Toro Development Network

Data & Evidence for Improved Urban Governance of Ugandan New Cities

(Open Data Analytics for Development Program)

Program Summary Paper (2022 – 2026)

By

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1.0 Introduction

This paper is a summarized extract from the main organizational strategic focus document (2022-2026). ToroDev and her key research partner, Universal Institute of Research and Innovations (UNIRI) are development oriented institutions based in Uganda, using advocacy and research approaches, respectively, to achieve results. On one hand, ToroDev's main focus for over the last 10 years has been supporting transparency, citizens' participation and accountability (TPA) in governance processes, through advocacy initiatives/projects, with an intersection of ICT platforms – a wealth of experience that has richly informed this new strategic focus or program. On the other hand, for over five years UNIRI has provided research informed solutions to social, economic and environmental problems confronting the Ugandan society. The institute works with specialized high quality researchers and has over those years conducted a number of researches to influence conservation governance and climate change, tourism entrepreneurship in Uganda, among others.

With the above combination of expertise, the two organizations have teamed up to galvanize synergies to implement the "Data & Evidence Informed Policymaking in new Cities" program for the next five years, within the broader "*Open Data Analytics for Development*" initiative launched by ToroDev in late 2019.

2.0 Background: Evidence Informed Policymaking for Sustainable Urban Development

The global Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs), particularly goal 11 emphasizes improved urbanization as one of the key levers/pillars of a better world by 2030. Under this goal, specific interventions by government authorities in form of policies, laws, programs and projects should target to achieve a safe, inclusive and sustainable urbanization capacity where residents/citizens' needs inform such policy, programs and projects. Practically, this is expected to lead to better urban transport systems, improved housing and elimination of slums, with special attention to improved habitation of vulnerable women and youths looking of economic opportunities in such urban centres. Also, urban centres/cities should monitor and improve waste management and air quality systems that guarantee environment conservation and reduction of adverse climate change effects. This can be possible especially with better utilization of the current proliferation of improved technologies for data, evidence for surveillance management, as long as governance (policy) issues regulating the same, are dealt with appropriately.

In order to achieve the above aspirations, quality datasets need to be gathered and processed into evidence that can inform public policy making processes to guide such development targets in urban jurisdictions. On one hand, data and evidence should be freely accessed by urban policy makers and other individuals who need it to innovate, in order to harness the missed development uses of such resources. On the other hand, such data and evidence resources also need to inform decisions and policy making actions, which are aimed at mitigating the risks/harms that come with free access and use of such resources, ensuring that fundamental human rights and dignity are not abused (misuse of data and evidence resources) by unscrupulous individuals and/or government agencies.

Whereas the developed world has taken long strides to address the above concerns, in Africa there is still a long way to go. Nevertheless, countries like Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Rwanda and Senegal are ambitiously exploring avenues to integrate new forms of data and evidence in their urbanization processes. This is done by putting in place fairly data governance policies that are supporting capacity building of both government agencies and non-state actors to exploit the missed uses of data and evidence, while regulating the possible misuse of such resources.

In Uganda, the central government embarked on an ambitious urbanization policy over two years ago that saw elevation of 10 municipalities into regional and strategic cities. These include special context urban centres like *Fort Portal Tourism City* and *Hoima Oil City*. This policy enables city authorities and national government to realize SDG 11 targets, empower urban residents to live healthy, economically sustainable lives and de-congest the slummy capital city of Kampala.

2.1 Current Situation of New Cities in Uganda: The need for Evidence Informed Governance

The good gesture by the Ugandan government to improve people's socio-economic development through urbanization (new cities), however, came with planning, budgeting and program implementation challenges that must be addressed by reliable data and evidence to inform such interventions. Urbanization is a policy intensive and governance is its major challenge in the Uganda (UNAS, 2017). There is a severe inadequacy of data and evidence use for informed policymaking and program implementations in newly launched cities. This results in poor plans, which have detrimental effects on medium and long term social service delivery, economy and environment of these young cities. For example, in the recent report of the National Buildings Review Board (NBRB, 2021), only 22% of buildings in these new cities were compliant to safety standards. Moreover, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA, 2019) reported that air/environmental pollution levels in Kampala city were 5.3 times higher than the WHO recommended limits, and other new cities like Jinja, Mbale and Mbarara were following in the same ranges! The same urban pollution in Uganda is echoed in a recent World Bank (2021) study majorly caused by poor disposal of waste and transport systems planning, pointing fingers at policymaking for solutions. Also, recent findings show that there are a lot of inconsistencies in the urban taxation interventions, limiting economic growth, local revenue generation, leading to inadequate social services delivery in the new cities (The Monitor, 2021). The Cities Alliance, one of the UN's SDG 11 interventions, has also found Uganda to have one of highest levels of urban poverty, especially among the youth and women in the world, due to inadequate urban planning. In view of the foregoing, ToroDev and partners, through the *Open Data Analytics* initiative believe that constant gathering of data and evidence generation will be a worthwhile contribution to addressing the above urbanization policymaking challenges in Uganda.

3.0 Theory of Change for Data & Evidence Use for Inclusive Urban Governance in Uganda

Our approach to data and evidence generation for improved urban policy making in Uganda hinges on the Combined Analytical Framework (Goldman & Pabari, 2021), the Consensus Development Methodology (Waggoner et al., 2016; Carter et al., 2021) and other conventional

research approaches to gain rigor, acceptance and use of evidence by authorities. Generating data and evidence that is relevant and timely to support effective urbanization in Uganda, requires a clear understanding of the macro (national or even regional) policymaking environment. This includes an existing legal framework review, building relationships and partnerships with strategic and like-minded institutions for moral, technical and funding support to new cities from philanthropists, non-state actors like civil society and other research institutions. Importantly to note, nature of routine decisions by policy makers has also be well understood, so that the data and evidence generated can be relevant for use.

In order to facilitate deep learning about our data gathering and evidence sharing for policymaking program in urban authorities in Uganda, we propose a piloting approach of interventions within a period of 3-5 years. ToroDev and our key partner (UNIRI) think that at least 2 urban authorities/cities with strategic focuses (such as tourism potential and/or natural resources/oil extraction) can present to us unique contexts that we can investigate, compare and support to fulfil specific urbanization objectives during our pilot program interventions. The smaller jurisdiction/scope during piloting will also help us to interrogate and learn from intricate public organizational capacities, culture and attitudes towards use of data and evidence in program and projects implementation to launch us into scaling in future. Moreover, closer engagements and trust-building with key stakeholders in 1 or 2 urban authorities/cities, determining best practices, motivators and de-motivators of data and evidence use in policymaking are likely to be achieved.

The Analytical Model emphasizes closer interaction and trust-building between data and evidence producers and government authorities to define what type of rigorous data is needed at a particular time. Implementers must also to focus on capacity building to access and use such data/evidence. Incentives/motivation to use evidence in public programs/project implementation and public institutional system and behavioral changes that support data/evidence usage are also key.
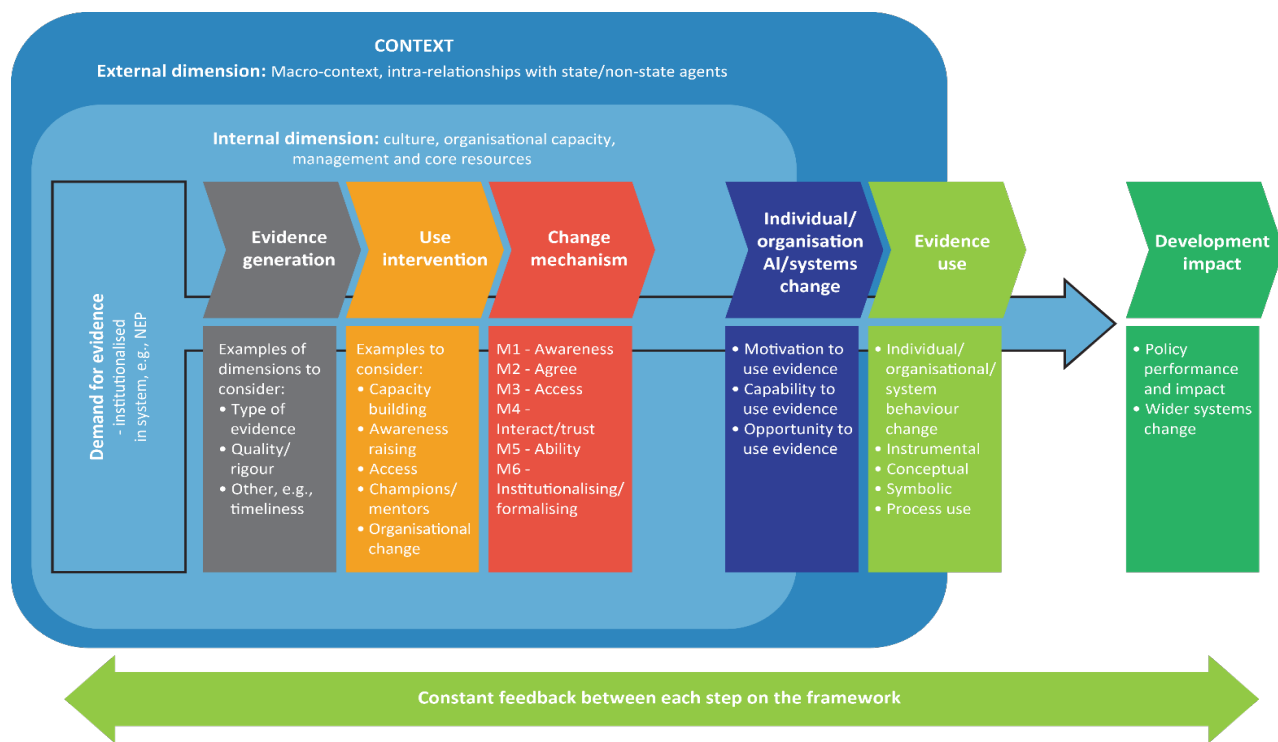
Figure 1: The Combined Analytical Framework. Source: Goldman & Pabari (2021, p.45)

The Special Contexts of the Proposed Pilot Cities in Uganda (Fort Portal & Hoima)

ToroDev and partners deliberately consider the advice of Weyrauch et al (2016) on the role of contextual factors in the data & evidence usage for effective and efficient public policy making process. Therefore, this program/project is proposed under a special urbanization development context of two new cities in Uganda, as pilot cases. In Uganda, since post-independence, Kampala has been the only capital and economic city. The city infrastructure and service delivery planning have raised a lot of controversy. There have been limited use of data and evidence for sustainable planning in consideration of the emerging socio-cultural and demographics factors, making it a typical example of a poorly planned city in sub-Saharan Africa. With the lessons learned from Kampala city, the newly created 10 cities in Uganda, since July 2020, should learn from that bad example so that from the onset, they are well planned for.

Specifically for this strategic program, two cities will be the focus due to their unique nature. Of the 10 cities that have been created, the Fort-Portal city in the western region, is the only approved tourism city in Uganda. This means its planning does not need to be like the rest of the cities in the country. This is because as tourism is ecotourism and highly depends on environmental resources, the planning should be integrative to enhance socio-economic development through conservation of the ecological integrity as it is the basis for tourism. The Hoima City is also envisaged to be for socio-economic transformation but also its unique aspect is that, it is located in the areas where Uganda oil exploration has been taking place and oil extraction/production is planned by 2023. Use of reliable data and evidence is need, in order to avoid the replica of "oil curse" urbanization in that part of Uganda. But at the same time, it is in close proximity to Murchison Falls National Park, which has rich flora and fauna and one of the

highly visited national parks in Uganda. Therefore, the city ought to be planned in the consideration of the likely impacts of oil production on the natural environment and/or climate change issues. Therefore, the choice of 2 pilot cities in this project is as a result of these unique aspects of those urban centers.

4.0 Strategic Result Areas for Data & Evidence Generation and Advocacy in Pilot Cities

4.1 Data Governance & Management in Urban Authorities: Assess policies and legal frameworks available for city authorities to enable them regulate data and evidence usage to implement programs and projects in revenue generation/ taxation, physical infrastructure development; human resource availability with required skill sets, competences and conduct capacity building interventions. Recommendations will be made for enacting and reform of needed by- laws at sub-national urban authorities and through collaborations pursue national legislations. This result area also will work towards lobbying for the reform of the national data policy/law, which establishes UBOS to transform into a regulatory body that regulates other data producers.

4.2 Inclusive Urban Economic Sustainability of Residents: Gather data and evidence about the current economic activities and potential revenues generated by the city authorities as baseline for decisions; Assess household incomes of specific population groups like women and youth and taxation regimes in place; Gather data and evidence on potential economic activities that are untapped and which could be developed by the new city authorities; Evaluate central government funding/budgets and actual allocations as pointers for new policymaking to these new cities.

4.3 Sustainable Urban Physical planning with Precision: Gather data on state of transportation infrastructures within the pilot cities; Health services quality and distance; Education services quality and distance; Market access, especially by vulnerable population groups; Energy/electricity access and cost; Water access facilities and quality; location of residences and greening sites and discuss it with city authorities. This result will also support a digitization process through digital mapping of the approved urban physical master plans of pilot cities.

4.4 Environment and climate change: Gather data on state of the environment in the pilot cities; Flora and Fauna; Conservation status of the species; Water and wetland resources and quality; Forest cover and biomas; Waste production and management; Greenhouse gas emission, etc.

4.5 Data Digitization & Smart Cities Modeling for Sustainable Urban Development
This area will focus of ensuring that all data and evidence generated by this program is digitized into urban institutional systems and platforms, visualized and freely accessed electronically for re-use in order to complete our "Open Data Analytics" conceptualization process. There are many open source ICT tools that support this process and ToroDev with partners will focus on leveraging such tools to build a robust and sustainable online databank for the selected urban authorities in Uganda.

5.0 How we will monitor and measure our progress: Key mechanisms and deliverables

ToroDev and UNIRI envisages establishment of a strong stakeholders' data ecosystem both at national and sub-national levels (urban authorities piloted). Working with like-minded institutions at national level, holding an annual stakeholders' reflection conference on data and evidence use in policy making will be a key deliverable. Secondly, quarterly panel of experts meetings will be instrumental in playing an advisory role on data and evidence generation, institutionalization, capacity building and motivation to use by public officials. The sub-national (piloted urban authorities) program steering committees will be established and facilitated to monitor progress. Context informed data systems will also be planned, designed and deployed/institutionalized in each of the piloted new cities/urban authorities to facilitate full time accessibility of data and evidence produced from the field. By-annual and annual evaluation reports on performance of this program will be published to inform internal stakeholders on progress.

6.0 Program/Project Governance & Implementation Team Composition

ToroDev will lead and partner with UNIRI to implement this program for up to 5 years. ToroDev's scope of work contribution will be overall the strategic guidance, human and financial resources administration of the program, data and evidence resources management, policy advocacy through policy briefs, strategic partnerships and media/communication engagements. On the other hand, UNIRI's scope of work will include continued mobilization of a senior and experienced research team for data gathering, analysis and quality assurance.

On top of the above, a program Steering Committee comprised of senior management team members from the pilot City Authorities, ToroDev and UNIRI will be established as the apex governing facility for the program/project implementation and evaluation responsibilities. Moreover, at least two program/liaison officer will be based at each of the pilot city authority headquarters to support the coordination of program interventions with in the policy making organs and technical departments of the respective urban centers.

7.0 Conclusion

ToroDev's rich experience from the last 10 years of implementing transparency, participation and advocacy (TPA) for improved governance/public service delivery program and projects pointed to the urgent need of rigorous and relevant data and evidence to inform inclusive public policy making. Accessibility to credible evidence improves knowledge and sustains public engagement with duty-bears by consumers of public services. This helps duty-bears to make effective decisions on allocation of resources and policies that are sensitive to context and inclusivity. In so doing, ToroDev believes that investing in this new articulated strategic focus and/or program, will continue to contribute to (in a more relevant, inclusive and sustainable way) a knowledgeable leadership and society as a whole.

8.0 References

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