

PIASS: Study on Church Governance

The Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences [PIASS] is conducting a research project on the governance and services delivery within the protestant churches of Rwanda. The project received a warm support by the Rwanda Governance Board which resulted in the signing of a MoU.

Churches, like any faith-based organization, are largely imbued with values. Their “core business” is different from trade and free voluntary associations. They proclaim values and value based rules as guiding principles. Protestant Churches represent around one third of the population of Rwanda. Their influence is proportionally more significant than their actual size. On one side, Churches enjoy great trustworthiness in Rwanda and their behavior and internal management are seen as instances, not to say “role models.” What proves to be implemented by Churches may be considered as possible, feasible and consequently a mainstream for other institutions in society. On the other side, when Churches are plagued by poor governance, the situation is considered more serious and the signal of a future breaking point or even a collapse. “Corruption of the best is worst” used to say common wisdom.

PIASS-Church Governance Study investigates how churches envisage the concept of governance and mechanisms that are available to bring about continuing improvement. It also investigates innovative actions if any churches have initiated to improve governance, bring peace, harmony and well-being of their members. Finally, missing mechanisms for good governance including legal and ecclesiastical procedures will be clearly identified and recommended for action. A barometer for good governance will be proposed; the findings will be available for anyone interested to take up.

The study is being conducted within nine protestant churches and three church related organizations. The majority of PIASS permanent staff in the three faculties are involved either as team leaders assisted by students or PIASS alumni, advisers or members of the steering committee. After a year of serious preparations involving the elaboration of the research tool and methodology that required a careful translation and adaptation in Kinyarwanda for field research, the training of research teams, the consultation with all church leaders concerned which are the stakeholders, the research teams were commissioned by PIASS authorities on 12 August 2015. The field work is expected to be completed by November 2015. The final report is due by February 2016.