

EAST AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE-TANZANIA ASSOCIATION OF SOCIOLOGISTS (TASAJA)

**EAST AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE
THE UNIVERSITY OF DODOMA, TANZANIA**

**THEME: THE CONTRIBUTION OF ACADEMIC RESEARCHES IN POLICY
MAKING IN AFRICA: EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS FROM EAST
AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

MARCH 20TH & 21ST, 2017

FINAL REPORT

TAASISI YA SAYANSI JAMII/ TANZANIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIOLOGISTS

**SEPTEMBER 17, 2017
MWANZA TANZANIA**

1.0: INTRODUCTION

The East African Regional Conference on the “Contribution of Academic Researches in Policy Making in Africa: Experiences and Reflections from East African Countries” was organized by the Tanzanian Association of Sociologists (TASAJA) under the sponsorship of the International Sociological Association (ISA) through its Regional Conference Grant. The Conference was held at the University of Dodoma, Tanzania from 20th to 21st March, 2017. The conference was hosted and moderated by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the same University.

The theme of the conference was “the Contribution of Academic Researchers in Policy Making in Africa: Experiences and Reflection from East African Countries”. This was arrived at after a thorough and wide consultation with TASAJA members, researchers, and various other stakeholders in the academic arena in both public and private academic institutions. The decision was informed by the shared state of affairs prevailing in all East African countries, whereby, the policy-making process is not informed by research findings and the research community is either less valued or neglected. Most importantly was an incessant and historical failure of most intervention strategies which have either been parachuted from far or crafted internally from one of our own. Nevertheless, we thought the bigger problem in this all quagmire was that, while academics often believe their evidence-based findings are ignored, policy makers often feel that academic outputs are too abstract and/or complex to help in solving their problems. This situation, indeed, indicates that there is a significant disconnection between the two agents and which needed to be addressed for each player to yield desirable results.

The literature in this area further indicates that, although researchers and policy-makers work together, they are not typically linked in a manner that is conducive for collective impact. According to Turkey (2016), there are about three circumstances that foster this disconnect between researchers and policy-makers; (1) researchers generally focus on informing other researchers of their results rather than policy-makers; (2) policy-makers generally do not have easy access to timely, context-specific research to inform their decision-making; and (3) policy-makers generally do not inform researchers of their research needs and sometimes even make data access difficult for researchers interested in analyzing their data.

It is from the review of literature and practical situation on the ground that TASAJA considered the theme appropriate for the conference. The intention was to gain a wider and profound shared understanding of a phenomenon and the way forward.

2.0: ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

The conference invited researchers and policy-makers all around the East African region comprising of 6 countries namely; Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and South-Sudan, members of the Tanzania Association of Sociologists, and Sociologists in general. Special invitation was further extended to all academicians at the University of Dodoma and

particularly members of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. As a result, the conference brought together over 30 professionals from 6 countries across the region to share their experiences, to learn from one another and to debate the future development of subject in question. There was a wide range of participants including researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, educators, health promoters, lawyers, community development activists and students who showed up in numbers. This mix helped to look beneath the surface of phenomenon to explore its underpinnings and to learn from the diversity of experience that participants brought to the conference. Feedback from the conference was very positive – participants greatly enjoyed the chance to meet like-minded people from so various countries, the opportunity to network and to learn from one another, and the chance to explore ideas.

2.1: CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

S/N	PARTICIPANT NAME	COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE
1	ANDREA, QUEEN KILONZO	KENYA
2	ASSEY, MARIA	TANZANIA
3	BASSO, JOHN	TANZANIA
4	BULABO, KELVIN	TANZANIA
5	BURUHANI, NASRA BATENGA	UGANDA
6	CHIZINGWA, GLORIA SOSPETER	TANZANIA
7	DAUDI, BIGAMBO	UGANDA
8	HAMAD, AMOUR SAID	TANZANIA
9	HASSAN, JAMILA	TANZANIA
10	OLUWOCHI, SAIDA	KENYA
11	ISSANGYA, ELIZABETH SHEDRACK	RWANDA
12	LUCAS, MUSHUN'GU	BURUNDI
13	MARIKI, REGINA LENGAKI	TANZANIA
14	MDAKI, EDWARD	TANZANIA
15	OGUDA, STANLEY	KENYA
16	MHAVA, JOSEPH GIDEON	TANZANIA
17	MIRAMBO, RASHID OMARI	TANZANIA
18	MULOKOZI, ALMANA	UGANDA
19	MOHAMED, AMINA	TANZANIA
20	MOHAMED, SULTANI AYUB	ZANZIBAR
21	MUSSA, MUSSA	UGANDA
22	MWAKIMBWALA, HAPPINESS	TANZANIA
23	MWALUSAMBA, CHARLES	TANZANIA
24	NNKO, JACKLINE ELIREHEMA	TANZANIA
25	NYAMUSHORA, FRANK JAMES	BURUNDI
26	OTHMAN, FATMA MOHAMEDI	ZANZIBAR
27	RIEQUE, PASCOAL BENEDITO JOAO	MOZAMBIQUE
29	BITURO KAZERI	TANZANIA

30	BAGASHE ENOCK	BURUNDI
31	ISSA AHAMED	TANZANIA
32	ONJERE-TWON'G	SOUTH-SUDAN
33	KAPIPO SALMA	TANZANIA
34	MICHAEL TENGERE	TANZANIA
36	JERALD KAMAU	KENYA
37	DAVIS MWANGI	TANZANIA
38	MWAIKUSA LILIAN	TANZANIA
39	AHMED OMARY	MOMBASA, KENYA
40	ERASTO ALEXENDER MASAWE	TANZANIA
41	ALMAS MAZIGO	TANZANIA
42	EMMANUEL NDOMONDO	TANZANIA

2.2 KEY NOTE SPEAKER

The conference was honored with the participation of Emmanuel Gibai (PHD) as a Key note speaker. Gibai serves in the Government of The United Republic of Tanzania as education coordinator in the President Office, Regional Administration and Local Government. He is former Principal of Local Government Training Institute – Hombolo, and lecturer at Mzumbe University. His area of expertise is public administration, applied policy and public policy.

On behalf of everyone involved in organizing the conference TASAJA leadership would like to express its sincere thanks to the workshop facilitators. When we organised the conference one of our prime aims was to let people learn from each other. The facilitators played a key role in making this happen. TASAJA would also like to thank everyone who attended for giving so freely of themselves and making the conference a memorable and successful occasion.

3.0: THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

In the light of the background, the proposed conference therefore intends to address the following four objectives:-

- 1) To assess the magnitude and effects of a strained relationship between policymakers and academic researchers
- 2) To explore and discuss the Key areas of contention
- 3) To understand both empirical and non-empirical factors behind the mistrust and disagreement
- 4) To propose the way forward in terms of both policy recommendations and pragmatic interventions on the matter

4.0: FORMAT & STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

The Conference was structured around paper presentations, plenary discussions, Questions and Answers sessions, general contributions, and group assignments and presentations. In addition,

the Conference held an awareness presentation on policy-making process where policy-makers shared experiences with the audience. Eight (8) papers out of Thirteen (13) received were accepted for presentation and discussion. These included;

1. Bagashe, E. (2017) *The Dissemination of Policy Research to Policymakers*
2. Braun, P., & Issa H (2017) *Public Policy and Political Ideas in Kenya*
3. Ahmed, O., & Omwangi, S. (2017) *Social Science Research and Governments in Africa*
4. Onjere-Twon'g, D. (2017) *Research, Politics, and the Electorates' wishes in South-Sudan.*
5. Kapipo, S. (2017) *The Influence of Social Scientists on Public Policy*
6. Michael, T. (2017) *Research Findings Utilization: The State of the Art.*
7. Jerald, K., & Davis, M. (2017) *Research-based Policy in sub-Saharan Africa*
8. Mwaikusa, L., & Liney, G. (2017) *Knowledge and Policy: The Certain Connection*

Each presenter was give 25 minutes to presents his/her paper in power point and then followed the Q & A session, comments and opinions.

Eight (8) working groups each with five (5) participants were formed for the purpose of working together on a certain assignments and yielding a more detailed and focused perspectives on matter at hand. Members were constantly altered for them to get an opportunity mingle with the rest of the members and share on the subjects.

5.0: CONFERENCE OBSERVATIONS

Apart from the general discussion that emerged from paper presentations on the subject and specific objectives of the conference, several other observations that either significantly contributed in hindering the relationship between policy and research were brought to light.

1. Sometimes research is not designed to be relevant to policy. Sometimes it is so designed, but fails to have an impact because of problems associated with timeliness, presentation, or manner of communication. Sometimes (probably quite often) policy-makers do not see research findings as central to their decision-making. The relationship between research and policy is often tenuous, quite often fraught.
2. The reason why there has been lack of research in most of the policy-making process in East African region was linked to the nature of decision-makers (players/stakeholders) involved in the process. The participants identified at least four (4) areas that had demonstrated failure and needed to be strengthened.

The Political Executive (ministers or secretaries of state) generally do not have time to read lengthy research reports or regularly interact with researchers. Researchers are at the end of a long chain of gate-keepers who condense, crystallize and present (or sideline)

their ideas. The favoured source of advice of the political executive may depend on factors like the leader's personal preferences.

Legislatures-members of parliament have few capable and technical personal staff. MPs generally have limited resources, cannot afford research assistance, and spend their time dealing with constituency responsibilities. Their ability to monitor policy and oversee the executive is weak compared to the bureaucracy. MPs therefore need to become self-sufficient in acquiring information and in building networks with the media and pressure groups, until they gain executive position and can draw upon bureaucratic advice. Learning about policy issues is more likely to occur through interaction with their colleagues in parliament rather than with experts or researchers.

Civil Servants and Appointed Official - senior civil servants are an elite group usually characterised by permanence, security, high entry standards, promotion by merit, code of political neutrality and a closed character. They may discount the validity of external research as esoteric. In many political systems (especially those that inherited institutions under British colonialism like Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda) the civil service is dominated by generalists, who are not experts in specific issues or knowledge areas. Appointed officials may well acquire office on the basis of expertise and experience in a particular policy field (although appointments are usually to political priorities).

6.0: CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

I. ESTABLISH CONTACTS

Researcher or research institutions:

- a) Try to disseminate information about current research projects as widely as possible:
 - I. Invite concerned government officials to conferences or presentations of research, or organize specific events bringing together policy makers and researchers
 - II. Send notes and abstracts to relevant ministries
 - III. Distribute research to government agencies but also to NGOs, which might also be among its users. Be ready to discuss work in progress with policy-makers after initial contacts have been established.
- b) Try to get in direct contact, for example with negotiators, by providing them with short notes/abstracts of relevant research findings.
- c) Establish contact and build a long-term cooperation with relevant ministries. The start can be facilitated by having a "champion" in the ministry. However, the

researcher/research institution may need to avoid being too closely identified with a “champion”, and hence, depending too much on the evolution of the "champion's" status.

- d) Access to high-ranked officials at ministries can be facilitated by involving higher-level representatives at universities (deans, vice-chancellors...) in the establishment and maintenance of contacts. However, more decentralized cooperation can also be productive if the procedures within the university tend to be very hierarchical and bureaucratic

Policy-maker:

- a) Communication flows should go both ways: policy makers should think of channels to inform academia of major policy questions. This would at the same time help make research more policy relevant.

II. MAKE APPLIED RESEARCH POLICY-RELEVANT

Researcher or research institution:

- (a) Involve policy-makers in research. Policy-makers who are consulted at the initial stages of a research project tend to be more open since they can actively participate and hence have a stake in shaping the research questions, and thereby take ownership of the research as well. Regular interaction during the research project can help adjusting the questions researched and the tools used to the needs of policy makers.
- (b) Ensure that research addresses issues of policy relevance by connecting it political manifestos, Countries’ development vision, Countries’ strategic development plans etc.
 - I. Relevant research questions. This should be in the form of simple information sheets or easy-to-answer questions, recognizing that the workload may not allow permanent mission officials to go through lengthy documents.
 - II. Attending national or international conferences whenever possible

Policy-maker:

- (a) Involve researchers in policy consultations and the policy-making process to make them aware of specific country needs:
 - I. Establish partnerships, multi-sectoral committees or policy forums where policy makers, private sector and academia can interact and discuss national development strategies and priorities.

II. Consider making researchers members of official delegations and inviting senior researchers to participate in policy reviews to expose them to relevant questions.

(b) Facilitate the access of researchers to relevant data, for instance, by creating a "policy data desk" within the ministries to facilitate research or other dissemination activities.

III. COMMUNICATE RESEARCH FINDINGS TO POLICY MAKERS AND DISSEMINATE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Build trust and credibility by:

(a) Being honest about underlying assumptions used in models and other methodologies, and not "selling" simulation outcomes as certain predictions. The researcher also has the responsibility to explain the caveats of a model and its results. Do not assume that policy makers are always familiar with the assumptions without you pointing them out.

(b) Using sensitivity analyses to show the range of potential outcomes. Provide a benchmark case and various scenarios in your analysis. Research that shows the effects of several options will be more credible than presenting absolute numbers

(c) Making sure that data sources are credible and verifiable.

(d) Pointing out the weakness of the analysis when presenting its strengths. Recognize that good policy makers will rarely depend on policy advice from one source only – the risks for them are too great. If you do not point out the weaknesses of your advice, someone else will and you will have destroyed your chances and, perhaps, the potential benefit from the application of what would have been good advice.

(e) Having in mind an escape strategy for the policy maker. Not all policy recommendations will be successful if adopted. If your advice should not produce the desired results, how can the policy maker minimize the risks?

Ensure that policy-makers understand the research by:

(a) Making findings readable and understandable to non-academician: use simpler language, provide a brief and concise non-mathematical outline, and focus on the application rather than the theoretical background. Provide targeted research, which offers suggestions that can be implemented by policy makers

(b) Producing Policy briefs, which are "custom-tailored" to policy makers' needs, and case studies; these can be useful formats to illustrate findings and communicate the main results to policymakers.

- (c) Providing concise and readable abstracts or summaries, so that policy makers are encouraged to go deeper into the findings

Reflect on the ways in which you disseminate the results of your research:

- (a) Research institutions should develop a dissemination or marketing strategy, which could involve holding conferences at the university, sending regular policy briefs to relevant ministries and NGOs, establishing personal contacts with policy-makers. A communication strategy should also define the format used to disseminate research findings, such as concise policy briefs.

IV: SECURE FUNDING AND BUILD A SUSTAINABLE CAPACITY FOR RESEARCH

- a) As a policy maker, consider contacting and funding national research teams instead of outsourcing research. Investing in local research represents a means of long-term local capacity-building and institution-building. One way of doing so could be to earmark some funds from donors for locally conducted research.
- b) As a teacher, do not forget that students are future policy makers and researchers. Enhance the role of applied research also in your teaching by integrating policy-relevant topics and methodologies into the curriculum. Although policy research will be mainly conducted by senior researchers, younger researchers could also be involved to get gradually more familiar with policy-relevant questions and research tools.
- c) To enhance the quality of local research, governments should invest in data collection, as well as dissemination.
- d) Funds from international donors are increasingly given on unconditional terms, which could help research institutions to provide targeted and country-specific research. The need is to put together a good proposal and, thereafter, seek funding.

7.0: WAY FORWARD

General

- Holding of more conference whenever is applicable possible
- The organizers should consider to publish the papers presented at the conference;
- Participating should endeavor to disseminate the proceeding and the final report of the conference through their various platforms and networks;
- Participants to extend the dialogue beyond this conference through web-based forum (i.e. Twitter and face book)

Publications:

Selected papers presented at the conference will be considered for publication after a thorough review and revision processes required by journal both local and international; initial the proceedings and paper will be uploaded on TASAJA website.

The Communication:

A dedicated electronic forum will be opened to further the dialogue among the participants and the general public. The proceedings and final report of the conference will also be posted on the opened forums.

8.0: CLOSING CEREMONY

The closing ceremony was performed by the organizing team. TASAJA expressed deep satisfaction with the conduct of the conference and its proceedings and thanked the keynote speaker, the moderators and participants of the conference for their engaging and productive deliberations for two days. They all committed to carrying the agenda of the conference forward through the steps outlined above.

9.0: CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The conference activities schedule was as indicated in table no.9.1 bellow

Table no. 9.1 Conference program

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON/ORGANISATION
DAY ONE – 20-03.2017	OPENING SESSION	CHAIRMAN
07:30-09:30	Arriving and registration	All
09:30-10:00	Invitation to the conference	TASAJA SECRETARY GENERAL
10:00-10:10	Welcoming remarks	VC-UDOM
10:10-10:15	Conference Overview	TASAJA INFORMATION OFFICER
10:15- 10:20	Official Opening/ key note speech	Guest of Honour Emmanuel Gibai (PHD)
10:20-11:00	TEA BREAK	All
PRESENTATION SESSION ONE	PRESENTATION	CHAIRMAN

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11:00-11:20	The Dissemination of Policy Research to Policymakers	Bagashe, Enock
11:20-12:00	Reflections, discussions, Q&A	ALL
12:00-12:20	Public Policy and Political Ideas in Kenya	Issa Ahmed & Braun Paul
12:20-13:00	Reflections, discussions, Q&A	ALL
13:00-13:20	Social Science Research and Governments in Africa	Ahmed Omary & Omwangi Sahreh
13:20-14:50	Reflections, discussions, Q&A	ALL
14:50-14:10	LUNCH BREAK	ALL
PRESENTATION SESSION TWO	PRESENTATION	CHAIRMAN- RAPPORRTEURS
14:10-14:20	Research-based Policy in sub-Saharan Africa	Jerald Kamua & Davis Mwangi
14:20-15:00	Reflections, discussions, Q&A	ALL
15:00-15:20	Research, Politics, and the Electorates' wishes in South-Sudan.	Onjere-Twong
15:20-16:00	Reflections, discussions, Q&A	ALL
16:00-16:30	HEALTH BREAK	ALL
PRESENTATION SESSION THREE		
16:30-16:50	The Influence of Social Scientists on Public Policy	Kapipo Salma
16:50-17:30	Reflections, discussions, Q&A	ALL
17:30-18:00	Review of Day One	ALL
18:00	Closing	CHAIRMAN
TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON/ORGANISATION
DAY TWO – 21.03.2017		

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PRESENTATION SESSION FOUR	PRESENTATION	CHAIRMAN
09:00-09:30	Research Findings Utilization: The State of the Art.	Michael Tengere
09:30-10:00	Reflections, discussions, Q&A	ALL
10:00-10:30	Health break	ALL
10:30-11:30	Group Assignments	All
11:30-12:30	Group Presentations	All
12:30-13:00	Knowledge and Policy: The Certain Connection	Mwaikusa Lilian & Liney Gibson
13:30-14:00	Reflections, discussions, Q&A	ALL
14.00-15.00	LUNCH BREAK	ALL
15:00-17:00	REFRECTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & WAY FOWARD	All
17:00-17:30	Tea Break	All
17:30-18:00	Closing Remarks	VC-UDOM & TASAJA Chairman

10.0 FUNDING

The conference was held courtesy to the International Sociological Association regional conference grant program of euro 2,300. Table no.10.1 below shows the expenditure of euro 2,300.

Table no.10.1: expenditure schedule

ITEM NO	CATEGORIES NAME	PURPOSE	DURATION OF	DETAILED BUDGET IN TSHS	TOTAL BUDGET IN
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EAST AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE-TANZANIA ASSOCIATION OF SOCIOLOGISTS (TASAJA)

			ASSIGNMENT		TSHS
1	Health Breaks	Provision of health break to participants	2 days	tea/coffee/bites/lunch	2,400,000
2	Stationary	Provision of stationary to participants	2 days	Stationary and multiplication of conference papers and documents	1,000,000
3	Travel & accommodation	Travel and accommodation to invited key note speakers Local travel to and from venue to town	2 days	Emmanuel Gibai (PHD)	1,500,000
4	Conference administration	Preparation and other administrative matters	4 days		275,000
	TOTAL				5,175,000

Note: Euro/Tshs exchange rate 1/2250