Format for an IUC programme application – Concept note South

Call Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) 2022

GENERAL INFORMATION

Programme data	
Country and region of the programme	
Uganda, Northern Uganda	
Programme title (linked to strategic/thematic focus area)	
Strengthening the Capacity of Gulu University to meaningfully contribute to inclusive Refugee-Host Community Socio-Economic Transformation in Northern Uganda	
Programme Summary (Focus of proposed strategic area(s) and institutional strengthening activity)	
Gulu University (GU) plans to use the IUC programme to become a gender-sensitive centre of excellence for community-driven applied research and student learning in areas of food security, health, education, peace building and environmental conservation. This will enable GU to deliver appropriate, accessible, cost-effective and affordable services to refugees and host communities in Northern Uganda. Thus, GU will implement strategic interventions that internally result into: 1) improved human capacity for community-driven applied research and learning, 2) institutionalized and strengthened management structures and policies and 3) improved infrastructural capacity for applied research and learning. Ultimately, GU will become a stronger development actor, capable of bringing meaningful changes in the lives of both refugees and host communities indicated by; 1) improved income, food and nutrition security, 2) improved access and use of health and education services, 3) enhanced peace and tranquility, 4) improved environmental conservation and 5) improved gender equity.	
Applying local university (institution and proposed local coordinator)	
Full name of the institution (+ abbreviation)	Gulu University, GU
Address	P.O Box 166, Gulu
Website	www.gu.ac.ug
Name of proposed local coordinator (details in annex 3)	Associate Professor Duncan Ongeng
Name of the authority of the local university (Rector, Vice-Chancellor, President,...)	Professor George L. Openjuru
Statute of the institute (private or public)	Public institution
Signature of the authority of the local university (Rector, Vice-Chancellor, President,...)	

Signature of the proposed local coordinator

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

1. Strategy of the institution

Briefly describe the overall institutional strategy. Highlight the institution's vision on its role as university and as a driver of change in society. Refer to other relevant internal policy documents, if relevant.

Gulu University (GU), through its strategic plan (2009/2010 – 2019/2020)[1], strives to be a key player in the socio-economic transformation agenda at national, regional and international levels. This is clearly indicated in its vision; *"to be a pillar for academic, professional and sustainable development"* and mission; *"to provide access to high higher education, research and conduct quality professional training for the delivery of services directed towards community transformation and bio-diversity conservation"*. To achieve the above vision and mission, seven (7) core development areas are elaborated and include: 1) improving the quality of teaching and learning for all gender categories; 2) Infrastructural and ICT facility development; 3) human resources development through staff training and development; 4) improving library and information systems including automation of library systems; 5) community-driven action research; 6) developing and strengthening community outreach programs, support community peace building and conflict resolution; and 7) sound financial resource management. This strategic focus is progressively positioning GU as a pillar of socio-economic transformation in Northern Uganda. For instance, through its community engagement approaches of the student centred outreach (SCO)[2] and the student enterprise scheme (SES)[3], GU has piloted interventions in the refugee and host communities of Northern Uganda contributing to skilling and farm based micro-enterprises development.

Therefore, the GU strategic plan responds to development priorities provided for in the existing policy frameworks. At national level, it operationalizes the strategy of Education and Sports sector that emphasizes churning out graduates with employable competences in Uganda[4]. It is also aligned with the Uganda Vision 2040[5] that aspires for *"a transformed Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years"*, and emphasizes that higher education should develop innovations and entrepreneurial capacities of the population. At regional level, it is embedded in the East African Community [EAC]'s Vision 2050[6] that emphasizes mainstreaming research and innovation in higher education institutions. At continent-level, it contributes to the education strategy enshrined in the policy framework of *"the Africa We Want"* of Agenda 2063[7] which calls for acquisition of skills and knowledge for all through a strong knowledge management system and experiential learning. At the global level, the GU strategic plan aspires and actively contributes to the realization of Sustainable Development Goals, including; 1) no poverty, 2) zero hunger, 3) good health and wellbeing, 4) quality education, 5) gender equality, 6) clean water and sanitation, 7) affordable and clean energy, 8) industry, innovation and infrastructure, 9) sustainable cities and communities, and 10) peace, justice and strong institutions.

Elaborate on the capacity of the university to network with external actors: Governments, private sector, communities, civil society organisations, external funders, etc.

Gulu University is able to engage with external actors and networks. Several examples suffice. Locally, GU works with 1) Ministry of education and sports through representation in the GU governing council; ii) district local governments including Gulu, Omoro, Amuru and others for community capacity building in the areas of agriculture, education and health; iii) refugee and host community in Adjumani, Lamwo, Arua, and Moyo districts for economic empowerment (e.g. 600 refugee and host community members were recently trained by GU in farm micro-enterprises development); iv) civil society organizations including Techno-serve and ZOA for building capacities of communities in business development as well as The Aids Support Organization for medical student training. GU has worked with Save the Children International to improve learning environment and learning outcomes in Northern Uganda. With private sector, examples of GU engagement include: i) commercial banks in provision of technical assistance services to student enterprise projects; and ii) private hospital e.g. Gulu Independent Hospital for action-research (developing nutritious food products for malnourished children). GU is also a member of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a network of 60 African universities collaborating in student training while addressing societal needs across Africa. At international level, GU has worked with many funding organizations. For instance, through support from Flemish Inter-University Council (VLIR-UOS), GU collaborates with Flemish Universities and University Colleges in areas of agriculture, health, peace building and governance. Examples of on-going collaborations between GU and Ghent University are: combating mycotoxin contamination and promoting agronomic iodine biofortification in Northern Uganda. Second, through a consortium involving MasterCard Foundation, Egerton University in Kenya and RUFORUM, GU is training economically disadvantaged and refugee students from across African countries (e.g. Somalia, Burundi, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Liberia and others). Other important previous collaborations include: Nuffic, EDULINK project, and Enabel-Belgium for institutional and staff development.

[1] Gulu University (2009). Providing higher education, research and quality professional training for community transformation. Strategic Plan (2009/10 – 2019/20).
[2] Kalule et al. (2016). Conceptualizing the Student-Centered Outreach Model for experiential learning and community transformation. *AFJRD,* 1 (3): 219 - 227.
[3] Kalule et al. (2017). The Student Enterprise Scheme for Agribusiness Innovation: A University-based Training Model for Nurturing. Entrepreneurial mind-sets amongst African Youths. *AFJRD*, 2(1): 55-66
[4] Ministry of Education and Sport (2017). Education and Sports Sector Strategic plan (2017/18 – 2019/20). Kampala, Uganda.
[5] National Planning Authority (2007). Uganda Vision 2040. Kampala, Uganda
[6] East African Community [EAC]. (2016). *Vision 2050. Regional Vision for socio-economic Transformation and Development.* Arusha, Tanzania: EAC Secretariat.
[7] African Union Commission [AUC]. (2015). *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.* Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: AUC.

2. Context analysis

Provide a local context analysis, highlighting key development problems, their context, importance and underlying causes. Take into account the transversal themes gender and environment in this analysis.

Recurrent conflicts in countries neighbouring Uganda such as South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo have caused huge displacement of people into refugee settlements in Uganda. Existing reports show that the refugee population in Uganda stands at 1.3 million with over 70% of this population located in Northern Uganda (UNHCR, 2019). At national level, a favourable refugee policy exists, operationalized by the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategic framework[8] that provides for equal opportunities between the refugees and host communities. This has enabled the refugees to stay safe in Uganda. This strategic framework provides that refugees should be assisted to be self-reliant through settlements with host communities rather than in camps. Accordingly, there are now many refugee settlements located in the districts of Adjumani, Moyo, Yumbe, Arua and Lamwo of Northern Uganda. With the current precarious political situation in Eastern Africa, the refugee population is even likely to keep growing. This influx of refugees has brought additional population pressure on natural resources (land, rivers, & vegetation) and basic social services (health, education, water & sanitation) in Northern Uganda. For instance, the ratios of health facilities and workers to patients have deteriorated because the original numbers of facilities and personnel now have to cope with additional patients arising from refugees. There has also been increased degradation of natural resources characterized by charcoal burning and destruction of marginal lands including wetlands and river banks in search of means for survival. Harmonious co-existence between the refugees and host communities is also affected by perceived preferential treatment of refugees. Host communities view the relief assistance to refugees as being special favours yet they expect to receive the same social services. This situation is likely to generate further conflicts between the refugees and host communities. In addition, conflicts are also likely to emerge amongst refugees who come from different origins or cultural settings. Therefore, a holistic approach for host communities-refugee and refugee-refugee relations that take care of sustainable natural resources use and equitable access to social services while providing capacity building in conflict resolutions and pursuit of natural justice is required. This is also supported by the National Development Plan II, which emphasizes that strategies have to be put in place which put special attention to refugee-hosting areas, Hence, the justification to intervene at the level of both host communities and refugees in Northern Uganda.

The refugee influx in Northern Uganda has therefore worsened the poverty situation in the region, which based on Human Development Index [HDI], is ranked among the poorest in Uganda (UBOS, 2017; UNDP, 2018). Northern Uganda had previously been ravaged by a protracted 20 years of armed conflict spanning from mid-1980's to mid-2000's, thus, creating immense social disorders among communities. The region has high levels of poverty incidence, accounting for 29% of poor households who fall below the poverty-line compared to the national average of 24% (UBOS, 2018). In terms of population distribution, over 80% of households in Northern Uganda are located in rural areas where poverty levels are highest (UBOS, 2018). Majority of these households missed out on active participation in economic activities during the war (Lehrer, 2010). This situation informs the post-war poverty conditions in the area, where subsistence farming is the pre-dominant economic activity and women provide most of farm labour. Accordingly, women are the majority of the working poor. Still, many of the farming households operate on small pieces of land which average around 2.5 acres. Further still, women remain marginalized in terms of access and control of land for agricultural production due to socio-cultural settings that largely favour men and boys. Due to low productivity and poor livelihoods, communities and most particularly the youths and refugees have resorted to environmentally unfriendly and non-sustainable practices. For instance, there is massive destruction of trees and vegetation cover through charcoal burning causing detrimental effects which aggravate climate variability and soil degradation. Thus, overcoming the current poverty levels through agriculture requires not only strategic investments but also gendered and innovative approaches to make agriculture work in communities where there is a lot of youth pessimism about economic recovery following the war (Bozzoli, Bruck, & Muhumuza, 2010).

In addition to high poverty levels, Northern Uganda has continued to perform poorly in many other development indicators. The food and nutritional security situation have remained very precarious. For instance, statistics show that 29% of children under the age of 5 years are stunted, a sign of chronic malnutrition. Similarly, the anaemic problem among women is very high in Northern Uganda. For instance, in Acholi sub-region of Northern Uganda, 47% of women of reproductive age are reportedly anaemic (UBOS, 2017). As an example, a recent study conducted in Northern Uganda as part of the deliverables for VLIR team-funded team project revealed that 37% of women of reproductive age and 30.7% of children of school going age are iodine deficient. The above statistics point to the need for innovative interventions for averting the food and nutritional challenges among communities in Northern Uganda, and particularly among the most vulnerable groups including the refugees, women and children.

Associated with nutritional challenges highlighted above is the poor state of child and maternal health. Indeed, the reports show that Northern Uganda dominates the national statistics on early child mortality which stands at

[8] United Nations High Commission for Refugees (2017). Refugee and host community empowerment Strategic framework –Uganda.

64 deaths per 1000 live births. These deaths are largely caused by preventable diseases including malaria, diarrhoea, and typhoid and are exacerbated by poor primary health care, low health worker/ patient ratio; feeding practices, and environmental sanitation and hygiene. Maternal health is equally poor. Maternal deaths in Northern Uganda constitute a big proportion of the 148 maternal deaths per 100,000 health facility deliveries[9]. With the influx of refugees, these kinds of health conditions have continued to deteriorate. There are also very high incidences of Non-communicable diseases in adults e.g. cancers, diabetes, Coronary Heart Diseases etc. Further, post-war conditions and the refugee situation have resulted in occurrence of many post conflict mental disorders. These post conflict mental disorders are responsible for widespread cases of depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), reportedly, peaking at over 10% in the general population and a striking 32% among former abductees[10], with women and children being the most affected. Gender-based violence, alcohol and substance abuse constitute factors that account for the maintenance of mental disorder[11]. In light of the severe shortages of mental health specialists, there is need for developing community systems that include training and deployment of local mental health workers, who are gender sensitive in Northern Uganda.

In terms of education, the human capital development index shows that the national mean years of schooling stands at 6.1 compared to the expected mean of 12 years. This means that many Ugandans hardly go beyond primary education. The rate of school drop outs, before completion of secondary education, is reportedly highest in Northern Uganda and majority of these drop outs are females and refugees due to early pregnancies, lack of sanitary pads and low prioritization of girl-child education. Also, owing to poor primary and secondary education in Northern Uganda, the region benefits least from the national scholarships for joining university education. The award of such scholarships is based on national merit of academic grades where students from Northern Uganda compete with their counterparts who go to good schools in other regions of Uganda. This situation, coupled with poor child nutrition and health implies that human capital development in Northern Uganda, particularly for women and refugees, will largely remain low and below other regions. Therefore, systematic interventions in the education sector to improve not only the quality of primary and secondary education and enrolment in higher education institutions but also the responsiveness of Ugandan education system to the refugee situation is required to enhance educational attainment in Northern Uganda.

Provide an institutional context analysis, highlighting strengths and capacity constraints / needs of the institution. Take into account the transversal themes gender and environment in this analysis. Describe the position of your university in the national higher education landscape.

Gulu University was established in 2003 at the peak of an armed conflict in Northern Uganda. During this period, many households had been displaced, families were living in confinement as protected camps and there was massive destruction of livelihoods. As such, the establishment of GU was partly to contribute to the revival of livelihoods. This mission is well enshrined in Gulu University's motto reading as follows: *"For community transformation"*. In the higher education landscape of Uganda, GU ranks as an emerging University but also known for its community orientation as opposed to the ivory-tower universities. This kind of GU stand is still relevant to date given the fact that Northern Uganda remains one of the poorest regions in the country. Accordingly, GU embraces community engagement in all its core functions of teaching and training as well as research and innovation. For instance, GU is one of the few universities in Africa whose curricula of training at both undergraduate and graduate levels emphasize deliberately structured courses on community engagement (CE). These CE courses are not only for experiential learning but also earning student academic credits. Available evidence shows that the community engagement approach of GU has positive impacts on both the students and host communities[12]. This community orientation is deliberately designed to make GU disseminate researched knowledge, technologies and innovations for immediate application for socio-economic transformation. To achieve this, the university has integrated novel approaches in the delivery of training, research and community engagement. For instance, the Student Enterprise Scheme (SES) has been provided for entrepreneurial capacity building for students and out of school youths as a strategy of addressing unemployment among young people. In addition, GU runs the Student Centred Outreach (SCO) approach as a vehicle for transmitting knowledge and innovations including business models emerging from SES to the community. Since, GU gives attention to health of local population, the medical training program provides for Community Clerkship (CC) in which students provide basic medical services and as such help to bridge the gap in health service delivery. Last but not least, GU cherishes peace and tranquillity and thus, as part of student training, runs a peace building program focusing on conflict resolution education in the community. The GU's CE prepares students, to work with rural communities after graduation. This is clearly shown in the graduate tracer

[9]Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2018). Statistical Abstract

[10]Mugisha et al (2015). Prevalence and factors associated with posttraumatic stress disorder seven years after the conflict in three districts in northern Uganda (The Wayo-Nero Study) *BMC psychiatry* 15.1: 170.

[11]Roberts et al (2008). Factors associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression amongst internally displaced persons in northern Uganda." *BMC psychiatry* 8:1: 38.

[12] Mugonola and Baliddawa (2014). Building capacities of smallholder farmers in agribusiness and entrepreneurship skills in Northern Uganda. *Agricultural information Worldwide*, 6, 122 – 126.

study of 2014 which revealed that majority of agricultural graduates from GU are working in rural and semi-rural areas (Odongo et al., 2017). At community level, the CE of GU is highly regarded as transformational, most especially among farming households. As a case, when the CE was piloted among refugees and host communities in Arua and Adjumani districts, a number of farm based micro enterprises were initiated and owned by the beneficiaries[13].

A notable gap in the CE agenda of GU is that despite the existence of CE policy, the university still lacks a community engagement unit to supervise and coordinate CE activities for better exploitation. In spite of the importance of GU in the training of professionals and community transformation through community engagement, there are many aspects that still require capacity strengthening. First, GU being a young university, only 27% of its academic staff hold PhD degrees and so need to upgrade their qualifications to the level desired for university teaching and research. The University has a huge PhD gender gap (i.e. only 11.3% of staff with PhDs are females) which still needs to be bridged. Even those with PhD degrees, a sizeable number is neither well versed with the ideology of community engagement nor can effectively provide supervision support to students carrying out community engagement and action research activities. Whereas, GU emphasizes applied research for community development, the institution still needs to put in place a research strategic framework with a strong emphasis on community engagement. In terms of gender mainstreaming, the number of female staff participating in community engagement remains very low. While GU has put in place the gender mainstreaming policy for integration of gender issues in all university activities, it has not been adequately applied in staffing and community engagement. This is attributable to lack of in-depth practical knowledge on implementing gender strategies. Equally important, is mainstreaming environment and natural resources management features prominently on the community engagement agenda of GU. Further, environment and natural resources management issues are not well integrated in curricula of learning and university management. Thereby, GU still needs to develop a policy at university level on environment and natural resource management and a green growth development strategy so as to regulate its operations in pursuit of the sustainability agenda at all levels. A key institutional weakness at the policy level is lack of mechanisms and capacity (human and technical) to monitor and audit policy implementation, to inform improvement processes.

Gulu University also has many other challenges which affect its training and research activities. Inadequate teaching and research facilities are greatly affecting the quality of training in the university. One of the most affected areas is the ICT department which is meant to offer support to research activities conducted by staff and students from all over the university. This affects access to quality journal articles, e-resources and software, leading to low research outputs in terms of publications in high impact factor and peer reviewed journals. Whereas, the Senate of GU has provided for a structure that assesses the quality of teaching and examination at university level, a mechanism that brings on board academic units at all levels in quality assurance of teaching, community engagement and research is still lacking. While the university derives its strength from collaborative projects, the capacity of staff to attract grants is still low. In addition, GU needs a research and grants coordination mechanism to enable efficient management of research grants as well as inter- and intra-institution cooperation.

[13] https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190214100818377

3. Proposed programme strategy

Long term desired change(s): Explain how the proposed IUC programme will contribute to the strategy of the institution. How does this fit with the objectives of institutional university cooperation? What are the ambition(s)/dream(s) of the proposed IUC programme?

The proposed IUC programme is expected to strengthen key aspirations of GU strategic plan. Particularly, GU is desirous of the IUC to catapult it into *a centre of excellence for community-driven applied research and student learning in the areas of agribusiness and food security, health, education, peace and tranquillity, gender and environment* as articulated in sub-sections 1 and 2 of the proposal, and in accordance with the priority areas identified in the Uganda country strategic focus, through:

1. Improved human capacity for community-driven applied research and learning
This will require deliberate actions to promote acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills by training academic staff at PhD level, while ensuring gender equity. It would also, for example**,** entail issues of staff empowerment to develop the capacity to facilitate student use of modern innovative methods. In addition, staff would acquire competencies needed to conduct community-driven and gender-cautious action research in identified critical intervention areas of relevance to the host community-refugee context in Northern Uganda and aligned to institutional focal areas of GU. Thereby, GU will be in a better position to produce skilled and competent graduates capable of fulfilling the needs of the community, the industry where they can be employed and most important are able to create self-employment opportunities to address the growing unemployment problem among the youth. Such a holistic approach, in an IUC programme, strategically helps GU play a key role in the implementation of the ReHoPE framework, with targeted interventions to promote socio-economic transformation of marginalized communities.
2. Institutionalized and strengthened management structures and policies
In order to make a holistic, multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary impact on the community, the IUC programme will establish an institutionalized Community Engagement Coordination centre to promote the synergy of university-wide community engagement activities, strengthen university-community linkages and document scientifically the impact of university community outreach. This also creates an opportunity to better organise and manage institutional collaborations (local and international) that aim at socio-economic transformation of communities as well as strengthening institutional capacity of GU. Under the IUC, a holistic quality assurance structure and associated policy framework will be established and operationalized. This will provide a functional mechanism for assessing, monitoring and evaluation of the university functions and outcomes (quality of research, quality of graduates, quality of management system, effectiveness of community engagement). A grants management system will be established to provide a one-stop centre to assist staff in resource mobilization. This is critical to ensure sustainability of the investments that will be brought in by the IUC. GU aspires to be recognized internationally and thus, an internationalization policy developed and operationalized with establishment of an international office. The policy will provide for earning and transfer of credit, strengthening mechanisms to attract international students and scholars. Preservation and or restoration of environmental integrity is very key for the global planet and GU needs to be part of a community of proactive actors in the realm of green growth. Therefore, a green growth strategy will the developed and operationalized. In all these structural and policy issues, gender will be streamlined to ensure gender equity.
3. Improved Infrastructural capacity for applied (action) research and learning;
Since ICT transformation is key to the functions of any University in this era, the IUC is well positioned to make a positive difference towards the development of basic investments in ICT infrastructure, internet and related support services. Thereby, it becomes important to put mechanisms in place to facilitate the process of developing capacity of staff and students in the use of ICT services to exploit, for example, e-resources for efficient teaching, learning and use of library systems in a more efficient manner possible. Such innovative developments in the library and learning systems (e.g. institutional repositories, video conferencing) would also help sharing of researched outputs not only in the academia and local communities but also would encourage exploitation of such results for practice and policy at regional and international levels. ICT development and appropriate use will also contribute to the dream.

The ambition of GU articulated above and the ways through which the IUC will contribute to GU strategic plan integrates well and fits in the objectives of an Institutional University Cooperation. GU may not make the needed contribution to the socio-economic transformation agenda of host communities and refugees in Northern Uganda if it is not recognized as a crucial partner and key player in the region as far as the current development context (i.e. host community-refugee crisis) is concerned. Interventions are therefore needed to facilitate changes at different levels of the institution, especially aiming at staff capacity development to better utilize their competencies in teaching, learning, research and outreach. In addition, the proposed IUC will not only focus on individual level actions but also targets organisational development to effectively utilize new structures, processes and procedures of existing policies or frameworks and or developing new ones that do not exist but are of relevance to the targeted socio-economic transformation agenda in the region. The IUC empowerment will enhance the quality of education as well as GU capacity development in conducting research and service delivery to the community. Inherently, it will also position GU to effectively contribute to the current development agenda of Northern Uganda as a strategic host of refugees from neighbouring conflict-affected countries.

Therefore, GU will be able to realise its ambition of becoming a key development actor by strengthening its internal capacity to contribute community-wide development changes that need to occur in Northern Uganda hence satisfying the objectives of institutional university cooperation.

Domains of change: What are the key challenges (cf. context/institutional analysis and strategy) the programme wants to tackle (can be both internal and external to the institution)? How to translate them into desired changes (i.e. "domains of change")? How does this contribute to the long term objective(s)?

The IUC programme will tackle the challenges faced by both host communities and refugees in Northern Uganda that have persisted or emerged as a result of the failure of agents of change such as GU to effectively implement their socio-economic transformation mandate due to limited institutional capacity. Key context-specific challenges that the programme desires to influence into positive outcomes include;

1. Wide-spread food and nutritional insecurity, compounded by low agri-entrepreneurial capacities in post-conflict Northern Uganda. This is manifested in form of low food production, poor dietary practices, high incidences of infant and child malnutrition; high micro-nutrient deficiencies among children and women of reproductive age and low levels of farm-based micro-enterprises development and youth unemployment. The above problems are exacerbated by the continued influx of a large number of refugees who themselves depend on non-sustainable relief supplies (humanitarian aid), with minimal structured and sustainable strategies to promote resilience and self-reliance for both refugees and host communities.

2. Inadequate health, water and sanitation services for resource-constrained communities in Northern Uganda. This is mainly the cause of frequent occurrence of preventable diseases e.g. malaria, typhoid and fatal diarrhoea and has resulted into high rate of mortality of children below the age of 5 years and women of reproductive age as indicated in the context analysis. The growing population of refugees in Northern Uganda has resulted into increased pressure on available health service provision. Yet, health services for post conflict trauma management are still limited. This has had a dramatic impact on host communities as far as health service provision is concerned. The cries from host communities relatively go unheard and their needs are not addressed systematically with health programmes similar to those of refugees. This has resulted into resentment and conflicts between the two groups, hence further crippling health service delivery.

3. Environmental and natural resources degradation, also linked to the increased need for productive resources to support food production. The increasing number of people in the region has led to encroachment on marginal lands such wetlands and river banks and destruction of forest trees and vegetation for charcoal. This in turn worsens climate variability, increases soil erosion, and leads to environmental pollution. The region has inadequate educational programs that target environmental conservation or the sustainable use of available natural resources and GU also currently lacks the capacity and policies that would enable it play a role as an agent of environmental conservation through its educational programmes, research and community outreach. Hence, enforcement of gender-sensitive environment and natural resources management strategies remains inadequate. Further, there is need for research into alternative energy sources (green energy, for example, the utilization of the bio-waste) so as to save the remaining forests in this region.

4. Low level of human capital development characterized by low completion rates of education at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) in Northern Uganda. It is noted that Northern Uganda benefits least from the national merited scholarship to pursue high education at the level of the university. Populations from the region are unable to access higher education since secondary level education is compromised by low quality education services. This kind of situation is worsened by the influx of high number of refugees who still have to share the limited school facilities with host communities in Northern Uganda. In all, the girl child is the most affected owing to early pregnancies and low prioritization of girls for higher education. Hence, capacity of the female gender to advance equally in education as males is still endemically low. Amidst these community challenges, the GU capacity of providing outreach services to primary and secondary schools as a response strategy of improving the quality education at those levels is still inadequate.

5. Community conflicts which are a recipe for unrest and instability. Notable conflicts occur between refugees and host communities while competing for resources; and between refugees-refugees originating from different cultural backgrounds. Women are at a high risk of experiencing the impacts of such conflicts, which further affects their resilience to shocks and also their livelihood strategies. Previous response approaches have not adequately developed sustainable conflict resolution strategies managed and owned by communities themselves.

6. Inadequate GU capacities in facilitating learning and conducting high quality research. Only 27% of academic staff members possess PhD degrees which are desired for effective university level teaching, research and outreach. Many staff are not using modern methods and technologies of teaching. This is so because there are inadequate facilities (e.g. lab equipment, e-resources, software etc.), which also in turn has affected the capacity of GU staff to conduct or supervise high quality research hence low research outputs and publications. There is also non-existent automated core library processes and limited capacities in utilizing e-resources and internet for training, research as well as monitoring and evaluation for learning. At a structural level, there is still inadequate community engagement [CE] mainly because GU lacks a CE center and respective implementation frameworks to systematically operationalize the CE policy. Furthermore, the effectiveness of teaching, learning, research and community engagement are greatly affected by the ineffective university quality assurance systems, insufficient operationalization of the gender policy to inform gender-sensitive institutional development

and absence of an institutional policy for mainstreaming environment and natural resources management in the operations of GU.

The above challenges do not operate in isolation. They are interlinked to one another in a vicious way and so tackling only one at the expense of another would be counterproductive. This IUC aims at strategies that are complementary and multidisciplinary in nature to translate these challenges into desired outcomes as below;

1. Improved food and nutrition security; through promoting nutrition sensitive agriculture to enhance food production by strengthening agricultural skills, introducing high-value and more resilient crops, strengthening post-harvest handling, primary processing or improved on-farm storage and better market linkages especially among women in host communities and refugee settlements. In addition, there will be a strong emphasis on the development of agri-entrepreneurial capacities to enhance business development for increased incomes and reduced household vulnerability.

2. Improved access and use of basic social services of health and education; this can be linked to improved food and nutrition security. A malnourished individual or household will have lower health which affects their capacity to work productively so that they have an income needed to facilitate health care and education especially among young children, youth and women. The IUC will help bridge gaps in service delivery to strengthen access to and use of existing services. In health, potential areas to contribute include; nutrition, sexual and reproductive health, post conflict mental health, HIV/AIDS, water, sanitation and hygiene both among host communities and refugees. For education, a positive change can be made at the levels of early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational, as well as non-formal education. It will also be paramount to offer interventions that tackle enhancement of technical skills training especially among the youth as a response to widespread unemployment and high rate of school drop-outs.

3. Improved environmental protection and conservation practices; to ensure sustainable use of natural resources either for food production to improve food and nutrition security or for other non-food livelihood strategies, the IUC targets to position GU as a facilitator of environmental protection and conservation. The focus here will be on strategies that maintain the integrity of wetlands, river banks, forest tree cover and other vegetation as well as assuring clean water and air for consumption and production. Through the IUC, GU can contribute to environmental conservation to promote sustainability of natural resources by developing an appropriate policy to guide the institutionalization of educational programs that target environmental protection and conservation to be implemented in refugee-hosting communities.

4. Enhanced peace among host communities-refugees and refugee-refugee contexts; GU aims to promote harmonious living and integration of refugees in hosting environments. Intervention approaches in the IUC will target to develop capacities for community governed conflict resolution systems as an alternative to retributive justice. The risks of conflicts in the refugee-host community contexts are largely a result of constrained access to productive resources in refugee-host communities, increased competition for economic opportunities and limited access to basic social services of health and education. Particular attention will be paid to rehabilitation and re-integration strategies for women and girls traumatized by violence and exploitation in the refugee-hosting communities of Northern Uganda.

5. Improved academic capacity of staff members to better integrate development issues in teaching, learning, research and community engagement; the IUC will mainly focus on staff training at PhD level for capacity to conduct innovative research that addresses current and future needs or challenges of communities in Northern Uganda. GU will also groom a crop of Flemish-trained scientists who are able to enhance the relevance of student learning by integrating research outputs into teaching. In addition, training staff at the highest level together with the IUC support to establish a Community Engagement center at the university will enrich the Community Engagement agenda to mitigate developmental challenges highlighted above that have hampered the socio-economic transformation of Northern Uganda. There will also be an emphasis on establishing effective quality assurance systems, gender mainstreaming and institutionalizing an environmental conservation policy to enhance the effect of improved teaching, research and community outreach activities.

In order for GU to be recognised as an important stakeholder and implementer of socio-economic development interventions among host communities and refugees in Northern Uganda, the above priority domains of change have to happen concurrently. First, there is special focus on GU capacity building and institutionalisation of policies, structures, processes and procedures which addresses internal inadequacies that hinder GU to play its role as a development actor in society. Second, the thematic domains of change are multi-disciplinary in nature and address key and priority challenges faced by both host communities and refugees in Northern Uganda. Based on action research and community outreach activities, communities will be empowered and made self-reliant in core life support and wellbeing services concerned with; food and nutrition security, agri-entrepreneurship training, child and maternal health, educational quality, environmental conservation, participatory peace building and conflict resolution. Thereby, GU will have become a strong and resilient institution that delivers needed development services to both refugee and host communities and a model to other institutions in similar contexts.

Programme strategy: Describe how the programme will approach these different challenges or 'domains of change'. What will be the key strategies of the programme? What will be the priorities of the programme in terms of capacity development? What are the key institutional strengthening domains to be addressed? Are there specific links with the transversal themes gender and environment foreseen?

1. Institutional strengthening for improvement of internal processes (ISIP) – transversal project. The focus will be on: improving the utilization of e-resources, provision of effective ICT technologies and automated library processes; institutionalizing the CE unit along with formulating CE implementation frameworks; operationalizing the GU gender policy to ensure gender equity in service provision; enhancing competences of staff in modern methods of facilitating learning and conducting research; strengthening student entrepreneurial scheme linked to CE; improving quality assurance system at GU; and improving research facilities (e.g. lab equipment & consumables). At GU level, an environment and natural resources management policy will be developed and operationalized to streamline environment concerns in all university processes and activities.

2. Promoting nutrition-sensitive food production and agri-entrepreneurship. This theme will address community needs in food and nutrition security as well as support for farm based micro-enterprises development among refugees and host communities. In achieving sustainability, the research and capacity building interventions will integrate gender concerns in food production, access, utilization and control of production resources. In the view of high rate of working poor in the agricultural sector and lack of decent employment for the youths, action-research will be conducted to develop high-impact farm based micro-enterprises and other business solutions. The GU SES and SCO models will be integrated in the action-research processes to enable tailoring of the research results to identified community development challenges. Given, the widespread problems of environment and natural resource degradation, all action-research activities will address the challenges of natural resource degradation that affect agricultural productivity. For instance, interventions will focus on water use efficiency, soil quality management and appropriate farm waste utilization among others.

3. Improving mental, maternal and child health in the refugee and host communities. Action Research interventions will focus on primary health care, post conflict mental health, clean water and overall sanitation, prevention of non-communicable diseases and innovative educational approaches for health management at household and community level. Innovative approaches will also be introduced to address the issue of preventable diseases among children, for instance, malaria, diarrhoea and others that have a compounding effect on the nutrition status of individuals. A cost-effective approach of student clerkship in the medical faculty will be exploited for provision of health services to poor communities.

4. Promoting restoration, protection and conservation of environment and natural resources. Given the destruction of forest trees and vegetation and inappropriate disposal of wastes including domestic garbage and polythene, this theme will also focus on replanting of agriculture-friendly trees and waste recycling (options that transform waste as a resource) and green energy production. Educational programs will be provided on harmonious crop and livestock production with trees and the management of these pathways in a circular economy perspective in the refugee-host community context.

5. Promoting participatory peace building and conflict resolution. Essentially, this action research will be on developing a community-owned and managed system for conflict resolution in search of durable relations between the refugee-host communities and refugee-refugee interactions. In all endeavours, a gender focus in support of equitable justices for women, men, boys and girls for harmonious families and communities will be emphasized and pursued as conflict resolution strategies rather than retributive justice. Research will also focus on the linkages between conflict and the environment. For instance, how harmonious relations can lead to community resolve to live in healthy environment or how occurrence of conflict contribute environmental degradation.

6. Promoting quality education for sustainable human capital development. The action research intervention will seek to address the inequality in enrolment of girls for science-focused education at university level through outreach to secondary schools using role-model approach and filmed case studies. In addition, methods of improving the quality and equitable access to higher education will be researched upon and promoted. A special window will be devoted for research on innovative approaches of the integrating refugees in the educational system of the host communities. In situations of prolonged unrest and people displacement, children grow up to adults without education and lifelong skills. Thus, special action research will be conducted on how adult refugees can receive appropriate education in a foreign land in the context of a rudimentary set up as is the case in Northern Uganda. Learning about environment and natural resource conservation among young people while in primary and secondary education is hypothesized to translate into better attitudes and practices towards environment protection and conservation. Accordingly, research will be conducted on how training young people on environment and natural resources management during school life translates into responsible behaviour towards the environment.

How will the university ensure an appropriate institutional embeddedness of the programme?

Even at the concept note development stage, GU has already taken concrete steps to ensure that institutional embeddedness of the programme does not only takes place during implementation but it is initiated and acted upon from the preparation of the proposal. The university has put in place an inclusive multi-disciplinary team for preparation and subsequent implementation of the proposed IUC action. Starting at the concept development, the Vice Chancellor of Gulu University has been consulted and approved the coordinator-ship and composition of the IUC team. The team involved in the preparation comprises of staff coming from all over the university academic units and the programme strategy encompasses the involvement of the university units at different levels. The proposed priority areas have been discussed and agreed to by the University management and GU governing council. Thereby, during the implementation phase of the programme, the initial actions that have been taken to ensure institutional embeddedness during the proposal development stage will be reinforced by having a local IUC Steering Committee (SC) chaired by the Vice Chancellor with representations from all the six faculties and administrative directorates of GU. Deliberations of the IUC Steering Committee will be presented

to the university-wide management committee and then to the University governing council (the supreme policy making organ). A Programme Support Unit will be established and integrated in operational and financial management structures of the University. All budgets and priorities within the proposed programme will be integrated in the periodic-rolling development plans and budgets approved by the GU governing council. The University Secretary who is the secretary of the university council and accounting officer of the University will play an oversight and monitoring role of the administrative and financial management of the IUC programme.

Explain how the proposed programme links to national/regional policies, strategies and/or priorities, and the VLIR-UOS country strategy (priorities and themes developed in the VLIR-UOS country strategy).
For some countries, the VLIR-UOS country strategy includes a list of potential partners. In case your university *is not on this list* , please motivate why an IUC programme with your university should be considered.

The proposed programme responds to the national policies and strategies as articulated in the second National Development Plan (NDPII)[14] and Vision 2040[15]and their constituent national sector–specific policies/strategies. In addition, the proposed IUC programme aligns perfectly with priorities and thematic areas of the VLIR-UOS Uganda Country Strategy.

First, NDPII that is aligned with aspiration of Uganda Vision 2040, highlights the need to empower universities in Uganda to be active drivers of socio-economic transformation through teaching and innovative research. As such, priority areas articulated by NDPII and Uganda vision 2040 that are linked with the proposed IUC programme include; agriculture development, promoting good health and nutrition, enhancing education and literacy, care and protection of vulnerable population groups, human resources development including skilling the young labour force, gender equality/women empowerment for socio-economic transformation, ICT development/use, natural resource conservation and climate change mitigation. The IUC programme is further aligned with sector specific policies and strategies that build upon the aspiration of NDPII and Uganda Vision 2040. These include; 1) the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan[16], that aspires to contribute to national wealth creation and increased employment; 2) The Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan[17] that aims at achieving equitable access to as well as ensuring delivery of relevant and quality education; 3) The Health Sector Development Plan[18] that aims to contribute to the production of a healthy human capital for wealth creation through provision of equitable, safe and sustainable health services; 4) The ICT Sector Strategic and Investment Plan[19] that focuses on increasing access and usage of ICT in the country; 5) The Social Development Sector Plan[20] that seeks to promote labour productivity, employment, protect rights of vulnerable and empower marginalized groups for gender-responsive development; and 6) The Water and Environment Sector Development Plan[21] that aims to ensure availability and access to safe/clean water and hygienic sanitation facilities in rural areas and provision and utilization of water for production facilities.

Since the proposed IUC programme has a specific focus on inclusive socio-economic development of both refugees and host communities in Northern Uganda, it is also important to reflect upon how it contributes to the Uganda Refugee Policy, regulations and strategies that are equally enshrined by NDPII and Vision 2040. The Uganda Refugee policy uses a development-based approach and recognizes that refugees have a right to work, establish businesses, move freely within the country, and live in communities rather than camps, in the spirit of promotion of their self-reliance. These aspirations are well highlighted in the ReHoPE framework and NDPII where refugee management and protection is mainstreamed.

Second, concerning VLIR-UOS country strategy for Uganda, the proposed programme tackles all the central and cross cutting themes of the country strategy. First, the IUC programme addresses the food security theme interventions for income, food, and nutrition insecurity. The Health theme is focussing on child and maternal health/nutrition through interventions on primary health care, clean water and sanitation, and non-communicable diseases. Furthermore, the proposed intervention on restoration, protection & conservation of the environmental resources addresses the environment theme. The Governance theme is also catered for in terms of participatory peace building and conflict resolution to promote harmonious living of refugees and host communities. As far as cross-cutting themes are concerned, the IUC interventions focus on capacity development and institutional strengthening to enhance teaching, learning, research and community outreach which fit under Community engagement theme. The Gender thematic area is covered throughout the programme and is clearly highlighted that the change process of GU, while implementing the IUC, will consider gender aspects targeting the empowerment of women and girls at the institutional level as well as in refugee and host communities. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the proposed IUC programme, there is a strong window of opportunity of effective partnerships with other actors, hence also strategically covering up the Networking theme of the country strategy.

[14]Republic of Uganda (2015). Second National Development Plan (NDPII) 2015/16 – 2019/2020.
[15] Republic of Uganda (2007). Uganda Vision 2040.
[16] Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (2016). Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (2015/16 – 2019/20)
[17] Ministry of Education and Sports (2017). Education and Sports Sector strategic plan (2017/18 – 2019/20)
[18] Ministry of Health (2015). Health Sector Development Plan (2015/16 – 2019/20)
[19] Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies (2015). ICT Sector Strategic and Investment Plan (2015/15 – 2019/20)
[20] Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (2016). Social Development Sector Plan (2015/16 – 2019/20).
[21] Ministry of Water and Environment (2015). Water and Environment Sector Development Plan (2015/16 – 2019/20).

4. Stakeholder analysis

In order for a programme to have impact, a thorough understanding of the key stakeholders is essential. Describe and analyse these **key** stakeholders These may include both internal and external (outside HEI) stakeholders, as well as direct and indirect beneficiaries.		
Stakeholder	**Analysis**	**Engagement strategy**
Academic staff of GU	The capacity of GU academic staff to conduct research and teaching is very limited. Out of 229 staff, only 27% have PhDs and 60% hold Master degrees. The gender disparity among academic staff is worrying. Only 19% of the total number of academic staff are females. Out of the total PhD and Master holders, only 11.3% and 26.8% are females, respectively.	Selected staff will pursue PhD in collaboration with Universities in Belgium. More focus will be on female staff to bridge the glaring gender disparity in academic staff. Others will be involved in supervision of PhDs, field research, publication and as team members in the different research projects.
Students of GU	GU has over 4000 students enrolled in 25 undergraduate, 15 master and 1 PhD programs. The majority (over 90%) are undergraduates. Students have very limited opportunities for graduate training due to lack of capacity of staff to supervise graduate research and limited graduate programs. For instance, GU has only 1 accredited PhD program. Gender disparity also exists in student enrolment, with 39% being female students. Students rely community challenges to GU and the researched solutions back to community, making them key stakeholders in the proposed IUC.	The students will benefit from enriched scholarly and library resources and gain research experience. They will benefit from enhanced teaching and learning, facilitated by improved ICT facilities. Through the SCO model, students will be involved in community action research geared towards acquiring solutions to the challenges faced by the refugees and their host communities.
GU administration	GU management is composed of the top university leadership including deans, directors, academic registrar, planner, university secretary and the vice chancellor. The management oversees all functioning of the university and operations of both academic and non-academics. Their interest is to have an improvement in the functioning of all university mandates.. They shall therefore play a critical role in institutionalising of CE, ICT frameworks and overall implementation of the IUC.	GU management shall be responsible for creating and managing enabling policies such as staff retention. They shall also link the IUC to outside stakeholders such as relevant ministries They will therefore play a key supportive role. They will form a local IUC Steering Committee (SC) chaired by the Vice Chancellor
Local communities and Refugees	The objective of the IUC is to improve resilience and quality of lives in the refugees and hosting communities in northern Uganda. The region hosts over 70% of the 1.3 million refugees in Uganda. These refugees have similar access to basic services as the hosts but they have higher levels of poverty and food insecurity. The school completion rates among the refugees and their hosts is very low. Access to energy is also a key challenge. Harmonious living among themselves and the hosts is challenging.	As beneficiaries, refugees and host communities shall be closely involved in selecting interventions. They will be consulted on designing strategies and skilled in Good Agricultural Practices, post-harvest handling, preservation and utilization of foods. They will participate in applicable green energy solutions. Their entrepreneurial skills will be enhanced and also benefit from health interventions.
Central and local government (Office of the Prime Minister (OPM); Ministries of agriculture, health, education, gender, ICT, environment, etc.)	These government entities monitor and oversee the implementation of different development interventions.. They are thus, interested in improving the resilience of refugees and hosts. The government of Uganda (GoU) has particularly implemented programs that aims at supporting livelihoods and reducing poverty in Northern Uganda e.g. the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) and DINU, making it a major stakeholder in socio-economic transformation of the region. The local governments ensure that the national development targets are achieved at districts and local levels.	The government agencies will be engaged in monitoring and overseeing the conformity of project activities to the country's strategic plans. Consequently, their influence in the program is high and will be kept informed and updated on a regular basis about the project progress.

Cultural and religious leaders	Uganda is a very culturally and religious diverse country. The cultural and religious leaders are very key opinion persons in facilitating the acceptance of refugees in the host communities, as well as advocating for harmonious living between the refugees and their hosts	The proposed action will consult the cultural and religious leaders in coming up with solutions to conflict situations among the refugees and the hosts, as well as handling domestic violence in their families.
International and local NGOs, Development agencies, . United Nations Agencies (e.g. UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO, WFP etc.), Enabel, SIDA, USAID, IrishAID, TPO, etc	These have the similar interest in improving health, nutrition and livelihoods of host communities and refugees. They are involved in different interventions. E.g. Enabel is implementing a project aimed at improving food security, nutrition and livelihoods of refugees in Uganda; TPO is working to improve mental health and socioeconomic outcomes. These agencies lack research proven, locally tested solutions to community challenges, which the IUC intends to offer to complement their efforts.	The influence of the agencies is perceived to be high. They shall be engaged as collaborators in the different aspects of the project. Their funding support will complement some aspects of the IUC. They are also capable of influencing policy formulation regarding food security, livelihood, health, educations and peace building
Private sector and industry	Private sector include agribusiness organisations, banks and other business entities in the region. They will be interested in participating in market development of research outputs that would arise from this project activities.	The private sector will be kept informed of the key project research outcomes. They will then be involved in uptake and commercialisation/valorisation of some of these outputs. As such, they will help in ensuring the sustainability of micro-enterprises and agribusinesses generated in the refugee host districts.

5. Assumptions, preconditions & sustainability

Describe in detail the preconditions and external factors that can influence the realisation of the objectives of the programme (feasibility).
Gulu University is a community oriented higher education Institution. The focus on community transformation gives this programme a good platform for success. For instance, the university has put in place working memoranda with WFP and FAO to promote micro-enterprise development and food and nutrition security in the region. Consequently, the university is able to tap on these existing networks to realise the programme objectives through sourcing for additional funding to support specific aspects of the programme. Further to this, this programme is being developed within the provision of the Ugandan development agenda, as enshrined in the NDP II and Vision 2040 plus respective policies and strategies, which ensures that the objectives of the programme complement the country's development agenda. Internally, the university has in place policies that support community and gender engagement. These are the frameworks that will act as springboards for the programme success. A key success factor of this programme will also be based on the implementing team. We have put in place a team drawn from different faculties, and specialities who are experienced in project implementation, collaborations and resource mobilisation, as such, this team is not only capable to delivering the programme successfully, but also able to mobilise additional resources and collaborations needed to ensure success and continuity. This IUC proposal also has complete support from the university management and council. This is crucial in ensuring that programme activities are conducted smoothly, and the outcomes of the project are sustained after the IUC period. With regards to community development, GU has several years of experience engaging with refugees and rural communities in issues related to peace building, food security, health and education. For instance, the faculty of agriculture and environment has promoted micro-enterprises in refugee settlements in Arua and Adjumani districts; the faculty of medicine works with rural communities through students clerkships to address a number of health issues. This experience and working relationships with communities will act as springboards for this IUC programme success. Lastly, the current stable political dispensation in the country gives guarantee that the project will be implemented in a stable environment and the results will be useful and sustained in the long run.
Describe the opportunities and challenges for the sustainability of benefits (capacity retention, continuation of research activities, outreach services, policy development, etc) after VLIR-UOS funding. This may include reflections on possible strategies to retain trained staff members, sustaining the enhanced research culture, continue the research activities, strengthen networking, making external international cooperation possible, etc).
The expected benefits from the IUC programme will include increased research capacity, improved staff capacity, and an augmented university community engagement. Once realised, sustainability will be ensured through the existing university policies and practices. For instance, outreach activities are at the core of the university and the university is currently actively involved in it. Through this intervention, we intend to strengthen the community engagement capacity of GU. Consequently, the university is able to continue running the outreach activities after the project has ended. A key challenge would be in the continuation of the funding for research and community outreach activities, however, through the platform created by the IUC programme, the university would have strengthened collaborations with government, NGOs, development organisation, private sector etc. These partners will be continuously engaged to step in to provide additional funding for continued implementation of GU aspirations aligned with the IUC programme. For instance, the government of Uganda has initiated a science and technology innovations fund which GU could tap into to complement and continue the activities of this IUC programme. The staff capacity building through this programme shall follow the staff development plan and policy of the university. As such, staff shall be given study leave with pay and be promoted upon attaining higher levels of qualification. These should motivate staff and ensure staff retention even beyond the project. In addition, staff members that benefit from the IUC programme, especially those that will take up PhD positions, will be officially bonded to serve at GU for a period of 5 years after completion. Through engagement with the private sector, local and international NGOs, and development organisations, we foresee development of spin-off projects as a result of activities of the IUC programme. This will therefore ensure that the outcomes of this project are sustained beyond the IUC lifetime. Within Gulu University, this programme will develop policies such as the creation of post-doc positions, partnerships arrangements, and institutionalisation of processes, procedures and curricula in key thematic areas. These policy documents, processes and procedures will remain part of the university hence ensuring sustainability of the programme. This IUC is envisaged to develop staff capacity in aspects of teaching, resource mobilisation, teaching, research and community outreach. Once the programme ends, these capacities will remain with the staff and as such ensuring sustainability of the outcomes of the IUC intervention.

6. Background of the proposal

Please explain how this concept note was developed (process, who was involved?).
We took note of the call for IUC programme through the VLIR website. Upon reading the call, we realised that having an IUC program would greatly help the University not only realize its vision of transforming the community, but also improve on its teaching and learning processes. Consequently, a meeting was held between the proposal proponents and the vice chancellor to discuss and get a way forward for putting up a proposal. From the meeting, it was approved that a team led by Prof. Duncan Ongeng start preparing a proposal in response to the IUC call. Subsequently, several meetings were held in respective faculties, to discuss the call and agree on the areas of focus, approach, the overall ambition of the university for the IUC programme and the major domains of change expected. These meetings then nominated staff that would constitute the IUC proposal development team mainly from the Faculty of Science, Faculty of Education and Humanities, Faculty of Agriculture and Environment, Faculty of Business and Development studies, Faculty of Medicine and the Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies of GU. Team meetings to discuss the proposal then followed. In coming up with the proposal, several analysis tools, including, Gender mainstreaming in higher education toolkit, SWOT analysis, stakeholder analysis were used to focus the programme objectives and thematic areas. Consultations with relevant stakeholders including university management, academic staff, Gulu district local government, as well as beneficiaries' groups were also conducted to get their insights and input into the proposal. The process described above gathered enough information that was finally used to develop this IUC proposal. As can be observed from the write-up, the proposed domains of change cut across the disciplines of peace and governance, food security and nutrition, agribusiness, child and maternal health and education, while strategically addressing gender and environmental issues.
Please explain earlier or current links with Flemish Higher Education Institutions (if any): • earlier collaborations with Flemish Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) • specific links with Flemish HEIs and/or individuals? • their role in the development of this concept note? • how do you see their involvement in the proposed programme?
Gulu University has been collaborating a lot with Flemish Higher education institutions. For instance, GU has been working with Ghent University on a TEAM project titled "agronomic iodine bio-fortification to improve iodine intake in northern Uganda" since 2016. This team project is coordinated by Prof. Xavier Gellynck of Ghent university. GU has also collaborated with University of Antwerp on governance and post conflict reconstruction in northern Uganda project, under the promoter-ship of Kristof Titeca. GU also worked with Ghent University on a holistic approach to combat mycotoxin contamination in northern Uganda, with Prof. Geert Haesaert in the context of food security and health. Gulu University is partnering with Mbarara University to implement a Team project on Analysis of past and projected future land use change and its impact on sediment fluxes in the Rwizi catchment, coordinated by Prof. Anton Van Rompaey at KU Leuven. As far as JOINT projects are concerned, GU is part of a consortium of Universities implementing a JOINT project on African network to study, treat and prevent onchocerciasis associated epilepsy (OAE-Africa) and coordinated by Prof. Robert Colebunders of University of Antwerp. At the level of South Initiative projects, GU has partnered with Ghent Uni-versity to run a project titled 'implementation of alternative sampling strategies as a toll for improving therapy of and insight into nodding syndrome, with Prof. Christophe Stove. In addition, a South Initiative project on the Relationship between mycotoxins and Nodding syndrome: a part of the solution, was implemented with Hogeschool-Gent together with University of Antwerp and coordinated by Prof. Geert Haesaert. Thereby, GU has also collaborated and continue to collaborate with majority of Flemish universities and University colleges in training and capacity building of staff at both masters and PhD levels. As such, there are over 7 Flemish University alumni, currently lecturing at GU. Therefore, Gulu University has a long history of good working relationships with professors and management of Flemish universities. These collaborations have over time built the further capacity of GU to jointly develop and manage projects in the context of VLIR OUS project as well as other external projects. As such, GU has satisfactorily implemented VLIR UOS based interventions at individual and department/faculty through ICP scholarships, South Initiatives, Joint and Team projects. This systematic collaborative evolution through from grass root intervention types of VLIR UOS has sufficiently prepared GU to advance to the Institutional level of collaboration with an IUC programme. GU is therefore in a strong position to collaborate with Flemish Universities and University Colleges to further elaborate and implement the proposed IUC programme.
In case your university has applied for IUC funding earlier, please summarize the main reasons for non-selection by VLIR-UOS at that time, and what measures you have taken to remedy since then.
Gulu university has not applied for IUC funding before and as such this is the first time we are submitting an IUC proposal.

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED

Annex 1: Format for a Concept Note South	*Main narrative document. This format is to be followed when drafting the proposal and to be submitted (with the signature of the rector enclosed).*
Annex 2: Institutional Fact Sheet	*The format is included and to be followed, except if indications are included that own data formats can be added*
Annex 3: Format for the application of a local coordinator (including a CV)	*The format is included and should in principle be followed. The CV of the proposed local coordinator is to be included in free format (relevant info for this mandate), however, with a maximum of 2 pages)*
Annex 4: Mission statement and latest strategic plan	*Free format*
Annex 5: Confirmation letter by the local rector	*Free format, The project proposal has to contain a confirmation letter (e.g. e-mail) of the rector of the university proposing itself for an IUC cooperation and supporting the proposed local coordinator*