

2017-2021

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION
GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM

Ripple
Peace Research
& Consulting



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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	3
Publication History.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
1.Evaluation Purpose and Approach	8
Theories of Change.....	8
Methodology.....	9
2. Relevance	11
Question 1. Does the Centre’s mission address a demonstrable need in Canada and around the world? Whether and to what extent has the need shifted over the past five years?	11
Question 2. How well does the Centre's portfolio of programs respond to the identified mission? 13	
2. Effectiveness	14
Question 3a. What significant outputs and short-term outcomes has the Centre achieved over five years?	14
Question 3b. Which of these achievements demonstrate influence among external audiences? ...	14
Question 4. How and under what circumstances did the program generate these outcomes?	21
Question 5. To what extent and in what manner do the Centre’s programs complement, coordinate, synergize or duplicate with each other?	21
3. Future Implications	23
Question 6. Drawing on the Centre Theory of Change / Logic Model, how likely are these achievements to lead to higher-level outcomes in the coming years? Why?	23
Question 7. How might the Theory of Change itself be further developed to support this progress toward higher-level outcomes?	26
Question 8. Synthesis: To what extent is the Centre positioned to deliver on its mandate?.....	27
4. Recommendations	28
Annex A: Centre-Wide Theory of Change 2017-2021 “A living document”	30
Annex B: Additional Methodology Details.....	31

Publication History

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Final Draft	23 November 2022	Final report for Centre review and comment
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Executive Summary

The past five years have encompassed great change at the Global Centre for Pluralism (“the Centre”). The Centre has inhabited a symbolically significant headquarters, completed its first senior leadership transition, weathered an ongoing pandemic and launched a highly relevant program portfolio that is producing compelling short-term results. This theory-centred performance evaluation assesses the relevance and effectiveness of that portfolio, and explores strategic future implications as the Centre navigates an important shift from programmatic start-up into the refinement and ongoing adaptive development of its portfolio.

Concerning relevance, this evaluation strongly affirms the conclusions of the prior 2017 evaluation on the continued high relevance of the Centre’s work. The Centre plays a unique role in addressing the increasingly pressing need for pluralist attitudes and institutions in Canada and around the world. It has responded well to recent contextual shifts, and is aware of the challenges posed by the emergent expansion of identity-based political exclusion and cultural polarization. The portfolio, built on the logic of influencing human “software and hardware,” aligns strongly with the Centre’s mission. It is well designed, with an inter-program complementarity that adds significant value.

Concerning effectiveness, the pace of program implementation progress has been remarkable considering the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic and the small number of staff. A limited exploratory outcome search demonstrates that short-term changes in perspective and practice, as well as steps relevant to policy change, are gathering pace sooner than staff expected, including some changes taking place at an international scale. This bodes very well for the future. Program results are not yet systematically tracked to inform decision-making, so this function is currently being built into the Centre’s next-phase system.

Concerning future strategy implications, the sustainability and long-term impact of the short-term changes now underway depends in large part on follow-up, raising the challenging questions of whether to invest in depth of presence or breadth of coverage, and how strategic partnerships might amplify the Centre’s reach. The next-phase Theories of Change should be anchored in a vision for long-term impact in the form of identifiable, sustainable change at social, cultural and/or institutional levels, and supported by a refined understanding of the shorter-term change processes that make such impact possible.



The Centre is in a strong position to deliver on its mandate and appears to be on the cusp of a new phase of expanded influence and progress. There are two key programmatic challenges to be addressed during the next five-year period to ensure that the Centre's program portfolio fulfills its high potential. These involve making strategic decisions on how to navigate the tensions between depth and breadth, and developing a system for data-informed program adaptation and management.



GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM

Performance Evaluation 2017-2021

The past five years, 2017-2021, have encompassed great change and growth at the Global Centre for Pluralism (“the Centre”). At the beginning of 2017, the Centre was moving into its fully restored landmark headquarters building and event centre in the heart of Ottawa. Based on its rigorous conceptualization of pluralism, the Centre was preparing for the inaugural Global Pluralism Award, and initiating a foundational education partnership in Europe.

By the end of 2021, the Centre had completed its first senior leadership transition, further researched and unpacked the conceptual building blocks of pluralism, creatively weathered the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic and launched a highly relevant program portfolio that has produced compelling short-term results.

This performance evaluation assesses the development of that portfolio over the past five years and explores strategic future considerations as the Centre navigates the important shift from programmatic start-up into the refinement and ongoing adaptive development of its program portfolio.

Centre Vision, Mission and Principles¹

At the Global Centre for Pluralism, we believe that societies thrive when differences are valued.

Our mission is to influence perspectives, inform policies and inspire pathways to advance pluralism.

The Centre works with policy leaders, educators and community builders around the world to amplify and implement the transformative power of pluralism.

We aim to embody pluralism in who we are and everything we do. We are creative and courageous, highly professional with a commitment to quality. We remain accountable by keeping our work grounded in learning and collaboration. We choose to own the discomfort and tensions inherent to our work. We focus on achieving transformational results.

¹ Global Centre for Pluralism Logic Model 2017-2021.

1. Evaluation Purpose and Approach

The Global Centre for Pluralism, as a partnership between His Highness the Aga Khan and the Government of Canada, is committed to an external review of its activities and projects at least once every five years. The 2017-2021 review includes this performance evaluation as well as a value for money audit, which is provided in a separate document.

This evaluation aims to:

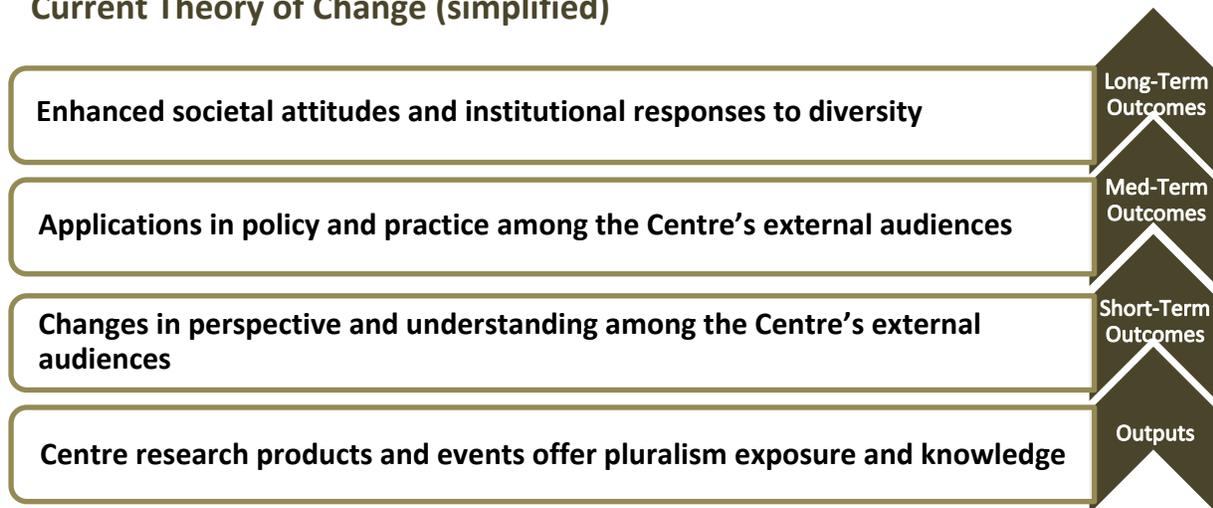
1. Assess the **relevance and effectiveness** of Centre programs over the last 5 years, including:
 - Global Analysis Program, particularly the flagship Pluralism Monitor (Monitor)
 - Educating for Pluralism program (Education)
 - Global Pluralism Award program (Award)
 - Peace & Conflict program (Peace & Conflict)
2. Inform **future programming**, particularly over the next 5 years.

The evaluation explored eight questions, which are elaborated step-by-step in the sections that follow. This was grounded in the Centre's Theories of Change, meaning the working hypotheses that explain how Centre activities are expected to lead toward the achievement of Centre's mission. The evaluation process used the Theories of Change to identify evidence of short-term program outcomes, and then assess the prospects for the development of higher-level outcomes during the coming years, including the conditions conducive to achieving those higher-level outcomes. The evaluation also explored the strength of the Theories of Change by examining their assumptions and causal mechanisms. We start, therefore, with an introduction of the Theories of Change.

THEORIES OF CHANGE

The Centre's current organization-wide Theory of Change is visualized in the form of a logic model, simplified here by the evaluators for the benefit of report readers (and available in its complete original form in Annex A).

Current Theory of Change (simplified)



This Theory of Change reflects the influence of the Centre's "hardware + software" approach, which was built into the Monitor program and is now becoming a conceptual backbone across the organization. It is noteworthy for addressing both the centrality of perspectives and attitudes (software) and the importance of tangible changes in policy and practice, particularly at the institutional level (hardware). The two-pronged nature of the approach aligns with social science research on the interaction between attitude change and behaviour change.²

The Centre's application of its Theory of Change has been influenced by an implicit hypothesis that Centre programs were still too new to have contributed to any significant changes among external audiences, particularly any changes in practice or policy. This assumption carries the potential to unintentionally block programmatic learning, so it was collaboratively explored during this evaluation.

METHODOLOGY

Based on an inception review of Theories of Change and core documents, the evaluators and Centre "End Users" (consisting of the Secretary-General, Director of Programs and Senior Advisor) worked together to finalize the evaluation questions and develop the methodology. Because there was ample existing evidence of the Centre's relevance,³ but little data available on effectiveness in the form of program outcomes, the emphasis was placed on the latter. A comprehensive outcome search would have exceeded the scope of this relatively small (23.5

² See for example Charles Stangor *et al.* 2022. [Principles of Social Psychology - 1st International HSP Edition](#), Chapter 4. BC Campus.

³ Global Centre for Pluralism Evaluation Report. 2017. Interis | BDO Consulting.

labour days) evaluation, so the agreed aim was a time-bounded exploratory search for short-term outcomes, to provide an indication of progress and an opportunity for evidence-based learning and reflection to inform the development of next-phase strategy. Using an adaptation of the Outcome Harvesting approach,⁴ the outcome search focused on verifiable changes in practice or policy to which the Centre had contributed, of any size whether small or large, and also considered related changes in perspective. The process is summarized in the table below.

GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM EVALUATION PROCESS	
Phase 1 Internal interviews	Online key informant interviews involving 12 staff members, Board of Directors and the Government of Canada. Conducted primarily in English, with French, Spanish and Arabic on offer, 60-90 minutes each.
Phase 2 External partner survey	Online exploratory survey of external partners, which included 106 global respondents (a 20% response rate). Purposively invited based on criteria of engagement. Conducted in English and French, 15 minutes estimated response time.
Phase 3 External partner interviews	Online key informant interviews involving 13 external partners. Purposively selected for examples of change in perspective, practice or policy, based on survey responses with voluntary self-identification and staff recommendations. Conducted primarily in English, with French, Spanish and Arabic on offer, 60 minutes each.
Analysis and Interpretation	The evaluators identified data patterns and shared them in the form of a preliminary findings brief. A staff “sensemaking workshop” enabled collaborative interpretation of meaning and implications.

In terms of limitations, it must be emphasized that the search for short-term outcomes was time-bound, and that external partners were purposively selected for their levels of engagement and their potential ability to share examples of change in perspective, practice or policy. Therefore,

⁴ [Outcome Harvesting](#) was developed by Ricardo Wilson-Grau and colleagues. An [Outcome Harvesting + Attitude Change](#) adaptation was developed by Michelle Garred and Malaka Refai with Tearfund.

the evaluators heard very little from people who were uninterested or negative toward human diversity, or who might have chosen to limit or possibly even end their engagement with the Centre. Additionally, the entire process was conducted virtually due to ongoing pandemic-related disturbances in transport systems. Data collection was conducted during August which, being a holiday season in much of the Northern Hemisphere, constrained availability among participants. Despite the multilingual process, language constraints were ever-present, and it is regrettably likely that this compromised the participation of some partners.

Given the ongoing nature of the Centre's program implementation, many processes were unfinished when the formal five-year evaluation period ended in December 2021, and they continued into early 2022. We opted to include such processes in our analysis, to provide a well-rounded and holistic view of programming progress.

2. Relevance

In brief: The Centre plays a unique role in addressing the increasingly pressing need for pluralist attitudes and institutions in Canada and around the world. It has responded well to recent contextual shifts, and is aware of the challenges posed by the emergent expansion of identity-based political exclusion and cultural polarization. The program portfolio aligns strongly with the Centre's mission, and the complementarity of the program design adds significant value.

Question 1.

Does the Centre's mission address a demonstrable need in Canada and around the world? Whether and to what extent has the need shifted over the past five years?

Given the continued global salience of difference-based exclusion, injustice and conflict, partners strongly affirm the **relevance of the pluralism lens**,⁵ the newness of the pluralism lens in many contexts around the world and the uniqueness of the Centre's role in disseminating the pluralism

⁵ "Lens" here refers to both a paradigm that influences how people view the world and, at a deeper level, to the comprehensive conceptual framing of that pluralism paradigm as developed by the Centre.

lens. External survey respondents, on average, rated the Centre's relevance as "high."⁶ One external partner stated it this way: "GCP is the only known institution that addresses conflicts and differences through the prism of pluralism." While the Centre is not actually alone in applying the pluralism concept, very few others have made pluralism their explicit reason for being or adopted such a holistic multi-faceted approach to pluralism.

As a uniquely Canadian manifestation of relevance, the Centre has contributed to the ongoing truth and reconciliation process by commissioning an indigenous-led study⁷ on the history of the land underlying its own building at 330 Sussex Drive, near Canada's Parliament. This building holds multiple levels of significance, as the repurposed former site of the Canadian War Museum and, even more foundationally, as part of an Ottawa governance district established through imperial colonialism. Centre headquarters are perched on the bank of the Kichi Sibi (Ottawa River), whose watershed comprises unceded traditional Algonquin territory. While it is not appropriate for non-indigenous evaluators to judge the quality of the content, it is clear that transparent self-examination can help to prepare the Centre for a more equitable engagement on indigenous affairs. As a subsequent step, the Centre has partnered with an indigenous-led training organization to provide a mandatory staff orientation workshop on indigenous affairs, which has prompted a neighbouring Canadian government office to do the same.

The Centre has adapted nimbly to several recent **shifts in the global context** including:

- The global COVID-19 pandemic posed obvious challenges to program start-ups. The Centre responded with digital programming on Pluralism and the Pandemic, which not only explored critical issues of equity and inclusion in public health, but also helped to consolidate an "online shift" that enabled new ways of working across all of the Centre's program streams.
- The murder of George Floyd in the USA, and the catalytic (if long overdue) increase in mainstream awareness of systemic anti-Black racism, exposed the desire of many educators to better help high school students process the issues. The Centre and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO offered a professional development program called Talking About Racism in the Classroom, which proved significantly influential in equipping Canadian teachers to address anti-Black racism.

⁶ "High" relevance was represented by a rating of 3 on a scale of 0 to 4. The mean rating across all survey respondents was 3.1.

⁷ Archipel Research & Consulting. 2021. [Where Sussex Drive Meets the Kichi Sibi: History and Pluralism at 330 Sussex](#).

**Observations from Centre partners:
(via external survey and interviews)**

- “It is very relevant to efforts to effectively manage the complex and divisive identity diversities in my countries.”
- “Pluralism becomes an asset-based starting point rather than getting more deficit kind of thinking. Pluralism sort of sees diversity as an asset rather than inclusion as a need.”
- “The focus ... is now more important than ever because of the weaponization of difference through authoritarian populisms arising across the world.”

There is a concerning emergent trend, mentioned by nearly all internal interviewees, in the **expansion of identity-based political exclusion and cultural polarization**. This trend increases the relevance of the Centre’s work, yet the perceived decrease in common ground may make it more difficult to operate, challenging the limits of the Centre’s gentle, constructively positive style of influence as pluralism becomes increasingly contested. Additionally, in some

contexts a related increase in political authoritarianism and decrease in civic space may further squeeze the operations of the Centre and its partners.

Question 2.

How well does the Centre's portfolio of programs respond to the identified mission?

The overall portfolio responds faithfully and thoughtfully to the Centre’s mission “to influence perspectives, inform policies and inspire pathways to advance pluralism.” The complementary purposes of each program make the whole potentially much more than the sum of its parts.

The Global Pluralism Award raises awareness and demonstrates in an engaging way what pluralism is, catalyzing shifts in perspective and brokering practitioner connections.

- The Global Pluralism Monitor lays out a groundbreaking conceptual framework that illustrates what pluralism requires, and enables a macro-assessment of context-specific strengths and needs across multiple sectors of a given society. That assessment is designed to be followed by decision-maker engagement processes to encourage uptake.

The astute shift in approach from an external comparative index to an in-country assessment⁸ is highly likely to increase decision-maker buy-in.

- Other programs, e.g. Education and Pluralism and the Pandemic, come alongside to address specific sectors that have been well identified as pivotal to the progress of pluralism in most or all societies. Peace & Conflict, the newest among them, introduces the pluralism lens into the work of peacemaking and negotiated settlement.

2. Effectiveness

In brief: Since the start of program pilots, the pace of implementation has been remarkable considering the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic and the presence of fewer than twenty staff. A limited exploratory outcome search demonstrates that short-term changes in perspective and practice, as well as steps relevant to policy change, are gathering pace sooner than staff expected, including some changes taking place at an international scale, which bodes well for the future. Program results are not yet systematically tracked to inform decision-making, so this system is currently under development within the Centre.

Question 3a

What significant outputs and short-term outcomes has the Centre achieved over five years?

Question 3b

Which of these achievements demonstrate influence among external audiences?

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACHIEVEMENTS

These programmatic highlights, drawn from program summaries and internal interviews, demonstrate the strength and resolve with which Centre programs have been developed, piloted

⁸ Independent Monitor assessments are completed by two in-country experts who are either nationals of the country or persons with significant in-country experience. Their two reports are reviewed and consolidated by a third, in-country expert.

and launched during the recent 5-year period. Building on the foundational partnership between His Highness the Aga Khan and the Government of Canada, these programs also reflect grant funding from partners including Global Affairs Canada, the German Federal Foreign Office, the US Agency for International Development, the International Development Research Centre (Canada), and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Germany).



KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACHIEVEMENTS

Global Pluralism Award

- The program was successfully initiated, with the first biennial Award being conferred in 2017, and subsequent awards in 2019 and 2021.
- Each award represents a quality multi-year process of nomination, assessment and decision-making by a diverse international Jury. There are 3 winners and 7 honourable mentions, all of whom receive benefits that amplify the effects of their work.
- The Award program harnesses the Centre’s communications and event convening capacities to increase awareness of pluralism as embodied by the laureates. The last two award cycles have both featured over 300 nominations from 70 countries, an indication of wide reach.
- The relationships brokered by the Award program are a frequent source of partnerships and expansion for other Centre programs.
- Next steps include: enhanced networking and learning exchange among laureates.

Analysis & Pluralism Monitor

- Published 18 research papers to develop the pluralism lens and context-specific applications.
- After a 4-year development process, completed the Monitor framework as a 21-element assessment of country-level pluralism strengths and needs. Further enhanced the approach by strengthening the framework’s gender components.
- Piloted the Monitor in 2019 in Canada, Germany and Kenya, and launched subsequent assessments in 18 other countries during 2020-21.
- During those assessments, engaged 54 experienced researchers to equip them with the pluralism lens and tools, and catalyze collaboration.
- Next steps include: In-country stakeholder and decision-maker engagement in considering applications of recent Monitor assessments.

Education Program

- Based on early work in Kyrgyzstan, teaching case studies with the Aga Khan Development Network and exploratory research, the program established its framework in 2019.
- The program focuses on issues of one-sided historical narratives, social media engagement and dialogue facilitation training for teachers, informed by an advisory Innovation Lab.
- The pilot of the Pluralism Reflection Tool for Schools, September 2021 – May 2022, including 5 Canadian educational institutions, plus adaptation for use by higher education institutions.
- A framework for assessing pluralism in education systems was developed and piloted in Germany in 2021.
- The pilot of the Teaching for Belonging professional development package, March-April 2022, engaged 37 teachers across 30 countries.
- The 2020 project called Talking About Racism in the Classroom engaged 500 Canadian teachers in 2020 and shaped a policymaker briefing in 2021.

Peace & Conflict

- The Peace & Conflict Program was launched in early 2021 to supportively equip change agents in the fields of conflict prevention, conflict management and peacemaking with the pluralism lens, concepts and tools.
- Key initiatives include multiple partnerships in support of the implementation of the Colombian Peace Agreements, support to Aga Khan Development Network partners integrating pluralism into peacebuilding in several countries in Central Asia, and developing a pluralism technical strategy to inform global humanitarian and development practitioners.
- Emergent advisory engagements include support to governments and other actors working on peacebuilding efforts in the Central Asia region.

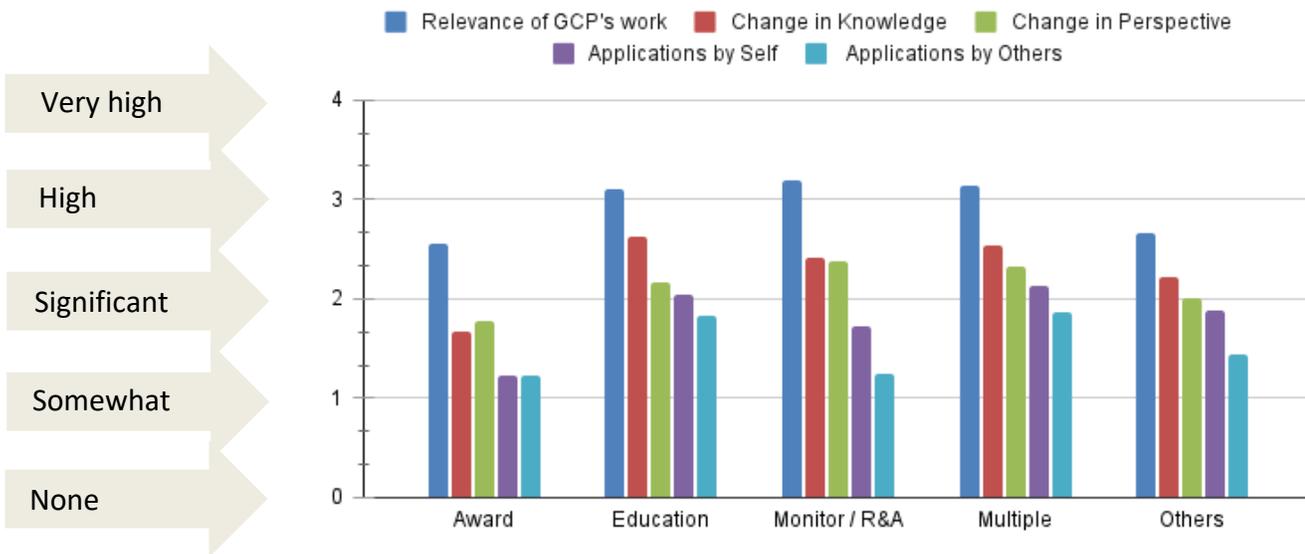
Influence among external audiences:

The Centre’s program results among external audiences are not yet systematically tracked. Numerous staff have expressed the view that the Centre’s programs are too new to move beyond shifts in perspective toward shifts in practice and policy. However, the evaluation did include a preliminary search for such changes, through an external partner survey and external interviews. A comprehensive search was beyond scope; this was a limited exploratory sampler. The data indicates that while applications do lag behind shifts in knowledge and perspectives, as the Theory of Change predicts, applications in practice and policy are taking place.

Amount of change

The external partner survey indicates that all programs are catalyzing applications. Among Education programs and participants in multiple programs, the applications reached a mean level rated by participants as “significant.” Additionally, almost 19% of all survey respondents chose to take the time to describe a specific example of application.

Survey Respondent Ratings by Program



Contrary to what the Centre staff had anticipated, the amount of change was not seen to change significantly over time. For example, participants involved for less than one year rated their own level of application on average as “significant,”⁹ about the same as participants involved for three years or more. This is encouraging, as it implies that change is starting much earlier than Centre

⁹ A “significant” level of self-application was represented by a rating of 2 on a scale of 0 to 4. The mean rating across all survey respondents was 1.9.

staff had expected. Nonetheless, there is still good reason to hypothesize that the *importance* of the changes may increase over time, as individual micro-changes have the potential to develop into collective or institutional shifts in behaviour.

Types of change

In-depth interviews involving 13 external partners identified 24 **changes in practice and policy**, toward which the Centre’s Monitor, Education and Award programs contributed significantly, alongside other actors and factors. Some represent a small change after just one Centre event. Others represent unfolding multi-change processes that reflect the development over time of Centre partners and, importantly, the indirect ripple effects catalyzed through their creative efforts. The chart below illustrates the socio-political levels at which these changes took place as well as their nature, whether practice-oriented or policy-relevant. It is noteworthy that despite the relatively short window of elapsed program implementation time, several changes are occurring at the international level, some of which are policy-relevant. The farthest-reaching policy-relevant change is a global strategy shift by an international non-governmental organization to integrate pluralistic perspectives into all civil society programming.



Practice and Policy Changes in External Partner Interviews

	Practice	Policy-Relevant
Institution - International	6 new/changed programs	1 global program strategy shift
Institution - Province or National		1 expression of interest by multi-lateral institution
Institution - District		2 school-to-school expansions
Institution - Local	4 new activities/programs in schools	1 school-wide curriculum review
Individual	2 changes in teacher self-study	2 new leadership roles
	2 changes in way of teaching	3 changes in way of doing research

In addition to identifying the changes in practice and policy, the interviews also explored their characteristics, such as the specific contributions made by the Centre and other actors/factors, the significance of the change, and any related changes in perspective. The **perspective shifts** are particularly important because they are central to the Centre’s mission and represent the “software” side of the “hardware + software” approach. All of the interviewees started with a generally favourable view of diversity (due to the method of interview sampling), yet many described an ongoing deepening and evolution in their understanding of pluralism. There have been increases in respect toward specific identity groups including indigenous and LGBTQIA+ people, shifts in philosophy around how to engage differences in opinion, and reports of feeling more equipped and confident to take pluralist action, all closely associated with changes in behaviour. There is personal transformation involved, as seen in one interviewee’s statement that educational collaboration with the Centre has been “one of the highlights of my professional life.”

It is also noteworthy that the types of change identified in the external partner surveys, while analogous in most respects to those identified in the interviews, do provide additional nuance on “changes in way of teaching.” The participating teachers mentioned changes in the way that they facilitate classroom processes at least as often as they mentioned changes in content. Their shift towards a more participatory style of facilitation, which was one of the direct aims of the Centre’s Education program, correlates with increased engagement and initiative among their students.

Additionally, while the availability of Peace & Conflict data is minimal, there is reason to expect that the Centre’s coaching of emergent mediators and under-the-radar advisory to parties in peace negotiations will contribute to significant changes in perspective and practice, which may lead over time to changes in policy.

As the Centre enters its next phase, **systematic tracking and periodic analysis of results across programs** will begin to provide critical data to support programmatic adaptation. Keeping a pulse on small, short-term outcomes opens up the possibility of nurturing them and/or addressing obstacles, increasing the likelihood that they may grow over time into something bigger. For example, the external interview data contains the story of one highly committed and dynamic Canadian educator who is struggling to continue their anti-racism work after being transferred out of a UNESCO-supported school. This may evolve into a multi-school district-level transformation - or it may end with an exhausted educator slowly giving up. It may be worth exploring how many other educators are faced with similar challenges, and what kind of support they require – an example of data-informed, adaptive program management.

Question 4.

How and under what circumstances did the program generate these outcomes?

The circumstances of 2017-2021 were not easy, with a fair number of charitable organizations succumbing to the blows of the pandemic. The Centre has not only survived, but also successfully launched an influential portfolio of more than four programs during the pandemic. This is particularly noteworthy given the small staff, consistently fewer than 20 individuals. The Centre management and staff are highly capable at getting things done, which is a tremendous asset. At this same time, this success has required several years of “heads down” implementation, indicating the importance of building cyclical periodic reflection pauses into the next phase. While some level of staffing increase is desirable, that will not obviate the need to carve out priority time to consider program results data, partner feedback and their implications.

Question 5.

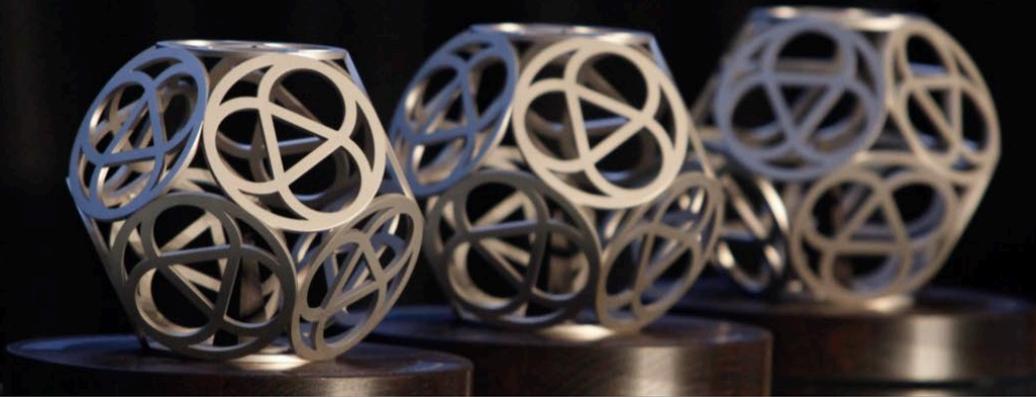
To what extent and in what manner do the Centre’s programs complement, coordinate, synergize or duplicate with each other?

The **complementarity of design is strong**, as described under Question 2 above. However, linkages between programs are limited in practice. The Award program functions as a relationship connector and conversation starter, through which other programs have found partners in new locations. Additionally, the survey of external partners implies that participation in more than one program may increase application. However, beyond that, **the inter-program linkage is minimal**. It is not built into strategy development, and staff do not appear to have the time or the mandate to nurture operational linkages.

This situation is shaped in part by uncertainties around the selection of operational locations. Programs are often not co-located, which naturally limits linkage and synergy. The prominent exception, besides Canada of course, is Colombia. The Centre’s engagement in Colombia was sparked by the identification of a Colombian Award laureate, which created relational connections leading to Monitor, Education and Peace & Conflict engagement in support of the Colombian Peace Agreement. The follow-up to the Monitor assessment may lead to another wave of expansion as stakeholders consider taking action to apply the Monitor findings in specific sociopolitical sectors and spaces. Colombia will become an important case study in how programmatic interconnection works in practice, ideally helping to fuel Centre learning.

It may also be worth exploring the question of how much, and in what ways, the inter-program linkages truly matter within a given geographical context. It is clear that the conceptual

complementarity of the programs is an asset. Further, there is good reason to hypothesize that multi-faceted programming can increase momentum, and theory underlying the assumptions that combining software with hardware interventions, and combining civil society with governance decision-maker engagement, can increase effectiveness. However, Monitor and Education *already have those components built into their program plans*. Therefore a fully developed Monitor or Education intervention may be capable of producing significant impact on its own, even if other Centre programs are not present. In contrast, the Award program should probably not be run in isolation, because both theory and experience indicate that Award is most effective when paired with other programs that facilitate concrete application.



Global Pluralism Award sculptures

3. Future Implications

In brief: The future sustainability and impact of the short-term changes now underway depends in large part on follow-up, raising the challenging questions of whether to invest in depth of presence or breadth of coverage, and how strategic partnerships might amplify the Centre's reach. The next-phase Theory of Change should be anchored in a vision for long-term impact in the form of identifiable, sustainable change at social, cultural and/or institutional levels, and supported by a refined understanding of the shorter-term change processes that make such impact possible. The Centre is in a strong position to deliver on its mandate, assuming the successful next-phase resolution of the strategic tensions between depth and breadth, and the development of a culture of data-informed program adaptation and management.

Question 6

Drawing on the Centre Theory of Change / Logic Model, how likely are these achievements to lead to higher-level outcomes in the coming years? Why?

Developing the potential impact of change already in progress

Overall there is strong potential for the changes already identified to develop into higher-level outcomes. The likelihood depends largely on **strategic follow-up**, such as:

- The extent to which the Centre and partners invest in implementing the institution-influencing tools and processes that are built into the program designs;
- The support of strategic partners that might allow some of this ongoing nurturing work to be expanded or amplified by parties other than the Centre; and/or
- An applied understanding of power relations and other blockage factors in the institutions and systems in which the Centre and partners are seeking to encourage change.

In specific programs, this may look like:

AWARD

Developing the full-fledged peer support networks that Award participants are requesting, to help expand their gains in a way that is partly or fully self-sustaining. (Note: a similar type of network has also been suggested for Monitor researchers who are newly taking up the pluralism lens in their work).

EDUCATION

Some trained teachers, who were equipped mainly for increased effectiveness within the classroom, are already attempting to make broader changes at the school and district level. It is not possible to support all of them individually, yet there may be possibilities for collective or resource hub forms of support, possibly linked to the deployment of the school-wide Reflection Tool and/or fueled by the engagement of other strategic partners in the education sector.

MONITOR

It is critically important that the Monitor makes it beyond the assessment phase, which is already contributing to change among the researchers involved. Countries that have completed assessments are now entering into the stakeholder engagement phase, which supports decision-maker engagement and action based on Monitor findings, with the potential for catalyzing societal-level change. Such change often happens slowly and iteratively, which may require investing in direct presence and/or active partner support over the long haul in specific geographical contexts.

Strategy questions for the future

Looking forward, other persistent strategy questions will shape the long-term impact performance of the overall portfolio. These interrelated questions of geographic and cultural positioning revolve around the **tensions between depth and breadth, and between universality and specificity**, all in the context of generous yet finite resources.

- What should be the relative proportion of Centre effort devoted to Canada as compared to the rest of the world?
- What does the “global” in the Centre’s mandate mean? Does it simply mean that the Centre operates internationally, or does it mean that the Centre’s “reach” is expected to be planetary? Does the Centre simply operate multi-locally, or do all the locations add up to an impactful pattern?
- How long should the Centre accompany program participants and partners in a particular context on the process of applying what they have learned about pluralism?
- Does the composition of the Centre’s staff provide the diversification of identities, cultural and language competencies to ensure resonance with the Centre’s chosen target audiences?

CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC REACH

ASIA	Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, S. Korea, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India
EUROPE	Germany, Bosnia, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Kosovo, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Hungary
LATIN & SOUTH AMERICA	Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA	Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Israel
NORTH AMERICA	Canada, USA
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Sudan, Malawi
OCEANIA	Australia

Agile opportunism has been quite beneficial in getting the Centre’s programs launched, as reflected in the geographic reach map above. Yet portfolio development over time may require more selectivity. In this light, it is also important to note that external partners do struggle at times with the globalized nature of the Centre’s content. Eleven percent of external survey respondents, who were generally quite satisfied with the work of the Centre, nonetheless commented on the **contextualization challenges**, such as a desire for regional or local specificity, or a need for alternate terms where “pluralism” carries negative connotations.

Question 7

How might the Theory of Change itself be further developed to support this progress toward higher-level outcomes?

Most importantly, as the Centre enters its next phase, the time is ripe for a **review of paradigms on what long-term impact will mean** for the Centre. Internal interviews revealed two points:

- Staff views are mixed on what long-term impact¹⁰ looks like. Some described impact in terms of the Centre’s reputation, reflecting a start-up organization’s natural focus on becoming established and known in order to open doors for influence and programming. Others described impact in terms of identifiable, sustainable change at social, cultural and/or institutional levels. As the Centre shifts from start-up mode to established organization mode, its reputation will never cease to be an important means to an end - but the understanding of long-term impact will need to strongly emphasize the latter, with a focus on the unfolding of identifiable change.
- There are multiple views on *how* the Centre will contribute to impact - whether by nurturing change among influencers and decision-makers, and/or by diffusing the pluralism lens among the resource people who shape the way work is done in fields such as mediation, peacebuilding, diversity equity and inclusion, etc. Similarly, whether impact will come by equipping audiences that are already pro-pluralism, and/or by persuading audiences that are difficult to reach. All of these pathways are viable, yet it is difficult to pursue them all simultaneously because they carry different implications for strategy, operations and results tracking. Developing distinct Theories of Change for each program¹¹ will help in this regard, making it possible to articulate clearly how the Centre’s different programs or components of programs are believed to have different pathways toward change, and making it easier to critically examine those assumptions.

As those programmatic **Theories of Change are further developed**, suggested priorities include:

- Clarify the distinction between achievements in program implementation (typically called activities and outputs) and influencing change among the Centre’s external audiences (typically called outcomes and impact). This may sound like an exercise in semantics, but it can transform the way the organization thinks.

¹⁰ “Impact” as a technical term refers to primary and secondary effects that are longer-term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion. See: OECD-DAC. 2012. [Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results.](#)

¹¹ Thus far, Monitor has its own logic model, but the other programs do not.

- Expect that short-term outcomes may start quickly, and will include not only changes in perspectives but also changes in practice and even steps toward policy change. Such changes are not a future state – they are happening right now.
- Identify the mechanisms that will be used to increase the likelihood of short-term changes developing into sustainable long-term impact, for example, networked follow-up support to practitioners, and/or engagement with key socio-political influencers, and/or addressing potential obstacles and “spoilers.”¹²
- Consider when it is time to begin testing the Theories of Change against the emerging body of the Centre’s real-world programmatic evidence.

It may also prove helpful to graphically visualize within the Theories of Change certain elements of Centre strategy that are pivotal in the process of catalyzing change, such as:

- the relationship between software and hardware - or perspective, policy and practice
- the understanding of whether and how the programs will link up
- the significance of location selection and depth vs breadth of presence
- the reach-amplifying effect of strategic partnerships and networks
- the role of selected key enabling conditions that are known to vary across contexts, such as cultural attitudes towards pluralism, or civil society operating space.

Question 8

Synthesis: To what extent is the Centre positioned to deliver on its mandate?

The Centre is in a very **solid position to deliver** on its mandate. The performance evaluation, as well as the accompanying audit (available in a separate document), reveal an organization in a key moment of transition, having a level of relevance that is currently unquestionable and launched a well-designed program portfolio that is catalyzing compelling short-term results in the form of tangible changes in perspectives, practices and steps toward policy. The Centre appears to be on the cusp of significantly expanded influence, poised for progress toward the long-term aim of enhancing societal attitudes and institutional responses to diversity.

There are two key programmatic challenges to be addressed during the next five-year period to ensure that the Centre’s program portfolio fulfills its high potential. These involve developing a next-phase strategy that provides clear guidance on the tensions between depth and breadth, and a culture and system of data-informed program adaptation and management.

¹² For more on this theme see: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2016. [Reflecting on Peace Practice \(RPP\) Basics. A Resource Manual.](#)

4. Recommendations

Informed by the Theories of Change review described on page 8 above, which reflects the Centre’s ongoing iterative learning about what long-term impact looks like and how it develops, two key recommendations for Centre consideration include the following.

- 1. Decisively address the programmatic tensions between depth and breadth** as central to the next phase of strategy development. If necessary, clarify the budget, staffing and mandate parameters, making it possible to home in on high-level strategy. Be open to commissioning additional research if necessary to help answer pivotal questions such as:
 - What will be the level of effort devoted to Canada as compared to the rest of the world?
 - What will “global” mean to the Centre? Is the Centre multi-local, multi-national, or planetary?
 - Will the Centre aim to co-locate multiple programs in the same geographic context? If so, how will the programs interact? Or, alternatively, will the Centre design most of its programs to be self-contained?
 - What enabling conditions do different types of program participants need to maximize their application of the pluralism concepts and tools?
 - Where accompaniment is required, what are the different ways in which it could be provided? Possibilities may include peer support networks and amplifying partnerships with like-minded institutions.
- 2. Develop a culture and system of data-informed adaptive program management.** This means having accurate information on the changes in perspective, practice and policy that are developing in and through the work of program participants, as well as listening to their feedback, and then using this information to make timely programming decisions in response to real-world realities. It is a “heads up” style of program management that greatly increases the prospects for sustainable long-term impact. Adaptive management requires the prioritization of time for reflection and openness to recognizing and learning from the unexpected, both of which have implications for organizational culture.

The Centre’s program results tracking system will need to be customized and bespoke. Nonetheless, developing this system will involve choosing one or perhaps two overarching paradigms for understanding and capturing change. We recommend selecting a paradigm that is:

- Complexity-friendly: able to capture emergent aspects of complex systems change that have not been predicted, identify both expected and unexpected results, and account well for the multi-causal nature of program outcomes.
- Learning-oriented: able to help reveal not just what has changed, but how.

- Potentially culturally responsive: able to shed westernized assumptions to become relevant and useful within other cultural worldviews. Promising practices may include making use of narrative storytelling as a source of data.

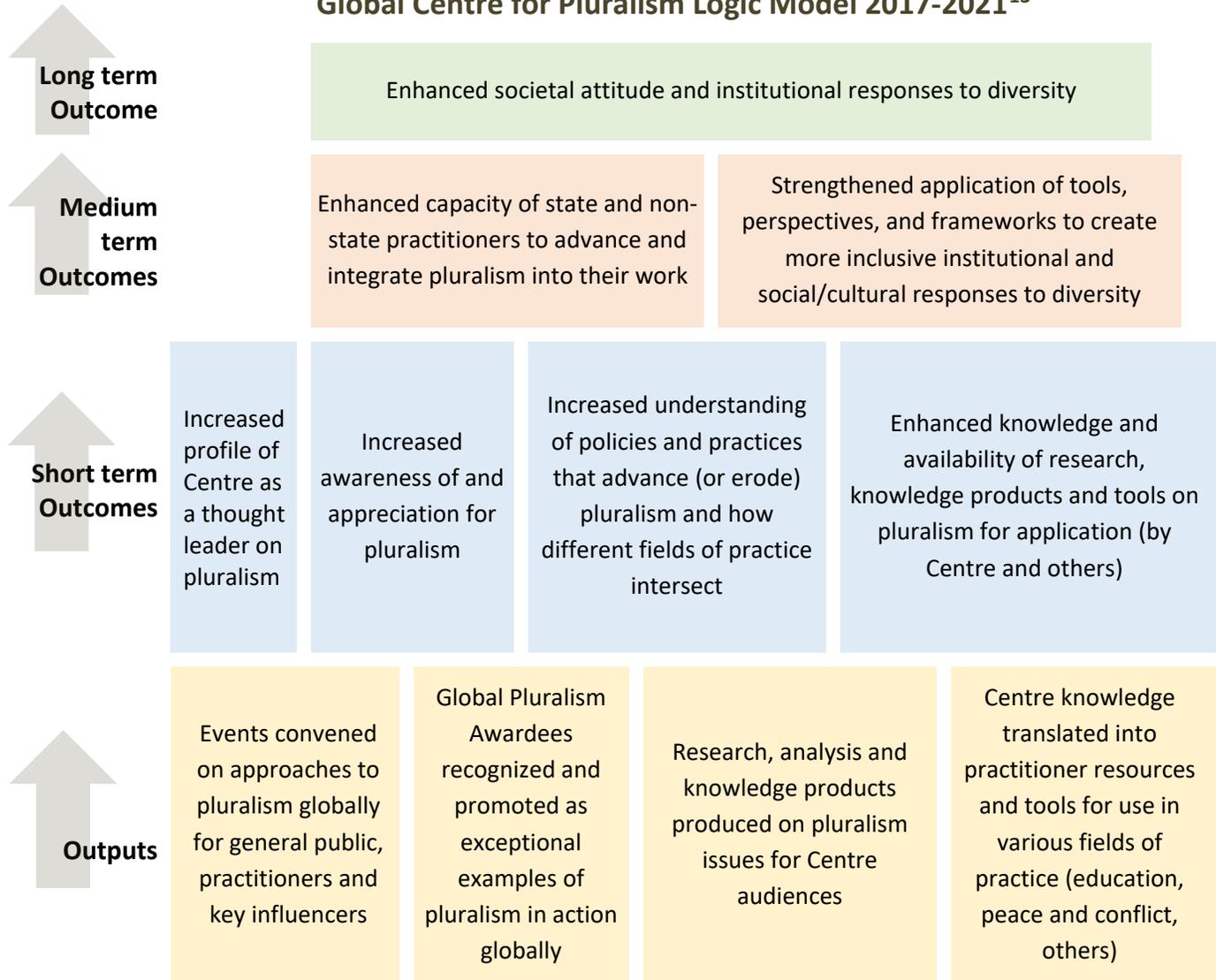
It may be helpful to start by working with partners on monitoring short- and medium-term outcomes, providing skills training if needed and win-win opportunities to exchange learnings and/or share news of their successes. If this practice is in place, then some longer-term outcomes will become apparent through natural monitoring processes - and others can be discovered through periodic deeper-dives into evaluation. To pilot the system, consider starting with the Monitor program's stakeholder engagement phase because it is very timely. It is also likely to identify a full range of changes in perspectives, practices and even steps toward policy change, helping to confirm and further develop the high potential of the Global Centre for Pluralism programs as explored throughout this evaluation.



Annex A

Centre-Wide Theory of Change 2017-2021 “A living document”

Global Centre for Pluralism Logic Model 2017-2021¹³



¹³ Global Centre for Pluralism core document, with arrows added by the evaluators.

Annex B

Additional Methodology Details

This Annex supplements the evaluation process overview and phased data collection details found on page 9 of the report.

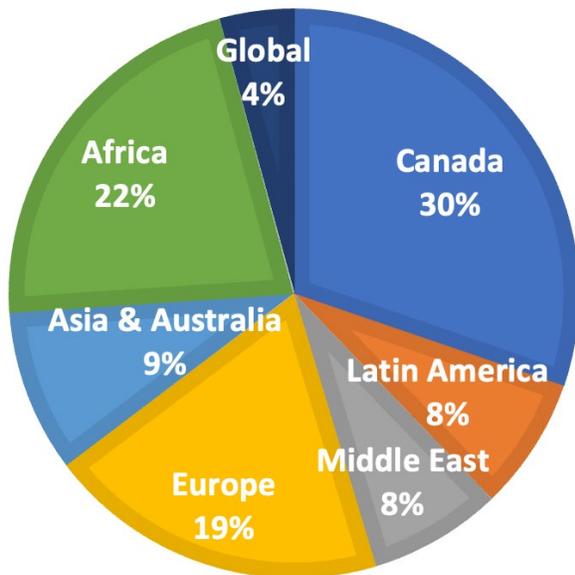
Evaluation Questions in Relation to Primary Methods

	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	PRIMARY METHODS
Relevance	Question 1. Does the Centre’s mission address a demonstrable need in Canada and around the world? Whether and to what extent has the need shifted over the past 5 years?	Review of organizational documents Internal Interviews (Phase 1)
	Question 2. How well does the Centre's portfolio of programs respond to the identified mission?	External partner survey (Phase 2)
Effectiveness	Question 3a. What significant outputs and short-term outcomes has the Centre achieved over 5 years?	External partner survey (Phase 2)
	Question 3b. Which of these achievements demonstrate influence among external audiences?	External partner interviews (Phase 3)
	Question 4. How and under what circumstances did the program generate these outcomes?	Internal Interviews (Phase 1)
Future Implications	Question 5. To what extent and in what manner do the Centre’s programs complement, coordinate, synergize or duplicate with each other?	Internal Interviews (Phase 1)
	Question 6. Drawing on the GCP Theory of Change / Logic Model, how likely are these achievements to lead to higher-level outcomes in the coming years? Why?	Evaluation team analysis plus staff “sensemaking workshop” for collaborative interpretation
	Question 7. How might the Theory of Change itself be further developed to support this progress toward higher-level outcomes?	
	Question 8. Synthesis: To what extent is the Centre positioned to deliver on its mandate?	

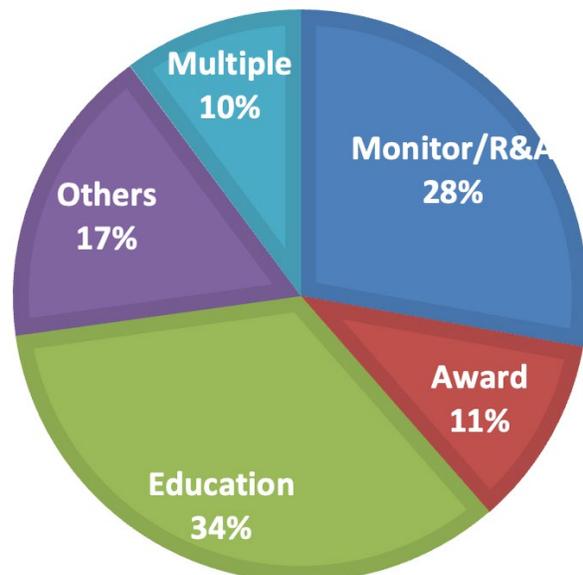
Phase 2 External Partner Survey: Demographics

106 survey respondents
(20% response rate)

Breakdown by Region



Breakdown by Program



Note: This survey was exploratory in nature and fulfilled that purpose well. Accordingly, it has limited claim to statistical rigour.

Phase 2 External Partner Survey: Instrument Summary

1. In which Global Centre for Pluralism programs/interventions have you collaborated? (Check all that apply).
2. How long is/was your collaboration with the Global Centre for Pluralism? (Choose one.)
3. What is/was your role when collaborating with the Global Centre for Pluralism? (Check all that apply).
4. On a scale of 0 to 4, how relevant are the Global Centre for Pluralism's programs/interventions to the needs of the context(s) in which you work?
5. Please tell us more about the relevance of the Global Centre for Pluralism's work within your context(s).
6. On a scale of 0 to 4, to what extent have you experienced changes in your knowledge about pluralism while collaborating with the Global Centre for Pluralism?
7. On a scale of 0 to 4, how much have your perspectives about pluralism changed while collaborating with the Global Centre for Pluralism?
8. On a scale of 0 to 4, to what extent have you experienced changes in the ways that you work or live since collaborating with the Global Centre for Pluralism?
9. If you have experienced change, please share an example. (Note: both small and large changes are important).
10. On a scale of 0 to 4, to what extent have you seen changes in other people as a result of the Global Centre for Pluralism's programs/interventions?
11. If you have observed change in other people, please share an example. (Note: both small and large changes are important).
12. Do you have any suggestions for the future work of the Global Centre for Pluralism?
13. In which region do you work? (Check all that apply).
14. Would you be available to tell the evaluation team more about the insights that you have shared during this survey? (Note: the evaluation team could speak to you in English, French, Spanish or Arabic).
15. If you said yes to the possibility of further conversation, please write your full name and your email address here. (Note: the evaluation team will NOT attribute your name to any of the ratings you have provided above).

Phase 3 External Partner Interviews: Demographics

INTERVIEWEE ID	COUNTRY/REGION OF WORK	GCP PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
A	Lebanon	Monitor, others
B	Kenya	Education, others
C	Kenya	Award, Education
D	Colombia	Monitor, others
E	Indonesia	Monitor
F	Canada	Education, others
G	Global	Monitor
H	Canada	Education
I	South Africa	Monitor
J	Uganda	Education
K	Europe	Award, Education
L	Global	Monitor, others
M	Canada	Education, others

Note: While gender was not emphasized during data collection, it is relevant to mention that 7 of 13 partner interviewees identified as female.

Phase 3 External Partner Interviews: Semi-structured Question Guide

1. Could you tell me a bit about your role/experience in collaborating with GCP?
2. During your collaboration with GCP, have you experienced any changes in your own perspectives or ways of working? (Note: Those changes may be of any size. Both small and large changes are important).
3. Have you observed any changes of the behaviour or ways of working in other people? (Note: Those changes may be of any size. Both small and large changes are important).
4. To talk further about the identified changes:
 - What is the name of the person or group that experienced the change?
 - Specifically, what did you/they begin to do newly or differently? (Had you/they ever done this before? If so, what aspect of it became new or different?)
 - When did that change happen?
 - Where did that change happen?
 - What were the enabling and supportive factors that helped to bring this change about?
 - Did your work in collaboration with GCP contribute toward this change? If so, how?
 - Were there any other actors or contextual factors that contributed to this change?
 - What do you think is significant about this change?
 - Are you aware of any additional evidence that could help us to verify this important change?
5. What is your hope for the future of GCP's work?
6. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Note: These interview findings were not independently substantiated as defined in Outcome Harvesting terms. Instead, they were internally triangulated to the highest extent possible.