Political Pluralism, Democratic Participation and Representation at Local Government Level in Uganda

A Handbook on Key Concepts for Civil Society, Media and Local Councils

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UMDF

Political Pluralism, Democratic Participation and Representation at Local Government Level in Uganda

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Contents

Acronyms/Abbreviations

CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CAP	Chapter of the Laws of Uganda
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
KANU	Kenya Africa National Union
KAS	Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
LC	Local Council
LGA	Local Governments Act
LGs	Local Governments
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NRM/NRA	National Resistance Movement/National Resistance Army
SACCOs	Savings and Credit Cooperatives Organisations
SFG	School Facilities Grant
TPDF	Tanzania People's Defence Forces
TV	Television
ULGA	Uganda Local Governments Association
UMDF	Uganda Media Development Foundation
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPE	Universal Primary Education

Foreword

This handbook has been developed to provide definitions and explanations for the concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation. The objective of this handbook is to provide information and serve as a reference material to different actors involved in the promotion of political pluralism and democracy at local government level in Uganda.

The handbook has been prepared as a component of a project on "Strengthening civil society, media and local councils' capacity to promote political pluralism, democratic participation and representation at the local government level in Uganda", implemented by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) in partnership with the Uganda Media Development Foundation (UMDF) with funding from the European Union (EU). The premise for this project as well as for developing the handbook is that whereas the concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation are key pillars on which democracy and development rest, the same concepts have not been fully appreciated and are also not fully functioning, particularly at the local government level in Uganda. Through this project, KAS and UMDF intend to contribute towards strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and district councillors, as well as media representatives, in promoting political pluralism, democratic participation and representation at the local government level. This project goal shall be realised through two objectives:

   a)   Assisting civil society, including the media, to develop greater cohesion and capacity in working on political pluralism, democratic participation and representation; and,

b) Promoting responsiveness and accountability of political leaders at the district level.

Realising the above objectives will be through a series of activities, including publication of this handbook and training of civil society members, journalists and district councillors about the concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation in the context of local governance in Uganda. Civil society, media and local councillors are especially targeted in this project for, among other stakeholders, they play a very critical role in the promotion of democracy and development at local government level. The three aforementioned groups are, for example, key to realising genuine representation and participatory democracy. Given adequate capacity, they can play an effective role in civic education, policy formulation, resource allocation, monitoring and representing the views of all sections of society, including those of usually marginalised groups such the women, children and the youth. The three groups – i.e. civil society, the media and local councillors – are hence particularly addressed in this handbook.

The handbook will be used as a springboard for implementing different activities under the aforementioned project. It will, for example, be the basis for developing training curricula that will in turn be used to train the identified target groups. Furthermore, the handbook is intended to serve as a reference material for various actors, both at local government and national level, for information about the definitions, meanings and applications of the concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation.

The analysis in this handbook begins with the understanding of democracy. Democracy links people and government in terms of inputs and outputs of the governing process. In this process, democracy presupposes certain participatory, pluralist, developmental, protection, and performance elements. If all the diverse segments of society (pluralism) are free to get involved (participatory) in the process of governing and are aware of their actions as part of a self governing process, and if the leaders and citizens believe in and practise

constitutionalism and the rule of law, and if leaders deliver services while citizens undertake their obligations and responsibilities in accordance with the laws and policies, then society would be practising democratic governance. These ideals are possible in local governments if civil society, the media and other state and non-state actors are ready to acquire skills and strengthen their capacities to propagate them.

The development of this handbook has been informed by both desk research covering mainly the theoretical meanings of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation, as well as two case studies conducted in the districts of Gulu and Mbarara. The case studies were mainly intended to elicit understanding of the concepts by the three main target groups on this project, i.e., civil society, the media and local councillors. The research process was commissioned by KAS and conducted by Associate Professor Elijah Dickens Mushemeza[1], who also took the lead in developing this handbook. In the different sections, a historical background of pluralism in Uganda is given, as is the theoretical foundation of democracy and representation, and the actual implications, perceptions and practices of these concepts in local governments are presented. The handbook concludes by identifying the drivers and possible areas of intervention to strengthen political pluralism, democratic participation and representation in local governments in Uganda.

KAS and UMDF express gratitude to the European Union and the Delegation of the European Commission to Uganda for supporting this project and the development of the handbook through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Further thanks go to Dr. Elijah Dickens Mushemeza, the consultant in this endeavour on the development of this handbook.

Peter Girke
Project Director

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1 Historical Overview

1.1 Uganda - the pre-colonial era

Although at the onset of colonialism, Uganda was not a single entity as is the case today, the people of Uganda were linked historically. According to anthropologists, there are four ethnic groups in Uganda: the Bantu, the Nilotics, the Nilo-Hamitic and the Sudanese. There is also evidence that the whole of western Uganda and much of Buganda were either governed together up to 1600 AD or were closely linked somehow during the dynasty of the Bachwezi.[2]

By 1800 AD, the kingship groups of the western, eastern and central parts of Uganda, with their new Luo relatives, together with the Karimojong, Iteso and the Bagwere of eastern Uganda, were not governed together but were linked. Indeed, the successor kingdoms to the Bachwezi dynasty, namely Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro and Nkore, were always in contact, sometimes allying and at times fighting among themselves. These same kingdoms also traded together. They were also linked with the chiefdoms of Busoga and Acholi and to a great extent with the kingdoms of Rwanda and the chiefdoms of Karagwe and Bukoba in Tanzania. Nevertheless, they remained a constellation of kinship states.[3]

Uganda has had periods of turbulence and insecurity since the pre-colonial days. Kingdoms rose and fell through violent struggles. There were wars between the various kingdoms and chiefdoms, such as between Buganda and Bunyoro, Bunyoro and Toro, Bunyoro and

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[2] Republic of Uganda, *Defence Policy*, p.2.
[3] Ibid, p.2.

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Nkore, Buganda and Busoga etc. Violence was, therefore, part of the metamorphosis of societies. These conflicts and wars were, however, not as devastating as the ones Uganda has experienced in the recent past.[4] Most important to note is that under kingdoms, the kings enjoyed absolute control of power and any political challenge was met with violence. In other words, Ugandans in pre-colonial times were ruled by absolute monarchs. Political change was always through violent means among princes, who had to physically eliminate their rivals.

1.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

We have already noted that pre-colonial Uganda was not a single entity as it is the case today, but that the people were linked historically. Ugandan territory as it is defined today comprised a number of kingdoms and scattered communities. It was a highly diverse territory, with a variety of social structures and practices. The 'state-nation' of Uganda was a creation of colonialism from these various entities. These nationalities and communities had their systems of local government which were only distorted by colonialism.

The first attempts by the colonial authorities to set up local administrations were made in 1919 when the African Native Authority Ordinance was passed. This ordinance provided for the powers and duties of African chiefs and for the enforcement of African authority. The chiefs collected taxes, presided over native courts, maintained law and order, enforced laws and constituted native councils at district and lower levels. The native councils were neither representative nor were they democratic.[5] Subsequently, the evolution of local government in Uganda went through some reforms. First were the reforms under the African Local Government Ordinance of 1949 that provided for the setting up of body-corporate councils in all districts and a system of standing (functional) committees that also endowed councils with the legal basis for assuming wider functions, for instance provision of primary education, maintenance of roads, and provision of local courts.

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[4] Mushemeza E.D., 2001, 'Issues of Violence in the Democratization Process in Uganda', in *Africa Development*, Vol. XXVI Nos 1 & 2. Dakar: CODESRIA.

[5] See Villadsen, S., & Lubanga, F., 1996, *Democratic Decentralisation in Uganda: A New Approach to Local Governance*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

The local government system that evolved in Uganda at the time was designed to serve the interests and convenience of the colonial regime.

1.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (1962 - 1986)

The 1962 constitution largely maintained a system of local government as inherited from the colonial period. Under the independence constitution, a substantial degree of autonomy was allowed to federal and semi-federal kingdoms. The Buganda kingdom enjoyed federal status with devolved powers while other kingdoms had semi-federal status. Kingdom governments and district councils exercised considerable authority in their areas and had possibilities to set their priorities and to execute their decisions. For example, the decentralised local governments had powers to raise revenue through taxes, draw up and implement budgets and provide services. The above arrangement was nevertheless not without contradictions and challenges. In the course of governance, the central government increasingly became uncomfortable about autonomous local governance and started curtailing the powers of councils in the belief that they were breeding grounds for opposition.

The contradictions that emerged as a result affected the relations between central and local authorities to the extent that in 1966 the then Prime Minister, Apollo Milton Obote, abrogated the 1962 constitution, replacing it with the 1966 "pigeon hole" constitution and subsequently replacing this too with the 1967 republican constitution which centralised all the powers.[6] As a way of consolidating the authority of the central government, the Local Administration Act, 1967 was passed. The act made district councils or local governments mere agents of the central government and changed their name from 'Local Government' to 'Local Administration', reflecting their diminished power. With powers thus over-centralised, district councils more or less became 'appendages' of the central government and their operational instruments, such as budgets and development plans, had to be approved by the central government.[7]

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[6] Mudoola, Dan. M., 2001, Religion, Politics and Ethnicity in Uganda, Kampala, Fountain Publishers.
[7] See Leys, C., 1967, Politicians and Politics in Acholi, Uganda, 1962-65, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, p.47.

The state of affairs described above persisted until 1971, when the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) government was overthrown by the Ugandan army under Idi Amin. The military regime suspended the constitution, abolished parliament, dissolved district councils and proceeded to rule by decree. Nevertheless, in 1973, Idi Amin reorganised local administration into ten provinces, headed by governors largely from the army and appointed by himself. Local administrations became avenues through which military directives could filter from the top to the lowest levels in villages. There was no participation of the citizens in governance; Amin had successfully transformed the military dictatorship into a fascist state.[8]

Idi Amin's military regime was eventually removed by a combination of Tanzania People's Defence Forces (TPDF) and Ugandan exile forces. Following Amin's overthrow, a new government, made up of representatives mainly from exiled opposition groups, was formed. This was established in Kampala under the auspices of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) and under a compromise president, Yusuf Kironde Lule. In terms of local governance, a local administrative system of *manyumba kumi* ('ten house cells') was established at the village level to mobilise communities, handle security matters, and distribute essential commodities such as salt, soap, and sugar.

In December 1980, a general election was organised by the Military Commission which had replaced two short-lived UNLF governments – the first under Yusuf Kironde Lule and the second under Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa. Apollo Milton Obote and UPC were returned to power amidst protests over a rigged election. On assuming power, the UPC reorganised local governance in accordance with the 1967 constitution and the 1967 Local Administration Act. In practice, the UPC operated as it had done before being overthrown by Idi Amin. What was remarkable during this period, though, was the increase in patronage. Chiefs who

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[8] See Mamdani, M., 1976, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, London and New York: Monthly Review Press; Mushemeza, E.D., 2001, 'Issues of Violence in the Democratization Process in Uganda', in *Africa Development*, Vol XXVI, Nos 1 & 2, Dakar: CODESRIA; Tukahebwa, B.G., 1998, 'The Role of District Councils in Decentralisation', in A. Nsibambi, *Decentralisation and Civil Society in Uganda: The Quest for Good Governance,* Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

belonged to opposition parties were summarily dismissed while others went into exile. Challenges in governance at all levels, coupled with an economic crisis and a rebellion in the heart of the country, undermined the ruling party and it eventually lost power.

The second UPC government was replaced by a military junta under Tito Okello. This junta was too short-lived to establish any meaningful governance structure. In addition, the six months of its reign were characterised by war, violation of human rights and preoccupation with unsuccessful peace talks in Nairobi, Kenya. The Okello regime was subsequently overthrown on 26 January 1986 by the National Resistance Movement/National Resistance Army (NRM/NRA) whose programmes and activities in relation to the concepts under study will be dealt with in the subsequent sections.

Summary

This section has briefly introduced the historical origins of local governance in Uganda, tracing it from pre-colonial days until 1986 when the NRM administration assumed power. Local governance in Uganda is not a new creation – rather it was a practice within pre-colonial indigenous communities and kingdoms and has continued to be practised, though with ups and downs, during the post-colonial period. The section also points to the violent political upheavals that Uganda has experienced, justifying the need to promote democracy as a basis for sustaining peace.

2 Understanding Democracy

2.1 MEANING AND FORMS OF DEMOCRACY

The origin of the word 'democracy' is in ancient Greece of the fourth century before Christ. Since then, not a single definition accepted by all societies that attempt to practise democratic rule has emerged. But one characteristic of democracy that is distinguishable in all contemporary societies worldwide is that the people themselves hold the reins of power.

In the ancient Greek states of Athens, Sparta and Corinth, the people had a tradition of holding town meetings which were open to all citizens. In such meetings, decisions concerning the laws, rights and duties of both citizens and slaves were made. However, only freeborn citizens participated in these discussions and passed decisions. Decisions which had the support of the majority carried the day and became binding. One of the shortcomings of that practice, however, was that women and slaves had no right to participate in such meetings.

Although this democratic practice laid the foundation for taking away power and authority from the hands of a small number of individuals and passing it to the majority, it did not grow and prosper well in the centuries that followed. This is why in many societies in the world, the rule of minorities over majorities continued.

From the ancient Greek experience, it is evident that democracy can be practised at all levels: at the national and local government level, in communities, schools, and workplaces, and within CSOs such as media

associations and women organisations. Democracy based on the ancient Greek model can be applied particularly in village communities or places where populations are small so that, for example, decisions concerning the use of resources such as water, roads, environment etc. are taken with full citizen participation.

Direct democracy: This form of democracy is where all 'qualified' people participate fully in making decisions on matters which are put on the agenda for discussion. Qualified people could be defined by the laws, norms, cultures or any other set standards. For example, in a village council in Uganda, all persons who are 18 years and above are regarded as qualified and are free to participate. Every participant in the decision-making process under direct democracy can give his/her approval or disapproval on a given matter by uttering 'yes' or 'no', or through voting by show of hands or by secret ballot. Direct democracy works well in communities where citizens have a consensual view of their goals and interests, for example at village level. It is also possible in communities where there is relative homogeneity, i.e. where such things as shared values and culture, comparable incomes etc. exist among the members. In Uganda, the practice of direct democracy can be found at Local Council 1 (village) level and during national referenda, as was the case in 2005 when a referendum was held that led to the changeover from the movement political system to a multi-party system.

Representative democracy: In this form of democracy, different groups, parties, or communities elect persons to represent them and give the elected people full mandate to decide on their behalf in various organs of governance. In this way, the people or citizens see themselves as ruling through their representatives. In Uganda, for example, article 1(1) of the Uganda constitution provides that 'all power belongs to the people who shall exercise their sovereignty in accordance with this constitution'. Clause (4) further provides that 'the people shall express their will and consent on who shall govern them and

how they should be governed, through regular, free and fair elections of their representatives or through referenda'. These constitutional provisions therefore give Ugandans the opportunity to practise both direct and representative democracy for their governance. Since governance in Uganda is through elected leaders (representatives), it is very important that the citizens understand the concept of 'governing through representatives' to be able to hold their leaders accountable and to participate effectively in the development process. The later sections of this handbook will discuss in detail the aspect of representation.

2.3 CONTENT OF DEMOCRACY

From the foregoing, it can be seen that democracy encompasses all political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life. Whereas in the democracies of the West the emphasis is more on individual rights, the focus in African democracies also includes the collective as well as communities' and societies' rights and interests.

According to Green et al., three conditions are commonly named as essential to any political democracy. These include: a) the existence of competition, b) participation of the governed, and c) respect for civil liberties.[9] In contrast to authoritarian systems in which decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of a few and authority is unchallengeable, democracies are based in the decentralisation of authority. In democracies, citizens take part in the decision-making process of governments. A democratic system of governance is one in which citizens hold their leaders accountable for their public actions. Accountability is also ensured through open competition for office. Democracy institutionalises competition for power through regular free and fair elections open to all citizens. Elections in a democracy cannot be facades that dictators or a single party can hide behind, but authentic competitions for the support of the people.

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[9] Green & Luehrmann, 2004, *Comparative Politics of the Third World: Linking Concepts and Cases*, p. 301.

Democracy further encompasses a set of principles and practices that protect human freedom. It rests upon the principles of majority rule, coupled with individual and minority rights. Democracies guard against all-powerful central governments and decentralise government authority and functions to regional and local levels, on the understanding that local governments must be as accessible and responsive to the people as possible. Furthermore, one of the prime functions of democracy is to protect basic human rights such as freedom of speech and religion; the right to equal protection under the law; and the opportunity to organise and participate fully in the political, economic and cultural life of society. Democracy, therefore, is not only political but also economic, social and cultural. It also ensures gender equality and empowerment of women as well as specific interests of youth, persons with disabilities, children's rights and environmental sustainability, among others.

Democracies are diverse, reflecting each nation's unique political, social and cultural life. Citizens in a democracy not only have rights, they also have the responsibility to participate in the political system that in turn protects their rights and freedoms. Democratic societies are committed to the values of tolerance and cooperation. Democracies recognise that reaching consensus requires compromise and that it may not always be attainable. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, 'intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit.'[10] At its core, democratisation entails the accommodation of a wide range of opinions. For a country to be considered a democracy, there must be room for a lively and vibrant civil society, with active parties, trade unions, and religious and cultural groups that operate independently of the government.

In the African context, the conceptualisation of democracy can be defined by four key characteristics.[11]

First, it has to be a democracy in which people have some real decision-making power over and above the formal consent of electoral choice.

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[10] Also see Principles of Democracy, ibid.

[11] For more debate on social democracy, see Ake, C., 1996a, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution; Murunga, G.R., and S.W. Nasong'o, eds., 2007, Kenya: *The Struggle for Democracy*, Dakar: CODESRIA.

This entails, among other things, a powerful legislature, decentralisation of power to local democratic formations, and considerable emphasis on the development of institutions for the aggregation and articulation of interests. The second criterion is the emphasis on concrete social and economic rights, which invest in the improvement of people's health, education and the capacity to participate effectively.

The third element is that a democracy puts as much emphasis on collective rights as it does on individual rights. It recognises nationalities, sub-nationalities, ethnic groups and communities as social formations that express self-realisation and thus grants them rights to cultural expression, as well as political and economic participation.

The fourth characteristic is that it has to be a democracy of incorporation - with inclusive politics that engenders participation and equitable access to state resources and that ensures special representation in legislatures of large social groups, such as the youth, labour movements and women's groups, which are often marginalised and yet without whose active participation there is unlikely to be democracy or development.

It is this concept that is meant to drive citizens to struggle for political pluralism and effective representation at both local and national levels.

2.4 Democratic participation

Participation is a component of democracy which refers to the process whereby people act in political ways to connect themselves to government and thus become self-governing.[12] Democratic participation can occur in two ways: First, people can participate through established structures of the adopted forms of democracy; and second, they can participate through civil associations. In democracies, the election of leaders must be free and fair. In some societies, a referendum is used to decide on major issues of the day. In this way citizens become part of decision-making and governance.

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[12] Grigsby, E., 2005, *Analyzing Politics: An Introduction to Political Science*, Belmont: Thomson Learning Inc., p. 325.

Experiences in Africa and elsewhere also show that leaders can neglect the interests of those who elected them and concentrate instead on their own interests and those of particular groups. It is therefore important for the people to constantly monitor the way their leaders manage their affairs. This is possible through civil associations, for example of farmers, youth, academics, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, entrepreneurs, environmentalists etc. Participation in such associations is important as they help to protect group interests and as they raise awareness about specific issues and therefore can be educative. Furthermore, participation through such associations and groups eliminates individual isolation and strengthens the people's position in engaging leaders for their own interests and those of the community in general.[13] This becomes even more relevant when the government system expands and its organs become far removed from the people, and when a person as an individual cannot effectively question the government.

A lack of people's participation in free associations bears the risk that since it is difficult for an individual to pressurise the government into meeting people's needs, the failure of individual efforts leads to individual despair and frustration, which may in turn lead to withdrawal from the campaign for democracy.[14]

Summary

In this section, democracy has been described as a system of governance in which the people hold the reins of power. In this system, the majority decisions prevail while minorities' views are also respected. In a democracy, participation of all is crucial as it depicts a true struggle for realisation of political, economic, social and cultural rights. At local government level, democracy must reflect indiscriminate service delivery, accountability, and transparency.

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[13] See REDET, The Foundations of Democracy, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Dar-es-Salaam (n.d.), p.14.
[14] Ibid., p.14.

3 Pluralism

Pluralism is in the general sense the acknowledgement of diversity. The concept is used in different ways and in a wide range of issues. Whatever the usage, for pluralism to function and to be successful in defining the common good, all groups have to agree to a minimum consensus regarding shared values which tie together the different groups in society, and to shared rules for conflict resolution between groups. The most important value in pluralism is that of mutual respect and tolerance, so that different groups can coexist and interact without anyone being forced to assimilate to anyone else's position in conflicts or differences that may naturally arise out of diverging interests and positions.

Political pluralism: The concept of political pluralism refers to a component of democracy where a multiplicity, diversity or plurality of opinions exists and where groups are free to express themselves within a political system. Pluralism's relationship to democracy is crucial: democracy requires that all people – with all their differing ideologies, opinions, values, and so forth – be free to connect to government. Ideally, pluralism requires that no single group has a special claim to be heard before any others or to silence any others. In this sense, democracy affirms that all groups and opinions in a society must be free to compete for attention and for followers.[15] Suppressing some opinions in any society reflects low levels of pluralism and if this practice becomes consistent, the level of democracy would normally drop in that society's political system.

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[15] For more discussion of democracy in relation to equality, see Christian, T., 1996, *The Rule of Many: Fundamental Issues in Democratic Theory*, Boulder, CO: Westview, p.3.

In the Ugandan context, political pluralism means, simply, that Ugandans are free to form and belong to different political parties and to hold different political ideologies. The different political parties or groups are free to compete for political positions (power) at all levels, national or local. In addition, the people are also free, whether as individuals or as political organisations (parties), pressure groups, or social, cultural and economic institutions, to express their opinion on different aspects of politics and governance. An individual's or group's opinion cannot be disregarded simply because it contradicts the view of the government or party in power; otherwise, all views have to be listened to and respected.

Political pluralism at local government level in Uganda: In local governments, political pluralism entails two basic aspects: first, political leaders, including local council chairpersons and councillors, may be elected on a political party ticket or as independent candidates, in which case different political parties can be represented in a local council. The second aspect is that the various stakeholders – councillors, civil servants and civil society - are all involved in the decision-making process. Pluralism at local level also implies considering the views and attending to the interests of special groups such as women and children, youth, persons with disabilities, veterans, or business associations, among others.

As noted, under political pluralism, different political parties can be represented in a local council depending on whether their (parties') candidates have won elections. However, once on the councils, members and political parties are expected to cooperate in mutual trust and good faith to foster cordial relations in accordance with the principles of multi-party democracy. In the subsequent sections, the responsibilities of councillors will be discussed; however, it can be pointed out at this stage that the councillors' principal role should be to foster development as enshrined in the government goals and objectives of decentralisation.

Local governments in Uganda still face challenges in understanding and practising the multi-party system. This has been established in case

studies carried out in Mbarara and Gulu districts to locate concrete realities on the ground. The case studies targeted councillors, media practitioners and leaders of CSOs. They were asked questions on the key concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation.

The experiences from the above-mentioned districts show that the concept of multi-party system has not yet been fully internalised in local governments. Councils still tend to operate to a large extent as they did under the Movement system. Besides challenges with the legal framework on the operations of local councils, internal democracy is generally still not brought into play among political parties. In addition, many of the parties have no functional offices at the district and sub-county levels. These challenges make it difficult for parties to participate effectively in local government politics and in promoting political pluralism at grass-roots level. These constraints and poor practices of the multi-party system depict low levels of political pluralism in local governments in Uganda.

Nevertheless, in the conduct of certain businesses, particularly the budget process, attempts have been made to have CSOs, community leaders, lower-level local governments and administrative units participate in budget conferences. This indeed reflects acceptance of diversity in decision-making and in the allocation of scarce resources.

It was also noted from the case studies that local governments have, besides some successes, experienced failures in service delivery due to resource constraints and corruption. These important developments are, however, not well articulated in the media because of possession of inadequate investigative skills by journalists. In vibrant pluralist societies, the media popularises people's achievements, and contributes to following up the leaders to ensure they are responsive, accountable and deliver on their parties manifestoes. The media also highlights the extent to which all groups are involved in the governance process, by, for example, highlighting the level of women's participation, attention to children's rights and the level of inclusion of other groups such as the youth, persons with disabilities etc.

Summary

In this section, it has been argued that pluralism is a component of democracy where a multiplicity, diversity or plurality of opinions exist and where groups are free to express themselves within a political system. As discussed in the historical analysis and the above section, Uganda's experience shows relatively low levels of political pluralism. Similarly, in spite of the transition to multi-party governance which is expected to promote political pluralism, experiences from certain districts show that some leaders in local governments are not conversant with the concept of political pluralism and its relevance to democratic governance.[1] In addition, the political practices of several actors in local governments depict low levels of political pluralism. There are, however, good practices, as cited in relation to the budget process, which should be encouraged if political pluralism is to take root in local governments.

4 Representation

The implementation of direct democracy at higher local government level (for example, at the district level) and also at national level can be very difficult. This is because it is not easy to assemble thousands or millions of people in one place, such as a stadium, in order to discuss and make collective decisions on issues that concern them. Because of this dilemma, representative democracy is used. Representation is defined as the process by which political power and influence which the entire citizenry or a part of it might have upon governmental action, with their express or implied approval, is exercised on its behalf by a small number among them, with a binding effect upon the whole community thus represented.[16]

Similarly, a representative government is understood to stand for 'the whole people', or some numerous portion of it. It exercises the ultimate controlling power through deputies periodically elected by the people themselves. Scholar J.S. Mill argued that 'the people must possess this ultimate power in all its completeness. They must be masters, whenever they please, of all the operations of government'.[17]

From the above conceptualisation, five essential principles of representation in a liberal democracy stand out, namely:

- The ultimate power lies with the people (the popular sovereignty principle);
- This popular power is exercised by a selected few on behalf of the many (the deputation principle);

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[16] Friedrich, C.J., 1968, *Constitutional Government and Democracy: Theory and Practice in Europe and America*, Massachusaetts: Blasdell Publishing Company, p.278.
[17] Mill, J.S., 1963, 'Of the Proper Functions of Representative Bodies', in H. Eckstein and D. Apter, eds. *Comparative Politics: A Reader*, New York: The Free Press, p.104.

- The deputies (or representatives) are mandated by the people through periodical elections (the popular consent principle);
- Decisions made and actions carried out by these deputies have a binding effect on the community (the governance principle); and
- As ultimate masters, the people remain the final judge of performance of the government and their deputies (the accountability principle).

But how should a representative act so as to conform to all these principles? Edmund Burke, an English philosopher and politician argued that a representative should be guided by four things, namely constituency opinions, rational judgment, consideration of the national interest and personal convictions or conscience.[18] In the modern world, most people tend to view a representative in Burkean terms: a person with discretion and inclined or expected to act in response to local, national and personal exigencies.

4.1 FUNCTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVES

Constitutions and subsidiary legislations in various countries, both at local and national levels, spell out the functions of representatives. There are common known functions such as law/ordinance/by-laws making, revenue-raising, and authorisation of budgets. However, representatives (for example members of parliament and councillors) do a lot of other things sanctioned by convention, the expectations of voters, personal convictions and the fact that they are 'leaders'. In the case study of the districts of Mbarara and Gulu political leaders, activists in civil society organisations and media practitioners identified a number of functions for a representative that can be located at three levels – national, constituency and personal.[19]

National level functions include law-making; passing and amending the constitution; approving taxes, other revenues and budgets; making or shaping public policy; controlling government actions; informing

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[18] Edmund, Burke, 1901, Writings and Speeches, Vol II, Boston, pp.89-98.
[19] The case study was conducted to tap the views of the media practitioners, CSO leaders and political leaders in local governments as part of the preparation of this handbook during the month of February 2009.

the government about constituency situations; resource allocation nationally and providing leadership nationally.

Constituency level functions include informing one's constituents about government actions, plans and policies; helping to settle conflicts and resolve grievances of constituents; aggregating and articulating the interests of constituents to relevant authorities; resource allocation locally; mobilising efforts for the development of the constituency; providing leadership locally.

Personal level functions include self-advertising, credit-claiming, and position-taking. Since these personal level functions are rarely discussed in literature, let us briefly explain them.

SELF-ADVERTISING has been defined as 'any effort to disseminate one's name among constituents in such a fashion as to create a favourable image but in message having little or no issue content'.[20] Experience, however, also indicates that self-advertising may include focus on the real issues of constituents and development. Getting oneself known in the constituency and nationally requires self-advertising using methods such as:

- frequent visits to the constituency in case one resides outside it;
- speeches to home audiences;
- attending constituents' functions and ceremonies, such as weddings and burials;
- sending condolence or congratulatory messages to constituents;
- writing newspaper columns (in newspapers published in local languages);
- participating in public debates (on radio and TV, in seminars, conferences, etc.); and,
- being calculatingly vocal on selected issues of local importance.

CREDIT-CLAIMING has been defined as 'acting so as to generate a belief in a relevant political actor (or actors) that one is personally responsible

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[20] Mayhew, D., 1987, 'Congress: the election connection', in P. Woll, American Government: Readings and Cases, p.469. Also for methods of getting known through self-advertising elsewhere in East Africa, see Mushi, S.S., 2004, 'Historical and Theoretical Analysis of Representation', in Mukandala, R.S et al., People's Representatives: Theory and Practice of Parliamentary Democracy in Tanzania, Kampala: REDET, pp. 42-43.

for causing the government, or some unit thereof, to do something that the actor (or actors) considers desirable. [...] The emphasis here is on individual accomplishment (rather than, say, party or government accomplishment) and on the Congressman as doer (rather than as, say, expounder of constituency views)'.[21]

POSITION-TAKING is defined as 'the public enunciation of a judgmental statement on anything likely to be of interest to political actors'. The position taken may tie in with constituency interests or the party position on the issue, or personal conscience. The position may be conservative (i.e. clinging to one's position of the past), or radical (i.e. breaking with the past or the mainstream view).[22] Position-taking in a local government council or national parliament includes fence-sitting (i.e. avoiding becoming involved in decision-making or being conscious of taking a side that may affect the rating of a representative negatively) on some sensitive issues if the representative is uncertain of the consequences of his pronouncement, i.e. how his/her constituents or his/her party would receive it.

The above personal level functions are important to the success of a representative because one cannot be known unless one advertises oneself, one may not get credit unless one claims it, and one cannot distinguish oneself unless one takes a position on issues which are considered important locally, for example on the grading of roads, construction of boreholes, access to gravity water, access to credit through Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs), resettlement of IDPs, girl-child education, environmental protection etc.

4.2 SYSTEMS OF REPRESENTATION

In modern democracies representation is realised through party systems. Whenever the phrase 'party system' is used, three notions are implied. First is the idea of the constitutional and legal regulations governing the formation, organisation and functioning of political parties; second is the balance of electoral support among political

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[21] Mayhew, p.469.
[22] Ibid., p.469.

parties in a given political system; and third is the actual number of political parties in the country.

On the basis of these three implied notions, a number of types of party systems may be distinguished. They are: no-party system, one-party system, two-party system and multi-party system. Each type is associated with a peculiar pattern of politics arising from the characteristics and dynamics of the actors/parties operating in the system and the reactions of the people to these actors/parties.

4.2.1 No-party system

In this political system the existence of political parties is decreed as constitutionally illegal. In some cases, though recognised by the constitution, political parties are suspended and governance is by established organs of the state which owe allegiance not only to the nation but also to strong individuals in the system. Legitimacy is sustained through individual merit practices while in other situations military presence in governance prevents dissenting views and political opposition. Three attempts have been made in Africa: General Acheampong's Union Government proposal in Ghana, the diarchy proposed by Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria[23] and the Movement system in Uganda. The former two did not survive the hostility they generated while the movement system in Uganda lasted for at least twenty years.

4.2.2 One-party system

This system is usually formally established through a constitutional provision that only one political party is recognised by the state. The one-party system was more commonly practised in Africa immediately after independence up to the 1980s and early 1990s. Examples include the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in Tanzania, Zambia's United National Independence Party (UNIP), and the Kenya African National Union (KANU) in Kenya. The leaders at the time argued that in an underdeveloped country, the major goal of political activity is the social and economic transformation of society and that if this is so, then there is little need for the organisation of several parties which might result in a distortion of the central goal of the development of society. Furthermore, they argued that the organisation and financing of rival

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[23] Nnoli, O., 2003, Introduction to Politics, Enugu: PACREP, p.213.

political parties can lead to a dissipation of scarce societal resources that could otherwise be better utilised. Unfortunately, none of those parties, despite their arguments, carried out social transformation of the societies in which they operated. It is therefore evident that no single group of political leaders can claim to symbolise the harmony of all the distinctive classes, groups and other divisions in society. Although the content of democracy is more important than the form, some forms of representation are more prone to dictatorship than others. This is why the one-party system may be less conducive to a democratic development of society with regard to the interests of all people than the multi-party system.

4.2.3 Two-party system

This is a political system in which two political parties enjoy predominant electoral support among the population. This idea can also be conveyed by saying that a two-party system is one in which even though three or more parties have a legal existence, the probability is very high that one or the other of the two predominant ones will form the government after each election. In this sense, the party system in Great Britain and the United States is often referred to as a *duopoly* because of the domination of the Conservative and Labour parties in successive British governments and of the Republican and Democratic parties in successive governments of the United States of America.[24] The majority voting system (as compared to the proportional voting system), in which "the winner takes it all", favours the development of two dominant parties.

4.2.4 Multi-party system

The multi-party system is characterised by three distinct features:

- the legal existence of three or more political parties;
- the high degree of fragmentation of the electoral base of each of these parties;
- the inability of any single one of these parties to form a government on its own thus giving rise to the emergence of coalitions of several parties to form government.

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[24] See, Nnoli, O., 2003, Introduction to Politics, Revised Second Edition, Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd, p.214.

Each party is represented in parliament (or in a local council) according to the proportion of votes it won. The often necessary consequence is the establishment of coalition governments. In a multi-party system governments rise and fall with compromises and balancing of parliamentary coalitions. Examples of such experiences are found in Israel, India, Germany etc.[25]

In Uganda, article 69 of the 1995 constitution provides for three systems of representation or political systems, namely the movement political system, the multi-party political system, and any other democratic and representative system. In 2005, Ugandans, through a referendum, voted to return to the multi-party system. As a result, the 2006 general elections were held under a multi-party system.

There are three main forms of organisation under a multi-party or two-party system. These forms directly or indirectly focus on the control of key areas of the government and the state, for example, the executive, which controls the instruments of coercion and the civil service; and the legislature that makes the rules to organise the state and the distribution of resources. The best known models or forms of a multi-party system are: the presidential system; the parliamentary system or the Westminster model; and hybrids of the presidential and parliamentary systems.[26]

The presidential system: Under this model, the president is elected separately from members of parliament. Under a multi-party system, this form of organisation has one inherent danger. One can have a situation where the president of Party X is elected and his/her party fails to win a majority of seats in parliament, which are won by Party Y. This makes it difficult for the president to push his/her policies through parliament which is dominated by Party Y. It should be noted that since party politics is partly about winning political power, a parliament dominated by a different party other than the president's party would not only work towards preventing the president from winning the next

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[25] Ibid., p.215.

[26] The discussion that follows on forms of organisation, the basics under the multi-party system, and the role of the opposition is derived from Mushemeza, E.D., 2009, Functioning of a Multiparty System in Local Governments: Challenges of Transition from the Movement System in Uganda, Kampala: ACODE.

election, but even towards failing his/her efforts to deliver on his/her commitments within his/her present term.

In the United States where the presidential system works, not all members of Congress are elected on the same day. In fact, members of the House of Representatives have a term of two years, while one-third of the members of Senate are elected every two years. Therefore, there are always mid-term elections that take place during the term of a sitting president. This mechanism makes it possible for a sitting president to mobilise for his/her party to win the mid-term elections. Furthermore, even if the president's party has a minority in parliament, parliament has no power to remove the president, except on conviction for treason, bribery or other serious crimes. Another stabilising factor is that the vice-president is also the president of the Senate. This gives the executive a lot of influence on the legislature, although ministers are not part of the legislature.

The parliamentary system: Under the parliamentary system, the political party or political organisation that wins a majority of the seats in parliament forms a government. This system operates in most Commonwealth countries. The party leader, who may be elected as a member of parliament, forms the government. In some cases, the party leader becomes a prime minister or president and leader of government, while another person becomes a ceremonial head of state without executive powers (Ethiopia is an example). In some cases both the positions of head of state and head of government are fused in one person. If no party attains more than half of the parliamentary seats, the party with the highest number of seats forms a government in coalition with another party or parties (Israel, India). The advantage with the parliamentary system is that the people participate directly in electing their MPs who are accountable to the party as well as to the population.

In general, there cannot be a paralysis between the president (executive) and parliament because the chief executive, prime minister or president has a majority in parliament. Even in a coalition government, the parties involved generally agree on major positions and whenever they fail to agree, the government collapses.

Ministers are appointed mainly from parliament (for example Uganda, Zambia). This ensures that for every government initiative, there always would be core support in parliament as ministers are obliged to support cabinet positions in line with the principle of collective responsibility. This arrangement, coupled with party discipline, makes it relatively easy for the government to secure parliamentary support for its programmes.

The hybrid system: When used in relation to political representation the term 'hybrid' generally refers to a system with a separately elected president who shares executive power with the prime minister. The president, however, usually has the constitutional power to select the prime minister. The description of this system further depends on the distribution of executive power between the president and the prime minister; if the constitution and/or political circumstances tend to place emphasis on the powers of the president, it is sometimes termed semi-presidential and if, on the other hand, the prime minister and the legislative leaders enjoy more power than the president does, it may be referred to as a semi-parliamentary system.

For political reasons, presidents generally appoint leaders of the ruling coalition to the post of prime minister, although they are not required to do so constitutionally. The prime minister may or may not be a member of the president's political party, depending upon which party or coalition of parties maintains the majority in the legislature.

The French system is the hybrid model most often cited as a semi-presidential system. In the French system, the president has broad powers. For example, the president nominates the prime minister and the prime minister selects his own cabinet, over which he presides. The French president, like some others in hybrid systems, has some areas where his power is well defined, such as in the conduct of foreign affairs. The day-to-day running of the government is, however, left to the prime minister and the cabinet.

Unlike in a parliamentary system, the legislature in France cannot force the resignation of a president. Rather, the president may dissolve

parliament's lower house, the National Assembly (but not the upper house, the Senate). Furthermore, the president appoints and can remove the prime minister, who is effectively the head of cabinet and legislature. As is the case with the parliamentary model, the National Assembly can also force the government (the prime minister and legislative leaders) to resign by passing a motion of censure. Thus, in the French model, while the prime minister is vulnerable to removal by both the legislature and the president, the president cannot be removed prior to the end of his/her electoral term.

The Ugandan approach: The Ugandan constitution provides for practices from both the parliamentary model and the presidential model. It is a hybrid system but different from the French type. The president is directly elected by the people. He appoints, with the approval of parliament, a vice-president and a cabinet with the prime minister as the leader of government business. The prime minister and the entire cabinet can be removed by the president any time he/she feels their performance no longer measures up to expectations. Under the multi-party dispensation, the ideal practice would be for the president to consult his/her party/organisation before effecting major changes in the composition of government. There is also in the Ugandan system a leader of the opposition who must be a member of parliament. The leader of the opposition is at the same level as a cabinet minister. The Ugandan constitution also provides for the right of individuals to contest elections as independent candidates; in the event that one is elected to parliament as an independent, one can sign a memorandum of understanding to cooperate with any of the parties/organisations represented in parliament. At local government level, whereas the Local Governments Act has not been revised since the transition to multi-party governance and still depicts the spirit of the movement political system, the Ministry of Local Government has designed model rules of procedure to help local governments practise multi-party governance in accordance with the national constitution.[27]

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[27] See, MoLG, Model Rules of Procedure for Local Governments, 2008.

Under this system, which presupposes the existence of several political parties and organisations vying for political power, there are two options for relationships between the political party or organisation in power and those out of power.

The cooperative model: The first option is that of participation in governance with the ruling party. This is practised in China under the concept of multi-party cooperation where the Communist Party of China is the dominant ruling party while the other eight democratic parties are cooperating parties. In the Chinese Peoples Political Consultative Conference under the leadership of the Communist Party, all political party leaders come together from time to time to consult on any major policies or decisions to be made. Personalities from other parties are appointed or elected with the support of the Communist Party to leadership positions in various organs of the state where, if it were purely party competition, they would stand no chance of winning those positions.

For the cooperative option to be possible, there are principles that guide the cooperating parties. These include: preserving the peace, national unity and the indivisibility of the nation; securing the well-being of the people of the nation; providing effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government for the nation as a whole; being loyal to the constitution, the nation and its people; respecting the institutions, powers and functions of the government; not assuming any power or function except those conferred on them in terms of the constitution; and exercising their powers or performing their functions in a manner that does not encroach on the geographical, functional or institutional integrity of government.

The adversarial model: The second option is that of opposition to the ruling party. This is more widely practised in a situation where one party is in power and the others serve in the opposition. Under this model, the party with majority representation in parliament would ordinarily form the government but may involve other parties in

governance through the creation of a coalition government, but there would be an opposition side comprising the parties not participating in the coalition. The opposition under this model would have certain roles and responsibilities, as discussed below.

Under the adversarial model, the opposition is legally recognised. The role of the opposition is to oversee the performance of the government so that it rules in the interest of the people who vested their sovereignty in it. The opposition also provides alternative ideologies, policies and programmes. To achieve this, the opposition must comply with some principles or risks becoming a mere commentator on government policies and programmes. The principles include, *inter alia*, not opposing government just for the sake of it but doing so constructively and conducting itself in parliament in such a manner as to persuade the people of the country that it can be an improvement on the government of the day. The opposition also should hold the government accountable to the people, as, in some cases, governments tend to forget what they promised to their electorate once in power. When this happens, the opposition, on behalf of the people, reminds government of the promises it made. Furthermore, the opposition performs other functions, such as scrutinising government expenditure; acting as the voice of alternative policies, persuading government to think again before it acts on anything that affects the public – have a "sober" second thought – and providing checks and balances on government extremes.

With regard to Uganda, the country is grappling with balancing the two relationships (cooperative and adversarial). Article 71 (2) of the constitution provides that parliament shall by law prescribe a code of conduct for political organisations and political parties and provide for the establishment of a national consultative forum for political parties and organisations with such functions as parliament may prescribe. There have been attempts to involve some political parties in consultations; this seems to represent movement in the direction of effecting the above constitutional provision and emulating positive aspects of a cooperative option. On the other hand, the practice in parliament and in local governments where more than one

political party is represented in the councils is clearly an adversarial relationship. Time will tell whether a hybrid relationship can genuinely be forged from both the cooperative and the adversarial models. There are, however, four lessons to learn from previous experiences.

First, political parties should make an effort to seek consensus, particularly on major national issues upon which may hinge the stability or survival of the state. When leaders differ, they should know the point at which to stop in order to protect the common good.

Second, leaders must recognise and accept that the people have a basic right to have and express diverse opinions on public issues, as no particular group or party has a monopoly of wisdom or virtue. This demands tolerance, knowing that today's majority may become tomorrow's minority in the game of state power politics under a multi-party system.

Third, a pervasive winner-takes-all philosophy would be dangerous to a developing country like Uganda. Opposition groups should not be marginalised or treated as if they are without a stake in the destiny of their country, as the consequences of such marginalisation could limit the chances of deepening national unity, democracy and development. In such a scenario, once the opposition is weakened, the negative practices of marginalisation could then also be applied to any groups within the ruling party that may have dissenting views. This is why some political forces in Uganda have been proposing proportional representation with the aim of reducing the disparity between a party's share of national votes and its share of parliamentary seats. Under proportional representation election procedures, parties receive a percentage of offices based on the percentage of votes won in an election.[28]

Fourth, democracy, as already articulated, particularly in the African context, should be viewed not only as political but also as economic, social and cultural. It is important for citizens to engage in socio-economic activities as this is crucial to the development of a country.

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[28] Grigsby, E., 2005, Analyzing Politics: An Introduction to Political Science, Belmont: Thomson Learning Inc p. 326.

Human beings must eat, drink, and have shelter, clothes, education and medicine for them to live a better life and be able to meaningfully participate in the game of power under a multi-party dispensation.

4.4 REPRESENTATION AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL IN UGANDA

Apart from parliament and other national institutions, representative democracy is practised in local governments. The form of governance at local level in Uganda is decentralisation as enshrined in article 176 of the constitution.

National policies and programmes on decentralisation: The decentralisation policy in Uganda evolved over a number of years and involved extensive consultations amongst stakeholders. The Local Governments (Resistance Councils) Statute, 1993 provided the law for decentralisation and empowerment of popularly elected local leaders to make own decisions, and to budget, plan and monitor own programmes. The 1995 Constitution and Local Governments Act, CAP 243, provides for a district to be a unit of decentralisation and spells out the functions devolved to local governments and the applicable funding mechanisms. The idea is to involve the people in their governance, i.e. to involve them in decision-making; in identifying their own problems, in setting priorities and in planning their implementation and monitoring; in ensuring better utilisation of resources, both financial and human; and in ensuring value for money through participation, transparency and accountability and sensitisation.

Decentralisation policy: The decentralisation policy is enshrined in the Ugandan constitution and is guided by the following principles:

- the system shall ensure that functions, powers and responsibilities are devolved and transferred from the central government to local governments in a coordinated manner;
- decentralisation shall be a principle applying to all levels of local government units to ensure people's participation and democratic control in decision-making;

- the system shall ensure the full realisation of democratic governance at all local government levels;
- a sound financial base with reliable sources of revenue shall be established for each local government unit;
- appropriate measures shall be taken to enable local government units to plan, initiate and execute policies in respect of all matters affecting the people within their areas of jurisdiction.

Central government decentralisation objectives: The policy is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- transfer real power (devolution) to local governments, thus reducing the workload on central government officials;
- establish decentralisation as the guiding principle applied to all levels of government to ensure citizens' participation and democratic control in decision-making;
- achieve good governance, which is a prerequisite for better performance of public servants;
- bring political and administrative control over services to the point where they are actually delivered, thereby improving accountability and effectiveness, and promoting people's feelings of ownership of programmes and projects executed in their areas;
- free local managers from central constraints and, as a long-term goal, allow them to develop organisational structures tailored to local circumstances;
- improve capacities of councils to plan, finance and manage the delivery of services to their constituents.

Institutional framework for decentralisation: The central government structure in Uganda comprises the offices of the president and prime minister and 25 line ministries, one of which is the Ministry of Local Government, which oversees local government administration. There are currently 80 district councils (LC V) and one city council (Kampala City Council). The constitutional amendment of 2005 establishes Kampala as a capital city with a special status. Kampala City Council has five divisions that constitute lower local governments with the status of a municipal council. The rural districts' lower level governments comprise 853 sub-county councils (LC III) and 83 urban

councils with some autonomy from the district. The urban councils comprise 13 municipal councils (LC IV), with 37 municipal divisions and 83 town councils (LC III). In addition, there are administrative councils consisting of county councils (LC IV), parish councils (LC II) and village councils (LC I). There are currently 1,076 local governments, as may be seen from the Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Local governments in Uganda

Category	Number
A/District councils	79
B/City council	1
C/City division councils	5
D/Municipal councils	18
E/Municipal division councils	37
F/Town councils	83
G/Sub-county councils	853
Total	**1,076**

Source: Ministry of Local Government, June 2007

In the administrative structure, a district is subdivided into counties and municipalities or towns depending on their size and other criteria set by the Ministry of Local Government. Every county is further divided into sub-counties, while municipalities are divided into divisions. The sub-counties, divisions and towns are further divided into parishes and wards, respectively. The parishes and wards are further subdivided into villages, which are the lowest administrative units.

Specific policies and strategies[29]
Legal and Political Reforms: The legal reforms or supporting legislation for decentralisation started with the 1987 statute, followed by the Local Governments (Resistance Council) Statute, 1993. These laws were later entrenched in the 1995 Constitution and further expanded by the Local Governments Act, 1997 and subsequently by the

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[29] This section relies on Mushemeza, E.D., The Functioning of a Multiparty System in Local Governments: Challenges of Transition from the Movement System, Kampala: ACODE (forthcoming).

Local Governments Act CAP 243. The law provides for the district to be a unit of local government or sub-government, with the functions for the central government and the local governments clearly spelt out. The Local Governments Act is gender-mainstreamed. The legislation provides that women councillors must form at least one-third of the total number of councillors at all levels of councils from the village to the district to ensure participation of women in decision-making. Gender mainstreaming, in particular the participation of women in capacity-building activities and sensitisation on gender issues, has been made an indicator of minimum conditions and performance measures during the annual assessment of the performance of local governments. The Local Governments Act CAP 243 operationalises the constitutional provisions for affirmative action by providing for one-third of the seats on each local council to be reserved for women. The act also provides for affirmative action with respect to other marginalised groups (for example people with disabilities and youth) in the composition of local councils. These provisions have resulted in a significant increase in the number of women in political decision-making at the different levels of local government (i.e. district councils, sub-county councils, city division councils, municipal councils, municipal division councils and town councils).

The increased representation of women in decision-making structures of local governments is especially significant in the context of decentralisation as substantial powers have been devolved to lower levels of government where policies, budgets and development plans are made. This means that at LC III level, which is the lowest governance structure for planning and budgeting, at least one-third of the decision-makers (councillors) in the 954 sub-county, town, and municipal councils are women. This number is further boosted by women representatives of youth and people with disabilities as well as by women councillors elected or nominated on the "non-affirmative" tickets.[30]

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[30] See CEWIGO, 2007, 'Impact Assessment of the Contribution of Women in Influencing Legislation and Policy Formulation and Implementation in Uganda 1995-2005', Policy Research Paper No.1, p.24.

Major political reforms have been instituted in government, including the requirement that all political leaders (LC I to LC V councillors) be popularly elected by the people. There is also a principle of non-subordination of the lower councils, implying that they have the power to make decisions on matters affecting them without recourse to the higher local government. There are a number of checks and balances within the local governance system. Although the political head of the district is the district chairperson, the district council has both executive and legislative power; hence, the chairperson is answerable to the council whose sittings are chaired by a speaker elected by councillors from amongst themselves.

Financial Decentralisation Reforms: The Local Government Decentralisation Programme devolved functions and services to local governments. The local governments were allocated sources of revenue to be able to deliver services. Financial decentralisation was implemented in phases involving only recurrent expenditures.

The Local Governments Act, 1997 and subsequently the 1995 Constitution and Local Governments Act CAP 243 gave local governments the autonomy to formulate and approve own budgets.

The allocation of revenue sources to local governments was to enable them to collect own revenue and fund their priorities. Hence, this ensures more autonomy in budget formulation and implementation. These sources of revenue by then were: graduated tax, market dues, trade licences and fees, rates, rents, property tax, royalties, stamp duties and registration fees. The local governments are believed to be the most competent in the assessment and collection of the sources of revenue allocated to them since those activities and properties are within their areas of jurisdiction. Graduated tax, which was the leading source of revenue for local governments, based on the acreage of crops cultivated, livestock numbers and other economic activities, was abolished in 2004 amid political pressures.

Local authorities have autonomy in the preparation, approval, control, monitoring and oversight of the implementation of their budgets.

The budget of a local government has to reflect all revenues and expenditures. This implies that the budget has to incorporate all revenues, including local funds, government grants, donor funds and others. The law requires them to run balanced budgets, which must take into account the approved three-year development plan of the local government, as well as the national priorities.

The Ministry of Local Government issued financial and accounting regulations in 1998, whose objectives are to ensure proper and orderly financial management, accountability and value for money. All local government councils and administrative units are required by law to keep proper books of accounts and to prepare annual accounts and financial statements for auditing. The public officers are accountable personally for any funds used by them out of the council's coffers. In addition, the council is accountable to the people who are beneficiaries of the services.

The central government is not supposed to transfer any extra responsibility to a local government without transferring also the necessary funds; no financial obligation can be given to a local government without providing funds for the discharge of that obligation. The realities on the ground, however, show that several local governments are undermined by corruption and mismanagement of both locally generated revenue and finances transferred from the centre.

Development Planning Reforms: Local governments have been given authority to plan for the development of their areas. The local governments are required to formulate and implement integrated and comprehensive medium-term development plans, incorporating plans of lower-level local governments within their areas of jurisdiction. District councils are required to submit their plans to the National Planning Authority for incorporation into the national development plans. The National Planning Authority has been created to coordinate all initiatives from various stakeholders to develop and guide the implementation of the National Development Plan. The commissioners were appointed in April 2003, hence the district plans are incorporated into the national

development plans. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development now receives inputs of local governments to prepare national development plans.[31]

One of the challenges is to harmonise the policy of decentralisation which was nurtured under the individual merit system of movement governance with the group competition system of multi-party governance so that delivery of services is not done along partisan lines. Are the beneficiaries (communities) and local leaders (gatekeepers of knowledge to the people) aware of the demands of the new dispensation? To appreciate these questions and provide appropriate answers, it is important to sensitise the leaders and beneficiaries about the concepts of multi-party politics and their application to governance in local governments.

4.5 ROLES OF COUNCILLORS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The principles that guide representatives and their functions in modern democracies have already been discussed. But it is important to reflect on how leaders in local governments in Uganda perceive such principles and functions. When case study respondents in Mbarara and Gulu were asked on their roles, the following responses were recorded as shown in Box 1 and Box 2:

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[31] See National Planning Authority, 2008, National Development Plan (2009/10 – 2014/15) Process: Revised Guidelines for Sectors.

Box 1: Responses from Mbarara on the question of how they see their role as a councillor in a local government

- Taking services nearer to the people
- Carrying out local government budget functions
- Co-ordinating government programmes at local government level
- Seeking people's views and presenting them in councils
- Monitoring government programmes
- Giving feedback to people about their expressed views
- Ensuring effective service delivery to the constituents
- Offering guidance and counselling to constituents
- Making policies at local government level
- Lobbying for services
- Discussing and passing district budgets
- Enacting ordinances
- Generating ideas in council on behalf of constituents
- Bridging the gap between council and constituents
- Supervising government programmes
- Representing people in lower local government

The responses from Mbarara indicate that local leaders have high levels of consciousness about what representing people in local governments entails. One factor responsible for this level of understanding could be the fact that some of the respondents had attended several workshops on their roles and responsibilities since 2006.

Box 2: Responses from Gulu on the same question

- Participating effectively in policy-making
- Monitoring and implementation of government programmes
- Sensitisation of the people on government programmes
- Lobbying for resources for the community
- Participating in debates during council meetings
- Settling disputes/problems among community members
- Initiating development programmes
- Making by-laws
- Representing the people at many occasions
- Being a spokesperson of the voiceless people in the communities
- Mobilising the people to participate in elections

In Box 2, respondents in Gulu, like those in Mbarara, were also aware of the roles of representatives in local governments. They, too, had attended several training workshops on governance and financial management in which issues of representation were discussed.

The two cases of Mbarara and Gulu local governments at the district level show that indeed councillors, CSOs and the media practitioners interviewed know the roles of representatives (councillors). However, while councillors demonstrated a clear understanding of their roles in governance, it is important to also establish whether these representatives adhere to these roles. When this question was put to the councillors in the districts of Mbarara and Gulu as a way of self-assessment, the following responses were recorded:

Box 3: Responses of councillors in Mbarara and Gulu on the performance of councillors in line with their roles

Mbarara

- Most of the councillors practise effective representation of their people
- Some councillors do not adhere to their role of representing constituents owing to limited education, corruption and frustration
- Many of the councillors are fighting their own battles for survival
- Some failures in representing their constituents have been registered
- All councillors adhere to representing their constituents unless they do not want other electoral terms

Gulu

- Some councillors do perform well while others do not
- Some councillors get disappointed when they realise that the material benefits are inadequate
- Lack of financial means and logistics makes representatives fail to deliver services
- Use of English language hampers the efforts of some representatives to articulate issues in council

The responses in Boxes 1, 2 and 3 depict a mix between an understanding by the councillors of their roles and their actual practices in terms of what they do or fail to do. It should be noted that the constraints that councillors face have a relationship to democratic participation and effective representation. It is important to train local government leaders to know the consequences of not adhering to their roles both in service delivery and deepening democratic governance. In spite of this reality, it was found that local government leaders as well as CSO members and media practitioners who interact with local government councils face challenges of inadequate training, communication, gender awareness, and policy cycle skills, which makes it difficult for them to effectively impact on local governance[32] and to

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[32] For details on the necessary skills for the CSOs, local councils and the media, see Appendix.

train others on deepening political pluralism, democratic participation and effective representation.

Representation in local government councils is highly contested in Uganda. Both under the movement system and the recently adopted multi-party system, competition for election to local council positions among aspirants has always been tough. In several cases elections have also reflected little of the ideal free and fair standards. The post-election appeals within party hierarchies and election petitions lodged in courts of judicature bear testimony to this. This situation indicates that apart from the interests of the constituents, there are other motivational factors – for example privileges and honours – that attract people to seek the electoral mandate to work as full-time representatives in local governments. These perceptions are important to know because they affect the performance of leaders. When these issues were put to the respondents in the case studies alluded to earlier, the following reasons were given as factors motivating people to become councillors in local governments:

Box 4: Responses of local councillors from Gulu on their motivations for becoming councillors

- Changing/reforming the establishment
- Championing the views of the oppressed
- Seeking employment
- Ambition – seeking status, power and self-actualisation
- Searching for material and non-material gains – money, trips, praise, titles ("Honourable")
- Training – issues of governance as a stepping stone to future political career
- Encouraged by the community to lead them
- Killing boredom
- Sharing experiences with one's people (retired public officers)
- Replacing non-performers

Box 5: Responses from Mbarara councillors on their motivations for becoming councillors

- Lack of satisfaction in service delivery of the incumbent
- Desire for self-satisfaction
- Effective party representation
- Strategy to reap financial benefits
- Source of employment
- Poverty (access to source of income)
- Competition for power
- Judging individual popularity
- Motivation by friends to compete
- Polishing individual public relations
- Influencing policy for selfish interests
- Curiosity to discover what happens in council
- Protection of wealth through formulation of fair policies

From the above two case examples (Boxes 4 and 5), it is clear that people would want to be councillors in local governments not only to serve the people but also to gain material and non-material benefits related to a councillors' position – access to government loans, and other fringe benefits, leading to dignity, opportunity, security, prestige and integrity, allowances during workshops and other opportunities closely connected to council membership. However, the case studies also showed that in some cases councillors are disappointed when they find the remuneration packages meagre or less than what they were paid in their former jobs if they had been employed.

4.7 CHALLENGES TO LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

In local governments, leaders face a number of challenges, ranging from limited resources, perceptions of a lack of self-governance by the communities, low practice of political pluralism, and a lack of civic education to difficulty with having a working language understood by all councillors in councils. Leadership is a very important aspect

of governance. There is a tendency to imagine that every citizen can lead, and do this efficiently and effectively. However, for a person to be a successful leader in local governments in Uganda, he/she must be knowledgeable, trustworthy, approachable, consistent, accountable, conscious of gender inequalities and a good communicator. These attributes can be acquired through education, training and practice so as to overcome the challenges outlined in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Views of the Local Government Leaders on Their Challenges

Financial resources	- Lack of financial means and logistics makes representatives fail to deliver services - Participation of people depends on availability of resources - Corruption in government departments takes money away from service delivery - Abolition of graduated tax without a viable alternative source of revenue undermined decentralisation
Political pluralism	- The movement concept with its individual merit and no-party democracy approach is still entrenched in people's thinking and practice - Some public officers and security agencies undermine freedom of assembly and organisation - Some NGOs have promoted the culture of attaching money to every activity. This undermines voluntary association and action crucial for growth of political pluralism - Negative political branding - Political corruption and rigging

Political pluralism	- Commercialisation of politics/voter buying - Manipulation and misinformation of voters - Lack of boundary between development programmes and electoral politics - Alleged negative history of political parties and multi-party system in the country - Regionalism and religious-based parties - Ethnicity-based politics - No boundary between the government and ruling political party - Cases of intolerance - Lack of levelled field for political parties during elections
Perception of self-governance	- The majority in communities feel that local governments are for leaders – there is a low level of citizen interest and ownership - There is a big gap between local governments and the people - The communities do not know, for example, what happens at the sub-county level. They only go to administration centres when they have individual problems to be solved, e.g. domestic violence, land disputes, criminal case allegations etc
Language	- Local government business is normally conducted in English and yet many councillors cannot freely express themselves in English. This undermines their ability to contribute to the debates during the proceedings of the council

Central government vs. local governments	- Behaviour of the state agencies in favour of the ruling party affects democratic participation at the local government level, e.g. police restricting freedom of assembly - Sometimes central government undermines local governments by directing implementation of projects when local governments lack appropriate structures - Corruption at the centre affects service delivery and yet service delivery is at the core of democratic participation at the local government level - Decisions at the centre may contradict people's interests at the local government level, e.g. re-centralisation of certain programmes - Local governments' democratic participation is weaker than national democratic participation - National legislators are facilitated and given more attention than local councillors - Views from lower areas hardly reach the national level

Summary

In Uganda, representation at the local government level is theoretically through councillors belonging to political parties or who are independents. However, the practice in most local government councils still depicts a movement system mentality which for twenty years provided the platform for political action. Decentralisation is still the platform and policy for political participation and service delivery - yet it was conceived under the movement system. The challenge is how to improve decentralisation with legislations and practices that conform to a multi-party system in a pluralistic society.

The actors in local governments know their roles but many of them do not adhere to those roles owing to, among other reasons, resource constraints. Furthermore, a lack of civic education among the population, and a generally poor understanding at local level of what a multi-party system entails in a pluralistic society, make it more difficult for local government representatives to fulfil their roles.

5 Possible Interventions to Strengthen Political Pluralism, Democratic Participation and Representation in Local Governments

Uganda has been undergoing a process of transition in which the values discussed in this handbook are being nurtured and practised. If this process is to be taken a step further – i.e. deepening democratic governance – then the various stakeholders, particularly civil society organisations, media practitioners, local government councils, specific state institutions and political parties, will have to play a key role in civic education and practising democratic governance. These actors have had a long experience working with the people in communities and if more skills were acquired, civic education on matters of governance would become a reality. This can happen through the acquisition of the necessary skills, such as training skills, communication skills, gender analysis skills and policy cycle skills, to popularise the key concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation.

5.1 Civil society

Civil society as a concept engenders various interpretations. One definition is that civil society is part of a country's life that is neither the government nor the economy but, rather, the domain within which interest groups, political parties, and individuals interact in politically oriented ways. Similarly, civil society entails organised social life that is voluntary, self-perpetuating and is, though bound by legal order,

beyond state control. It is a realm of contradictory possibilities, replete with conflict between ethnicities, classes and other interests. In practice, the more the members of society organise themselves into groups to advance their particular interests, the less likely the state can function in an autonomous and unaccountable manner; the proliferation of organised interests is a bulwark against unbridled state power, and this autonomy may be one of the key principles in the building of democracy. On the whole, the concept of civil society is thus an overarching one that subsumes within it a variety of social formations, including social movements, NGOs, trade unions, professional associations, students' organisations, women organisations, youth organisations and other civic organisations.

To promote political pluralism, democratic participation and representation at local government level, civil society organisations and their membership should be trained and be conversant with the issues involved. Civil society organisations are well placed to carry out civic education and empowerment of the people because:

- of their ability to easily mobilise and network with grass-roots communities across the country as well as their participatory approaches that lead to effective civic empowerment;
- they are known for appreciation of synergistic linkages which are necessary for a broad civic education programme;
- a wide variety of CSOs, including both local and international NGOs, faith-based organisations, human rights bodies, professional bodies, theatrical groups, network bodies and community groups have been involved in civic education in Uganda. Equipping them with more skills would be value addition in promoting democratic governance in local governments.

A number of CSOs with a good track record in delivering civic education can be identified. In a previous survey, for example, a number of CSOs were engaged in the delivery of the community-based civic empowerment component in 40 districts of the country.[33]

[33] See Fox, J., Mushemeza, E., Nkutu, A., 2006, Deepening Democracy Programme in Uganda: National Civic Education Programme Component Document, Kampala: DANIDA, p.10.

Using a variety of approaches, including forum theatre, road shows, publications, workshops, church sermons, and community meetings, the CSOs partnered with local leaders to deliver messages to over 75,000 people including women, men and youth. Furthermore, many CSOs are already implementing programmes with some measure of citizen empowerment. For example, CSOs involved in rights awareness, good governance, peace-building, gender issues and conflict transformation issues are already advancing the importance of citizens' participation in decision-making and monitoring of governance processes.

CSOs, however, do have their own weaknesses that need to be addressed in order to strengthen their performance and make their participation in delivering civic education at local government level more effective. Many CSOs are bedevilled by institutional weaknesses – specifically in the areas of training, communication skills, gender analysis, planning, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation. Although CSOs often claim to represent grass-roots networks, and even when they are known to appreciate synergistic linkages, their co-ordination mechanisms can sometimes be weak and, apart from the delays this causes, this deficiency also affects quality assurance. CSOs are also perceived as being 'traditional' in outlook and slow at adapting modern and faster methods of delivery.[34]

5.2 THE MEDIA

It is widely believed that a free media and citizen participation are key to democracy. In a democracy, in order for people to participate, they must be able to make independent and informed decisions, and that can only happen if they have credible and factual information. Similarly, the media have been perceived as a key watchdog on government and public institutions, since they check the excesses of governments. In broad terms, a free media landscape promotes the protection of democracy, human rights, accountability, development and social justice.

In Uganda, since the mid-1990s, and prior to the opening up of political space, the media, more than any other institution, has provided a

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[34] Ibid., p.11.

forum for public debate in the form of interactive talk shows and *ebimeeza* (open-air group discussions, live broadcasts). In the absence of formal political parties, many of those with dissenting views used such space and platforms offered by the media and human rights CSOs to express their views on important governance issues, including the constitutional review issues, the return to multi-party governance, and the electoral processes.

The media have been equally lauded and castigated for this role and sometimes accused of acting irresponsibly. However, its continued use by even its critics to clarify specific issues, and relay information on government policies and programmes, underscores the media's potency as a medium of communication.

By enhancing the forum for debate through interactive methods, the media in Uganda has continued to increase citizens' participation in governance and policy issues. In the post-election period after the 2006 elections, media talk shows, opinion pages and web forums have continued to attract heated discussions on human rights, conflict, peace and accountability issues – and they are invariably educating the public, while at the same time allowing people to express their views. Through these forums, the media has an opportunity to promote political tolerance, and provide diversity in opinion and social cohesion.

In spite of these generally positive characteristics, especially on the part of private radio stations, the levels of liberty to debate differ greatly between Kampala-based media stations and rural stations. While Kampala-based stations are viewed as experiencing less interference from government, rural media outlets are regular targets of local government functionaries who control and stifle debate on such stations.[35] Disparities are also cited between the print media and broadcast media. Print media is seen as more limited in its ability to offer a platform for political debate than broadcast media. This means that the potential of the media to play its democratic role in Uganda recedes as you move from the city, and differs between print

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[35] See Mayiga, J.B., 2008, 'A Study of Professionalism and the Professionalisation of Journalists in Uganda from 1995-2008', Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University.

and broadcast media.[36] It is, therefore, necessary to train media practitioners to improve their knowledge and capacity to play their social responsibility despite the limitations imposed by the state laws and the market. Training would help them to overcome the challenges they face in promoting democratic governance, not only at local government level but also at national level. Such challenges include:

- limited skills in investigative journalism and in-depth technical analysis of issues which have at times affected the credibility of the media;
- inadequate moderation and facilitation skills which sometimes affect broadcasters' ability to handle topical debates objectively and professionally;
- limited access to information and researched publications, especially from government, policy research think tanks and public institutions;
- public perceptions of the media as business-oriented and/or elitist and hence giving little attention to issues affecting marginalised communities;
- unethical practices relating to the publication of 'newsworthy' stories.

5.3 Local councils

Leaders are the gatekeepers of information at community level and, because of the premium put on local-level decision-making within the local council structures, as well as a continuing respect for traditional local institutions, leaders are generally well regarded by the public. Targeting leaders with a civic education programme can have a positive influence on decision-making processes at all levels of engagement in local governments.

Furthermore, the democratic institutions in Uganda are still in their infancy, and they frequently suffer from an overbearing executive authority. Institutions such as parliament, the Electoral Commission, the Uganda Human Rights Commission and the judiciary still face challenges in executing their duties. The challenges range from under-

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[36] Ibid.

funding to continuous interference by the executive – as well as their inability to connect well with the citizenry. So what is lacking to-date both at national and local government levels is a comprehensive and multi-faceted civic education approach that is able to create informed citizens and turn them into real defenders of democracy. It is therefore urgent for local governments to be trained and gain the skills required to deepen political pluralism and democratic governance.

This is possible through training the executive, the speaker, deputy speaker and the councillors at local level who would in turn train other leaders in lower-level local governments and administrative units (sub-county, parish, village) and stakeholders (opinion leaders, religious leaders, teachers). This training should be comprehensive and should involve issues of resource generation and distribution, gender equality and women's empowerment, children rights and HIV/AIDS, as well as environmental sustainability as core issues of pluralism, effective representation and good governance.

5.5 POLITICAL PARTIES

A political party can be defined as a group of people who share a common conception of how and why state power should be organised and used. This idea is sometimes expressed in a different way when it is argued that a political party is an organisation concerned with the expression of preferences regarding the emergence, consolidation and use of state power or the chief policy-making offices of government.[37]

One important point that emerges from the definition is that political parties differ from all other political groups in society by the fact that they do not only seek to influence government policy but they also undertake or seek to undertake responsibilities for actually formulating and implementing government policy. This willingness to take up government responsibility sets the political party apart from organisations such as trade unions, professional associations and other interest groups and pressure groups.

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[37] Nnoli, O., 2003, Introduction to Politics, revised Second Edition, Enugu, Snaap Press Ltd., p.207.

Political parties play four major functions: [38]

- they endow regimes with legitimacy by providing ideologies, leadership or opportunities for political participation, or a combination of all three;
- they act as a medium for political recruitment, thus creating opportunities for upward social mobility;
- they provide opportunities for the formation of coalitions of powerful political interests to sustain government (interest aggregation), have a major influence on policies as a result of devising programmes, and supervise policy implementation, political socialisation or mobilisation of people to undertake self-help activities;
- they provide political stability in societies able to absorb increasing levels of political participation by new social forces generated by modernisation.

From the foregoing, political parties which are national in character, practise internal democracy, and respect constitutionalism and the rule of law are good vehicles in promoting political pluralism, democratic participation and representation in a political system at all levels. It is therefore important to train leaders of political parties, particularly in local governments, in the principles and good practices of democratic governance.

5.4 STATE INSTITUTIONS

There are institutions that are mandated to play a critical role in promoting democratic governance. Such state institutions include the Uganda Human Rights Commission, the Electoral Commission, security agencies (the police, the intelligence services, and the army). These institutions should stick to their constitutional mandate, particularly being independent, non-partisan and defending the common good. [39]

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[38] Randall, V., ed., 1988, Political Parties in the Third World, London, Sage Publications, pp. 183-7.
[39] See the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995.

Summary

The promotion of political pluralism, democratic governance and representation at local government level requires several interventions by different actors, including civil society, the media, local councillors, political parties and state institutions. The promotion of democracy cannot be a task undertaken by any one of the aforementioned groups alone or that the groups can undertake in isolation from each other. It is thus necessary that actors not only appreciate the different ways in which they can contribute to deepening democracy but also understand that this contribution can be strengthened with improved coordination and networking amongst all actors.

6 Conclusion

This handbook has attempted to explain three important concepts related to governance at both local and national levels in Uganda. The analysis focused on political pluralism, democratic participation and representation. However, emphasis is put on the local government level because this is where the majority of citizens interface with government.

The objective of this handbook is to provide an explanation of these key concepts at local government level without losing sight of the application of these concepts at all levels of society. Important actors – namely civil society, the media, local councils, political parties, and state institutions – were identified to appreciate the meaning and practices of these concepts and to use this handbook as a basis for acquiring certain skills, knowledge and information for deepening democratic governance in Uganda.

Furthermore, the content of this handbook is aimed at serving as a reference material for various actors, both at local government and national level, to learn about the concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation.

The analysis of issues takes a historical perspective because it is not possible to fully understand a given situation without reference to its history and the various stages of its development. Therefore, Uganda's history brings out the struggle for political pluralism, the contradictions of democratic and anti-democratic movements and the quest for true representation of the people while being conscious of the historically

marginalised groups (e.g. women, youth, people with disabilities, workers) in their governance.

The handbook also analyses recent political developments in local governments under decentralisation and the reintroduced multi-party system. The analysis captures the leaders' voices in selected local governments to tap the concrete realties on the ground. It is evident from the analysis that much more civic education needs to be carried out by civil society, the media, local councils and other stakeholders for local governments to appreciate, embrace and practise political pluralism, democratic governance and effective representation. This is possible if the identified drivers are trained and equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for carrying out such tasks.

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Appendix

Collection of Some Necessary Skills for Civil Society Organisations, Councillors and the Media to Promote Political Pluralism, Democratic Participation and Representation

1. TRAINING SKILLS

Training is a process of learning the **skills** (ability to do) that one needs to do a job or activity. It involves giving clear guidelines and instructions. Training involves sharing knowledge and life experiences and this requires appropriate and thorough preparation before training begins. It is also important to consider the tasks for which the individual is being trained, and thus tailor the training content and methods in a way that that person acquires the most appropriate skills for the tasks. In view of this, training content and methodologies may vary depending on which group is being trained and what role they are intended to play after the training. For example, in the case of political pluralism, one would train aspiring candidates, community civic educators, councillors, media personnel etc.

Preparation **–** This is the first step in the training process. It involves planning and organising for the training. Preparations occur at two levels: Physical and mental/psychological preparation. Physical prearrangements, such as the dress and a generally appropriate and decent appearance, play a big role in determining whether the trainees will have the confidence to believe in and trust the trainer or not.

Psychologically, the trainer should endeavour to do away with stress or any other form of mental disruptions. A trainer should be able to control and manage his/her emotions. A trainer must be ready to learn from the audience and this requires being open-minded. In some instances, trainees may be highly educated while others may have had experience from their previous employment or leadership in local government/CSOs/media houses. Such trainees would enrich the trainers' knowledge about the subject in several ways.

No matter how many times one has trained, a trainer must make a thorough preparation before embarking on training any group. It is important to know that every training programme is different from all the others, and as such it requires its own preparation.

Wise moves – The following questions can guide a trainer:

1. **Who** am I going to train? (audience)
2. **What** am I going to train my trainees? (topic/sub-topic)
3. **Why** am I training them? (objectives)
4. **Where** and when am I going to train them? (location and time)
5. **How** am I going to train (method/technique/strategy)

Preparation also entails having training materials ready (for example, copies of the handbook, training manuals/curricula, legislations, policies and other relevant literature on local governments in Uganda).

Presentation – Right from the time a trainer rises from his/her seat, he/she should be able to capture the audience's attention. The style in terms of body language (how you walk, stand and present yourself, facial expressions, and in general all body movements and gestures) will either build the training or demolish it. A trainer should create a warm and comfortable environment for the audience (a smile can be good for the trainees/salute and greet your audience). A simple 'good morning' or 'hello' makes the audience feel at home and identify with the trainer.

- **Break the ice** – A trainer should be creative and innovative in order to remove barriers between himself/herself and the audience. This

can be done by making a simple joke or telling a short story/asking a simple question on the current affairs regarding the media/NGOs/local councils.

- **Introduction** – A trainer should clearly state the objectives for the training. Trainees should share their expectations. This should help the trainer to identify the needs.
- **Building rapport –** A trainer should be respectful of his/her audience, try to learn participants' names (calling someone by name and/or title makes them feel recognised, cared about, and important), use simple language/avoid complicated terminology, feel free to share personal experiences, avoid being judgemental.

Handling the topic – The objectives of the topic should be articulated clearly. A trainer should exhibit thorough knowledge of the topic. The handbook here becomes very important. A trainer should be consistent and avoid contradicting statements/ideas. A trainer should use facts, minimise the lecture method and involve the audience as much as possible. A trainer should allow adequate time for questions and be conscious of time. Time management usually makes or spoils a training session. A training session should be as memorable as possible (use of Power Point and exciting animations will make the presentation memorable).

During training, a trainer should endeavour to understand the participants' behaviour and bear in mind that people are different and therefore behave differently. As such the trainer should be aware that in any group dynamics, there are people who have ideas to share but are shy or lack the confidence to contribute. It is the trainer's role to ensure that as much is solicited from everyone as possible, balancing between those who contribute a lot, and prompting the less confident to contribute. The trainer should avoid use of gender-insensitive language and examples that demean people's status, gender, age etc. Understanding the audience helps a trainer to handle them appropriately without embarrassing any of them.

End well – A trainer should summarise major ideas/points discussed regarding the key concepts. The summaries in the handbook should

be helpful in this exercise. A trainer should challenge the audience to action or to change the environment or situations using the knowledge and skills acquired during training.

2. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication is one aspect of life that one cannot do without. Whether we decide to talk or to be silent, we are always communicating. For example, journalists have a saying that "No comment!" is a comment, because by refusing to comment on a question, a source is actually saying something. Communication is the transmission and reception of a message or idea from one party to another in a fashion that is mutually understandable.[40] Good communication includes clear delivery that enables the recipient to understand the message. Communication can be verbal or non-verbal.

Verbal communication – It involves actual words spoken, tone of voice, pitch and intonation.

Non-verbal communication – The common saying that 'actions speak louder than words' demonstrates the significance of non-verbal communication. Body language contributes a lot to the message one is putting across. Non-verbal cues include: eye contact, body posture, body movements, facial expressions, gestures, appearance (physical – dress code, hairstyle etc.). A trainer should make sure that the non-verbal elements do not contradict the verbal messages.

Ten tips – For trainers to deliver the message on the key concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation, they need communication skills (interpersonal skills). There are tested tips for good interpersonal communication skills that should be learnt by the actors involved in popularising the key concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation.[41]

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[40] Birungi, M., 2003, Human Resource Management, Kampala: Hoonkab Printers, p.95
[41] The top ten tips for good interpersonal communication skills are derived from http://www.communication-skills.info/interpersonal-communication-skills.shtml, accessed on 6/3/2009.

1. Listen first. Communication is a two-way process; getting your message across depends on understanding the other person.
2. Be interested in the people you are communicating with. Remember people are more attracted to those who are interested in them, and will pay more attention to what they are saying.
3. Be relaxed. Bad body language such as hunched shoulders, fidgeting, toe-tapping or hair-twiddling all gives the game away.
4. Smile and use eye contact. This is the most positive signal you can give.
5. Ask questions. It is a great way to show people that you are really interested in them.
6. If the other person has a different point of view to yourself find out more about why they have that point of view. The more you understand the reasons behind their thinking, the more you can understand their point of view or help them to better understand your point of view.
7. Be assertive. By this we mean try to value their input as much as your own. Do not be pushy and do not be a pushover. Try to go for the right balance.
8. When you are speaking try to be enthusiastic when appropriate. Use your voice and body language to emphasise this.
9. Do not immediately try to latch onto something someone has just said…'oh yes, that happened to me' … and then immediately go on and tell your story. Make sure you ask enough questions of them first and be careful when/if you give your story so as not to sound like it is a competition.
10. Learn from your interactions. If you had a good conversation with someone try and think why it went well and remember the key points for next time. If it did not go so well – again try and learn something from it.

3. GENDER ANALYSIS SKILLS

Civil society organisation leaders, media practitioners and councillors in local governments must acquire gender analysis skills and struggle for gender equality if they are to be effective in civic education about

the concepts of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation.

Gender analysis is a systematic examination of the different activities and identities of men and women. It encompasses an understanding of power relations relating to patterns of women's and men's access to land and control over resources, authority and social legitimacy. In the context of local governments, we can use gender analysis to study the differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources, control of assets, decision-making powers as well as representation. This analysis is useful in understanding that women still suffer injustice in several spheres of life, hence the need for an active desire to change women's subordinate position in society (gender equality). A trainer who is grounded in gender issues will highlight during training the need for affirmative action to the historically marginalised groups including women, the need to increase women's participation in governance and the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as a crucial ingredient of political pluralism and effective representation. The analysis enables planners to understand who does what or uses which resources, how and why? Furthermore, gender analysis helps local governments to put in place a gender-responsive development planning process to formulate gender-sensitive development programmes.

A trainer must therefore be conversant with the following concepts[42]: The illustrations are placed in the context of local governments in Uganda.

Sex – Is a term describing the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth. People are born male or female, they learn to be boys and girls, and grow into men and women.

Gender – Refers to the socially constructed differences and distinctions between men and women. Gender differs from sex in that it is not biologically determined. Gender distinctions include the different

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[42] The definitions of the concepts on gender are adopted from Ssali, N.S; J. Ahikire; & A. Madanda., 2007, Gender Concepts Handbook (Popular Version), Gender Mainstreaming Division, Makerere University.

attributes, statuses, roles, responsibilities, and potentialities as well as access to and control over resources and benefits. When we question why more male councillors go for workshops in the city than females, this is a gender issue.

Gender mainstreaming – Is a process undertaken to ensure that the concerns and needs of both women and men are considered in all planning and policy-making processes and that all policy-makers are aware of the needs of women and men and their roles and responsibilities. It is a conscious approach of an organisation/local government to take into account gender equality concerns in all policy, programme, administrative and financial activities as well as organisational structures and procedures. In order to realise gender mainstreaming, it is important to modify the legal framework. Is the legal treatment of men and women equal? Are men and women equal under and before the law? Are gender issues integrated into the Local Governments Act?

Gender roles – Responsibilities associated with our biological set-up or the expected duties and responsibilities, rights and privileges of men and women/boys and girls that are dictated by cultural factors. These roles are shaped by society and influenced by religion, economic factors, cultural attitudes, and the political system. They are learnt through the process of socialisation and vary from one culture to another.

Gender relations – Are principally about power. It refers to those dimensions of social relations that create differences in the positioning of women and men in social processes. Gender relations entail the ways in which a culture or society defines entitlements, responsibilities and identities of men and women in relation to one another.

Gender inequality – Is a form of social division relating to varying amounts of power, resources and opportunity between men and women. When roles and responsibilities are differentially allocated and interpreted between men and women, one gender becomes more socially privileged than the other.

Gender equality – Refers to equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same but rather that their opportunities and life chances in local governments are equal. This means that there is no discrimination on the grounds of a person's sex in the allocation of roles and duties, benefits, privileges or in access to resources. When an executive committee is being formed at local government level, sex should not be used to discriminate against anyone in the allocation of positions.

Gender issue – This is a point of gender inequality that is undesirable and therefore requires intervention. It results from some form of gender discrimination or oppression. A gender issue arises when there is inequality or differentiated treatment of an individual or a group of people purely on the basis of social expectations and attributes to their sex. Examples of gender issues that may arise in local governments include: the dress code in councils, promotions of staff in the district public service, composition of the executive by gender, and many others.

Practical gender needs – These needs arise out of the concrete conditions that women and men experience, and are usually a response to an immediate perceived necessity.

Strategic gender needs (SGNs) – Arise out of the analysis of women's position relative to that of men. If SGNs are addressed, the existing relationship of unequal power between men and women is transformed. Intervention at the level of SGNs challenges the existing gender division of labour and the position of men relative to that of women. In the local government context, intervention at the level of SGNs may include women's ownership of land and training men in sanitation and nutritional classes.

The role of councillors in promoting gender mainstreaming – local government councils in partnership with CSOs and the media – can promote gender equality by:

- identifying gender needs and integrating them into local government planning and budgeting processes;
- ensuring that the multiple sectors of production, reproduction and community service address women's concerns;
- recruiting and/or facilitating gender specialist officers (e.g. from CSOs) to organise gender training workshops and offer technical guidance on gender issues in general;
- encouraging formation of women community-based organisations, and Cooperative Savings and Credit Organisations (SACCOs) to facilitate their participation in economic development;
- Popularising gender-strategic needs in society and eradicating discrimination based on sex, age, and physical disabilities.

4. POLICY CYCLE SKILLS

Popularisation of political pluralism, democratic participation and representation in local governments requires policies and programmes/ activities that involve leaders and the citizens. Quite often policies are designed without the involvement of CSOs and the media yet CSOs are expected to audit those policies while the media is expected to scrutinise them.

It is important, therefore, for CSOs and the media to acquaint themselves with the policy cycle so as to be prepared to use their expertise and knowledge to influence policy. In particular, they need to know four main categories of policy processes, namely: problem identification and agenda-setting, formulation and adoption, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (and reformulation).

Problem identification and agenda-setting – In order to introduce a problem to the policy agenda or turn the problem into an issue, it is necessary to convince the relevant policy actors (local government councils, public officers etc.) that the problem is indeed important and solvable. CSOs with practical experience are often in an excellent position to crystallise and articulate the problems facing ordinary people and other vulnerable social groups with whom they work. Therefore the

first step is to identify a problem/issue and set the agenda to be sold to policy-makers at local government level.

Formulation and adoption – CSOs are known to represent the interests and views of the poor people although in some cases the clash between the state and some CSOs may undermine their legitimacy. CSOs with knowledge of pluralism, democratic participation and representation are more likely to be accepted when formulating a policy on gender equity budgeting or on operations of the multi-party system in local governments. Both the CSOs and the media should invoke the participatory policy-making skill to involve communities in influencing the formulation and adoption of policy.

Influencing the implementation of policy – Good governance at local government level is associated with service delivery. In this endeavour CSOs directly influence the implementation of policy as the primary agents responsible for instituting a policy shift and making it a reality on the ground. CSOs should therefore avail themselves to local leadership to be commissioned as service providers or may work independently. With their knowledge, CSOs can provide expertise to other agencies responsible for implementing policies. This is possible if CSOs also improve on their skills, such as gender analysis and communication.

Monitoring and evaluation – The effectiveness of CSOs and local government councils in influencing evaluation processes depends on two factors: whether they can gather evidence to make a sound assessment of policy; and whether they can use evidence to demonstrate their legitimacy in doing this. Similarly, the media has a key role to play in not only making information on policy publicly available and in an accessible format, but also in providing informed scrutiny. Monitoring and evaluation also entails participative processes which transform the views of ordinary people into indicators and measures which can make policy process accountable.