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Examining the incentives and motivations for research-based legislation in Uganda

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of the paper is to discuss the factors that would increase or decrease the prospects to use research evidence in legislation in a developing country.

Design/methodology/approach – Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to identify the gaps in ability to utilise research evidence among policymakers. A combination of expert analysis of five policy brief formats, 13 self-administered semi-structured interviews with policymakers, focus group discussion and literature analysis informed data collection.

Findings – The incentives and motivations for research-based legislation are classified into three categories: those that concern legislators and researchers, those that concern legislators only and those that concern researchers only.

Originality/value – The work discusses the need for policymakers to make decisions based on facts. The findings are a reflection of a long interaction the author had with policymakers and researchers in Uganda.

Keywords Researchers, Uganda, Legislation, Policymaking, Research evidence

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

For generations, governments have promised and shown commitment to provide the best services to their citizenry. This often starts with budgeting and legislation, in places or aspects where legislation is needed. However, the current global challenges have indicated that most governments have failed to honour their responsibilities in many ways. In the developing world, especially in Africa and the Middle East, there have been uprisings, all stemming from the failure of the governments to honour the demands of their citizenry. In Uganda, there have been disappointments for the government's failure to address the most pressing budgetary problems. Without accurate, reliable and timely information, decision makers across the globe, in Africa and specifically Uganda, would be resigned to shooting in the dark (Sanya, 2011).

The need to make decisions based on facts has been echoed in a number of forums, the most recent being at the 16th United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Conference in honour of the African Statistics Day (UNECA, 2011). Universal and equitable access to national resources and realising the Millennium Development Goals are unlikely to be achieved without evidence-informed policies and actions (Chalmers, 2005; Lavis *et al.*, 2004;



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