

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN DEVELOPMENT: OPPORTUNITIES, IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Presentation at the ROUNDTABLE on THE ROLE OF RESEARCH
IN DEVELOPMENT IN TANZANIA”, THURSDAY 30TH JULY 2015

By
Prof. Samuel Wangwe
Executive Director REPOA
swangwe@repoa.or.tz

Outline

- Introduction and context
- Opportunities
- Impact
- Challenges
- Conclusion and way forward

Introduction and Context

- ◉ Knowledge has increasingly become a determining factor in development: case for a knowledge-based approach to development.
- ◉ Research as shedding light to society- generation and sharing knowledge.
- ◉ Research community is an integral part of the society they live in and serve as an important generator and catalyst for ideas and action in their local areas, nationally, regionally and globally.

- Why policy makers need social science research:
 - to obtain basic information about the societies they govern;
 - the use of the knowledge in policy making and decision making,
 - to get information about how current policies are working;
 - to get information on possible policy options and their likely implications on productivity increase, improved quality of life of society

- ◉ Facilitating and undertaking research in social sciences and dynamics in society
- ◉ Developing capacity for undertaking research Training.
- ◉ Facilitating and stimulating the utilization of research findings: dissemination and outreach
 - Research reports and policy briefs
 - Website and library
 - Capacity building of stakeholders
 - Seminars and policy dialogue

Opportunity

- Development agenda has been set in Tanzania and can be a basis for setting the research agenda
 - Development Vision 2025
 - MDGs (2000)
 - MKUKUTA I (2005) and MKUKUTA II (2010) (income poverty, human development and governance)
 - 15 year long term plan (2011-2025)
 - 5 Year Development Plan (2011/12-2015/16)
 - BRN (Big Results Now 2015)
- Advances in technology esp. ICT have increased access to information, information sharing and the speed at which research results can be disseminated.

- ① Research collaboration is an opportunity for tapping on global knowledge.
- ① Local knowledge generation
 - generate locale-specific research outputs.
 - develop research on methodology which reflects realities on the ground e.g. about behaviour of households, firms (distinguish between the behaviour of large firms from that of small firms).
 - Adapting local knowledge to represent cutting edge knowledge.

Impact: Enhancing Knowledge

- ① Use of research findings
 - Evidence based decision making
 - Knowledge generation for society
 - Strengthening of skills
 - Informed articulation of diverse societal interests
 - Evidence based advocacy
 - Agenda Setting
- ① Clients to be reached and influenced
 - National government
 - Private sector
 - Civil society
 - Public
 - Regional and international agencies and networks

Challenges

- A number of knowledge generating institutions, including the universities, sectoral research organizations, policy think tanks and civil society organizations are positioned to play complementary roles in generating and disseminating knowledge in society.
 - Challenge of understanding this complementarity
- Lack of national framework for identifying research priorities;
 - Anticipating challenges and changes
 - Responding to challenges and changes
 - Appreciating deep synergies (e.g. economic and social policy, science and technology policy, governance, politics and power relations etc.)

- ⦿ Inadequate mechanisms for training and hiring researchers. Appropriate research designs and methodology.
 - Managing and developing researchers (human resource development)
- ⦿ Focus on generating knowledge from local experience and adapting global knowledge for use in the local context.

- Political, social and economic context for generating demand for policy research:
 - accountability challenges.
 - Communication of findings to key audiences: Accessibility and quality of information generated.

- ⦿ Inadequate and stable funding of research;
- ⦿ Donor funding cannot substitute for government funding;
 - influence on ownership and setting the research agenda.
 - Research collaboration and determination of the research agenda and management of the collaborative research projects.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- Research in the social sciences influences socioeconomic development of society;
 - Contribution to social, cultural and economic well being
 - Contribution to public policy;
 - Mapping, monitoring and evaluating trends in society;
 - Recognition of synergy and complementarity between various disciplines;
 - Achieving an appropriate balance between research and short term pressures of consultancies (more research to understand underlying issues).
- Working on effective interaction between the supply side (researchers) and the demand side (policy makers) of knowledge generation;
- Managing and developing researchers (human resource development).
- Funding of research- public goods require public funding- need to establish independent mechanisms of funding and managing allocation of research funds.

Thank you for your attention