

What is Pluralism?

The programme defines pluralism as the energetic engagement with diversity. Diversity is a given, but pluralism is an achievement.

PKP members in Uganda describe **pluralism** in the 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.”

Pluralism is therefore not just about tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference, as well as the inclusion and free participation of all people in development processes.



▲ Manifestations of difference: A mind-map created by PKP partners at a methodology workshop held in Mpigi, October 2009.

PKP Members in Uganda

The programme is a collective undertaking by a number of civil society organisations and academic institutions in Uganda, including Kampala International University, the Islamic University in Uganda, the Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies at Gulu University, Nkumba University, the Uganda National NGO Forum, the Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA), the Human Rights Network (HURINET), the Human Rights and Peace Centre at Makerere University, the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, the Uganda Women’s Network, and the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, as the coordinating organisation.



The PKP in Uganda cooperates with sister institutions in India and Indonesia, and



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Building Bridges

THE PLURALISM KNOWLEDGE PROGRAMME IN UGANDA

Developing civil society strategies to increase spaces for pluralism in practice

Background

The Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Programme (PKP) is an international initiative bringing together several organisations - universities and NGOs - in Uganda, India, Indonesia and the Netherlands.

The programme was triggered by concerned civil society organisations in the South that noticed increasing forms of intolerance manifested in religion, ethnic affiliation, nationalism, social class, gender and other identities. It seemed ever more 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.

Responding to this, a group of academic and civil society actors came together, with the Kosmopolis Institute and the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (Hivos) in the Netherlands. to identify and generate knowledge about the appeal of extremism, and to comprehend divergent experiences and views on pluralism.



▲ The PKP at an NGO fair

Why the PKP in Uganda?

The PKP reflects a conviction that, by virtue of our nation's history and its ethnic, political and religious composition, valuing and managing diversity is necessary for equitable and sustainable development. There is also a need to re-enforce legal institutions and instruments that protect minorities and therefore broaden the scope of affirmative action.

The PKP in Uganda also provides a much needed platform for the public to engage in conversations that address our differences and build an equitable society.

In the course of the first phase of the programme (2009-2010), the PKP was instrumental in:

- Fostering a gradual recognition of the value, relevance and timeliness of pluralism as a critical issue in Uganda.
- Generating knowledge on the subject of pluralism in Uganda where this was not previously easily available.
- Turning NGO/academia collaboration into a reality



▲ The Pluralism programme – Engaging with difference

Objectives of the PKP in Uganda

- Influence 4 Ugandan universities on their practice and engagement with pluralism, both as learning communities and as hosts to the future leaders of the country.
- Develop and implement civil society strategies in promoting pluralism, including engaging with policy makers and civil society itself, and contributing to on-going governance processes.
- Undertake further topical research and share experiences across PKP programme countries and the East African region. In addition, the PKP will provide learning spaces to all its participating organisations

