

Uganda Evidence Ecosystem Map

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SECTION ONE

This map presents the map of Evidence Ecosystem for Uganda, a country commonly referred to as '*the Pearl of Africa*', located in East Africa.

The main role players in the Evidence Ecosystem

The main role players in the evidence ecosystem are:

- The **commissioners** of researches/evaluations such as the Government Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs), projects, the civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private for profit organisations.
- The **producers (researchers/evaluators)** who are usually consultancy firms, academic institutions as well as freelance individual consultants. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) is mandated to develop and maintain an integrated, coherent and reliable National Statistical System (NSS). UBOS takes lead in producing and disseminating national statistical information, and coordinating, monitoring and supervising the NSS.
- The **users** of the researches/evaluation often comprise of the commissioners of evaluations; the funding agencies, the policy makers, particularly parliamentarians; students, the media as well as the general public.

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) coordinates all monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities in Uganda at national level. The Uganda Evaluation Association (UEA) is the lead professional association bringing together commissioners and users of evaluations. UEA has developed evaluation standards and a strategic plan towards improving the quality of evaluations in Uganda.

Gaps in Uganda Evidence Ecosystem

The gaps in the evidence ecosystem include:

- *Weak coordination of country level efforts*; there is lack of a one – stop center to serve as a repository for all researches conducted in Uganda. As a result, there are lots of overlaps and duplication of efforts which limits efficiency.
- *Limited public/private sector partnerships in producing evidence*; the public sector is usually the commissioner whereas the private sector is the contracted producer. Rarely do the two produce and utilise evidence.
- *Weak regulation of evaluations*: Although evaluators are supposed to obtain approvals from the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and the National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST); there are a number of evaluators that do not go through these approval processes.
- *Limited practice and appreciation of data use*: the importance of evidence based decision-making is not well appreciated at all levels, such as implementation, local government and national level. Once the senior leadership at any level does not appreciate the importance of data, and how they can use it as an institution; limited attention is paid to data quality assurance as well as data analysis and use. Collecting and analysing information has for long been seen as a 'donor requirement' and is often done as an obligation. However, with improved M&E skills, the appreciation of data is steadily improving though not yet at the desired level.
- *Poorly constructed terms of reference and evaluation questions*: the evaluation commissioners often do not fully comprehend what they want from evaluations and hence they formulate either ambiguous or inadequate evaluation questions; hence findings may not be very useful for improving programs. The research producers in Uganda are usually skilled, highly educated professionals; whereas the users are

usually less knowledgeable in areas of research, M&E and data use; though they may be technical in other subjects.

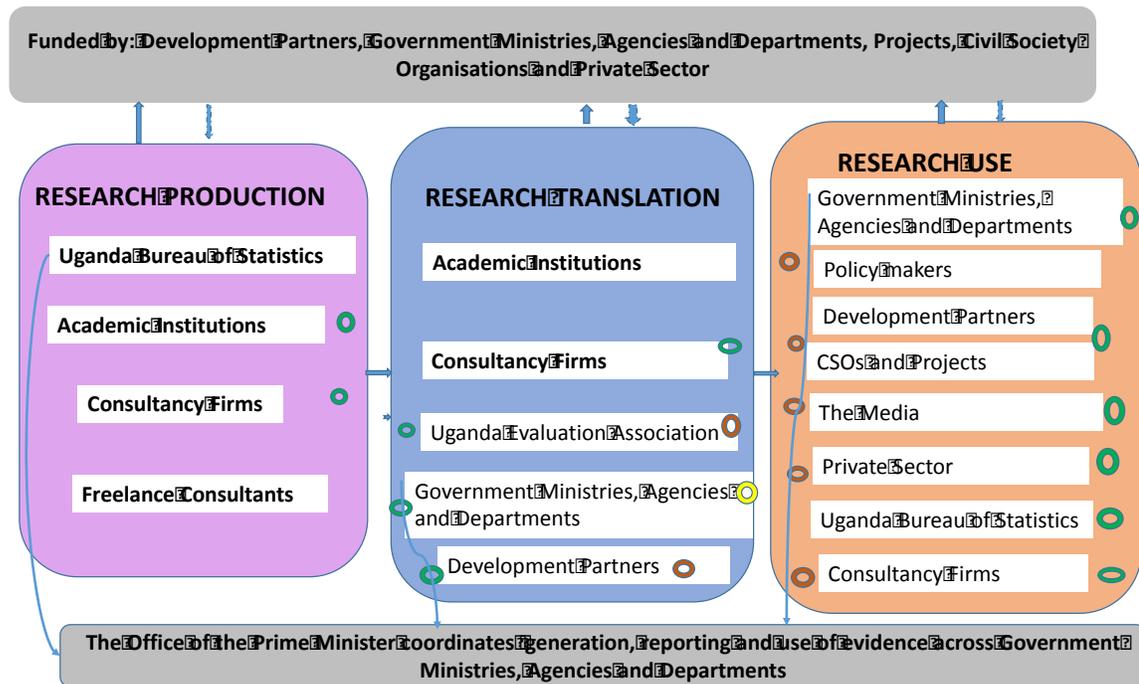
Bottlenecks or Organisational Silos that Impede the Flow of Evidence Through the System

- The public sector and private sector often operate in silos with limited partnerships for evidence generations and sharing, except where the private sector is contracted to conduct the assignment for the public sector.
- In the health sector, although there have been improvements over recent years, a number of private health facilities do not submit data into the Health Information Management System (HMIS). This implies that at national level, there is no complete picture of aggregate data from both public and private sector.

Characteristics of the Relationship Between Research Producers and Users

The relationship between research producers and users in Uganda is characterised by distinct groups of 'implementers of research' and 'funders of research'. There is mainly a contractual obligation to produce data and limited involvement or extension of mandate for research producers to facilitate data use.

SECTION TWO



Key

Green bubble: engagement in capacity-building

Yellow bubble: network or a community of practice

Orange bubble: support of data use

SECTION THREE

Conclusions

The evidence ecosystem in Uganda would benefit from support aimed at strengthening the functioning of an *integrated* evaluation management repository that tracks *real-time evaluations/researches* and can be easily accessible by key stakeholders to avoid duplication of efforts and scale up data use. Support for more creative products for data dissemination and use would also greatly enhance data use. These should be tailored to key stakeholders at different levels such as service delivery, local government as well as central government. This map relates to the three themes of the Evidence 2018 conference: Engage, Understand, Impact; it depicts how various key stakeholders are engaged in evidence generation, interpretation and making it more usable for greater impact.

The role of Uganda Evaluation Association (UEA) is establishing evaluation standards and strengthening capacity for evaluation practitioners, particularly through monthly evaluation talks is a good practice that can be emulated by other countries. UEA brings together commissioners and users of evaluations and works closely with OPM which coordinates all government M&E activities.

Uganda evidence ecosystem can be best described metaphor evidence; *complex, fragmented and rapidly growing*.