look, the areas which this Nile Republic was supposed to include were areas that are inhabited by the Nilotic people. Generally there is a feeling today that most of the resources have gone to the southern part of the country, especially during the current regime which came into power in 1986. This partly explained the numerous rebellions that ensued in Northern Uganda and even North Western Uganda after the present regime came into power (Brett, 1995).

It is not only indigenous Bantu or Nilotic peoples that are citizens of Uganda, there are also various tribes that are Ugandans, including people of Asian origin that hold Ugandan passports and are therefore citizens of Uganda. Tanzania too has a sizeable population of people of Asian origin, especially in Zanzibar and the coastal city of
Dar es Salaam. Because of the colour of their skin, they too have been subject to discrimination from the indigenous Africans and vice versa. This ill treatment on the basis of colour became much more apparent when the two East African countries were shifting allegiances from the West to the East. In Tanzania for instance with the introduction of Ujamaa, a number of privately owned businesses such as banks were nationalised. Because the people of Asian origin were much more enterprising, they were affected by this significant shift from a market led economy to state led economy. In Uganda too when the Obote government threatened to nationalise many industries in 1969, Asians exported much of their wealth and were accused of graft and tax evasion. It is not surprising therefore that when Idi Amin came in as president in 1971, he was able to chase people of Asian origin out of Uganda in 1972.

In an attempt to comprehend such intolerance between indigenous Africans, scholars such as Vassanji (1989) and Voet (1998) bring out the libertarian and the communitarian conceptions of citizenship as explanations for suspicion between the above nationals of Tanzania and Uganda (Kahyana, n.d, p. 2). The libertarian conception of citizenship Kahyana (n.d) shows, ‘sees citizenship predominantly as a legal status and attempts to give the individuals the maximum amount of freedom, and believes that self-interest is the basic motive upon which citizens act’. The communitarian conception of citizenship emphasises social participation in the activities of the community and also demands that an individual should respond to calls to contribute to the common good of their community.

To the indigenous Africans, the communitarian conception of citizenship was and is very appealing, while to the nationals of Uganda and Tanzania of Asian origin, the libertarian conception of citizenship was/is more appealing (Kahyana, n.d; Vassanji, 1989; Voet, 1998). The end result of this difference in perception was/is intolerance between the indigenous Africans and the citizens of the two East African countries of Asian origin. In Tanzania for instance at a rally on 23 January 1993 utterances by Christopher Mtikila the leader of the Democratic Party in connection to the relationship between black Tanzanians and Tanzanians of Asian origin sparked off riots in Dar es Salaam with youths pelting cars owned by Tanzanians of Asian origin. In Uganda the intolerance between black Ugandans and Ugandans of Asian origin reached its height in 1972 when Idi Amin expelled the latter out of Uganda (Campbell, 1999). In the two countries the low levels of trust between the two races continue up to today, with great potential for the relationship between the two races to degenerate and lead to bloodshed.

Related to the above is the issue of Tanzania’s union that has been said to be cracking especially after the death of Julius Nyerere in 1999 (Dickinson, 2004; Gidley-Kitchin, 1996). Zanzibar is home to largely people of Asian origin and is also home to Tanzania’s largest concentration of Muslims. Although the mainland has a huge Muslim population too, the cracking of the union that the two authors refer to partly has to do with the differences in terms of colour and religion that exist between the islands of Zanzibar and the mainland. In Uganda too a rift between northern Uganda
and Southern Uganda can be identified, although this rift can be attributed to the differences in ethnicity rather than religious differences since all religions are equally diffused in every part of Uganda. The situation in Zanzibar has similarities with the relationship between the Buganda Kingdom and Uganda because Buganda too seems to have ambitions of being an independent state from Uganda.

Nyerere’s communist policies were able to foster a high level of national unity amongst indigenous ethnic Tanzanians than was fostered amongst indigenous ethnic Ugandans by Obote’s and later on Amin’s policies. Nyerere’s communist policies that emphasised village life, reduced benefits for the elite etc, were not seen amongst most ethnic groupings as favouritism to a particular group at the expense of others. In Uganda on the other hand, the advantaged position of the Baganda at the period of independence and the quest of the independent government to reduce this advantaged position resulted in a number of problems, most notably the 1966 crisis. Starting with this crisis, it became extremely hard for subsequent regimes not to be seen as catering for ethnic rather than national interests.

The Ugandan Constitution recognises Banyarwanda as one of the tribes of Uganda, although they continue to be victimised because of their being Banyarwanda. This Constitution (1995) shows that a citizen is, “… every person born in Uganda, one of whose parents or grandparents is or was a member of any of the 56 indigenous communities existing and residing within the borders of Uganda as at February 1, 1926…” Given the conflicts that have characterised the Great Lakes region of Africa and Rwanda in particular, a number of Banyarwanda, especially ethnic Tutsi’s, migrated to neighbouring countries of Congo (now DRC), Tanzania and Uganda. In Uganda, these Banyarwanda were officially recognised as citizens of Uganda, since many qualified by the birth criteria provided for in the 1995 Constitution. They had got caught up in the political conflicts of the country in the late 1970s and early 1980s and could therefore not resist the temptation to fight for their lives. As a result they joined rebellion under the National Resistance Army and significantly contributed to the project that overthrew the regime in Kampala in January 1986. After 1986, because of their contribution to the struggle that brought Yoweri Museveni to power, a number of Banyarwanda including Fred Rwigiema (the leader of the force that launched the invasion of Rwanda in 1990), Paul Kagame (the current Rwandan president) served as senior military officers in the Ugandan military until they decided to invade their motherland – Rwanda.

**Culture and national identity**

Culture is divided into two aspects, material and non-material. Material culture includes all tangible items that people use in their daily lives. While non-material culture includes all intangible aspects such as beliefs, norms and values that guide people in their everyday life. Language is part of a culture but because of its importance in the formation of a national identity, I will present language on its own later. Considering aspects such as the national dress, national dish, national sport, and national symbols
Managing Diversity – Uganda’s Experience

(coat of arms, flag, and currency) for the two countries of East Africa, this shows the different levels of national identity development. While it might be easier for a Tanzanian for instance to come up with what they can call a national dress, for Uganda, it is not easy. What exists for Uganda as the national dress is the *kanzu* (tunic dress) for men and *busuti* for women, but which many Ugandans do not put on partly because of the tension between Uganda and Buganda. Both the tunic dress and the *busuti* seem to have first been embraced by the Baganda and therefore spread from Buganda to the rest of Uganda. In Tanzania there is a national dress for the women that seem to originate from the Swahili culture and was popularised in the country alongside the Swahili language. While Tanzanians will be proud of their national dish –Ugali, in Uganda the national dish may not be clear, although a majority of the people in the south take pride in growing and eating bananas while in northern Uganda, millet is the major staple.

**Language and national identity**

A shared language is often looked at as an important characteristic of a nation and therefore important for national identity. Blommaert (1996, p. 235) shows ‘Language is often a central issue in nationalist ideologies. It is seen as a crucial element in the definition of people’s identities’. Blommaert further points out that many times governments or nationalist movements introduce language policies with an aim of giving nations their desired shapes. Blommaert says “Often this shape is homogeneous: one language, one people, one nation; in more exceptional cases pluralism in language policy may serve to reinforce the image of the federal state with cultural autonomy for its sub-parts…”

In Tanzania, although different ethnic groups have different languages, most people speak Swahili –the national language, which was popularised during the regime of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (Campbell, 1999). Swahili has served to unite Tanzanians from all walks of life - be it the educated and non-educated. In the struggle for independence Swahili was used by nationalists such as Nyerere as they moved around the country trying to gather support for TANU, and immediately after independence it was declared the national language. Swahili has continued to be a uniting factor for the people of Tanzania and it is only recently, after the country abandoned state-led development, that the calls for increased use of English surfaced again.

The Swahili that was adopted was a language of an indigenous tribe along the coastal region and could therefore have had the potential to cause conflict. But as Blommaert (1996, p. 248) points out, “… the number of native speakers of Swahili was so relatively insignificant that the choice of Swahili would not be interpreted as favouring one particular ethnic group or region over another”. Swahili therefore stood for independence, Africanhood, self-confidence and freedom; and English was the mark of imperialism, oppression, and neo-colonialism (Blommaert & Bysels, 1987). Immediately after independence Tanganyika adopted Swahili as her national language to be used at the lower levels of the education sector and, when the Afro
Shirazi party captured power from the Sultanate in Zanzibar, Swahili was emphasised as a replacement for Arabic and English. The use of the Swahili language was further emphasised in the united Tanzania with the 1967 Arusha Declaration that introduced Ujaama socialism and economic self-reliance. After the Arusha Declaration, some of the radical revolutionaries within TANU wanted Swahili to be entrenched to the extent of replacing all the indigenous languages in Tanzania and thus signalling the convergence of Tanzania’s political and cultural identities (Blommaert, 1996).

In Uganda however, no national language exists apart from English, the official language, which is supposed to unite all Ugandans all corners of the country. Many people, especially the elderly, do not speak English, thereby limiting communication across the different ethnic groups. The north-south divide that can be seen is partly a result of this communication problem, making it difficult for instance for young Ugandans from the northern region to work in the south and young Ugandans from the south to work in the northern region. To overcome this, it is now government policy to have Swahili taught in primary schools but, as it stands now, Swahili remains the language of the military. With Swahili spoken widely in Tanzania and Kenya, Uganda will however have limited options but to popularise Swahili since the leadership in Uganda seem to be very interested in reviving the idea of regional integration in East Africa.

Currently in Uganda, Luganda is widely spoken by the Baganda who live in Central Uganda and by most of the elite from the other tribes who have stayed in Kampala and other urban areas in Central Uganda for a considerable time. Although Luganda is widely spoken by even non-Baganda from other areas of the country, it is nearly impossible to have it as the national language because the other ethnic groups would protest the imposition of this language on them. From history, if Buganda had aimed at leading the entire of Uganda rather than insist on a federal status, the situation in terms of adopting Luganda as the national language would be very different. Luganda would have been taken on slowly but quite surely, until such a time when everyone in Uganda could speak this language. But as it stands now, Luganda remains largely the language of trade in a big part of southern Uganda in the same way that Swahili was a language of trade before finally it got adopted as the national language in Tanzania. As it stands now, Luganda cannot be made the national language, although it is widely spoken in the Buganda region and is spoken by many people in Uganda’s urban areas.

In Uganda, most of the Bantu languages that are spoken in the southern part of the country are closely related and it is therefore not very difficult for a person from one given tribe who does not speak the language from the next tribe to follow conversations carried on in the next Bantu language. But it is not very easy for an individual from one of the Bantu tribes to follow easily conversations carried out in a language(s) from the northern and the North Eastern part of the country, where most tribes are Nilotic.
Religion and national identity

Religion is sometimes used as the most important factor in defining a nation and therefore national identity. When one for instance mentions Italy, one could think about a Catholic nation. Many other nations, especially in the Arab world, have Islam as the national religion and this influences the identity of their people. In Uganda religion is a major factor that is always considered when political appointments are being made. Religion is used to explain for instance the armed conflicts that ravaged the country in the recent past with rebel groups such as the Allied Democratic forces (ADF), The Holy Spirit Movement and the Lord’s Resistance Army, all having religious connotations as to the causes for which they were/are fighting the government.

Religion continues to play important roles in the shaping of the national identities of the two countries of Tanzania and Uganda. In Uganda for instance some of the major political parties continue to reflect the major religions that Ugandans fall into (Ward, 2001). It is widely known in Uganda that the major parties are believed by many Ugandans to have been formed along religious lines. The Democratic Party is largely believed to be for Catholics, the Uganda People’s Congress largely for Protestants, and the Justice Forum for Muslims. Although other parties have now come up such as the National Resistance Movement and the Forum for Democratic Change with an agenda to unite Ugandans for national causes beyond religious lines, these new parties are also being seen by a section of Ugandans as dividing Ugandans along ethnic lines.

When the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government came to power in Uganda in 1986, it was pointed out that political parties had turned out to be divisive and had therefore done more harm than good. The regime partly based its argument on the religious inclinations different parties had adopted and it was pointed out that this was not helping Uganda at all. The result of this kind of thinking was the banning of political parties and the introduction of an all-embracing Movement system. Under this system, which lasted until 2005, it was pointed out that every Ugandan belonged and all political inclinations were supposed to find a home within it. The history of the country was claimed to explain the need for such an all-embracing system of governance, rather than multi-party politics that had been seen as entrenching divisions amongst Ugandans. This system ended in 2005 following a referendum in which Ugandans “decided” that they had “matured” once again for multi-party politics. After this referendum however, the Movement System turned itself into a political party to claim all the achievements that Uganda had made during the 16 years when all political parties had been “lumped” into this system.

DISCUSSION

Tanzania is four times the size of Uganda and has a population density of 41 persons per sq. km. Uganda, which is much smaller, has a total population of 30 million.
people and a population density of 119 persons per sq. km. No matter how rich in terms of resources and fertile soils Uganda may be endowed with, the population growth rate is quite alarming. With the increase in population, while the economy is not guaranteeing the population a better standard of living, we will continue to see the struggle for livelihood manifesting itself in form of religious, ethnic and racial intolerance. It is now clear that most of the world’s resources are finite, and therefore the world should be able to regulate the number of humans in relation to the available resources and in consideration of the future generations. Using this Malthusian thesis, individual countries, especially in the developing world, should be able to regulate their population growth rates, in order to guarantee an acceptable standard of living to their populations. With the spirit of national identity providing a basis for mobilisation in many developed countries, these countries cannot escape to tackle the population problem head on in relation to the limited and finite resources available to them.

Unlike Uganda, the independent government in Tanganyika and later on Tanzania, was able to maintain the cohesion of the country so that it could not be seriously affected by religious conflict. TANU as a party and later on Chama Cha Mapinduzi united people from the different religious backgrounds. Julius Nyerere, the first leader of TANU, was a devout Catholic, Al Hassan Mwinyi who followed him was a Muslim, Benjamin Mkapa was a Christian and the current leader of the party Mrisho Kikwete is a Muslim. Even when the freeze on political parties was being lifted under the Mwinyi regime in 1992, the requirement was that for the party to be registered it should be active in both Tanganyika and Zanzibar, and it should not be identified with any religious, regional, tribal or racial groups. Indeed, when the leader of the Democratic Party uttered racially insensitive statements at a rally in Dar es Salaam in 1993, the result was deregistration of the party.

The high percentage of indigenous beliefs – currently 35% of the population (CIA, 2008a), contributed to the relative peace that can be seen in Tanzania. The persistence of such beliefs which are strongly embedded in the ethnic identification of the peoples of Tanzania meant that there were not many bases of divisions among the people. Indigenous religion in Africa is usually part of the people’s ethnic identity so this provides little room for these believers to feel that their ethnic and religious affiliation is being attacked or being deprived of vital resources. For such believers, their ethnic and religious identities are tied up. In Uganda however, the numbers of people reporting themselves as believing in the mainstream religions that originate from outside the country is quite high at over 97%. This in short means that the politicians had and will need to contend with the peoples’ ethnic and religious identity since the two here are not well fused together.

Tanzania still could not suffer the levels religious tension and intolerance that Uganda witnessed continues to witness mainly because Tanzania has a high percentage of Muslims -45% (CIA, 2008a). Islam as a religion has been much able to co-exist with the indigenous religions of Africa:
Islam sits more comfortably with some aspects of traditional religion than Christianity. A key area is marriage. Christianity demands monogamy. Islam, by contrast allows a man to take several wives. So Islam had a better chance of being accepted in the polygamous societies of Africa (BBC, n.d).

With a high percentage of Muslims in Tanzania and with Islam sitting comfortably with traditional religions, the notion of ethnic identity becomes more important for a person who practices both as a Muslim and a traditionalist. With the high level of indigenous beliefs, only ethnicity is the major source of difference among the peoples of Tanzania. In Uganda on the other hand, Christianity was deeply entrenched by the Missionaries, with both the Anglican and Catholic Missionaries fighting open battles to obtain more followers in Central and Southern Uganda.

Tanzania was blessed with the visionary leadership of Julius Nyerere who remained a political force until he died in 1999. While Tanzania was under the leadership of Nyerere, Uganda was under the leadership (1971-1979) of one of the worst dictators – Idi Amin. The stability therefore that can be seen to prevail in Tanzania is owed to the charismatic leadership of Julius Nyerere who is believed both within and without Tanzania to be the father of modern Tanzania. Nyerere was able to maintain the delicate balance of pronouncing Tanzania a socialist state by introducing African Socialism and maintaining a good relationship with the West. He was able to keep Tanzania united and not torn down by the tribal tensions that were affecting many other African countries.

While Nyerere was able to keep Tanzania safely away from tribal nationalism, in Uganda the special position that was accorded to Buganda at independence by the British created trouble for the independent government. When Obote moved to reduce this special position, the result was that he also finally lost his grip on power. Most of the political unrest that can be seen in Uganda and the failure to develop a unified nation can be traced to this colonial arrangement and the failure to handle it in the most appropriate manner. While the Tanzanian union has presented a greater challenge than the Uganda-Buganda challenge, it should be noted that this union was entered into after the two countries of Tanganyika and Zanzibar got independence. This enabled these governments to discuss on a more equal basis than what prevailed in Uganda where the British actively created a Uganda with Buganda with a special status.

Commentators such as Lupogo (2001) point out that the geographical proximity of Tanzania to troubled countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique and Rhodesia could not allow it to slip into turmoil. Tanzania became instrumental in the liberation efforts especially in Mozambique and Rhodesia. In the spirit of Kwame Nkurumah when he pointed out that, “the independence of Ghana was meaningless when the rest of Africa was under colonial rule”, nationalists in Tanzania concentrated on trying to help their neighbouring countries that were not yet independent, especially in Southern Africa. In this spirit, the independent government in Tanzania allowed
the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) to use Tanzania as its base while fighting the Portuguese rule in Mozambique and it was not by accident that the influential leader of FRELIMO Eduardo Mondlane was killed in Dar es Salaam using a parcel bomb, rather than in the jungles of Mozambique. Although Mazrui (1967) shows that, after independence, Tanganyika that was united by the anti-colonial struggle started showing signs of disintegration. Once the struggle was over, Uganda suffered much more after her independence because her neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Congo, Sudan, Tanzania, Rwanda, got independence nearly at the same time.

The semi-autonomous nature of Zanzibar has enabled Tanzania to remain more peaceful than Uganda. When the Union was created, Zanzibar was allowed to have her own parliament and an autonomous government. In Uganda on the other hand, the Buganda kingdom whose nationalism resembles the kind of nationalism that can be seen in Zanzibar, remained effectively under the central government especially after the 1966 crisis. Because of the failure to look into this kind of nationalism that later we witness a guerrilla war get launched in this part of the country until the rebels captured power in 1986 (Okuku, 2002).

The location of the islands of Zanzibar-off the coast of Tanzania also helped mainland Tanzania to remain peaceful. The actions of the citizens there do not directly affect the ordinary citizens on the mainland, while in Uganda the part that is more interested in autonomy is the central region of the country, even housing the capital city. If Buganda was to get more autonomy, it would mean having a sizeable country that is geographically within Uganda. This cannot be accepted by most nations, whether the demand for autonomy is genuine or not.

Another issue concerns Buganda’s nationalism, where the Baganda are more interested in becoming a state than being leaders of Uganda, which they could have achieved quietly and consistently especially after the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979 when Yusuf Lule, Binaisa and Paulo Muwanga were brought in as presidents by the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF). Unfortunately the factions that had fought Idi Amin which were sympathetic to Buganda’s interests were more interested in entrenching the separation of Buganda. This could not be tolerated by the UNLF government, and I believe could not have been tolerated by any other central government that would have been in power.

Although Zanzibar is largely autonomous and some voices originating from these islands were of the view that the mainland should also have an autonomous government apart from the union government, the political leaders have not bought this idea. This can be compared to the kind of demands that Buganda kingdom has been making while clamouring for the introduction of federalism in Uganda. This federalism, according to Buganda, can be based on kingdom structures that were existent in the country before kingdoms were weakened by the colonialists and the Obote regime. As a result, it appears that only Buganda interested in federalism while the rest of the Kingdoms in the country are less interested.
While handling the problem of ethnic divisions in the armed forces Tanzania - unlike Uganda - was able to make a fresh start in building her army after the January 1964 mutiny in which soldiers of the Tanganyika Rifles raised a number of issues in relation to their conditions of work. It is now generally believed that this mutiny was not meant to overthrow the political leadership but was genuinely concerned with the conditions of work. While writing about this mutiny Lupogo (2001) pointed out:

*The mutiny in 1964 was fortunate in that it enabled Tanganyika to make a fresh start in the creation and direction of its army. It triggered off far-reaching changes in the history of the country, including the appointment of military officers to political and administrative posts.*

Uganda on the other hand was not so fortunate; the independent government inherited the army from the colonialists which army had been built on ethnic lines. The colonialists had recruited mainly soldiers from tribes from the northern region of Uganda (Ward, 2001). This inequality created problems later as those who dominated the military dominated the politics of Uganda. This kind of inequality has persisted to today, as it is now felt that the army has now been dominated by soldiers from the southern region of the country and most especially the south western region of Uganda.

Good relations between civilians and the military were well conceptualised and served Tanzania well. These relations started with the reorganisation of the Tanzanian military after the 1964 mutiny. The training of civilians in military skills helped to demystify the army and reduce suspicion vis-a-vis the military. In Uganda, by contrast, the military was the reserve of a few people, which provided fertile ground for suspicions to prevail. The army and the civilian leadership could not realise that they were working for the same goal and this bred coups and counter coups in the period before the current regime came into power. Because the current Ugandan president spent a long time in Tanzania, studying and undergoing military training, he realised the importance of bringing the army closer to the people and he has been able to put in place an arrangement where the civilians are trained in basic military skills. The reasoning behind training civilians in military skills today in Uganda is nearly the same that the Nyerere government used in Tanzania (Lupogo, 2001). One component in this training is what can be seen as indoctrination of the people so that they can support their nation and have a high sense of national identity.

In Tanzania, unlike Uganda, there was active an construction of a national identity; the independent government under Nyerere from the onset predicted that the diversity of Tanzania could breed conflict and put in place programmes that sought to construct a unique national identity for Tanzania. This national identity is quite pronounced in the Arusha Declaration of 1967, where education for the young Tanzanians was given adequate attention. This emphasised basic values of loving one’s nation, honesty, and never to be driven by material desires but by moral uprightness (Campbell, 1999). Nyerere himself was a modest man that never was corrupted by the power of state house and was able to live within the means of his country. The simple moral nationalist
values that were emphasised by the education system to sustain the revolution were humbling and form the basis of the high sense of national identity that Tanzanians have over many African states and over Uganda in particular. In relation to this, Davidson (1992:112) points out:

*In the Tanganyikan (Tanzania) case, for example, the multiplicity of fairly numerous ethnic groups, coupled with the strongly unifying influence of a single major nationalist movement, the Tanganyikan African Nation Union (TANU), was able to keep the ‘social conflict’ near the centre of the picture. Where the elitist politicians of multiparty Nigeria went for the spoils of office or each other’s throats, usually the same target, those of Tanganyika, or most them, remained more or less acutely aware of their duty to promote postcolonial social change.*

It is this awareness that necessitated the Nyerere government to put in place the Arusha Declaration in 1967, as part of the commitment to promote post-colonial change.

The British influence in Uganda was quite heavy compared to their influence in Tanzania. Britain acquired Tanganyika as her colony after the First World War in 1919 after Germany was defeated while Uganda was a British protectorate from the onset of the colonisation era in 1894. The British influenced the overthrow of Obote to bring in Idi Amin and can also be noticed in the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979. In relation to this Davidson (1992:11) emphasises:

*Those who argued for inter-territorial federalism or its equivalent, pointing out the obstacles to progress adhering in the colonial frontiers, were ignored or pushed aside. Any such large and constructive reorganisation of frontiers could never suit the imperial powers, eager still to retain ‘neocolonialist’ levers of interest and influence.*

In short, the reorganisation of the boundaries of the former colonies would mean that the former colonial powers would have lost their much influence, mainly because the resultant nations from this reorganisation would be completely different from the ‘nations’ the colonial powers had put together.

**CONCLUSION**

Although Ugandans can notice and identify with Ugandan symbols such as the national flag, the coat of arms, the national currency, their geographical territory and so forth, a strong sense of national identity is lacking amongst most Ugandans. This lack of strong sense of national identity that would in turn culminate into a strong sense of nationalism, explains the numerous problems of insecurity, tribal clashes and high levels of corruption prevalent in the country. Most of former Ugandan presidents have fled the country after being overthrown by the military and almost no Ugandan president has ever handed over peacefully to another regime.

Compared to Ugandans, Tanzanians have a high sense of national identity. A number of qualities are strongly shared amongst Tanzanians such as the ability to speak
Swahili – which is spoken by the young and the old, women and men, educated and non-educated, Zanzibaris and mainlanders, southerners and northerners, Christians and Muslims, all over Tanzania. No former Tanzanian presidents starting with Julius Nyerere up to Benjamin Mkapa, have ever fled the country to go into exile. The strong moral values that were emphasised in Tanzania’s education system and through the political mobilisation programmes by the Nyerere government are still a characteristic of the Tanzanian people. Kaufman (1999) in relation to this contended:

After he retired, Mr. Nyerere was often asked whether he had any regrets. In a typical interview, he said he was pleased that ‘Tanzanians have more sense of national identity than many other Africans,’ and he expressed pride in the nation’s high rate of literacy (Kaufman, 1999).

Generally, apart from the islands of Zanzibar that have now obtained their own flag and representation in the world football governing body, Tanzanians have a strong sense of national identity and a strong sense of nationalism.

**Bibliography**


18. Understanding Local Perceptions of Pluralism: Is this of any Relevance to Uganda?

JOHN DE CONINCK

Developing a pluralistic society is seen as increasingly necessary – if challenging – in the northern hemisphere. But is pluralism seen as a relevant concept in an African nation such as Uganda?

Uganda seldom makes international headline news but the name might occasionally creep into the inside pages of newspapers and periodicals. If for some, Uganda is still associated with Idi Amin or, more frequently in recent years, with gorilla tourism, the inquisitive reader might, in the last year, have seen the country mentioned in the context of bomb attacks and ‘civil disturbances’ in the capital city, Kampala; or in the continuing mayhem caused in the Congo and the Central African Republic by a band of Ugandan rebels called the Lord’s Resistance Army. The international media also covered the recent fire that destroyed Uganda’s single man-made UNESCO world heritage site – the royal tombs at Kasubi and, more recently, a parliamentary bill that proposes to make homosexuality – already a crime in Uganda – punishable by death in certain circumstances.

These events have all shaped worldviews on Uganda: how have they been perceived by Ugandans themselves?

The bomb blasts that cost the lives of 76 football fans watching the final match of the World Cup in July 2010 were quickly ascribed by the general public to ‘Muslim fundamentalists’ aggrieved by Uganda’s involvement in a peace keeping mission in Somalia. Soon thereafter, Kampala’s resident Somali community and other adherents to the Muslim faith felt it prudent to lie low: gratuitous retribution was never far from the surface. The Kampala riots also cost lives. In September 2009, gangs of youth suddenly reacted with fury to the news of the Government preventing the King of Buganda from visiting what they considered part of his kingdom. The police and army reacted harshly; more than 40 people died in the fracas. One can look for the cause of this in widespread youth unemployment but, for those directly concerned, these riots were seen as the latest chapter in the long history of competition for power and resources between the central government and the most prominent of Uganda’s ‘traditional kingdoms’, evinced from political power since the mid-1960s, but still very much part of the identity for Uganda’s largest ethnic group. As a result, excited youth targeted anyone whose physical features were not, in their view, sufficiently locally rooted, and especially those with the looks of Ugandans from the western region, seen to dominate the organs of the central government (and to benefit disproportionately from them). If in doubt, the hapless victim was asked to sing the anthem of the Buganda kingdom on the spot and, if unable to do so, would join others in being at the receiving end of insults and beatings. In the same vein, the ‘evil hand’
of central government operatives, as arsonists – or at least instigators - was instantly identified by many of the kingdom’s subjects when fire destroyed the tombs of its kings.

As for the far graver misdeeds of Joseph Kony and the Lord’s Resistance Army, one is aware of the 20 years’ of the most ignominious atrocities that resulted in thousands of deaths, child kidnappings and the herding by government of almost the entire population of northern Uganda for years into camps for displaced persons. The LRA’s campaigns of mayhem are now seen as even more distant for the ‘Ugandans that matter’, those that are not part of the long-impoverished northern part of the country, the home of their compatriots who are often stereotyped as having lived in violence and depravity for as long as one can remember...

Finally, the anti-homosexuality bill: in this, Ugandans have found a rallying cry to defend their ‘national cultural values’ and the ‘evil of globalisation’, a useful diversion for many from what some might consider far more pressing issues than the remote danger of youth being led into moral concupiscence...

Why such perceptions? To start answering this question, it may be useful to remind ourselves of three critical national characteristics. One is that, despite recent progress, Uganda remains desperately poor: competition for resources is thus a matter of sheer survival.413 The second is that a ‘Ugandan identity’ remains difficult to define: as an artificial colonial creation, with borders arbitrarily cutting across pre-colonial territories and a history of manipulation of the ‘ethnic card’, it is little wonder that, a mere 50 years after independence, the creation of national consciousness continues to preoccupy minds and government policies. Thirdly, and to a great extent as a consequence, the recent history of Uganda has been characterised by strife. The government has only been able to secure the entire national territory in the last few years: while it might preside over the first generation in independent Uganda that will live in relative peace, the memory of war and arbitrary regimes remains omnipresent.

Given these public perceptions, it is not altogether surprising that, at a national conference held in Kampala, in April 2009414, a main conclusion was that, by virtue of the nation’s history and its ethnic, political and religious composition, valuing and managing diversity is necessary for equitable and sustainable development.

This reflects the fact that, in Uganda’s post-colonial era, ethnicity and religious diversity have been used to manipulate allegiances to meet political ends and to determine the distribution of resources. In particular, patronage continues to pervade economic, social and political spheres: ethnicity is therefore neither about pluralism,
nor about ‘tribes’, but an ideology of dominance that inevitably results in a significant
democratic deficit.

The contemporary politics of inclusion and exclusion that determine access to vital
resources prolong their colonial trajectory: during the colonial era, foreign religions
compounded intra-and inter-ethnic factionalism, which was aggravated by ethnic
tensions caused by the forceful integration of people of 60-odd different cultural
backgrounds into a single administrative unit. The colonial policy of divide-and-rule
fed into the pattern of collaboration and resistance to colonialism that kept religious
divisionism and ethnic consciousness alive.

The autocratic rule of post-colonial governments in Uganda since 1962 has therefore
reproduced rather than deconstructed ethnicity in Uganda. To many ethnic groups,
the ‘independent’ state is an instrument for the advancement of their own interests,
mainly under the principle of ‘winner takes all’. While successive governments
have accepted ethnic diversity as a fact of life, they have also suppressed particular
ethnic groups to promote the interests of the political leader’s group. Indeed, the
historical factors determining the development of identity in Uganda are still relevant
today. This validates what several commentators have termed the reproduction of
the colonial state by post-colonial administrations, as with the current divide and
rule stance of Government towards the traditional kingdoms, and the balkanisation
of administrative units, which increases ethnic tensions as each group attempts to
scheme for a territorial arrangement that will enhance its control over resources.

Uganda is a multi-ethnic society and these contradictions have fuelled socio-political
conflicts that have threatened its unity, peace and spirit of co-existence. Forms
of identity that impose limits to people’s access to resources are several, but are
principally linked to ethnicity and nationality, in addition to political affiliation, class,
religion, education, language and gender.

In such an environment, patronage and corruption thrive and result in the current
perception that cultural diversity represents exclusion to the detriment of the collective
public good. There are many signs that fundamentalist tendencies are spreading in
many spheres, such as the way the person looks at her/his neighbour or the shrinking
political space available for dissent. One can find reasons for this in the skewed
access to resources, but also in the current absence of a national project, amidst
fractious identities. For the future, therefore, effectively managing diversity appears
as not only extremely difficult, but as inescapable for national health. As a first step,
research is currently underway to better understand local perceptions of pluralism, to
communicate this and to foster action arising from this understanding, from a local
cultural perspective, rather than pluralism in its ‘imported’ and universalistic form.
19. A Time to Act on National Peace and Development

UGANDANS CONCERNED FOR PEACE AND NATIONAL COHESION - PRESS RELEASE

Background
On the 13th and 14th of January 2011, more than 200 Ugandans, came together to attend a National Convention on Democratic Governance. Held at the Main Hall of Makerere University, the Convention was aimed at critically reflecting on some of the most contentious issues affecting the state of governance and democratic development in contemporary Uganda. It covered five key themes: Citizenship and Culture; Institutions and Governance; Political Participation and Voice; Social Exclusion and Marginalization, and National Resources (Human, Environmental and Public). The Convention attracted cultural leaders, politicians, members of civil society and the women’s movement and representatives from academia, among others. The Convention represented an important symbol of hope and opportunity in looking beyond the looming election and asking the question: ‘What issues of governance and democracy are of most critical importance in Uganda today?’

Emerging National Issues

Ω The concept of citizenship remains elusive to most Ugandans as they feel that their constitutional rights are still beyond realization. This feeling has led many Ugandans to ask whether Uganda is really a nation, and indeed whether it is owned and controlled by the people in accordance with Article 1 of the Constitution, which confirms that “all power belongs to the people.” These feelings suggest that we are not yet Ugandans, but still belong to our different nationalities.

Ω State institutions in Uganda are still quite weak. In many respects, the institutions of State are viewed merely as extensions of the Executive. This weakness is compounded by sectarianism, nepotism, secrecy and unprecedented levels of corruption. These problems have largely hampered their effective functioning and legitimacy in the eyes of ordinary citizens.

Ω Recent times have witnessed the enactment of laws such as the Non-Governmental Registration (Amendment) Act and the introduction of bills such as the Public Order Management Bill, 2009, the Anti-homosexuality Bill, 2009, the Press and Journalists (Amendment) Bill, 2010 and the Traditional and Cultural Leaders Bill, 2010 that deter debate, impose censorship and undermine democratic participation. Public space for debating national issues is narrowing, as witnessed by the outright banning of all radio Bimeeza (live call-in talk shows). Where space for debate is available, it
is under intense surveillance, thereby curtailing the right to political participation.

Ω In the meantime, the State has failed to fully appreciate and positively exploit the varied dimensions of culture and its crucial role in ensuring improved democratic governance in the country. The current stand-off between the State and some cultural institutions is unproductive and detrimental to national unity, peace and cohesion.

Ω Despite the existence of institutions and policies aimed at bringing about balanced and equitable development in the country, there is clear evidence that minority groups and vulnerable and socially disadvantaged citizens such as women, ethnic communities (such as the Batwa, the Benet and the Karamojong) as well as sexual minorities are increasingly marginalised. There are also an increasing manifestation of intolerance which is having a serious impact at various levels and in different locales including Buliisa, Kibale, Toro, the Karamoja region, Acholi and Buganda, to mention a few.

Ω There is a great deal of dissatisfaction over the lack of transparency and inclusion in the (mis)use of national resources, ranging from access to State House scholarships to the pending exploitation of oil reserves and the distribution of its proceeds. Public assets and resources have been deployed in order to gain political advantage and domination, and to undermine legitimate expressions of disagreement with or opposition to the established order.

Ω Civil society - that would have spearheaded the quest for accountability and reform - has failed to cultivate a national movement to propel improved governance and accountability in the country. Uganda’s younger generation feels let down and disenfranchised, confronted with the erosion of values such as tolerance, love for country above self and devotion to a national ethos.

In light of these concerns, the participants expressed the view that there was an urgent need to:

1. Re-confirm the rights of all citizens, irrespective of their station in life, ethnicity, place of origin or current residence and political opinion.
2. Re-orient our mind-sets from looking at Uganda and its resources as a ‘national cake’ to be consumed and to instead ask ourselves what we can contribute to building the nation.
3. Nurture within the young generation a passion for Uganda as a country accommodative of all and proud of our many cultural values and diversity.
4. Be more self-critical and own up to the truth where violations of human rights have been prevalent such as in Northern Uganda and embrace reconciliation.
5. Honour our right to vote and actively use it to bring about the change we desire, and
6. Continue with the process of Regional Conventions held in different parts of the country to enable local stakeholders to debate issues affecting governance and the rights of citizens and eventually convene a Grand National Convention at which the national dialogue on issues of the State and its responsibilities to the citizens be debated

The National Convention urged the Government of Uganda to:

1. Desist from and halt the on-going enactment - without adequate consultation and inclusion of the various stakeholders - of various laws, policies and plans of action that institutionalize intolerance and exclusionary tendencies and which stifle democratic and free expression.

2. Protect and promote the full rights of all Ugandan citizens. Citizenship should be understood in a wider perspective than is currently the case, in order to ensure that substantive rights and freedoms are accorded equally to all without discrimination based on sex, age, race, ethnicity, or social status.

3. Work towards the creation of a democratic and all-inclusive state system which is owned and accountable to the people.

4. Re-commit to the full professionalization of the security agencies as national institutions accountable to the people, rather than to individuals or to the governing regime of the time.

5. Promote acceptable moral, cultural, national and territorial values, including the development of all languages spoken by the people of Uganda, as a basis for their identity and sovereignty.
VII. CONTRIBUTORS AND PLURALISM PROGRAMME PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS
Ivan Amaniga Ruhanga is a development researcher with experience in policy research and analysis, advocacy and institutional development. He holds a Master of Science Degree in Environment and Natural Resources from Makerere University in addition to other professional training qualifications. Ivan has researched on issues of culture and community development and published widely to inform and influence policy options for sustainable development.

John-Jean Barya is Associate Professor of Law at Makerere University’s Faculty of Law attached to the Department Public and Comparative Law. He holds an LL.B. (Hons) (Mak); LL.M, Ph.D. (Warwick); Certificate and Diploma, Freedom of Association (ILO, Turin/Geneva); Dip L.P. (LDC, Kampala). He is an active researcher in public interest issues, civil society and cultural matters and an expert on labour law and development issues. Dr. Barya has published on foreign aid issues, workers and the law, constitutionalism, democracy and the state, industrialization and technology acquisition, Investment Law and Cultural Revivalism in Uganda.

John De Coninck works at the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda as Programme Advisor. He has a professional experience dating back 30 years, much of it acquired in Uganda, working at Makerere University, then for a variety of international and local non-governmental organisations. He has published in a number of areas related to Civil Society development in the region. He has also been actively involved in a number of research initiatives on poverty reduction policy. He holds a PhD from Sussex University in the UK.

Emily Drani is the Executive Director of the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, an organisation dedicated to promoting the value of culture in development. Emily holds an MPhil in Development Studies with a focus on Endogenous Development and has over 12 years professional experience in development work. Her experience in the last 7 years has focused on ‘culture in development’ and cross-cultural engagement at national, regional and international levels. Emily is a member of the 2013 UNESCO Consultative Body for the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Kayiso Fulgencio is currently employed as a Research and Documentation Specialist at the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU). He holds a Master’s degree in Development Studies (ISS, The Hague), majoring in Environment and Natural Resources Management and a Bachelor’s degree from Makerere University. He is finalising his doctoral programme in Environment (Makerere University and Cardiff Metropolitan University).

Emmanuel Maraka is a development worker and farmer. With education in animal production, human and social studies and an MA in International Development, he has a keen interest in knowledge and development practice for expansion of positive human freedoms. He has 30 years’ experience in community development (agriculture, HIV/AIDS and development of young people). As a freelance consultant, he offers consultancy services in these areas, as well as research and NGO management.
Tabitha Naisiko is a Lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences at the Philosophy Centre in Jinja, an affiliate of Uganda Martyrs University. She has studied Social Work and Social Administration, African Studies and Ethics and Development up to PhD level. She has published on various African issues, taking a social-cultural and anthropological approach to her research interests.

Bishop David Zac Niringiye is an activist, theologian, pastor and organisational development consultant. He has a passion for social justice and good governance, particularly as they impact children, youth and women. Dr Niringiye holds a Physics degree from Makerere University, a Masters degree in Theology from Wheaton College, USA, and a PhD in Theology and Mission History from Edinburgh University. He has served as Chairperson of the National Governing Council of the African Peer Review Mechanism in Uganda and has spoken and written widely on leadership, justice and mission.

Jimmy Spire Ssentongo lectures in Ethics, Sustainable Development and Research Methodology at Uganda Martyrs University. He holds a Diploma in Philosophy; a BA in Philosophy; MA in Ethics and Public Management; Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods and Report Writing; MSc in Education for Sustainability as Common Wealth Scholar; and is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Humanistic Studies (Holland) as part of the Pluralism Knowledge Programme. Email: jsssentongo@gmail.com.

Vusia Santa Izama works as a consultant with the Nordic Consulting GroupUganda. Hailing from Moyo, she studied at Makerere University for a Bachelor’s Degree in Social work and Social Administration, undertook a certificate course in Adult Literacy work and has an MSc in DevelopmentManagement from the Open University U.K. She has worked with government, NGO and the private sector on issues ranging from gender and development, water and sanitation, and disability issues, training, materials.

Christopher Tumwine teaches at the Department of Sociology and Social Administration, Kyambogo University, Kampala.

Elly Ronald Wanda is a transdisciplinary fellow based at the Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute (currently being constituted into a University) in Mbale, eastern Uganda, where he coordinates the Institute’s research and academic programmes. He is also the executive director of Afrika Study Centre (ASC), a regional community site of knowledge engaged in cross-border restorative cultural research and studies. Email: ronald2wanda@yahoo.co.uk

The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda – CCFU is driven by the conviction that the positive aspects of culture, if analysed and harnessed, provide an essential resource and the basis for sustainable development. CCFU therefore promotes the recognition of culture as vital for human development that
responds to our national identity and diversity, through three interlinked programmes focusing on ‘Culture in Development’, ‘Promoting Cultural Heritage’ and ‘Managing Diversity’. CCFU has acted as coordinating organisation for the Pluralism Knowledge Programme in Uganda.

**The Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations - DENIVA**, founded in 1988, is a legally constituted network of non-governmental and community-based organisations. It provides a platform for collective reflection, action and voice to voluntary local associations to strongly advocate the creation of more opportunities for the citizens and civil society organisations’ participation in the development of Uganda. DENIVA has grown into a large national network with over 700 members who are located in several regions of the country.

**The Gulu District NGO Forum** was established in April 2001 as a voluntary, non-partisan umbrella/ network organisation to enhance lobbying and policy dialogue with local government, promote networking and information sharing among the Civil society Organisations’ fraternity, including carrying out capacity building in terms of training for the Member Organisations. The Forum draws its membership from NGOs, community-based and faith-based organisations operating in Gulu district.

**The Human Rights and Peace Centre - HURIPEC**, a semi-autonomous department under the School of Law, was set up by Makerere University in 1993, as the first human rights centre of its kind in Sub-Saharan Africa. HURIPEC was established to foster teaching, research and activism on human rights and peace issues at the University. The centre pursues a vision of contributing to the establishment of a human rights’ conscientised, educated, activist,
academic society in Uganda and other countries. It seeks to promote understanding and respect for human rights, democratic governance and sustainable peace in the East Africa subregion and Africa generally through teaching, research and outreach.

The Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies at Gulu University is working hard to transform communities emerging from conflict through training, community outreach and research. The Institute has a diverse student and staff body and has embraced respect for all and tolerance as its principles. It opens up spaces for engagement with the wider Gulu University community through public lectures, conferences and seminars embracing the University motto of community transformation.

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda-IRCU is a faith-based non-governmental organisation that brings together different religious institutions to address issues of common interest. Established in 2001, IRCU is affiliated to Religions for Peace International and the African Council of Religious Leaders. IRCU’s current membership includes the Roman Catholic Church in Uganda, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, the Church of Uganda, the Uganda Orthodox Church and the Seventh-day Uganda Union. IRCU implements several cross-cutting programmes in HIV/AIDS and Public Health, and Peace, Justice and Governance.

The Islamic university in Uganda- IUIU was established by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in 1988 for English speaking members’ countries. Its aim is to promote higher education Islamic culture among needy countries in Africa.

Kampala International University’s vision is to become a premier institution of international repute that prepares students for the world and for an inclusive society. Its mission is to respond to societal needs by designing and delivery of an education guided by the principles and values of respect for society, economy and environment and to provide and develop a supportive research environment in which scholars at every stage of their career can flourish.

The Mpigi NGO Forum - MPINGOF is the umbrella organisation for civil society organisations in Mpiji district. It was founded in 2007 and works to influence and change the status of civil society organisations in the district in terms of visibility and credibility, and to work as partners with the district local government and the private sector. Its mission is to improve the quality of services
delivered by civil society organisations through capacity building, coordination, partnership and networking.

**Nkumba University** is one of the largest private Universities in East Africa. It is a non-profit, non-denominational institution granted a Charter in 2006 by the Government of Uganda. The University, which is a centre of academic and professional excellence, aims to promote education in business, arts, social sciences, technical, communication and cultural fields, as well as stimulate the spirit of enterprise and entrepreneurship.

**Uganda Martyrs University - UMU** is a faith-based private University owned by the Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Bishops of Uganda. Located 84 kms from Kampala, UMU was established in 1993 by the Catholic Church but pluralistically open to people from all religious denominations. The University has campuses and branches in Kabale, Kampala, Masaka, Mbale and Ngetta – all in Uganda. Its vision is: “to be a university that is nationally and internationally recognised for excellence in research and the advancement of knowledge.”

**The Uganda National NGO Forum- UNNGOF** is an independent and inclusive national platform for NGOs in Uganda. Its primary constituency and owners are NGOs in their diversity and configurations. The National NGO Forum platform is however open to other interest groups within a broadly defined civil society. The Uganda National NGO Forum’s operational scope is at national level, with a focus on issues and processes that concern NGOs across the board.

**The Uganda Women’s Network-UWONET** is an advocacy and lobby network comprising of national women’s organisations, institutions and individuals. UWONET was established in 1993 during the Kampala Women’s conference to provide space for collective engagement of women and women’s organisations advocating for women’s rights, especially the eradication of gender based discrimination.
Managing Diversity – Uganda's Experience