



Interim Synopsis of the DRUSSA Education Policy Symposium – Uganda

Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sport Policy Symposium – Monday, 16 March 2015 – “Enhancing the Quality of Higher Education in Uganda through Research Uptake”

DRUSSA has entered the fourth year of its five-year programme and has seen significant achievements during this period. The last three years have given the DRUSSA programme an array of insights into the challenges of institutionalising research uptake within the 22 African universities. Last year, the programme began a series of ‘demand-side’ activities in Uganda and Ghana that address emerging themes and gaps. This has included developing a series of symposia to bring senior academics and policy makers together to break down some of the real and perceived barriers between each constituency. The symposia encourage greater confidence among the policy community in valuing the quality, relevance, and potential of research undertaken within each country’s universities. Additionally, this interaction supports members of the academic community to better understand the policy directions and questions that the ministries are focusing on, enabling them to direct their research and set research questions that, where appropriate, can directly support policy agendas.

In addition to and in parallel with these symposia, the DRUSSA programme has convened a specific dialogue around higher education policy and mechanisms that can stimulate the supply of development focused research and the wider adoption of research uptake practice within the higher education sector. This dialogue involves university Vice-Chancellors and academics, senior policy makers involved in shaping both higher education policy and science and innovation policy, and those responsible for setting national research priorities and allocating public research funding.

The first of such symposia was convened in Ghana in February 2015 with DRUSSA partner Council for Scientific and Industrial Research – Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (CSIR-STEPRI), the Ministry of Education, and the National Council on Tertiary Education (NCTE). Tentative plans for further symposia include Rwanda, Mauritius, and Kenya for the end of 2015 and early 2016. The second of these symposia took place on 16 March 2015 in Kampala, Uganda in coordination with DRUSSA partner Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) and in partnership

with the Uganda Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MESTS). The symposium focused on higher education research uptake in policy and practice and featured paper presentations and discussions on the quality of education in Uganda and enhancing the use of research evidence in higher education policy. Forty-eight higher education university Vice-Chancellors, academics and policy makers involved in shaping higher education policy (including those from MESTS) were brought together, along with additional key stakeholders in higher education in Uganda (Appendix 1). The purpose of the following overview is to act in tandem and in dialogue with the official symposium report produced by UNCST and is by no means meant to be an exhaustive account of the day's activities.

Outcomes

The higher education policy symposia in Uganda had the following aims:

- Encourage understanding of the challenges faced in the supply and uptake of development-focused research;
- Stimulate the supply of development focused research and the wider adoption of research uptake practice within the higher education sector;
- Engage senior officials in discussions around the challenges encountered in utilising research evidence;
- Encourage senior officials to demand greater use of evidence by their staff;
- Produce a set of recommendations to take forward by MESTS.

The following demonstrates that the above aims have been met or are in the process of moving forward.

Strengths

- Well-thought out programme (Appendix 2);
- High quality presentations and discussion;
 - 'Quality of Education in Uganda' by Dr Vincent Ssembatya, Director, Quality Assurance, Makerere University (Appendix 3) set the context for education in Uganda, followed by:
 - 'Enhancing the Use of Research Evidence in Higher Education Policy-making in Uganda: Concrete Proposals and Recommendations' by Dr Kedrace Turyagenda, Commissioner, Directorate of Education Standards, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports which picked up on themes in the morning presentation and addressed them to higher education, offering recommendations (Appendix 4).
- Good representation from Ministry and HE policymaking stakeholders (Appendix 1);
- Robust and informed responses to papers and lively discussion between participants;
- Enthusiasm from stakeholders and participants for follow-up activities (Appendix 5);
- Afternoon chair Prof Pamela Mbabazi session kept conversation on track and focused;
- Afternoon paper presentation by Dr Kedrace Turyagenda of the Ministry of Education was an essential contribution to the proceedings and ensuing discussion (Appendix 4);
- Good gender representation in presenters/chair;
- Attendance was high and diverse stakeholders were represented (Appendix 1).

Weaknesses

- Morning session relied heavily on protocol and ran overtime;
- Morning paper presentation focused heavily on primary education rather than HE;
- Gender of participants was heavily male;
- Number of returned evaluations were not representative of number of attendees;
- There was some confusion and dissent from participants about the last session, 'The Way Forward' by Kevin Balaba, the Assistant Commissioner for Budgeting on behalf of Arnold Dhatemwa, the Commissioner for Education Planning and Policy Analysis in MESTS. It was not evident to the participants that the Ministry had received a prior copy of Dr Turyagyenda's paper ahead of time and had chosen recommendations to take forward as a result. Many participants were under the impression that they would be discussing and voting on the key recommendations to take forward, rather than the Ministry deciding this;
- Morning discussants were both from Makerere University.

Opportunities

- Capitalise on the set of recommendations coming out of the symposium by arranging further meetings with Ministry of Education officials, particularly as there appears to be some level of buy-in from the Ministry of Education and a valuable supporter in Dr Turyagyenda;
- Discuss potential synergies with Ghana Higher Education Symposium activities;
- Potential for WP2 and WP5 collaboration in Uganda, especially to carry forward the recommendations made as a result of the symposium. These could be carried forward through policy fellows, short courses, or other parts of the programme;
- There is no shortage of topics for additional education symposia in Uganda that could act as a continuation on themes from this symposium;
- Dr Kedrace Turyagyenda is a useful ally for the DRUSSA programme and will be speaking at the ACU SARIMA conference in Johannesburg on 12 May on building partnerships for research uptake and knowledge transfer. This could be a useful opportunity for her to speak about taking some of the recommendations forward.
- While 100% return on evaluations is difficult, to ensure that as many participants as possible complete evaluation forms for future symposia, the pre-questionnaire could be included in the participant pack and five minutes taken at the beginning of the morning session for all participants to complete the evaluation and then collected by staff. A similar format could be followed just before the closing session for handing out and completing the post-questionnaires.

Threats:

- Continued poor quality and lack of access to higher education research for both academics and policy makers.
- Carrying the momentum forward despite competing activities to follow through with Dr Turyagyenda's and the MESTS' recommendations (Appendices 4 and 5, respectively).

Appendix 1 – List of Participants

#	NAMES	INSTITUTION	E-MAIL
1	Dr. Annabella Habinka	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	annabinka@must.ac.ug
2	Dr. Ruth Mbabazi	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology	r.mbabazi@uncst.go.ug
3	Dr. M.A. Sahag	Cavendish University	mumtaz_sohag@hotmail.com
4	Prof. Samson James Opolot	Ibanda University	sopolot2002@yahoo.com
5	Dr. Munyambonera Ezra Frank	Economic Policy Research Centre	emunyambonera@eprc.or.ug
6	Mr. Minze Richard	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports	mirize.richard9@gmail.com
7	Mr. Mubaraka Nsamba	Makerere University	mnsamba@caes.mak.ac.ug
8	Dr. Hannah Halder	Association of Commonwealth Universities	Hannah.halder@acu.ac.uk
9	Prof. Babugura Allen	Kabale University	ababugura@kab.ac.ug
10	Ms. Esther Nakkazi	Scidev.Net	
11	Prof. Peter Kanyandago	Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi	pkanyandago@gmail.com
12	Prof. Robert Byamukama	Nkumba University	rbyamukama@nkumbaunv.ac.ug ; Kbyamukama@yahoo.com
13	Prof. V.A. Ochwoh	Busitema University	pkanyandago@gmail.com
14	Prof. Pamela Mbabazi	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	dvc1@must.ac.ug
15	Dr. Karrine Sanders	Association of Commonwealth Universities	karrine.sanders@acu.ac.uk
16	Dr. Ismail Barugahara	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology	i.barugahara@uncst.go.ug
17	Prof. Eriabu Lugujo	Ndejje University	vc@ndejeuniversity.ac.ug
18	Dr. Kedrace Turyagenda	Ministry of Education and Sports	tkedrace@yahoo.com

19	Prof. John Opuda Asibo	National Council for Higher Education	ed@unche.or.ug
20	Mr. R.S. Baale	National Council for Higher Education	rsbaale@yahoo.co.uk
21	Hon. Oleru Huda	Parliament of Uganda	holeru@parliament.go.ug
22	Mr. Edward Kyambadde	Cavendish University	edward@cavendish.ac.ug
23	Prof. Joseph Oonyu	Makerere University	joonyu@dosate.mak.ac.ug
24	Ms. Proscovia Nalumansi	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology	p.nalumansi@uncst.go.ug
25	Dr. Vincent Ssembatya	Makerere University	vas@qad.mak.ac.ug
26	Mr. Joseph Kinene	Makerere University	jkinene@gmail.com
27	Mr. Augustine Omare Okurut	Uganda National Commission for UNESCO	aomare@unesco-uganda.ug
28	Mr. Collins Mwesigwa	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology	c.mwesigwa@uncst.go.ug
29	Mr. Bin Nkeeto	Cavendish University	
30	Prof. G.W. Byarugaba-Bazirake	Kyambogo University	gwbazirake@gmail.com
31	Prof. J. Mulira	Cavendish University	
32	Prof. Mukadasi Buyinza	Makerere University	
33	Mr. Enock Duhimbaze	Uganda Broadcasting Council	duhimbazeenock@gmail.com
34	Ms. Susan Mbabazi	Makerere University	smbabazi@rgt.mak.ac.ug
35	Ms. Suzan Nawonga	Star TV	nawongasuzan@gmail.com
36	Ziritusa Mudde	UBC	ziritusamudde@yahoo.de
37	Ms. Ester Zansanze	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology	e.zansanze@uncst.go.ug
38	Dr. Saverio Pido	UNEB	saveriopido@yahoo.co.uk

39	Dr. Simon Anguma	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	sanguma@must.ac.ug
40	Prof. Peter Ubomba-Jaswa	Uganda Christian University	pubombajaswa@ucu.ac.ug
41	Ms. Lyndah F. Lwoyja	Ministry of Education and Sports	flynniw@gmail.com
42	Mrs. Elizabeth Gabona	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports	
43	Ketts Mabonga	Voice of Africa FM	
44	Ms. Faridah Nakabanda	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology	f.nakabanda@uncst.go.ug
45	Mr. Eddie Ssejjoba	New Vision	
46	Dr. C. Dranzoa	Muni University	
47	Mr. Kevin Balaba	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports	
48	Mr. R.S. Baale	National Curriculum Development Centre	rsbaale@yahho.co.uk

Appendix 2 – Programme

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION/PERSON
SESSION 1: OPENING: Chair: John Opuda-Asibo (Prof), Executive Director, National Council for Higher Education		
8.45-9.00 a.m.	Arrival and Registration of Participants	UNCST Secretariat
9.00-9.10 a.m.	Introduction of Participants	Tour-de-table
9.10-9.20 a.m.	Welcome Remarks	Peter Ndemere (Dr), Executive Secretary, UNCST
9.20-9.30 a.m.	Welcome Remarks	Karrine Sanders (Dr), Programme Manager, Association of Commonwealth Universities, United Kingdom
9.30-9.45 a.m.	Opening Statement	Rose Nassali Lukwago (Dr), Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES)
9.45-10.00 a.m.	Tea/Coffee Break	UNCST Secretariat
SESSION 2: PRESENTATIONS: Chair: Pamela Mbabazi (Prof), Deputy Vice Chancellor, Mbarara University of Science and Technology		
10.00-10.15 a.m.	Introduction to DRUSSA Project	Hannah Halder (Dr), DRUSSA Project Coordinator, Association of Commonwealth Universities, United Kingdom
10.15-11.00 a.m.	Quality of Education in Uganda	Vincent Ssembatya (Dr), Director, Quality Assurance, Makerere University
11.00-11.15 a.m.	Discussant 1	Joseph Oonyu (Prof), School of Education, Makerere University
11.15 – 11.30 a.m.	Discussant 2	David Rider Smith (Dr), Regional M&E Advisor, DFID-UK
11.30-1.00 p.m.	Plenary Discussion	Participants
1.00- 2.00 p.m.	Lunch Break	UNCST Secretariat
2.00-2.45 p.m.	Enhancing the Use of Research Evidence in Higher Education Policy-making in Uganda: Concrete Proposals and Recommendations	Kedrace Turyagenda (Dr), Commissioner, Directorate of Education Standards, Ministry of Education and Sports

2.45-3.00 p.m.	Discussant 1	Eriabu Lugujo (Prof), Vice Chancellor, Ndejje University
3.00- 3.15 p.m.	Discussant 2	Elizabeth Gabona (Mrs), Director, Higher, Technical, Vocational Education and Training, MOES
3.15- 4.00 p.m.	Plenary Discussion	Participants
SESSION 3: CLOSING: Chair: Allen Babugura (Prof), Deputy Vice Chancellor, Kabale University		
4.00- 4.15 p.m.	The Way Forward	Arnold Dhatemwa (Mr), Commissioner, Education Policy and Planning, MOES
4.15- 4.20 p.m.	Vote of thanks	Participants
4.20- 4.30 p.m.	Closing Remarks	Executive Secretary, UNCST

Appendix 3

'Quality of Education in Uganda' by Vincent A. Ssembatya (PhD), Directorate of Quality Assurance, Makerere University

Extended Abstract

Education is one of the fundamental factors of development¹. No country can achieve sustainable economic development without investing substantially in education. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and the world. In addition to improving the quality of lives of individuals, education leads to broad social benefits to society. Education raises people's productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances.

Education is one of the major sectors in the Ugandan Economy. The Education sector was allocated Uganda shillings 1,801 Billion (13% of the budget) and Uganda Shillings 1699.4 Billion (11% of the budget) respectively in Financial Years 2013/14 and 2014/15. The sector has three major segments of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education.

According to the Education for All (EFA) Global monitoring Report (2013/14) (UNESCO: 2014), Uganda has made significant progress in providing access to Universal Primary Education (UPE) which is one of the five EFA goals. Uganda has achieved gender parity (100%) at Primary and Secondary levels of Education (Goal number 5). The country however has not attained the target in the following areas: Pre-primary Education (target of GRE of 80%); Lower Secondary Education (target of GRE 97%); Adult literacy (target of 97%).

This paper contextualizes the Quality issues that form binding constraints to the attainment of EFA goals for Uganda. A perspective is generated based on data available in Uganda Statistical Abstracts and strategies/policy directions are proposed for scaling Quality performance in Education in the country.

Education for All Goals: By 2015

The Education for All framework was established in Dakar Senegal in April 2000. In this forum, the participants reaffirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015. UNESCO was entrusted with the overall responsibility of coordinating all international players and sustaining the global momentum. Eleven Global Monitoring Reports have been made by UNESCO with the most recent published in 2014.

The following goals were set in EFA forum:

- **Goal 1:** Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- **Goal 2:** Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

¹ Ilhan Ozturk: The role of Education in Economic Development: a theoretical perspective <https://ideas.repec.org/p/pramprapa/9023.html>

- **Goal 3:** Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
- **Goal 4:** Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- **Goal 5:** Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- **Goal 6:** Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Key Quality Binding Constraints

The 2014 EFA Global Monitoring Report points out that the EFA goals will not be met by the target date. Worldwide 57 Million pupils are still out school and a good proportion of those in school are not learning the basics.

A lot of these issues resonate locally in various ways. The most prominent constraint in achieving EFA goals in the case of Uganda is the shortfall in appropriation of funds to the Education Sector. The current level of 11% of the Government Budget, besides being a prominent decrement by 3 percentage points from the previous budget, falls short by a very wide margin of 9%, of the world benchmark of 20%; the current world average is 15%. In addition, expenditure on Education as a percentage of GDP dwindles around 3% against an EFA commitment of at least 6%. Kenya and Tanzania have spent close to the benchmark.

Consequences of the shortfall in the appropriation of funds to the sector include the following:

1. A proportion of Children out of School;
2. Low survival rates (up to the last grade of UPE);
3. Primary School Age Children are not learning the basics;
4. Inadequate support to teachers: An Education System is only as good as its teachers; Education Quality improves when teachers are supported and vice versa;
5. Inadequate numbers of teachers leading to high pupil to teacher ratio: The country average is 49:1 (world benchmark of 40:1). (Governments worldwide need to recruit an additional 1.6 Million teachers to achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015);
6. Insufficient Data;
7. Inadequate attention to pre-primary education;

How successful has Uganda been in achieving education targets (Research by UCRNN – Uganda Child Rights NGO Network ucrnn.net)

Despite well stipulated and well intentioned pledges that the Ugandan government has made, education and most especially quality and access to free and compulsory education in Uganda still has its daunting challenges.

While there has been a marked increase in the number of government sponsored primary and secondary schools over the last few years, the number of school going age children enrolling for the program rapidly increasing every year, Education Sector in the country is still being marred by the following challenges that should be addressed urgently:- Dropout rates remain high (especially among girls) According to a recent report by UNESCO, only 53 percent of Ugandan children complete Primary School. Government's failure to resolve the school lunch problem means that afternoon attendance and concentration remain substantially lower than in the morning. Teacher attendance still remains a challenge in many UPE and USE Schools in relation to the teacher to pupil ratio which is not a rosy sight to behold.

Access to Early Childhood Development programme in Uganda is still very low with most of the registered Pre-Primary Schools being privately owned and located in urban centers. Only about 2.6% of Primary entrants attend some form of organized Early Childhood Development Programme (UCRNN: Status and Well being of Children in Uganda 2012). Essential to say is the inequality that exists between urban schools and rural schools mainly brought about by quality of infrastructures and man power in urban areas compared to their counterparts. News about the best schools and pupil's usually fills the TV and radio waves of both national and local stations with newspaper headlines awash with pictures and names of pupils with their schools in the papers. It is always apparent that we see and read statements like; "Urban schools beat rural schools; Northern and Eastern schools, the worst performers in this year's Examination.

Have we ever wondered why a child in Agago, Kween and Amudat Districts does not even come close to any of the above grades? Are they considered failures? How do they compete with the Kampala and the urban children who have had their foundations grounded in early childhood development and in well-furnished private schools? One thing the government probably needed to have taken into consideration from the onset of the UPE and USE was to include quality of education for all Ugandan children to coin a phrase like; "A compulsory, free and quality education for all Ugandan Children."

In light of all the above, the Government of Uganda in a bid to improve quality in UPE schools, should invest more in improving the quality of learning by building more classrooms, training more teachers and providing teaching materials and more importantly, subsidizing lunch in these schools, which will be a great feat in reducing dropout rates and scaling up retention of children in school. Just as we draw nearer to the commemoration of the National Day of the African Child on the 16th of June 2014 with the theme: A Child Friendly, Quality, Free and Compulsory Education for all Children in Uganda," It is imperative that the government of Uganda starts to juggle around with a strategy to improve the compulsory and free education by deliberately including quality to it and access to it.

Appendix 4

'Enhancing the use of Research Evidence in Higher Education Policy-making in Uganda' by Dr Kedrace Turyagyenda, Commissioner, Directorate of Education Standards, MESTS

Outline of Presentation

Preamble

- Research evidence
- Uses of research
- Policy making
- Relationship between policy making and research evidence
- The role of Universities
- Situational Analysis
- Recommendations

Preamble

- Democratic societies make decisions and policy based on many inputs, including fiscal considerations, societal values, prevailing public views, and the ideals and vision of the government of the day.
- Good decisions use high quality information and evidence, both in developing new policies and in evaluating current policies.
- Public good is undoubtedly advanced by knowledge-informed policy formation, implementation evaluation.
- Decisions made in the absence of such informed background material are, by definition, less likely to be effective or efficient
- It must also be acknowledged that many decisions that governments and MDA have to make are developed in an environment of limited available information or where the use of science is unable to resolve competing policy options.
- The challenge is how to do better in two related domains:
- The generation and application of knowledge to inform policy making, and
- The use of scientific approaches to the monitoring and evaluation of policy initiatives.
- It is envisaged that such unbiased information and evidence can be got from research.

Research Evidence

Research is defined as:

- Any gathering of data, information and facts for the advancement of knowledge (Shuttleworth, 2008).
- A process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue. It consists of: Pose a question, collect data to answer the question, and present an answer to the question, Creswell (2008) .
- Comprises creative work undertaken on a systematic (scientific) basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humans and other living creatures, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications (Rocco et al, 2011).
- Research 'evidence' means knowledge /conclusions arising from the scientific research process.

Forms of Research

- Scientific research is a systematic way of gathering data, a harnessing of curiosity.
- Research in the humanities: explores the issues and details that surround it using qualitative methods.
- Artistic research: purpose is to gain knowledge within and for our artistic disciplines.

Uses of research

- To establish or confirm facts
- Reaffirm the results of previous work
- Solve new or existing problems
- Support theorems or develop new theories
- An expansion on past work in the field or evaluate implementation of policy or programme.

Policy Making/ Policy Formulation

- A policy is the set of basic principles, rules and associated guidelines, formulated and enforced by the government or governing body of an organisation, to direct and limit its actions in pursuit of long-term goals.
- Deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes.

Forms of policies

- Fundamental policy
- Major policy
- Institutional and
- Meta-policy

Policy-planning processes

- Analysis of the existing situation.
- The generation of policy options.
- Evaluation of policy options.
- Making the policy decision.
- Planning of policy implementation.
- Policy impact assessment.
- Subsequent policy cycles.

Conceptual Models on scientific Research Evidence and Policy Making

Millstone (2005) identified two models in the role of science in public policy-making:

- The 'decisionist' model: politicians determine policy goals proactively; expert advice help to decide on the regulatory and implementation processes.
- The 'technocratic' model: expert advice based on scientific knowledge determines policy goals, and democratic debate then focuses on the regulatory decisions that will achieve those goals in a way politically acceptable to the electorate.
- Iterative model: what has been termed the 'co-production' model of policy making, in which policy makers, expert advisors and society negotiate to set policy goals and regulatory decisions that are agreed to be scientifically justifiable as well as socially and politically acceptable.
- However, the iterative model of policy development requires expert advisers to be more sophisticated in the way that they communicate with policy makers and the public.
- Relationship is of critical importance in this increasingly complex and interconnected world.
- However the challenges are multiple include:
 - To identify what research and information is needed,
 - To identify appropriate sources of such knowledge,

- To interpret the validity, quality and relevance of the knowledge obtained, and
- To understand how that knowledge can improve consideration of policy options and policy formation
- Being cognizant of the changing nature of science and
- The increasingly complex interaction between science (scientific research) and policy formation.

Relationship between research evidence and Policy making

- It is important to separate as far as possible the role of expert knowledge generation and evaluation from the role of those charged with policy formation.
- Knowledge is not, and cannot be, the sole determinant of how policy is developed
- Governments have the responsibility to integrate dimensions including societal values, public opinion, affordability and diplomatic considerations while accommodating political processes.
- To assume a direct relationship between the knowledge generated from a scientific investigation and the answer to every problem identified would be presumptuous.
- Because the issues to be addressed are of growing complexity and uncertainty in an environment where there is a plurality of legitimate social perspectives.
- It is assumed that evidence-based approaches should lead to greater efficiency in the provision of public services.
- Policy formed without consideration of the most relevant knowledge available are likely to be ineffective in meeting their primary or secondary policy objectives.
- In spite of this uncertainty, governments still must act.
- Many Government-funded programmes now in place based on some policies, when properly assessed would not meet objective tests of effectiveness;
- Such evidence from evaluation, of non-performance would allow both the public and politicians to accept, and indeed require, redirection of effort.
- Noteworthy, there are limits to scientific knowledge and to the scientific approach;
- governments and their advisors must be aware of such limitations,
- otherwise science can be misused to justify decisions that should legitimately be made on the basis of other considerations.

- Conversely, this limitation cannot be used as a reason to avoid the application of scientific findings where such knowledge can help define or resolve the range of options for the policy maker.
- Therefore, developing the opportunity for enhanced application of knowledge to better inform options and decisions in policy formation is a process that all well intentioned citizens should wish to support.
- It is not evidence itself that makes good policy – rather, it provides knowledge, potential options and solutions, and a key foundational basis from which other factors can be adjudicated on by policy makers.

The Role of Universities

- The traditional functions of universities are teaching and research.
- University research increased the body of theoretical knowledge as well as its application to practical problems.
- In his article in the University World News under the Global Window on Higher Education, Boulton (2011) makes the following proposals:
- Play increasingly important roles in modern society and are crucial national assets in addressing many policy priorities.
- Play a direct economic function of wealth creation.
- The true role of universities in society should be understood before mechanisms to promote change are put in place.
- University is a resource for an unknown future- its 'useful knowledge', may not be immediately applicable.
- The central role of the university is education: universities serve to make students think.
- Research or scholarship are essential to the university enterprise only if they are intimately associated with the educational process.
- Universities are important parts of the modern innovation process, but not as its drivers.
- Universities have the potential to stimulate regional social and cultural vitality.
- Policymakers too frequently prioritise and fund outcomes rather than the health of the university engine that delivers them.

Situational Analysis

- Currently, there is no formal connecting thread (or little) between policy making institutions (Ministries, etc.) and institutions of Higher learning.
- Little value is placed on these research institutions - in terms of solving policy-related challenges.
- Most of the research output in Uganda is either academic or Donor led consultancies.
- There is no research department or unit at the MoESST to coordinate research issues.
- We do not have a one stop centre in charge of coordinating research issues.
- Funding for research is inadequate
- Education policies in general and policies on higher education in particular are not effectively informed by the beneficiaries or research evidence that could already be available.
- It is not even clear to what extent the individual university policies are informed by the abundant research evidence available in their libraries.
- Our senior academicians, who would be engaged in serious thinking (Think-Tanks), are still grappling with the basics of life and not yet economically comfortable.
- Few incidences where deliberate efforts have been put in place to focus use of research evidence on policy in various aspects of national interest or in HE

Recommendations

- Close collaboration between researchers and policy makers during the research process.
- Policy makers must recognise the role of universities or indeed higher education institutions in the generation of new knowledge through research.
- The government should use university/research institutions to find real life solutions, through research.
- Form research clusters - e.g. in medicine, social sciences, agriculture, etc. and provide funds to organise discipline-based seminars, conferences, etc.,
- Action Research to generate solutions to policy matters
- The government should invest resources (controlled and monitored funds) in purposeful research studies geared towards improving education in general and HE in particular
- Developing an Institutional research agenda that is tailored to address specific issues/needs of higher education.

- Higher Education Institutions to develop “Incubation Centers” to incubate promising academic research and/or ideas into products that can then be used by the Institutions to improve their processes and policies.
- Forming Think-Tanks within Institutions of HE to advise and influence policy.
- Develop a deliberate policy with adequate funding to establish tripartite relationships between government, industry and Academia.
- Establish a unit within the MoESST to work with UNCST as a one stop centre for driving research agenda and utilization.

Appendix 5 – The Way Forward

Kevin Balaba, the Assistant Commissioner for Budgeting, presented the way forward on behalf of Arnold Dhatemwa, the Commissioner for Education Planning and Policy Analysis in MESTS. Kevin Balaba highlighted following key recommendations for follow-up by MESTS within the framework of DRUSSA and other education sector programmes:

- Fast tracking the Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy and implementation arrangement.
- Harmonization of the Quality assurance framework for education system with the various stakeholders.
- Strengthening the monitoring, supervision and inspection of teaching and learning process.
- Continue to lobby government for increased educational funding (from 14% - 15% of GDP).
- Improve processes for increasing transfer of research findings from universities to the end users (society) to inform policy making.
- Strengthen collaboration between researchers and policy makers during the research process.
- Establish a one stop centre/ unit within the MESTS to work with UNCST to drive research agenda and utilization.
- Invest resources in research studies geared towards improving education in general and HE in particular
- Develop Institutional research agenda that is tailored to address specific issues/needs of higher education.
- Higher Education Institutions to develop “Incubation Centers” to incubate promising academic research and/or ideas into products that can then be used by the Institutions to improve their processes and policies.
- Forming Think-Tanks within Institutions of HE to advise and influence policy.
- Develop a deliberate policy with adequate funding to establish tripartite relationships between government, industry and Academia to facilitate knowledge transfer.