Pluralism: Toward a new global response to diversity

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The Global Centre for Pluralism: mission and mandate

What is Pluralism?

How do you know when diversity is respected?

Principles of Pluralism

Programs

Global Pluralism Award

Research and Analysis

Education
What is the Global Centre for Pluralism?

“Diversity and pluralism enrich societies and should be cherished…”

ANTONIO GUTERRES, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Annual Pluralism Lecture 2014
The Global Centre for Pluralism

- **Mission:** to change the global conversation about diversity
- **Work:** Applied research, convening and knowledge exchange, education, award

www.pluralism.ca
How did you define pluralism?

Strength from diversity:

The active engagement with diversity, and promotion of genuine understanding across lines of difference...

Ensuring that all interventions recognise the inherent diversity among beneficiary communities, and facilitate the active participation of all groups ...

...where people from all fragments of a society can practice their faith, norms and lifestyle without fear of being discriminated and that their way of living causes no harm to others as well.

...not only respecting cultural and other types of diversity, but also embracing/tolerating and accepting differences/diversity as a strength and not as a weakness of society.
What is Pluralism?

An ethic of respect for diversity
Diversity

• Diversity is “the condition of having or being composed of differing elements: variety” (Merriam-Webster)
• Identity diversity includes age, gender, ethnicity (HBR, 2017)
• Cognitive diversity is “the multiplicity of perspectives that are drawn from different ways of knowing, arising from livelihood activities, life experiences, and cultural backgrounds” (Kassam, K.-A. S., 2017).
A few key principles…

- Diversity is a fact
- Pluralism is:
  - Positive
  - Contextual
  - Continuous process
  - Fragile and reversible
  - Holistic
  - Complementary

- Pluralism is about recognition and belonging
Activity: How do you know diversity is being respected?

My language is used in public places (F, I)
I can wear religious dress (F, I)
I see myself in my history textbook (F)
I have the same economic opportunities as my neighbour (F, I)
My gender is represented in leadership (F)
My way of thinking is respected in groups (I)
My teacher knows where I am from (I, F)
My colleagues ask about my culture (I)
Celebrating holidays of other ethnic groups/nationalities
Political participatory approaches consider all the citizens
Opportunities to follow/practice my faith
Asking questions in different languages during seminars/workshops
I feel comfortable saying who I am and where I’m from
Different communication styles visible in public discourse
Kids with different social and cultural background can fulfill their background
I can speak my accent w/o being judged
The “hardware” and “software” of pluralism

• **Hardware**
  - Institutions— constitutions, courts, legislatures, schools.
  - These formal institutions define the spaces and frameworks for the governance of diversity.

• **Software**
  - Habits of mind, narratives and norms - for example, conceptions of civic identity and historical narratives.
  - They shape perceptions of who belongs, who contributes and influence everyday interactions.
GCP Programs: Global Pluralism Award

- Recognizes pluralism “in action”
- Celebrates extraordinary achievements of individuals, organizations, governments from all sectors who are advancing more inclusive societies
- 2017 winners: Leyner Palacios (Colombia), Alice Nderitu (Kenya), Daniel Webb (Australia); plus 7 honourable mentions
GCP Programs: Research and Analysis

- Publications Program
- Global Pluralism Index
- Developing an analytical framework and tools to advance pluralism
GCP Programs: Education

- New program; complements other VBE approaches
- Case studies; history education (in Kyrgyzstan); VBE project in Kenya
- ½ day pluralism workshop
Thank you

Questions?

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