EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING

Presented by
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Meeting with Zambian National Assembly on Topical Issues in the Agricultural Sector
Lake Safari Lodge, Siavonga.
25 March 2017
If government could increase its spending, what do you think should be the top three priorities for this additional investment/spending?

1. Education
2. Roads and bridges
3. Security, like the police and military
4. Health care
5. Water and sanitation
6. Rural electrification etc.
MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION?

If you were given a million dollars to spend in your constituency, what would be the top three priorities you would spend this money on?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1</th>
<th>Priority 2</th>
<th>Priority 3</th>
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<tbody>
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1. Education
2. Roads and bridges
3. Security, like the police and military
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## What do the Honorable Members think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1=True</th>
<th>2=False</th>
<th>3=Do not Know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of input subsidies will result in food insecurity</td>
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<td>Removal of input and output subsidies will increase poverty</td>
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<td>Removal of maize subsidy will push the price of mealie meal up</td>
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<td>Elections are won and lost based on how government handles maize production; maize marketing and the price of mealie meal</td>
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Zambia Agricultural Sector & Policies
THE CHALLENGE?

Er...
Agricultural policies and programs in Zambia are often inadequately informed by research-based evidence due to:

- political expediency
- lack of transparency
- rent seeking behaviour by a privileged few.
- information gaps,
OVERBURDENED & UNBALANCED

Government Treasury
Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

- We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.
- Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different
- Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.
HOW TO DEAL WITH ISSUES IN AGRICULTURE?

1. Diagnosis
2. Evidence
3. Prescription
4. Monitor
5. Evaluate
Why is Evidence Important in Policy-Making?
**WHY EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY-MAKING?**

- Poverty
- Malnutrition
- Food Insecurity
- Climate change
- Unemployment
- Population growth
- Etc.

A dynamic economic environment and scarce resources

Quality of policies depends on the evidence on what works and what doesn’t.
AVAILABILITY OF DATA

Limited use of an Enormous Amount of Data for Evidence Generation

- Costly datasets are used for basic descriptive analysis
- Generating more evidence from these could help decision making.

Capacity Issues?

- Crop Forecast Surveys
- Post Harvest Surveys
- Living conditions Monitoring Surveys
- Rural Agricultural Livelihood Surveys,
- Demographic Health Surveys, etc.
HOW CAN WE CHANGE THE STATUS QUO?

Government, Policy Makers or Technical staff

Researchers
HOW CAN WE CHANGE THE STATUS QUO?

Government policy makers or Technical staff

Researchers

Evidence

Policy

Evidence

Evidence

Evidence

Evidence
ENHANCING EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY

- Continuous dialogue between senior decision-makers, government technical staff and researchers.
ENHANCING EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY

- Capacity training of key policy makers and their support staff
A long term solution

• instill a culture of inquiry in the population through our education system.
TEAM
Together
everyone
achieves
more
“Evidence-based policy helps people make well-informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation. (Davies, P.T., 1999)
Tomorrow Belongs to People Who Prepare for it Today -- African Proverb