

Netherlands Institute for

Multiparty Democracy

10
YEARS
IN UGANDA

COMMEMORATIVE MAGAZINE



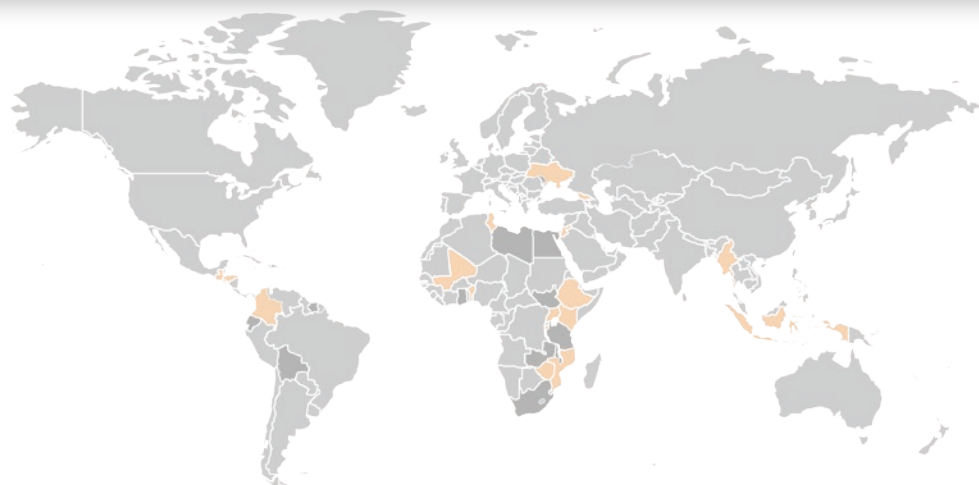


Democracy
starts with
dialogue.



Multiparty
Democracy

TABLE OF CONTENTS



COMMEMORATIVE MAGAZINE

Commemorative Word from the IPOD Chairperson

6

Welcoming Remarks

7

Democracy Starts With Dialogue

8

Profiles

9

NIMD Partners With DGF to Improve Political Parties Capacity

15

Lessons Learnt from the Ugandan Dialogue Process

18

Interview of the Uganda Country Representative of NIMD, Mr. Frank Rusa

20

Capacity Building of Political Parties on Electoral Processes

21

Pictorials of Key Activities NIMD 2018-2020

22

Why Uganda Needs Political Parties

26

The Inter Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD) Journey

29

Snapshot Into the Future:

30





COMMEMORATIVE WORD FROM THE IPOD CHAIRPERSON



On behalf the Inter Party Organization for dialogue (IPOD), I congratulate the Netherlands Multiparty Institute (NIMD) on its 20th Anniversary globally and 10th Anniversary in Uganda and welcome you to the NIMD UGANDA @10 Commemorative magazine.

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) has been pivotal in strengthening democracy in Uganda for the last 10 Years. NIMD started its work in Uganda at the invitation of political parties who needed experts in multi-party governance during the transition from the movement system to multiparty democracy.

NIMD Uganda has over the last ten years been a key facilitator of the dialogue process between and among the political parties represented in Parliament since the founding of the Interparty Organization for Dialogue (IPOD) in February 2010. IPOD continues to be a safe platform for uninhibited political dialogue and is growing to be very instrumental in strengthening multiparty democracy in Uganda.

The stewardship and commitment of the NIMD – Uganda Office which has generously hosted the IPOD secretariat is immensely appreciated by all the IPOD members who currently are Democratic Party (DP), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Justice Forum (JEEMA), National Resistance Movement (NRM) and Uganda People's Congress (UPC). IPOD's role as a space for bringing together key stakeholders in the democratic has been critical in building trust and collaboration. During the past two years, IPOD has convened two successful Summit of Leaders, which were both a significant step in encouraging dialogue. A number of very important recommendations from the Summits are being implemented.

NIMD had also conducted numerous capacity building activities intended to enhance the capacity of our respective parties through various interventions to strengthen internal democracy, conflict resolution capacities, gender mainstreaming and youth leadership development among others.

We take this opportunity to wish the entire NIMD fraternity success in its future endeavors and they can rest assured of the commitment and support of all members of IPOD.

WELCOME REMARKS



On behalf of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), I welcome you to the NIMD UGANDA @10 Commemorative magazine.

This year is very significant in the operations of NIMD, as we celebrate our 20th Anniversary and 10th Anniversary of our operations in Uganda. NIMD was founded in 2000 by seven Dutch political parties and is a Non Governmental Organisation, with headquarters in the Netherlands. NIMD's multiparty identity provides us with the legitimacy and unique opportunity to work on an impartial basis with all political parties in a country and encourage dialogue between them. NIMD initially focused its multiparty dialogue processes in South Africa and was later inspired and encouraged by the Late President Mandela to expand its work in other African countries and beyond.

In Uganda, NIMD started its operations by facilitating the multiparty party dialogue process that eventually culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 5th February 2010, which governs the multiparty platform and gave birth to the Interparty Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD).

NIMD's overall objective in Uganda is to help foster a well-functioning, strong and vibrant multiparty democracy. The core aims are therefore to strengthen parties to be more programmatic and responsive, to promote the inclusion of women and youth in the political space, and to facilitate the dialogue process for parties, civil society, and other stakeholders.

The programme has two main aspects. The first focuses on facilitating an inclusive political dialogue between the parties represented in parliament. The second supports parties as they develop into mature organizations with a sound organizational structure and a distinctive programmatic identity.

This magazine is a celebration of the long journey we have walked together, with all stakeholders and partners, in supporting a strong vibrant inclusive multiparty democracy in Uganda. In particular we thank the political parties, Government of Uganda, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF).

Frank. N. Rusa
Country Representative - Uganda

DEMOCRACY STARTS WITH DIALOGUE



The year 2020 is an eventful year in many aspects. Especially for the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty democracy (NIMD) as it was founded 20 years ago and also the NIMD Uganda office is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

Our work started in South Africa, where we launched a programme to bring South African political parties together and support them in defining their new roles after the end of apartheid in the country. The objective of the politicians was clear: they wanted to create a united, non-racist, non-sexist, and democratic society. However, there was no democratic culture to build upon; Not in their own country and not in the region.

That is when Dutch political parties decided to step up and help improve the democratic culture among South African parties. This had such a positive effect on the level of trust and collaboration between them that South Africa's main political leader, Nelson Mandela, strongly recommended that the Dutch political parties expand their work to other countries. This led to the establishment of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) in 2000 by seven Dutch political parties.

Fast-forward 20 years and our work has expanded across to the globe with operations in Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe.

The multiparty identity is still providing us with the legitimacy and opportunity to work on an impartial basis with all political parties in a country and encourage dialogue between them. Over the years, globally, NIMD has supported the creation of 17 interparty dialogue platforms akin to IPOD in Uganda. These safe and informal platforms are spaces where dialogue can take root and begin to thrive. We bring together actors from all political denominations, so that they may overcome barriers and build the foundations for working together. Once a basic level of trust has been established, we help the participants formulate a common agenda for democratic reform. As a result, the dialogue often leads to improvements in the formal democratic system.

For example in Guatemala, we have sensitized the political culture to the extent that the important but politically sensitive law against femicide was adopted to bring down the large number of women killed every year. In Colombia, we have been part of brokering the peace accord. While in Tunisia, the NIMD School of Politics has empowered a new generation of politicians with a large proportion of the alumni elected into decision-making positions in 2019.

Despite these results, there is little time to sit on our laurels; building peaceful, just and inclusive societies is one of the major challenges of the coming decade and therefore more important than ever. At NIMD, we are able to invest in long-term programmes and maintain long-lasting relationships with our partners, thanks to the continuing support of donors such as the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Democratic Governance Facility in Uganda. We look forward to celebrating the successful cooperation of the past 10 years with our Ugandan partners and count on many more.

UGANDA PROGRAMME

Frank Nyakaana Rusa



Frank Nyakaana Rusa is the Country Representative and Executive Director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), a Hague based international NGO that works to support established and aspiring politicians as they shape the future of their countries with the ultimate aim of achieving peaceful, just and inclusive societies that deliver sustainable development for everyone.

Previously, MR. Frank N. Rusa has served as a programme manager for civic engagement and electoral integrity at the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) in Kampala, Uganda the largest multi-donor basket fund focusing on democratic governance in Africa.

In 2005, as the Head of the Legal department of the Uganda Electoral Commission, Mr. Rusa played key advisory roles to the Government of Uganda in the transition from “no party” politics to multiparty politics. Mr. Rusa holds a Bachelor of Laws Degree from Makerere University and a Master of Public Administration from Harvard University. Over the years, Mr. Rusa has attended prestigious fellowships including as a Reagan Fascell fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy, Maurice R. Green berg world fellow at Yale University and as a draper Hills democracy fellow at Stanford University.

Lawrence M.K. Sserwambala



Lawrence M.K. Sserwambala, PhD is the NIMD Uganda Programs Manager. A very experienced programs management specialist and development Economist. He is widely experienced in Governance work having previously worked with World Vision and now with NIMD Uganda. Lawrence holds a B.A Education, M.Sc. in Project Planning and Management and a PhD in Development Economics from Nkumba University. He also has various qualifications in Philosophy, Theology and Monitoring & Evaluation. In his current role, he ensures that NIMD programming and capacity building in the organisational partners in Uganda is in tandem with the result framework.



Mrs. Femke Lee-Brouwer

Mrs. Femke Lee-Brouwer has worked as a Programme Manager for the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) since July 2019. She oversees the organisation's programming with political parties, parliaments, civil society and citizens in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Prior to this, Mrs. Lee-Brouwer worked as Chief Technical Advisor for UNDP at the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova from July 2017 – July 2019. She worked to support the national legislature with improving their law-making, oversight and representative functions with a specific focus on European integration and the SDGs. She has also worked as Senior Parliamentary Officer at the Natural Resource Governance Institute supporting parliaments and political parties on extractive policy development and law-making. She was one of the co-authors of an innovative guide for political parties, which examines their role in resource governance and assists parties to develop strong policy positions across a wide range of political and technical topics.

With over 15 years of experience, Mrs. Lee-Brouwer has strong expertise in political analysis, technical assistance delivery, learning and program design and strategic planning in the governance sector. She has worked in more than 20 countries across Europe, Africa and Asia with a wide variety of stakeholders including politicians, government officials, civil society and citizens. Mrs. Lee – Brouwer had the pleasure of teaming up with the following organizations: United Nations Development Programme, Natural Resource Governance Institute, International IDEA, AWEPA, Friedrich Ebert Association, American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), European Parliament and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

She holds a Master degree in International and European law from the University of Groningen and a Postgraduate Diploma on Governance, Democratization and Public Policy from the International Institute for Social Studies in the Netherlands. Mrs. Lee – Brouwer is a Dutch native speaker and also fluent in English and French.



Anita Ramharakh

Anita Ramharakh is a seasoned communicator with more than 20 years of experience in training and increasing organizations' public profiles. Since 2014, she has been working as the Communications Advisor for the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). As part of this role, she develops and gives communication trainings to NIMD's partner organizations in more than twenty countries worldwide.

Anita was first introduced to professional communication in 1998 when she started working at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. Since then, she has worked as a Communications Advisor for several other organizations, both profit and non-profit. Her role as a communication professional has always been broad: in addition to training and coaching colleagues on communication, and she has developed and implemented campaigns, organized numerous conferences and (international) events, and helped organizations to articulate their (implicit) communication messages and turn them into concrete and cohesive communication strategies.

Anita has studied Communications, Organizational Anthropology, and Political Science.



Juriaan Brouwer

Juriaan Brouwer is an experienced financial administrator working in the non-profit sector with various organisations for over a decade. His area of expertise includes financial reporting, report analysis, capacity building, internal auditing, budgeting, contract preparation, grant management and organizational setup. His geographic focus is Eastern and Central Africa, Central America and Southeast Asia. Juriaan studied International Economic Relations and Business administration in Germany and the Netherlands.

Natasha Apio

Natasha Apio is a Program Officer at the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, an international NGO that works to promote peaceful, just, and inclusive politics. She has been supporting the Interparty Dialogue and Political Party Strengthening programmes.

Natasha has experience in promoting peace and security through dialogue, mediation and seeking the protection of civilians in conflict. She holds a Master of Science in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Arts in Politics and International Relations from the University of York.

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Sarah Nassaka Musoke

Sarah Musoke is the Finance Manager at NIMD Uganda. She has over 15 years' progressive work experience in the management of Finance, Audit and Administration with notable achievements in responding promptly to donor requirements.

Sarah worked in VEDCO as the head of Finance before joining NIMD and among many projects she has handled were EU, NOVIB and USAID funded projects.

Sarah holds a Bachelor's Degree in commerce (Accounting) from Makerere University and is a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants UK (ACCA) and Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU).





Nabafu Seniorita

Nabafu Seniorita joined NIMD in April 2019 as an accountant for the Strategic Programme (SP). She is an experienced accountant with a proven record of work especially in Non Profit Organizations. She is a highly-motivated, deadline-committed & goal-driven accountant with over seven years of experience. She has acquired skills in financial reporting, financial management, imprest management & Budgeting among others. She is a strong operations professional with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration specializing in Finance and Accounting from Uganda Christian University.

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Brenda Tuhirirwe

Brenda joined NIMD Uganda in October 2018 as an Accountant supporting the Political Party capacity strengthening programme funded by Democratic Governance Facility. She is a qualified chartered accountant with vast experience and a demonstrated history of working in the non-profit organization management industry. Skilled in Financial reporting and analysis, Business Planning, internal controls, and Budgeting. She holds a Masters' degree in Business Administration (M.B.A.) and a Bachelor of commerce degree focused on Accounting and Finance from Makerere University.



Babra Nyakato Mukunde

Babra Nyakato Mukunde is a proficient and dynamic administrative assistant with over five years of experience in customer care service, procurement, human resource and administrative functions. She joined NIMD as an administrative assistant in November 2018 under the strategic programme (SP). She is highly organized, assertive, conscientious, dedicated to achieving tasks at hand, result oriented, very enthusiastic and an ambitious person who has developed a mature and responsible approach to any task that she undertakes.

Babra possesses a Bachelor's degree in social work and social administration from Uganda Christian university and a post graduate diploma in human resource management from Uganda Management institute.

NIMD @ 10-

Promoting dialogue and strengthening the capacities of political parties and actors globally

NIMD PARTNERS WITH DGF TO IMPROVE POLITICAL PARTIES CAPACITY

*Lawrence M.K. Sserwambala,
PhD (Program Manager – NIMD)*

More than fifteen years ago, Ugandans overwhelmingly voted in a 2005 referendum to return to multiparty democracy. However, despite the opening up of multipartism, Uganda's political space remains restricted and decision-making is concentrated in the hands of a small elite. Political parties in Uganda, which are expected to be the engines of democratic development like elsewhere, remain relatively weak, fragmented, and are lacking in representing the interests of their constituents. In a Political environment with a dominant party, The National Resistance Movement (NRM) for Uganda's case, dialogue remains an available option and the only chance for other political and civic actors seeking to influence political processes and focus on National development.

In a bid to support political parties becoming more functional, relevant and support the functionality of the respective party structures, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, in partnership with the Democratic Governance Facility worked together to support the political parties through a "Political Parties Capacity Support Project" (PPCSP). The project aims at championing an interest-compatible approach to capacity strengthening for political parties so that they can have the necessary capabilities in order for them to play their rightful roles.

Uganda's political environment has, over the last few years, continued to be dominated by tensions between the ruling party and the main opposition, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC). This particularly resulted from the disputed outcome of the 2016 presidential elections among others. The tendency towards violence continually appears to motivate relentless state restrictions on political activity by opposition groups and critical civil society organizations.

The existence of constricting legislations such as the Public Order Management Act (POMA), which are viewed as tools to restrict the political space have not helped matters. These conditions have tended to push the major opposition towards further entrenchment into their positions, thus negatively affecting the propensity towards open - minded dialogue and mutual co-existence.

The main opposition parties are further handicapped by protracted internal leadership struggles and conflict. This provides an additional complicating factor, which influences the ability of these parties to develop and pursue an effective strategy for opposition politics in the Ugandan political settlement.

Therefore, the major problem that NIMD and DGF sought to address is that democratic institutions like political parties and political processes do not address the rights and aspirations of citizens. In line with this, the two entities proposed interventions to contribute towards the improvement of democratic governance in Uganda by ensuring a broad based political engagement that makes the state and its institutions more responsive to the citizens.

In a quest to improve the Political parties' functionality, the Political Parties Capacity Support Project sought to intervene at three objective levels including:

- a. Strengthening capacity of political parties to build their local structures, improve political party programmatic capacity, enhance internal democracy and conflict management ability.
- b. Enhancing participation of women in political parties and politics at national and subnational levels.
- c. Enhancing participation of youth in political parties and politics at national and subnational levels.

Against this backdrop, NIMD and DGF have employed a strategy that this multifaceted project offers a unique opportunity to ensure coherency and coordination among different actors; investing efforts in building and increasing trust and relationship among political actors as key actors in the process of political bargaining. It will furthermore build linkages between political and civic actors to realise a shared agenda for dialogue and joint lobby strategy for change. This multipronged approach is anticipated to increase the space for diverse actors to influence the process so as to contribute to the realisation of an enabling environment, responsive political parties and a culture of inclusive and accommodative politics that better serve the needs and aspirations of Uganda citizens.

The Democratic Governance Facility has provided an amount to a tune of six billion shillings towards the political parties' capacity support program. To-date, this has so far been used to enhance the effectiveness of political organisational capacities through:

- a. Intra- party constitutional literacy through enhanced dissemination of their party constitutions targeting political parties' organs at the various levels. This is expected to increase compliance with party rules and regulations and general constitutional literacy among party members.
- b. Strengthening Inter and Intra party mediation and conflict resolution capacities to handle and manage conflicts from within the political organisations. This will ultimately enable the parties to strengthen their internal cohesion and improve their effectiveness to discharge their mandate to their support bases, the citizenry.

- c. Strengthening inclusive manifesto and policy development capacities of the member political parties. This is intended to enable political parties to develop coherent policy platforms and be in position to articulate and advocate for policy alternatives that reflect their ideological premises. It is hoped that this will contribute to issue based politics as opposed to personality centred politics.
- d. Enhancing communication capacities of the political parties both internally and externally. This was done through providing funding facilities to the respective political parties to respond to their unique communication challenges.
- e. Strengthening the role of youth and women in politics through mainstreaming their issues in party policy documents and amplifying their voices within the party policy processes. This was done through various trainings, peer learning engagements, inter-generational discussions and mentorship among others.

It is worth noting that while there is evident improvement in the political parties' functionality especially around the areas that the donors sought to address, the progress has in a way been dogged by some challenges including the difficulty in changing mind set from the old to the new way of doing things. During the first phase of political party capacity support, NIMD and DGF extended support to parties in form of facilitation i.e. parties were given money to spend and later account. However, there was a shift from that position to a new one in phase II where funding follows a project model, where support is directly extended to the beneficiary members of the political parties. This caused a bit of friction between the project implementation unit and the beneficiary political parties, whose mind-set is not yet adjusted to face the new reality.



Focus for 2020

The political season is right at the door; NIMD as an organisation that seeks to support the entrenchment of democracy intends to undertake a number of interventions aimed at supporting political parties to prepare for elections. Learning from the past election periods, the interventions shall be aimed at managing and sailing through the election period unscathed. At the first level, NIMD intends to support internal democratic processes of political parties, support towards developing manifestos as well as managing conflicts and other unintended outcomes from especially the party primary elections.

While these are not an end in themselves and may not completely transform the political parties into the institutions that their respective members wish to see, building blocks are added onto them and they shall not remain the same.

NIMD and DGF hope that the contributions made to the improvement and growth of political party structures and internal processes through this funding support will go a long way in improving the democratisation of Uganda.



LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE UGANDAN DIALOGUE PROCESS

All Interparty dialogue processes have different types of processes and outcomes, though the methodology has some similarities. Here we share the lessons learnt from the Ugandan experience that may be useful for other dialogue processes on the Continent and beyond.

Timing

The timing of an inter party dialogue process kick off can have serious consequences. Consideration of the phase in which a country finds itself along the electoral cycle should inform timing wherever possible. Try to avoid beginning on the cusp of an election; of course the timing of an intervention may not be up to NIMD at all, but rather may be an answer to an urgent call from the political parties in the country concerned.

Use it, for example, to put pressure on the process for a quick delivery, but be careful to ensure that there is sufficient ownership of the outcomes, especially ownership of the party caucuses.

Arranging exchange visits

Exchange visits (both at the start and as challenges arise) to confer with and learn from peers are a valuable weapon in the arsenal of an inter-party platform. A visit to a country with a multiparty platform that has faced similar challenges can provide the necessary impetus to push a tentative country into forming a platform.

Trust Building

Ensure the various elements of the dialogue structure and operations are geared towards building trust between the member parties. Trust is the basis for these parties to dialogue and to make concessions on their demands in order to reach consensus.

The confidentiality of the inter-party dialogue process must be secured, lest it becomes about point scoring rather than a consensus building.

Having a neutral facilitator trusted by all sides is a key aspect of building trust in the platform. While it is important to foster personal relationships between the individual party representatives in the process, it is equally important that personal relationships are forged between the Executive Director, the Secretariat and party representatives. Alongside the conventional trust building, informal unorthodox methods focused on more intense personal relationships and social interactions are key considerations.

Setting realistic experiences and achievable tasks

Set realistic expectations and ensure that the agenda is not overburdened, especially at the start of the process; otherwise it will be nipped in the bud.

The approach used is to find some early success in order to build trust and confidence in the process. A distinction is made between short term issues, that could be tackled immediately and those that are longer term and require more intensive dialogue. These longer term, trickier issues can be phased as progress is made with the short term issues. Another technique used was stressing the issue of give and take, bargaining and ultimately emphasizing the need to look at the best interests of the country.

Working in Small Groups

Working in small groups is very important as it is easier to achieve an initial consensus working in smaller committees so we often divided the groups into sub-committees, each tasked with a specific issue.



INTERVIEW

with Mr. Frank Rusa, Country Representative Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), Uganda Office

Why did the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) decide to open a national programme and Office in Uganda?

NIMD opened an Office in Uganda in order to pursue its programmatic objectives of supporting political parties and dialogue processes worldwide. NIMD had been approached by various actors and stakeholders to support and engage in democratic processes in the country. NIMD operates primarily around very specific programmes and activities, which entails that the offices are established to anchor the specific deliverables.

The Interparty Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD) process has been widely credited for bringing political parties to start engaging with each other in an unprecedented manner. Explain to us how the NIMD conceived the programme and what is the key ingredient for its apparent success?

The multiparty dialogue process all started with a series of requests from various Ugandan political party representatives seeking help to better fulfill their roles. Several parties approached both the Dutch Ambassador in Uganda and The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Dialogue (NIMD) in The Hague independently. These included opposition parties and the governing National Resistance Movement (NRM) through its Secretary General.

What are the challenges and the future of IPOD and other forms of dialogue in Uganda?

I believe that we have to look at the opportunities that exist before delving into the challenges. I believe that the dialogue process spearheaded by IPOD has succeeded in bringing the parties to the table and acknowledging that they have a shared future for the country.

As we celebrate the 10 years of NIMD and IPOD, we need to acknowledge that the political parties have shown commitment to the process without interruption. The main challenge will be to continue the momentum and ensure that some of the achievements are fully integrated in the sustainable democratic processes in the country.

Finally, could you kindly share your personal vision for sustainable multiparty democracy in Uganda?

Uganda has come a long way. From the very difficult days immediately after independence characterized by state inspired violence, military coups and gross violation of human rights to the relatively stable constitutional order witnessed in the last 30 years.





Multiparty politics is relatively new having been adopted in 2005 after a referendum. Political Parties are still very weak and are largely personality driven. The legal regime continues to grapple with the legacy of the 'individual merit' system that characterized the no-party politics that preceded the adoption of the multiparty system and politics is still largely dominated by the ruling NRM.

I believe that there are still a number of improvements to be made especially around strengthening the spirit of constitutionalism, rule of law and respect of human rights in addition to the strengthening of Political Parties in order to enhance the viability of a credible multiparty democracy in Uganda.

I am optimistic that the spirit of constructive dialogue that is exhibited in the organs of IPOD and other forums like the National Dialogue Process provide very important platforms in which honest discussions can be had about improving the practice of multiparty democracy in Uganda.

This calls for deliberate steps to strengthen constitutionalism and the rule of law, promote the respect of human rights and have stronger viable political parties that compete around issues and not personalities. The task ahead is still enormous and is by no means a simple task; however it is not insurmountable either-- with sufficient good will, it is achievable!

Capacity Building of Political Parties on Electoral Processes

Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Workshop Election Managers of IPOD Political Parties, 17th- 19th June 2020 Nican Resort, Lweza, Uganda.

As Uganda heads for the general elections in 2021, the year 2020 is critical, being a pre-election period with a lot of stakeholder trainings and engagements are meant to build capacity of the political players in order to boost confidence and credibility into the electoral process. The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) held a 3-day workshop for Election Managers of IPOD Political Parties from 17th-19th June 2020.

The BRIDGE training was held against the backdrop of the COVID 19 pandemic thus presenting a very unique challenge in the delivery and mode of facilitation. However, from the feedback from the participants, it was well received and they greatly benefited from the training. The training was facilitated by Kenneth Mpyisi (Uganda), Anne Kathurima (Kenya) with interventions from Theophilus Dowetin (Ghana). The Facilitators from Ghana and Kenya joined the workshop virtually due to the travel restrictions which would not allow them to travel to Uganda in person. In attendance were participants from the Democratic Party (DP), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Justice Forum (JEEMA) and Uganda People's Congress (UPC). Participants included core members of each party's electoral management team.

PICTORIAL











WHY UGANDA NEEDS POLITICAL PARTIES

By Noel Henry Beyendeza, Senior Lecturer, Cavendish University

The reputation and attitude towards political parties is not always very positive, both in more established democracies and emerging ones. The public, at large, often has reservations and skepticism about the usefulness of political parties. At times there are calls for a new political order that usually require the ouster of political parties and elected leaders. Those advocating such a position harbor the misconception that the answer lies in loose, nonhierarchical movements.

The case will be made that Democracies and Uganda needs political parties. Scholars note that political parties straddle the space and span the connective linkages between citizens and government, and between a multitude of private, market-based, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the general public.

It is further argued that parties also cut across at least four conventional processes of government: the electoral, the legislative, the executive and the administrative. Beyond cutting across government processes, political parties also shape public policies and programmes that cut across party politics and government functions, and even the state's response to trans-national public policy issues where the party in power holds sway in implementing policies informed by its electoral pledges.

The case for the parties is further strengthened by the argument that by their very nature, political parties are representative institutions that endow regimes with legitimacy; provide ideologies that represent social, economic and political interests; and produce leaders who through democratic elections form the machinery of government (from parliament to the political executive) or opportunities for political participation, or a combination of all three.

Political parties also intermediate and create opportunities for upward social and political mobility-the formation of coalitions. Within the African context, some political parties have been active not only in political mobilization, but also in mobilization for self-help activities, conflict management and beyond.

It will be further argued that Uganda needs strong political parties and based on the past history, it is the sole alternative for a sustainable democratic process and system. An analysis will be made of the past systems including the movement system, governance through decree and also the weak political party system. It will further delve into the urgent need for parties to be strengthened in order for them to positively contribute to the democratic governance system as was indicated above.

Political parties perform an important task in government. They bring people together to achieve control of the government, develop policies favorable to their interests or the groups that support them, and organize and persuade voters to elect their candidates to office.

Parties nominate candidates, raise and spend campaign funds, register voters, simplify decisions for voters, unify diverse interest, act as a moderating influence on government, reduce diffusion of power in government provide patronage, inform public through party platforms, and provide loyal opposition.

Political parties have been defined from the point of view of the functions and purposes they serve or are meant to serve. They are by definition, mere means to an end. Generally they are said to be associations of citizens through which the citizens seek to influence the affairs and process of governance.

They are means through which the people express themselves and decide the system of government they want. They are viewed as movements which seek to persuade the citizens to give them a chance to run the government

Accordingly political parties are perceived to be intermediaries through which people can organize themselves. They therefore play the function of providing an organizational vehicle for the people. And because, as we pointed out in "Reflections on the three institutions of organized society, Law and government that man chose to move out of solitude in to a life of organized society as a means of enabling himself to properly manage the resources and share them equitably. Political parties act as a vehicle through which the people can organize themselves and must be viewed from this value adding perspective.

Role of Political Parties

It is argued that the role of political parties is to help democratize and constitutionalize governance as a means of ensuring the welfare of the people in the society concerned. Their role is to make governance more democratic, constitutional and republican.

They must assist in bringing about and maintaining good governance and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love will be least likely to sacrifice to temporary or partial considerations.

Political parties are therefore the means through which the citizen seeks to attain democracy. They are institutions in which the citizen places his confidence and trust and it is these objectives that they must seek to attain. Their leadership and membership ought to impel them to act not in their narrow personal and sectarian interest but instead in the interest of the entire community. They must have wisdom sufficient enough to enable them bear Republican responsibilities to the entire nation without discrimination against none members.

Political parties are the indispensable links between the people and the representative machinery of government. Their role is most obvious when an election is in prospect but in fact, they need to be continuously operative if a democratic system is to operate effectively.

It is democratic parties that organize the vastly diversified public by nominating candidates for office and by popularizing the ideas around which governmental programmes are built.

They are the vehicles through which individuals and groups work to secure political power. What differentiates political parties from pressure groups is the breadth and variety of their followings and the orientation of their programmes towards issues of concern to the whole country. In this case, awakening interest is a more difficult task than stimulating interest in matters that obviously affect the business or family of an individual.

Uganda used to have a one party system under NRM until a new of multiparty system set in. One of the disadvantages of a one-party system is that it is undemocratic. The operation of a one-party system in a state does not give room for such choices to be made. It can degenerate into a dictatorship. Another disadvantage of a one-party system is that it has the tendency to become dictatorial.

A monopoly on the vote is very likely; virtually every economist agrees that a company holding a monopoly is problematic for the economy. For one, it is able to suck up any corporation that threatens its existence. Thus, people are not given an alternative they must buy from that company or not buy anything at all. Because there is no alternative, companies can sell whatever they want and do whatever they want. Innovation is stifled. Similarly, one party systems stifle public sector innovation. Since people have no alternative, they are forced to abide by the policy of that party.

Any competing party, and their innovative and reformative ideas, is crushed. As a result, areas that are under government control (the economy, for example), stagnate, as the government is unable to implement innovative policy that could potentially transform the sector. Parties are immune to any change if the public doesn't want change, and thus can do what they please.

Most one party systems often have a single party that acts recklessly, since they are sure that the electorate will vote for them regardless of what they do (see India under Congress rule, 1947-1977 and 1980-1996) This facilitates corruption.

Parties in one party systems can be out of touch with the people. As stated above, one party systems have a single party that holds a monopoly on the electorate; they kill (often literally) any and all competition, which can include the people. In more authoritarian systems, the people are prevented from stating anything that is contradictory to what the government is implementing.

As a result, people are left out of the decision making process, and the government stays out of touch with their demands. This has dire consequences; an irritable and rebellious public will often resort to drastic means to have their voice heard (see Tiananmen Square). A conservative public will often let the party do what they want. The party will continue to implement its vision, or its idea of what it believes is right for the people. This vision may be wrong and can negatively affect the public which Uganda is not ready for, if it is to progress ahead.

In conclusion, whereas democracy and multipartyism are inseparable, it is arguable that;

Multiparty systems guarantee the rights for all people who want to choose someone to vote for.

The voice of people is respected and may divide the feelings of voters but no one will harass them because of different opinions.

Right of constitution and public are well observed among multiparty system.

THE INTER PARTY ORGANISATION FOR DIALOGUE (IPOD) JOURNEY

Starting the dialogue

The multiparty dialogue process all started with a series of requests from various Ugandan political party representatives seeking help to better fulfill their roles. Several parties approached both the Dutch Ambassador in Uganda and The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Dialogue (NIMD) in The Hague independently. These included opposition parties and the governing National Resistance Movement (NRM) through its Secretary General.

A regional conference of Political Party representatives from all NIMD's partner countries was held in Naivasha, Kenya from 7th -10th June 2000, during which the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) representatives were invited. The purpose of inviting the two parties was to both induct and inspire them.

Following these initial contacts that are best described as very hostile, a few months later the first multiparty meeting was held in Kampala. It was attended by each of the six Secretaries General, accompanied by their respective entourage in a tense environment filled with anticipation. This was the first in more than twenty years that the opposition and the governing parties were meeting with the idea of some kind of cooperation in mind. It was here that they first demonstrated a collective will to move beyond their seemingly intractable views of each other as enemies and undertake the route of dialogue and cooperation. The delegates also confirmed their acceptance of NIMD's bona fides as the platform's facilitator and the Secretariat. This started a process that eventually culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 5th February 2010, which governs the multiparty platform and gave birth to the Interparty Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD).



SNAPSHOT INTO THE FUTURE:

NIMD to implement The Power of Dialogue (PoD)
Programme 2021-2025

With the support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, over the next five years NIMD will be part of a consortium which will be implementing the Power of Dialogue (PoD) programme. The consortium members include the Gorée Institute (GORIN) based in Dakar Senegal, the Centre for Mediterranean and International Studies (CEMI), Tunis, Tunisia and Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) a pan- African feminist organization based in Uganda. The Programme aims to contribute to peaceful democratic space and inclusive, responsive and representative political decision-making at all levels.

The PoD programme's overarching objective is to enhance collaboration between political and civic actors to participate in accountable political processes. This, we believe, is both timely and relevant in the context of Uganda as there is still presently minimal interaction and engagement between political and civic actors on matters of governance.

The PoD programme shall therefore open opportunities for creating intersectional spaces of engagement between civic and political actors, with a special emphasis on women, youth and other marginalized groups (such as PWDs) to jointly contribute to shaping the agenda for dialogue, with a view to realizing the much-needed synergetic progress on the governance front.

Emphasis will be placed around capacity strengthening for aspiring women and young leaders to empower them to effectively influence and participate in political processes that respect and promote democratic norms and values.

Departing from its traditional approach of exclusively working with political parties, in the POD programme, NIMD will seek to enhance collaboration between political and civic actors to participate in accountable political processes. There will be deliberate steps taken to include previous unheard and marginalized voices in various dialogue processes to strengthen inclusion and legitimacy of the dialogue initiatives.

The above notwithstanding, building on the important work and achievements of the Interparty Organization for Dialogue (IPOD), NIMD will explore further opportunities in the POD programme to deepen political dialogue within and among the political parties in line with its long-term objective of enhancing a culture of political cooperation and trust among key political parties





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