Data & Evidence for Improved Urban Governance of Ugandan New Cities

(Open Data Analytics for Development Initiative)

Program Strategy (2022 – 2026)

Summarized By

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1.0 Introduction

This paper is a summarized extract from the larger ToroDev's strategic focus document (2022-2026), mainly focusing on the ODA - *Data & Evidence for Improved Urban Governance* program. 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 realize their goals. On one hand, ToroDev's main focus for 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 ODA strategic 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 ecological 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 for Improved Urban Governance* program for the next five years, within the broader *ODA-Open Data Analytics for Development* initiative launched by ToroDev in late 2019. Meanwhile, ToroDev will also continue in TPA, but specifically focusing on piloting an eParticipation model in some Ugandan and Kenyan devolved jurisdictions.

2.0 Background: Data & Evidence use for Improved Urbanization

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 healthcare, education facilities, 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, preservation of wetlands 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 relevant information and 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 such urban centres, 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, there are traces in countries like Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Rwanda and Senegal of ambitiously exploring avenues to integrate new forms of data and evidence in their urban public services delivery 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 in a bid to actualize the aspirations of Uganda's Vision 2040 through the National Development Plans (NDPs II and III), which ToroDev has been committed to contributing to implement. 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 healthily, economically sustainable lives and de-congest the slummy capital city of Kampala.

2.1 Current Situation & Need for Data Use, Governance & Management for Urbanization
The good gesture by the Ugandan government to improve people's socio-economic development through urbanization (new cities), however, came in a rather haste - 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 are out of touch with local reality backed by data and evidence. In the end, detrimental effects on medium and long term social service delivery by exacerbating inequalities, economy and environment of these young cities might be observed. Moreover, data gathering, processing and use needs to be governed and managed in the most appropriate way by urban authorities, with transparent regulations and practically devising innovative models for incentives to create confidence in citizens and public officials for sustained institutionalization.

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, Gulu, Hoima 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 loss where marginalized groups like youth and women are over taxed, evade such taxes, 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.

Therefore, ToroDev and UNIRI, through the *ODA* initiative believe that constant gathering of relevant data generating it into evidence, building capacity and incentive systems for urban officials to use such evidence in their routine decision making process, will be a worthwhile contribution to addressing the above urbanization policymaking challenges in Uganda within the next five years.

3.0 Theory of Change: Data & Evidence Use for Urban Governance in Uganda
Our approach to data and evidence generation, capacity building and incentive systems to institutionalize evidence use for improved urban governance in Uganda, hinges on the Combined Analytical Framework (Goldman & Pabari, 2021). In addition, 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 will be employed throughout the program. 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 this program, from philanthropists, non-state actors like civil society and other research institutions. Further, understanding the nature of routine decisions by policy makers, makes data and evidence generated relevant for use.

In order to facilitate deep learning about our data gathering, capacity and incentive systems building for sustained evidence use for policymaking program in urban authorities in Uganda, we propose a piloting approach of interventions within a period of five years for this program. ToroDev and 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 unique contexts that can be investigated, compared and supported to fulfil specific urbanization objectives during the 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, providing a platform for scaling in future. Moreover, closer engagements and trust-building with key stakeholders in one or two urban authorities/cities, determining best practices, motivators and de-motivators of data and evidence use in policymaking are likely to be achieved.

The Analytical Framework emphasizes closer interaction and trust-building between data and evidence producers and government authorities to define the type of rigorous data needed at a particular time. Implementers must also to focus on capacity building to access and use such data/evidence. It also advises investment in incentive systems/motivation interventions that focus on changing situate behavior to institutionalize evidence use norms in government/public agencies.
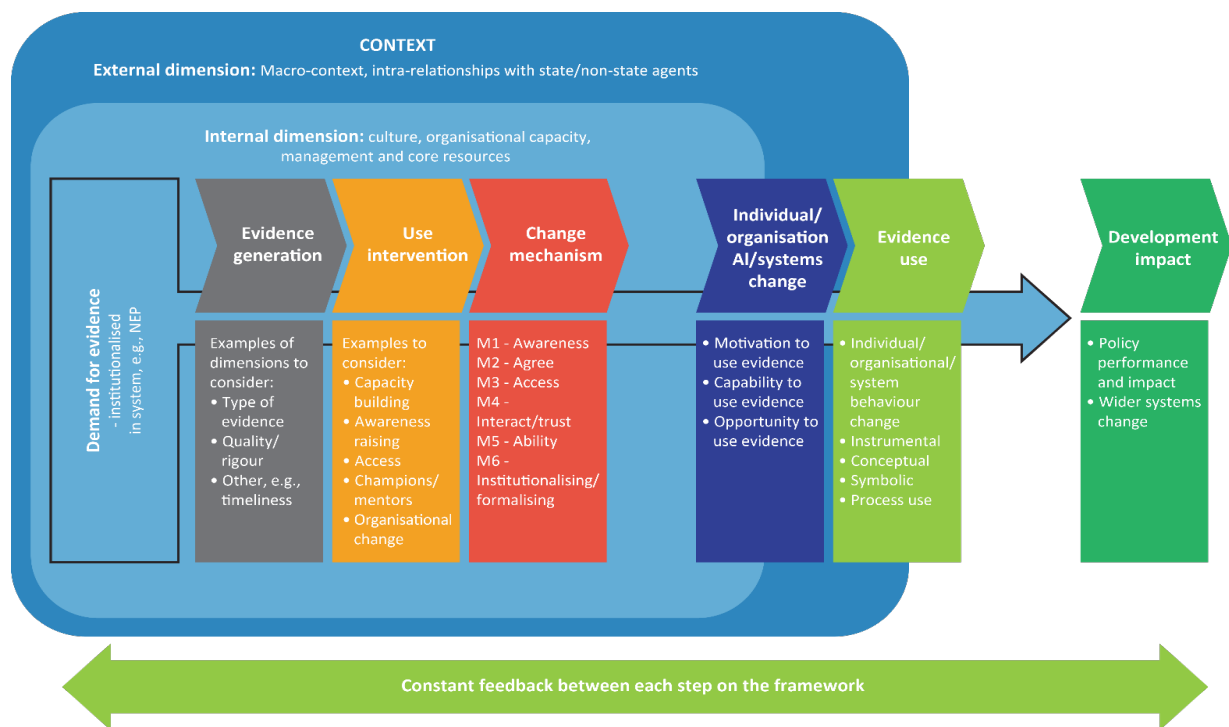
Figure 1: The Combined Analytical Framework. Source: Goldman & Pabari (2021, p.45)

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

ToroDev and partners 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. To this end, this program is proposed within a special urbanization development context of two new cities in Uganda, as pilot cases. Since post-independence, Kampala has been Uganda's capital and only economic city. The city infrastructure and service delivery planning have raised a lot of controversy over half a decade now arising from population influx pressures. 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 July 2020 newly created 10 cities in Uganda should learn from that bad example so that from the onset, they are well planned.

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 earmarked city in Uganda. This means its planning does not need to be like the rest of the cities in the country. Because as tourism is an ecologically supported sector, highly depending on environmental resources, the planning of this particular urban center should be integrative to enhance socio-economic development through conservation of the ecological integrity - as it is the basis for tourism in this particular context. 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 needed, in order to avoid the replica of the "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 and the need to be locally grounded in their contexts, in order to draw practical data & evidence use that can be scaled.

4.0 Strategic Result Areas for Data & evidence use for Improved Urbanization Program

4.1 Data Governance & Management in Urban Authorities: This area will focus on understanding existing urban/city frameworks and changing them for effective institutionalization of data and evidence use in decisions like for revenue management/taxation, physical infrastructure development, etc. We will engage in deep collaborations with piloted cities to assess staff competences, by consensus discover data and evidence use capacity and incentive needs, and collaboratively design approaches to addressing them. We will particularly support enacting of by-laws and guidelines for institutionalizing evidence use to adequately reap the benefits of relevant data and at same time, regulate its abuse. Through close national level collaborations, pursue macro level legislations like lobbying for the reform of the national data legislation that establishes UBOS to transform it into a regulatory body that regulates other legitimate data producers.

4.2 Data for Inclusive Urban Economic Sustainability of Residents: Support data and evidence use to improve forecasts of cities' economic activities and revenues likely to be generated by the authorities as baseline for decisions; assess household incomes of specific vulnerable population groups of women and youth and taxation regimes in place for them; gather data and promote evidence use 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 Data for Sustainable Urban Physical Planning: Support efforts for data and evidence use in urban infrastructures planning/decision making; 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 them 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 Data for Environment and Climate Change: Support data and evidence use in cities' decisions targeting environment conservation; flora and fauna; water and wetland resources and quality; forest cover and biomas; waste production and management; greenhouse gas emission.

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. 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 Monitoring and Measuring of Progress: Key mechanisms and deliverables

ToroDev and UNIRI envisages participating in the establishment of a strong stakeholders' data and evidence use ecosystem in Uganda, both at national and sub-national levels (urban authorities piloted). Working with like-minded institutions at national level, by supporting an annual stakeholders' reflection conference on data and evidence use in policy making will be a key deliverable of this program. Secondly, quarterly national panel of experts' meetings will be supported as an advisory instrument on data and evidence generation, institutionalization, capacity building and motivation to use for improved urban governance in Uganda. The sub-national (piloted urban authorities) program steering committees will be established and facilitated to monitor progress of this program quarterly. 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 by ToroDev & UNIRI. By-annual and annual evaluation reports on performance of this program will be published for stakeholders.

6.0 Program/Project Governance & Implementation Team Composition

ToroDev will partner with UNIRI to implement this program for up to 5 years. ToroDev's scope of work contribution will be the overall strategic program guidance, human and financial resources administration, 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 senior and experienced research team for data gathering, analysis, quality assurance and support for publications. Data and evidence use capacity building and any other technical advisory services will led by UNIRI.

A program Steering Committee for each of the two piloted urban authorities comprised of senior management team and political head 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 officers will be based at each of the pilot city authority headquarters to support internal coordination/institutionalization of program interventions within policy making organs and key technical departments of focus.

7.0 Key Potential Threats/Risks to Program Implementation

Short-term oriented funding opportunities/partnerships are currently largely available globally. Most of these international donors look at two or three years' of data and evidence for policymaking support, yet realizing impact from evidence use in public service may span over years. Besides, specific interventions like capacity building require patience and substantial financial resources for long-term interventions. We will focus on building a robust fundraising sub-strategy to address the funding resources gap in order to achieve our desired outcomes.

The political context that heavily influences public policy in Uganda is rugged; largely comprising of strong inclinations on individual or smaller groups' interests over inclusive public

well-being. ToroDev & UNIRI will adopt an engagement and consensus-building approach that models cases of pursuing public well-being interventions that garner support for attainment of individual political interests for key national political party players and top leaders of urban authorities. Moreover, there is a shrinking space for civil society organizations in Uganda due to the need by current establishment to weed out critical, but also to counter perceived illegal activities of external supporters and/or funders. Evidenced during the pre-election and post-election of 2020/2021 period, more government institutions are either getting more psychologically threatened by the work of CSOs or just shying away from partnering with them in fear of reprisals. The strategy for this program is to intervene from behind as consulting partners - enabling piloted public/city authorities take the lead, by determining their data and evidence needs to address routine decisions and policy making processes, rather than pushing our own pre-determined agenda. In addition, at sub-national city authority level, the joint **Program Steering Committees** are expected to deliver confidence and transparency as far as the interventions of this program are concerned. Such committees will also offer an oversight role and set guidelines for data use and misuse regulation, capacity building and incentive system needs identification, and approaches design for evidence institutionalizing, with support from ToroDev and UNIRI. At the macro-national level, the **Panel of Experts** will comprise representatives from targeted public sector or government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), which are key in the in data and evidence use for public policy making at national and sub-national levels. All these measure are expected to instil confidence in the political players at all levels (national and sub-national) that ToroDev's work is transparent, accountable and complimentary to government efforts towards national development.

8.0 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 for rigorous and relevant data and evidence to inform inclusive public policy making, especially for the emerging ambitious urbanization agenda in Uganda. Accessibility to credible evidence improves knowledge and sustains fruitful engagement between duty-bearers and consumers of public services. This helps duty-bearers to make effective decisions on allocation of resources and policies that are relevant to context and inclusivity. In so doing, ToroDev believes that investing in this new strategic program, will continue to contribute to her long-standing vision of a "*society empowered with knowledge and leadership skills for positive livelihoods*".

10.0 References

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