The Importance of Evidence Based Policy Making Process

by

Chance Kabaghe, Mr.

Presentation to the Parliamentary Committee on Economic Affairs, Energy and Labour, Chaminuka Lodge, Lusaka

January 26, 2016
About IAPRI
History of IAPRI

- IAPRI was incorporated on 5 October 2011 under the Companies Act of Laws of Zambia as a **private company limited by guarantee** with a local Board of Directors.

- Indigenous Agricultural Policy Think-tank

- Serves both Public and Private Sector
  - Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock as the main collaborator and client
Vision and mission

- **Vision**: To be the Centre of Excellence for Agricultural Policy Research and Outreach in Zambia

- **Mission**: IAPRI exists to carry out agricultural policy research and outreach, serving the agricultural sector in Zambia so as to contribute to sustainable pro-poor agricultural development.
Governance Structures

- **Registration**: Companies Act Cap 388 as a company Limited by Guarantee-incorporated on 5th October 2011, Registration # 96001

- **Promoters/Guarantors**: two independent esteemed individuals

- **Members/Subscribers**:  
  - Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry; Ministry of Finance; Central Statistical Office  
  - University of Zambia, Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources; INESOR; Zambia National Farmers Union, Agriculture Consultative Forum; Women in Agriculture, Millers Association of Zambia, Grain Traders Association of Zambia, Programme against Malnutrition

- **Board of Directors**:  
  - Drawn from both public and private sector (11 members)  
  - Guided by Articles of Association & Board Charter
Structure and organization

- IAPRI Board
- Executive Director
  - Director of Research
    - Research Fellows x4
    - Research Associates x8
    - Research Assistants x4
  - IT & Data Manager
    - Data Associate
  - Director of Outreach
    - M&E Officer
    - Librarian
  - Director of Finance & Administration
    - Business Development Manager
      - Accountant
      - Assistant Accountant
      - Office Assistant
    - Administrative Officer
      - Office Manager
      - Drivers x2
    - Gardeners x2
Research Agenda

- **Research Themes**
  - Market Trade and Development
  - Public Policy & Spending
  - Natural Resources management & Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
  - Productivity & Poverty Reduction
  - Agriculture, Food and Nutrition
  - Emerging issues

- **Outreach**
  - Infographics, Documentaries
  - Provincial Outreach, Meetings with political parties, House of Chiefs, Parliamentarians,

- **Capacity Building**
  - Graduate Research Scholarship Programme
Why Does Zambia Need Evidence-Based Policy-Making Process
• Development outcomes depend on the quality of policies adopted.
• Quality of policies depends on the evidence on what works and what doesn’t.

• In Zambia sound agricultural policies based on evidence will be required to address problems.
Limited Use of Evidence in Policy-making:
Some Examples
Implementation of Costly and Ineffective Government Programs Ignoring Evidence

- Budget allocations for FISP and FRA are at the expense of long term growth. The benefits from the two programmes are minimal.
  - FRA price support does not benefit the majority of the poor households.
  - The FRA policy raises the cost of maize to most households who are net buyers of maize.
  - Private traders do not operate profitably in remote areas because of the FRA policy.
  - Substantially high budget allocations to the two programmes is at the expense of long term growth.
  - The traditional FISP ignores the need for crop diversification to tackle production shocks, soil acidity, and malnutrition -
Most smallholder farmers are land constrained, yet commercialization is being pushed without taking this into account.
- Only 54% of land is available for agriculture, contrary to government’s estimate of 94% (game reserves, forestry, lakes, rivers, swamps etc).

Past recommendations for government to work with local authorities in giving preferential treatment to land constrained households have been ignored.
Factors Affecting Evidence Based Policy-making

- Limited capacity of parliamentary librarians
- Self Interest by Individuals and groups with political connections at the top-level
- Political Influence
- Timeliness of evidence timely and its relevance
- Failure to utilize existing data to generate evidence beyond descriptives.
- Ineffective communications strategies
- Personal attributes, judgements, and experience of decision makers
- Culture of inquiry in the population
Suggestions of Improving Situation

- Continuous dialogue between senior decision-makers and researchers.
- Communicate research effectively to decision makers and their junior staff.
- Include senior decision-makers from policy making institutions in the early stages of research designs to ensure early buy-ins.
Suggestions of Improving Situation

- Understand analytical abilities of senior decision makers and their junior staff.
- Increase the speed with which evidence is generated.
- Increase transparency and accountability in public sector staff.
- A long term solution is to instill a culture of inquiry in the population through education.
Discussion Questions?

Question 1
• Are decision-makers aware of the existing evidence?

Question 2
• Why are decision-makers not using available evidence?

Question 3
• How relevant is the evidence to decision-makers?

Question 4
How can we change the situation
Thank You