The use of evidence in African legislatures: The role of Parliamentary Networks

Case study: African Parliamentarians’ Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE)

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Structure

- Evaluation: Basic definition
- Supply and Demand
- Parliament-Government Architecture
- Role of Evidence in Parliaments
- Role of Parliamentarians
- Parliamentary Networks
- APNODE
- Theory of Change
- Institutionalization of Evaluation Successes
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
Evaluation

“The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability ” (OECD Development Assistance Committee (2002)).
Supply and Demand

“What happens when you have low demand and high supply of evaluation”? (Robert Picciotto, 2009)
Supply and Demand

Suppliers of evaluation
- Evaluation Community
  - Universities
  - Think Tanks
  - Evaluation Associations
  and Networks
  - Consultants

Demanders of evaluation
Principal and Government agents
Principals:
  - Executive
  - Legislatures
  - CSO's
  - DP
Govt:
  - Central Govt. and Ministries etc.
Private Sector
International Financial Institutions
Demand

Demand for Evaluation: arises when decision makers want to use evidence to assist them in making decisions an *actual*, *latent* or *potential* demand arises.

Actual : Active request !

Latent: if the decision maker is not aware that evaluation can be a source of evidence

Potential : if there is an awareness but resources to fund the evaluation are lacking
Supply

Supply of Evaluation: putting in place people who are trained, to collect, capture and verify data.

- Supply is based on the existence of frameworks, institutions and resources for evaluation.
National Governance Architecture

“Good governance is the positive exercise of authority. It is characterized by citizen transformation and participation in governance, control of corruption, political stability, and respect for the rule of law, government effectiveness, regulatory quality and effective knowledge management.”
Role of Evidence in Parliament

- Evidence is a crucial element for the successful delivery and implementation of a parliament’s core function:
  - Oversight
    - Budget review, discussion & approval
  - Legislation
  - Representation
The Parliamentarian

The Role
Each parliamentarian elected fulfil 3 key roles:

– Lawmakers
– Conductors of oversight, including budgeting and appropriation
– Representatives of citizens

The Challenges

• Inadequate staffing & skills in research & data use...
• Lack of supportive infrastructure
• Evidence is not readily available to MPs
• Difficulties with getting data/information from gov’t agencies
• Low interest in use of evidence among MPs? Politics & interests

“MPs can not effectively exercise their oversight role without credible evidence” Speaker of Parliament - Malawi
Parliamentary Network

- Term used in the parliamentary community to describe what, other fields, are called Communities of Practice (CoP) or learning Networks.
- Formal associations, independent, non-governmental organizations of parliamentary institutions and/or parliamentarians.
- Characterized by a set of relationships, personal interactions and connections between members.
- Provide a platform to Parliamentarians with a specific objective in mind.

*Engaged in bridging the gap between evaluators who provide evidence and parliamentarians, encouraging parliaments and parliamentarians to institutionalize evaluation, by empowering them to warrant evaluation that responds to their demands*” (Nagnouma Kone, 2018).
Common Design Features

There are similar qualities/ architectural features that can be grouped around the following attributes:

- Size (number of members)
- Purpose/ objective/ mission
- Degree of formality (informal <→ formal)
- Secretariat
- Annual General Meetings
- Leadership (the degree of sustained leadership by members, e.g., Executive Committee members)
- Self organized vs. Sponsored
Parliamentary Networks

- Capacity building initiatives (Training, workshops, e-learning, conferences)
- Facilitate evidence dissemination (Peer-peer learning)
- Develop evidence informed behaviour (Institutionalization of Evaluation)
- Enhance reciprocal learning
- Awareness raising & engagement
- Legitimacy overtime = more network influence
- Increased evidence use
APNODE

Background
APNODE was launched in March 2014 at the 7th African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Vision
To promote development effectiveness and inclusive growth in the African continent through an effective use of development evaluation by policy and decision makers.

Mission
To promote development evaluation as a pillar of parliamentary oversight and policy making.

Geographical focus
All African countries where parliamentarians demonstrate interest in APNODE's work

Stakeholders
• Parliamentarians
• Parliaments
• Parliamentary Secretariats
• CSO’s and PMG
• Development partners
• Executive
• Universities and research institutes
• VOPEs and members Eval-Community

Principals and values
• Evaluation in national decision-making,
• Diversity and the varying needs of different political contexts,
• Sensitivity to gender and the rights of minorities,
• Evaluation capacity as part of personal capacity,
• Institutionalising evaluation
APNODE Theory of Change

Greater African Development Effectiveness and Inclusive Growth

- Stronger and more accountable democratic systems
- Executive using evidence in national policy and decision making

Parliaments making greater use of evaluations for oversight

Strengthened national evaluation systems

VOPEs
- Evaluators

Supplies

Parliaments
- Conducting Oversight

Lawmakers

Representatives (and advocates)

DEMAND

Advocacy

Knowledge Sharing

Capacity Building (HEI's STPs)

APNODE - supporting and empowering Parliamentarians

THROUGH

CSOs

Constituent's

Citizen's
Achievements

- More than 100 parliamentarians trained in evaluation since 2017
- 3 AGMs held, 2015 (Cote d’Ivoire), 2016 (Zimbabwe), 2017 (Sudan)
- Democratic election of Executive Committee Members; Constitution, Membership policy and Travel Policy
- Growing membership from 7 - 19 African countries.
- 11 National chapters established
- Validation of the 5 year APNODE strategic and action plan(s)-structure, with costed Work-Plan and Communication Strategy
- Growing interest from parliaments as institutions e.g. Zimbabwe, Sudan and Benin, moving beyond individual membership (fosters sustainability).
- Growing interaction from development partners and regional bodies e.g. UEMOA, COMESA, GPFE, SADC Parliamentary forum
- Strong partnerships established AfDB, CLEAR-AA, UN-Women, UNICEF, the African Evaluation Association (AfREA) and EvalPartners;
Challenges

• Resource Mobilization
• Most parliaments do not fund M&E trainings
• Few donors fund multi-country Networks
• Low interest in Evaluation at the continental level
• Slow progress to recognized the value of Network in parliaments and by parliamentarians
• Institutional memory affected by elections-lack of champions
• Unconducive environment for evaluation
• Difficulty to keep parliamentarians engaged and motivated
Institutionalization of Evaluation
Successes

• Increased awareness on evidence use through regular exchange (south-south cooperation APNODE-GPFE).
• Togo national chapter has been instrumental in using M&E reports for the state budget thanks to the local APNODE Chapter.
• Côte d’Ivoire chapter was instrumental in ensuring that evaluation is included in the constitution.
• Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Benin, Ghana- parliamentarians have obtained context driven trainings enhancing capacity in M&E.
• APNODE constantly recognized as the only PAN-African Parliamentarian Network focused in institutionalizing Evaluation in Parliaments and by Parliamentarians
Conclusion

• National Govt. and regional institutions need to own the Evaluation Process
• Need for increase for/ in demand for Evaluation
• Buy in from Leaders and not just individual parliamentarians
• Donors to acknowledge relevance of Parliamentarian Networks
“APNODE’s experience shows that development evaluation and ECD support must address both the supply (evaluators) and demand (users) side of evaluation, and that as users of evaluation, parliaments and parliamentarians have an interest in development evaluations, although challenges such as lack financial, institutional and human capacity exists, opportunities offered by Parliamentary networks need to be profited upon. “
References

References

- Khumalo, L. (2017). The role of networks in strengthening use of M&E evidence for effective legislative oversight and decision making.