

**Citizens' Manifesto:
Report on consultations with 'cultural resources
persons'**



The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda – August 2010

1. Background

This report arises from two consultative meetings:

- a. A meeting held in Kampala on 29th June 2010 with a group of selected cultural resource persons (from academia, NGOs with focus on cultural issues, religious institutions, 'traditional' cultural institutions), from across the country, from Karamoja to Tooro, Lango to Kigezi).
- b. A meeting held on 4th August 2010 in Jinja, specifically with representatives from the Busoga Kingdom (Ministers and Permanent Secretary; Chiefs, Parliamentarians)

Altogether 30 people were involved in both meetings.

2. Methodology and Process

The methodology was as follows:

- For meeting one: a one-day interaction that included a presentation on the CM, its objectives and processes; a discussion on the link between governance and culture (the formal, more visible as well as the informal, less visible dimensions of political processes as informing governance issues and the allocation of resources. Within the less formal spaces, cultural values, processes, leaders play an important role. This is also where a notion of 'well-being' (with its material, social and spiritual dimensions) might make more sense than the notion of 'development' with its focus on material aspects). This was followed by eliciting contributions to the Citizens' Manifesto, working on two themes: (i) vision and values (ii) cultural leaders and governance structures.
- For meeting two: a one-day interaction that included a presentation on the CM, followed by sessions to specifically to review and comment on the proposals put forward by the national group.
- A second meeting of the national group is planned to review the draft Citizens' Manifesto.

3. Emerging Priorities

a. A vision for Uganda.

The groups proposed the following statement:

"A culturally pluralistic, upright society, where citizens and their political, cultural and religious leaders ensure that we all live in peaceful co-existence, uphold moral, spiritual and cultural values and religious beliefs, and share resources equitably in an environmentally alert and healthy way"

This could be shortened, if need be, as: *"A society living in diversity, attached to cultural and spiritual values in a good environment"*.

b. Values

This statement reflects a set of values that the group felt were important to be reflected in the CM:

1. Authentic expression: One must have the freedom to learn and develop one's own mother tongue. Local languages must be promoted (beyond UPE to infuse the entire educational system) and preserved for posterity.

2. Solidarity: social and cultural support systems need to be recognised and promoted; opportunities for social networking must be safeguarded and illustrate the importance of the group to the individual Ugandan.
3. Tolerance for different worldviews: the need to maintain unity in diversity, while preserving ethnic, clan and religious entities and practices. Human rights should not be seen as universal, but context specific. There is often a need to adjust to accommodate ‘the other’.
4. Multi-culturalism: is desired and must be promoted. Cultural and religious pluralism is desirable.
5. Adaptability: Cultural change cannot be forced, but cultural adaptation is often necessary to fit new circumstances and should be achieved through peaceful means, such as persuasion and in consonance with cultural traditions and norms.
6. Constitutionalism: there is a need to observe the provisions of the constitution in all our endeavours, as well as the need for cultural institutions to participate in non partisan political life.
7. Exemplary leadership: leaders, including cultural leaders, need to fight manipulation and patronage. We must look for the following moral values in any prospective leader, which are culturally expected and supported by our culture:
 - a. Integrity
 - b. Honesty
 - c. Reverence for the sanctity of life
 - d. Accountability
 - e. Respect

In conclusion, we need to recognise the multi-cultural character of our nation and the need to co-exist.

c. Cultural leaders and their roles

Culture has been a motor of managing and developing societies since time immemorial, in all spheres of life. Therefore, culture cannot be written off or washed away from our lives.

Cultural leaders and institutions include the kingdoms, chiefdoms, clans, council of elders, and the family. Since culture has been a motor of managing society, it is absurd to sideline the cultural leaders from political activity.

Cultural institutions indeed are charged with the task of guaranteeing the existence of a people with a history and a future.

The 1995 Uganda Constitution prohibits traditional and cultural leaders from playing a political or administrative role, however by virtue of the positions and



Group work in the Prime Minister's Office, Jinja

influence they have in the community, they exercise power and influence over community attitudes and decisions.

Simultaneously, cultural institutions (especially, kingdoms and chiefdoms that receive a monthly stipend from the State; or have come into existence with support of the State) are compromised and are not likely to effectively hold government / leaders to account. The regional tier introduces a number of changes that raises concerns about costs, duplication of tasks as well as upward accountability (to the President as opposed to the community) which does not auger well with democratic principles of accountability.

It was noted that some of the traditional / cultural leaders have a limited capacity to engage in political spaces and interrogate development processes, an area that needs to be dealt with if they are to effectively provide guidance in community decision-making, with respect to governance. Also noted was the limited recognition (sometimes absent recognition) and appreciation of the traditional structures in some ethnic groups and therefore different strategies need to be employed.

It is proposed that cultural leaders be recognised as political although not involved in party politics or publicly promoting a particular party. Cultural leaders however should promote cultural values and principles, economic development and social programmes that resonate with the aspirations of their respective communities.

In the light of the above, cultural leaders, as responsible citizens holding considerable authority should actively involve themselves in governance in respect to:

- Promoting cultural values of integrity, transparency, honesty, hence accountability
- Mediation; conflict resolution
- Promoting gender equity considerations
- Community mobilization for common public goods
- Participation in planning and budgeting processes
- Holding citizens - including political leaders - accountable

d. Cultural structures

1. Cultural Institutions

Ancestral cultural structures are often better embedded than structures associated with a particular political regime; as such, they offer sustainable perspectives. However, in often case, they need to adapt to new circumstances and they need to 'professionalize' themselves and to develop their own resources (rather than depend on government largesse; although the comprehensive return of kingdom and chiefdom property would help in this respect). Cultural institutions need a code of conduct at various levels, but also to be allowed to make bye-laws. A senate as part of the kingdom institution should be considered. Clans are all-important: an effort should be made to revive clan roles at kingdom, chiefdom and clan head levels.

A proposal is made to establish a socio-cultural diversity (intercultural) forum that compiles and synthesises community manifestos that can be measured against the political manifestos of presidential and other aspiring political candidates and demand for the aspirations and needs of the people to be met. They would thus contribute to fostering harmonious coexistence.

2. District level government institutions

Community manifestos - Cultural leaders, in the form of “council of elders” in areas where this is feasible and appropriate and where cultural leaders are acknowledged, should be tasked with generating information on community priority aspirations and needs, to develop a community manifesto which would then be matched with the manifestos presented by various political parties. These elders could play the role of ensuring that community interests are included in political manifestos as well as continuous monitoring of delivery on political promises against the community manifestos.

The Local Council I was considered often non-functional or operating as one-person committees in some districts. It was also noted that the LC structure has been co-opted into the current political system and is further compromised by the recent proposal to pay LCIs a monthly fee. This will make it difficult for them to be impartial and hold government at any level accountable. It was thus proposed that the LCI be strengthened by functional clan structures (where these exist) through close collaboration, informed by cultural values. The groups however cautioned to avoid a culture of impatience and allow the LC system to work.

Land allocation and distribution - cultural leaders should be custodians of customary land as they are knowledgeable about the history of ownership of land in their vicinity and the customary principles and practices of land management. A representative from the cultural institution should have a seat on the Area Land Committee. The legitimacy of customary land tenure should be upheld alongside other land tenure regimes.

Budget allocation and use (taxes) – cultural leaders should have access to information on budgetary allocations, and use; and be involved in the existing budgeting and planning processes, at all levels, in order to hold leaders accountable.

Customary law – the utilisation of (progressive) customary laws alongside legal law especially should be promoted where these resonate with current needs (Courts that dispense customary law should be established and recognized in the judicial system of the country). We need to explore community mechanisms (reprimanding songs) to impose sanctions on individuals who go against commonly accepted values (integrity, honesty, etc).

3. National level

Governance role - Cultural leaders should play an active role in governance in respect to:

- Promoting cultural values of integrity, transparency, honesty, hence accountability
- Participation in planning and budgeting processes
- Policy consultations
- Holding citizens’ including political leaders accountable

Common language – the promotion of a common language (Kiswahili) alongside traditional / indigenous languages was proposed as one way of fostering unity in diversity

Documentation – there is much need to document cultural practices, language and other cultural resources. Particular proposals include:

1. A study on the values of different ethnic groups to explore priority values and similarities as a first step towards developing nationally recognized values.
2. Documenting cultural values as an essential tool for the guidance of the younger generations.
3. Establishment of libraries at different levels in the cultural institutions

4. Teaching institutions should adopt the teaching of ethics, morals and the mother language.
5. Any international documents and important literature to the community should be translated into local languages, e.g. the Uganda constitution.
6. Cultural anthropology must be taught in our educational institutions.

4. Lessons

At the end of the meetings, participants shared a few reflections:

On the positive side:

- The diverse groups of participants provided a wealth of knowledge and continuous networking is encouraged
- Enhanced understanding of the role of citizens in the political process – enough to advise community members to look out for core values rather than immediate material benefits, leading to selling one’s voting rights.
- The youth present appreciated the restoration of traditional values for posterity as a responsibility and duty to the future generations.
- The Jinja session emphasized the need for the kingdom to ‘get its act together’ and specific internal measures were discussed to take this forward.
- A better understanding of the tensions between Buganda and Central Government

On the less positive side and recommendations:

- There a weak culture, that of impatience. The CM process is rushed and therefore does not allow for sufficient internalisation of issues and engagement with political aspirants who may have already finalized their manifestos. Some are still in the process of developing their manifestos and would welcome input from civil society (we need to move fast!)
- There is a need to explore culture and understand its implications – this was considered a knowledge gap. A basic course on culture in development would enhance knowledge on culture and its value. However, the discussion sharpened the appreciation of the link between governance, development and



Plenary session at the Busoga Lukiiko, Bugembe

culture, the latter being essential though not often recognized.

- The introduction of a Linguistic and Cultural orientation manuals programme at Makerere University would be a good resource for appreciating culture and learning to manage cross cultural engagement.

5. Post 2011 Agenda

The CM work builds into CCFU's current research work on 'Culture and Governance'. This currently focuses on four 'real-life' case studies (from Pokot, Teso/Lango, Nebbi and Tooro), examining how Ugandans make use of 'traditional' governance mechanisms in their day-to-day lives. These will be published in the coming months.

A forward agenda will be prepared, in view of these experiences, in late 2010.

Annex 1: List of participants and programme (National ‘cultural resources persons group’)

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14	Emily Drani	Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda	ccfu@crossculturalfoundation.or.ug	0752 622 543
15	John De Coninck	Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda	ccfu@crossculturalfoundation.or.ug	0772 462 480



**CITIZEN'S MANIFESTO: 1ST CONSULTATIVE MEETING FOR
CULTURAL RESOURCE PERSONS, TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2010**

TIME **10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.**

PROGRAMME

Time	Activity	
10.00 - 10.15	Introductions	Emily Drani
10.15 - 10.30	Background on Citizen's Manifesto	Arthur Larok
10.30 - 10.40	Objective of the meetings and expected outcomes	Emily Drani
10.40 - 10.55	What connection between culture and governance? What cultural dimensions are relevant?	John De Coninck
10.55 - 11.25	Discussions - personal experiences	Participants
11.25 - 12.30	Contribution to the Citizen's Manifesto: (i) vision and values (ii) cultural leaders and governance structures	Participants
12.30 - 01.00	Presentation of 1 st Group Discussion	
01.00 - 02.00	LUNCH BREAK	
02.00 - 02.30	Presentation of 2 nd group Discussion	Participants
02.30 - 03.00	Conclusions and way forward	John De Coninck

Annex 2: List of participants and programme (Busoga kingdom group)

NO	NAMES	DESIGNATION	EMAIL	TELEPHONE
1	Muwereza Wilson	Prime Minister		0772589797
2	Stephen Nantamu	Culture		0772584843
3	Kiirya Patrick	Ministry of Agriculture and rural development.	Kiiryadelba@gmail.com	0772644197
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11	Lukakamwa John	Deputy Speaker		0776652408
12	Baite Munobwa	Busoga Lukiko		0712550790
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	John De Coninck	CCFU		



**CITIZEN'S MANIFESTO: CONSULTATIVE MEETING FOR
BUSOGA KINGDOM, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4th, 2010**

TIME **11.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.**

PROGRAMME

Time	Activity	
11.00 - 11.15	Introductions	P. Kiirya
11.15 - 11.30	Background on Citizen's Manifesto	P. Kiirya/J. De Coninck
11.30 - 11.40	Objective of the meetings and expected outcomes	J. De Coninck
11.40 - 12.00	Comments and clarifications	Participants
12.00- 14.00	Review of National Group submission for the Citizens' Manifesto (group work)	Participants
14.00- 14.30	LUNCH BREAK	
14.30 - 15.30	Presentation by groups and discussion	Participants
15.30 - 16.00	Conclusions and way forward	Hon. Prime Minister/ J De Coninck