

VAKA
YIKO

inasp



AFRICAN CENTRE FOR
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS



Parliament in focus *Ghana*

AUTHORS

Rasheed Draman | ACEPA

Agnes Titriku | ACEPA

Issifu Lampo | ACEPA

Emily Hayter | INASP

Kerry Holden | QMUL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the staff of the Parliament of Ghana who have shared their needs and observations with us, throughout the VakaYiko programme and in particular during the production of this paper. We recognize the excellent work of our partners at Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS) who led implementation of this project in Ghana and created the space for us all to learn about evidence in parliaments.

Cover photography: Jonathan Ernst / World Bank



INASP

2/3 Cambridge Terrace,
Oxford OX1 1RR, UK

Tel: +44(0)1865 249909

Fax: +44(0)1865 251060

E-mail: info@inasp.info

www.inasp.info

twitter.com/INASPinfo

facebook.com/inasp.info



INASP, 2017. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike Licence (CC BY-SA 4.0).

Charity No. 1106349
Company No. 04919576



VakaYiko is part of the DFID programme Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE)

Executive Summary

An analysis of factors affecting evidence use in Parliament of Ghana reveals a largely encouraging external environment, but limited institutional capacity to leverage this to build a strong and systematic culture of evidence use in the institution.

Staff capacity in Parliament's Research Department is a notable issue in Ghana.

The extremely limited number of research officers makes it impossible for the Research Department to fully respond to the wide range of evidence needs across the institution, and many committees and sectors are inadequately serviced. This is compounded by limited networks between the Research Department and Ghana's research community, constraining the ability of Parliament to fully leverage the potential of this rich resource.

Another main barrier to evidence use is internal institutional inefficiency. This manifests in particular in a lack of clarity around the strategic planning process, and bureaucratic difficulties accessing the funds that do exist for research and evidence. Overall, when considering evidence systems in Ghana's Parliament there is a notable juxtaposition between the enabling external environment, and the disabling factors at institutional level. We conclude that, with regards to its information and evidence systems, Ghana can be characterized as an 'emerging legislature'.

However, the Seventh Parliament (from 2017) presents a key opportunity for progress in terms of institutional culture around evidence use. Early indications suggest a supportive leadership and a growing momentum around evidence. The extent to which this supportive institutional culture is sustained, and Parliament's institutional structures are able to deliver on it, will be crucial to enhancing institutional efficiency and evidence use in future.

The VakaYiko programme's work with Parliament of Ghana, in collaboration with GINKS and ACEPA included:

- Training for information support staff (library, Hansard, IT, research, committees), using the EIPM Toolkit, in how to find, assess and communicate evidence to inform decision making (INASP, 2016)
- Organizational-level work to pilot a strategic approach for IDRIG departments to work together to anticipate and respond to evidence needs
- Participation in a learning exchange initiative with the parliaments of Uganda and Zimbabwe, including a visit to Uganda to observe Parliamentary Research Week

See www.inasp.info/GhanaLRI

Introduction¹

In this Parliament in Focus profile, we explore some of the main factors we identified through our ‘Evidence in African Parliaments’ paper in the context of the Parliament of Ghana (ACEPA et al, 2017). Drawing on our combined experience working with Parliament of Ghana as well as on interviews with information support staff, we turn our attention to some of the main factors affecting evidence within Parliament as an institution. We describe Parliament’s information support system and identify some of the key constraints and opportunities within this, including staffing structures and inter-departmental collaboration, systems affecting evidence use, and resources.

This profile aims to describe the Parliament of Ghana’s information support system and shed light on some of the specific issues that affect how it works, highlighting some of the opportunities that we have observed. This is by no means an exhaustive investigation, and there are numerous areas which would benefit from more in depth research than our scope permits.²

What is evidence-informed policy making?

“Evidence-informed policy is that which has considered a broad range of research evidence; evidence from citizens and other stakeholders; and evidence from practice and policy implementation, as part of a process that considers other factors such as political realities and current public debates.

“We do not see it as a policy that is exclusively based on research, or as being based on one set of findings. We accept that in some cases, research evidence may be considered and rejected; if rejection was based on understanding of the insights that the research offered then we would still consider any resulting policy to be evidence-informed.” (Newman, Fisher and Shaxson, 2012)

For evidence to routinely and systematically inform policy making, our view is that at least three interlinked elements should be in place:

- **Individuals** in public institutions with the skills to access, evaluate and use a range of types of evidence (including citizen knowledge, administrative data, practice-informed knowledge and research)
- **Processes, systems and cultures** in public institutions for systematically identifying and meeting evidence needs
- **An enabling environment** of engaged stakeholders such as citizens, media and civil society that links evidence producers and users
- The **Context Matters Framework** outlines a series of six interrelated sets of factors that affect the use of evidence throughout these levels. It can be accessed online at www.politicsandideas.org/contextmatters (Weyrauch et al., 2016)

1. While the research to inform this profile was primarily conducted under the Sixth Parliament of the Fourth Republic (2013-2017), we have tried wherever possible to identify emerging developments from the first six months of the Seventh Parliament. The profile has been shortened and adapted for publication by INASP based on a longer background analysis conducted by ACEPA. ACEPA’s analysis, in turn, expanded on the Parliament Review conducted by GINKS (2015).

2. In line with the Context Matters framework approach (see box), our full analysis explored both macro-level and institutional-level factors affecting evidence use at the Parliament. In this paper we share our findings from the institutional-level analysis. Our scope did not permit a full systematic investigation into each of the factors; rather we highlight some particular factors we find relevant, especially those concerned with organizational leadership and culture as well as capacity, management and systems.

The evolution of parliamentary democracy in Ghana

Ghana attained independence in 1957 and became a republic in 1960 with Kwame Nkrumah as the first president. The period after independence was characterized by a number of military interventions that disrupted the democratic governance order. In total, the country has had four republican governments; in 1960, 1969, 1979, and 1992.

Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup in 1966 and over the period of the next 27 years, parliamentary democracy operated sporadically for fewer than five years in total due to the series of coups and military governments. This includes the June 1979 military coup which brought Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings to power. He handed over power to an elected government for a two-year period from September 1979 to December 1981 when he returned to power through another coup. He remained in power until 1993 when the fourth republic was ushered in with the adoption of the 1992 constitution and a new era of multi-party democracy began. The First Parliament of the Fourth Republic came into being on 7th January 1993.

Since then, the country has made significant progress in consolidating democratic governance. The peaceful alternation of power between the two major political parties through the six elections that have been held, as well as the resolution of the 2012 election dispute through the courts have all contributed towards establishing Ghana's credentials as one of the most stable and well-regarded democracies on the African continent. The Democracy Index 2015 ranks Ghana 53rd out of 167 countries surveyed, putting it among a group of countries perceived as "flawed democracies"; nevertheless it is ranked below only Mauritius, Cape Verde, Botswana, and South Africa on the African continent.

Institutional factors and evidence use in the Parliament of Ghana

While some key enabling factors for evidence use are present, including resources, institutional inefficiencies have thus far prevented a robust and systematic approach to evidence within the institution. It is also important to note that at the time of writing this profile, at the beginning of the Seventh Parliament, this picture was shifting, and early indications suggest some potentially significant changes to the culture of evidence use within the Parliament of Ghana in the coming years.

Strategy and leadership

Parliament of Ghana's last Strategic Plan expired in 2014 and a new one has been in draft since then. This essentially means that currently, there is no strategic plan. Despite the fact that the previous plan had adequate focus on all departments, management systems planning has been quite weak in the Parliament of Ghana over the years. As mentioned earlier, organizational restructuring processes have dragged for many years and there is a time lapse between strategic plans. This could prove detrimental in sustaining gains made towards evidence use due to the absence of a strategic direction.

Formal procedures to use evidence to inform policy making are in place in Parliament. However, as in other parliaments, there is an ongoing tension between these formal procedures and the political interests that motivate MPs. In exercising their mandate - parliamentary inquiries, budget hearings and debate, fact-finding missions, question time, among others - MPs are required to use evidence. While political incentives mean that their contributions may not always be evidence-informed, our interviews suggest that Parliament's formal procedures to some degree counteract this.

Overall, our assessment of organizational management and processes presents both challenges and opportunities. While it is positive to note that formal processes that support EIPM exist, the leadership to give meaning to the processes seems thus far to have been absent. At the institutional level, the inconclusive nature of reforms and the absence of a strategic plan constrain the ability of Parliament to have a strong and coherent approach to evidence gathering and use. Early indications from the first six months of the 7th Parliament, however, suggest that both of these factors may change significantly in the coming years. The new Speaker, Professor Aaron Mike Oquaye, has a strong background in academia and research and has been committed to raising the profile of research and evidence within the institution.

Human capacity: information support staff at Parliament³

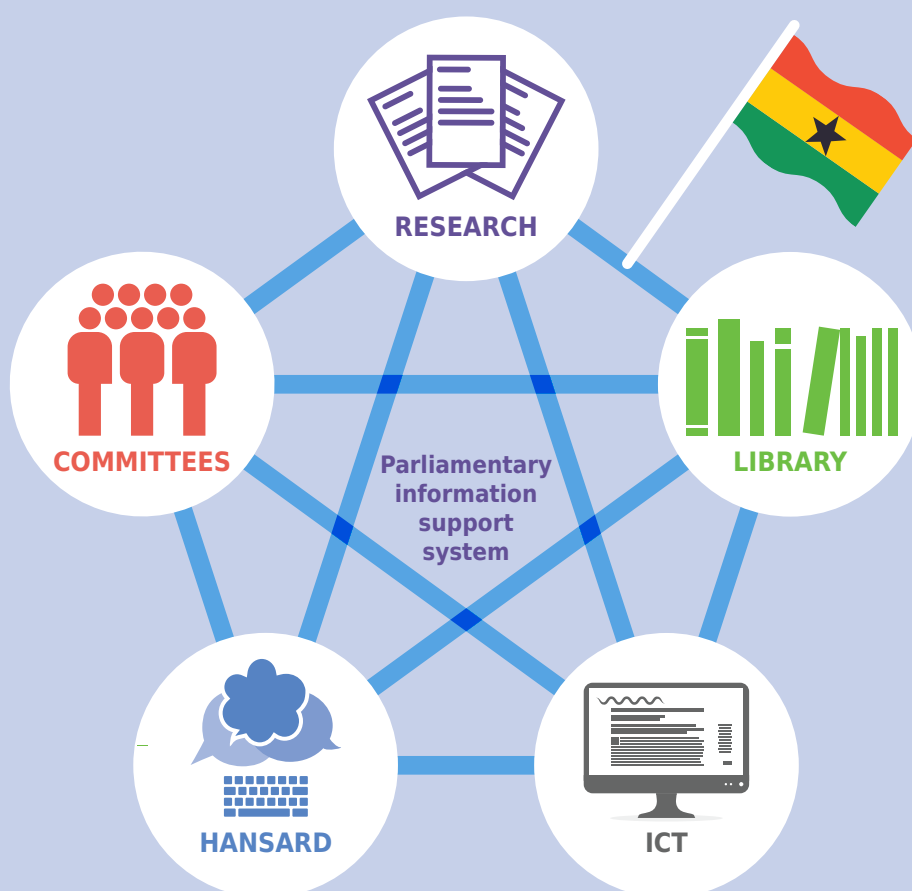
The growth of multi-party democracy in Ghana has had important institutional implications for Parliament. Parliament has evolved from a House that used to have only one-party representation to a 275-member House that has an almost equal ratio of majority and minority parties. Staff strength and departments have also increased since 1993. In terms of information support, the First Parliament of the Fourth Republic had only Committees, Library and Hansard departments; Research, ICT and others were created in the early 2000s. The Parliamentary Service, which is headed by the Clerk, is currently organized along three divisions, namely: i) the Legislative Management Division ii) Information, Publications and Research Division and iii) the Finance, Human Resource and General Services Division (GINKS, 2015). Together, these departments constitute the main internal information support system within the institution.

The Research, Library, ICT, Committees and, to some extent, the Hansard Department play an active role in the generation and input dimension of information flow within the Parliament.⁴ Over time, the lines of functionality between these units have become blurred and there has been reallocation and

“Intense politics and caucus activities have led to members not interested in technically validated evidence. They therefore ignore evidence and proceed to the floor of House without adequate facts to support their arguments. As a result, they are often asked to withdraw or provide evidence. Parliament is a House of facts and evidence. This is supported by the Standing Orders and all MPs are aware of that. The ultimate effect is that sometimes, legislations passed are immediately found to be defective in some parts because of insufficient evidence and therefore require amendments.”

Mohammed Hardi Nyagsi, Director, Research Department - Parliament of Ghana

Figure 1: Ghana parliamentary information support system



3. While this profile focuses specifically on Parliament's in-house information support structures, it is important to note that many other actors are involved in the supply and demand of evidence at Parliament. These may liaise directly with committees in response to calls for evidence.

4. While our focus is on factors shaping how Parliament *demand*s evidence, it is important to note that as an institution it also *supplies* evidence about its work (such as the Hansard or official record) to the general public in the interests of transparency. Staff are involved to different degrees in the supply and demand of evidence: for instance, Hansard, ICT and Public Affairs are more involved in sharing the evidence Parliament generates, while Research and Committees respond to the demand for evidence to inform decision making. The Library acts as a record both of Parliament's own evidence (eg. committee reports, Hansard) and of external evidence.

restructuring of departments under managerial divisions. In their present configuration these units are spread across the Information, Publications and Research Division and the Legislative Management Division. While inter-departmental collaboration between the units has in the past been a challenge, the recent formation of the new Inter Departmental Research and Information Group (IDRIG) presents an opportunity to address this (see box).

The Research Department, which can be seen as the main focal point in parliament's information system, has 10 researchers.⁵ With the support of secretarial and administrative staff, they serve 40 committees and 275 MPs. This constitutes a ratio of one researcher to every 27.5 MPs, which is notably limited when judged against, for example, Uganda, which has over 30 researchers and a ratio of 1:11. Research officers manage four thematic desks: Governance and Legal; Economic and Finance; Social; and Technology. In addition, the Department recently created a sub-specialized unit known as the Finance and Economic Unit, which, in the absence of a Budget Office, will focus on providing financial and economic evidence to MPs and committees.

The Department's closest working relationships within Parliament's information support system are with Library, ICT and Committees departments.⁶ The Committees have, on average, three to four people serving each Committee, comprising two Clerks and support staff. The Library has five staff and ICT four. In terms of skills and capacity, Research officers are mostly master's degree holders, with two PhD holders, while staff of other information units such as Committees and ICT are also holders of at least a university degree.

The main capacity challenge relates to the number of researchers. The limited number of research officers makes it impossible for the department to fully respond to research needs across all sectors of the economy. Only a few sector Committees currently benefit from the attachment of research officers, and interviews revealed that some more technical and scientific areas such as climate change or GMOs remain beyond the expertise of current research staff (GINKS, 2015). The limited numbers of researchers and their dual role in serving both MPs and Committees also means that the Department is fully occupied with responding to requests and is not able to proactively set research agendas or to do in-depth investigations. The Department's limited relationships with external research institutions further compound the situation, meaning that Parliament is not able to leverage the potential of Ghana's rich research and higher-education sector to complement its limited research capacity.⁷

A second challenge relates to motivation and incentives. Even though there are performance management practices such as annual appraisals, these are not directly linked to promotions. Promotion and career progression for research officers has stalled due to ongoing organizational restructuring by the Parliamentary Service Board, which has been a lengthy process beset by delays.⁸ Despite this challenge, however, it is important to note that staff turn-over rate within the past eight years has been low. This means Parliament stands to benefit from the many investments made in capacity development for research staff over the years.

IDRIG

The Inter Departmental Research and Information Group (IDRIG) was formed at the Parliament of Ghana in 2016. IDRIG provides a collaborative space for the five main information support departments (Research, Library, ICT, Committees and Hansard) to coordinate their work.

Prior to the VakaYiko programme, which brought these staff together for workshops on evidence-informed policy making, these departments had limited engagement with each other. After the programme, with the support of Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Parliament created IDRIG as a formal internal structure.

In 2016-2017, IDRIG members have held two awareness-raising events: an exhibition as part of the orientation activities for the new Parliament, and later in the year a full Research Week. Both events were modelled on Parliament of Uganda's 2016 Research Week, which IDRIG members observed and learned about through the VakaYiko Parliamentary Learning Exchange.

Early indications suggest that IDRIG is poised to extend on a supportive leadership culture in the new Parliament, as well as the capacity strengthening offered through VakaYiko and other programmes, to exploit an important window of opportunity to strengthen visibility of information support services and build momentum around evidence issues in Parliament.

5. As in other parliaments, Parliament of Ghana's in-house research team are not the only researchers contributing to Parliament. The National Service Secretariat, for example, has since 2009 posted new graduates to serve as Research Assistants to MPs under the National Service Scheme.

6. The weaker relationship with the Hansard department is due to the fact that it is a one-way/one-directional relationship (Interview with Research Officer, 2016). Interviews with Research Officers revealed that even though the Research department uses information generated by the Hansard department, it does not approach the department often, since that same information can be obtained at the Library. The Hansard department on the other hand does not have any cause to come to approach the Research Department.

7. The Research Department has commissioned external experts/providers only on two occasions (Interview with Research officer, 2016). The Institute for Statistics, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) of the University of Ghana was hired to provide research services during the consideration of the Lands Bill. The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) was also recruited to work on the Political Parties Financing Bill. These two initiatives were however funded by development partners. Interviewees observed that it was an expensive venture which the Research Department could not have been able to support with its budget.

8. For example, interviews reveal that some Research Officers have worked for seven to 10 years without a promotion.

A third challenge relates to the visibility of the information-producing departments relative to other departments such as Committees. Our interviews suggest that the latter enjoy high visibility because the bulk of parliamentary work is done in Committees, and the Committee Clerks are prominent within Parliament because they work closely with the MPs. Research officers and IT and Library staff work more ‘in the background’. Despite this, however, interviews with staff revealed that there are some MPs who have consistently relied on the services of the Research Department to act as advocates and champions for evidence use and the work of the department, which provides an opportunity for the Department to raise its profile within the institution.¹² IDRIG is exploring ways to involve such champions in its work, and in 2017 has conducted two promotional initiatives targeted at MPs. These were an exhibition during Orientation and a Research Week several months later; these initiatives are showing early indications of raising awareness and demand for research.

Resource capacity for evidence at Parliament

Financial

Funding for the Research Department at the Parliament of Ghana is said to be adequate. According to interviewees, the Department is never able to exhaust its annual budget. As encouraging as this may sound, however, upon further examination it emerged that while the budget for the department exists in figures and on paper, there are difficulties in actually accessing the funds to support the activities of the department when the need arises. This is due to managerial challenges within the hierarchy of Parliament which are attributable to the fact that Parliament does not receive its budget releases on time from the Ministry of Finance.

The Research Department does enjoy additional support from donors and external sources of funds, however, as part of significant donor support for Parliament as a whole. Currently, STAR-Ghana, a multi-donor support programme funded by the EU, DfID and DANIDA and led by Christian Aid, is one of the most significant players in this and has been particularly active in supporting the Research Department. Other notable external partners and funders include the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA).

“A state agency may present an organizational culture that appreciates the use of knowledge and that has staff with the right capacities to generate it and/or digest existing research.

However, if they lack financial resources, time and infrastructure, the real opportunities for use will be significantly diminished.

(Weyrauch et al, 2016)

Infrastructural

The Research Department is equipped technologically to carry out its functions and roles, with all research officers having modern desktop computers.⁹ Internet connectivity remains a challenge, however. This has a number of important implications, from affecting information support staff’s ability to use the internet to gather information, to shaping the way evidence is provided to decision makers. While the Parliament of Ghana has been part of global discussions about ‘e-Parliaments’ and has started to use a range of new technologies in recent years, there remains a heavy reliance on hard copies as a means of producing and sharing research evidence with MPs. Without reliable internet connectivity, the potential for transformative and accessible approaches to information within Parliament will be limited.

A further issue relates to information management systems, both for evidence generated by Parliament and to access external sources of evidence. There is no central point to gather the information and knowledge generated by the information departments. For instance, the Research Department currently uploads few of its products such as policy and budget briefs to the Parliament website. The Library does not have the full complement of committee reports as many committees do not deposit their reports with the Library but¹⁰ remain on the computers of the Committee Clerks. In the event they leave the institution, the documents leave with them. Furthermore, access to academic journals in the library has been very limited, although Parliament’s library is exploring becoming a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries of Ghana (CARLIGH) (Hussain, 2017). The absence of a central repository for research evidence and information is a setback to efforts to systemize evidence use.

Processes for requesting evidence

The Parliament of Ghana has an elaborate procedure for making and processing requests for research services through the Research Department. While some MPs adhere to the procedure, interviews revealed that a majority of requests are made informally, often by the MP directly to the research officer from whom information is requested. Requests made to the library or any other department are not coordinated by the Research Department, meaning that different and/or parallel process for evidence requests may exist across the institution, and evidence could be duplicated. The formation of IDRIG presents an important opportunity to address this issue.

9. Research officers stressed the importance of having laptops in addition to desktop computers due to the nature of their job (Interview with Research Officers, 2016).

10. Intervention made by Deputy Director, Library Department, Parliament of Ghana, during a Learning Exchange Programme in Uganda, November 14-16, 2016.

Table 1: Requesting evidence from Parliament of Ghana's Research Department

Making a request for evidence	<p>MPs make research requests by completing a request form (available on the website or in hard copy from the secretariat of the Department) and submitting it to the <i>Research Secretariat</i>. This form contains the subject and purpose of the evidence request as well as the anticipated audience for the output and the required timescale.¹¹</p> <p>Committee chairpersons may send their requests through the <i>clerk or research officers attached to a Committee</i>. In either of these instances, the person receiving the request must submit the request to the research Secretariat who will determine the next course of action.</p> <p>Emergency requests are those that are time-sensitive such that they cannot be handled using standard assignment procedures. In cases that are highly time-sensitive, requests may be made by making a telephone call or contacting any member of research staff. The Principal Research Officer (PRO) will determine when requests meet these emergency criteria. When emergency requests are made, the Assistant Director and PROs will convene a meeting and assign the job.</p>
Reviewing a request to determine action	<p>The Director or a Deputy Director will convene a meeting consisting of research officers (RO) to select a review team. During this meeting a RO will be identified to lead the review team and assign the work. Each request will be reviewed to ensure that it is relevant, appropriate, made in clear and specific terms and that the research question is politically neutral. It will then be prioritized. This may involve a clarification discussion with the requestor.</p>
Assigning a request	<p>The RO leading the review team will assign the work to an appropriate team (multidisciplinary) or individual. Assignments are made using the following criteria: area of specialization; past experience or assignments with related jobs; current workloads.</p>
Notification of Committees and MPs at the request and assignment stage	<p>The Director notifies the requestor whenever a request for service is denied or referred to other places. Such notification will include the reason for denial or referral and will be made in either verbal form or in writing.</p> <p>When a request is accepted, the Director will notify the requestor in writing, immediately after the review meeting at which the study team is assigned. The written notification will be made using a standardized format and will contain the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A statement of the reformulated problem with the justification for the restatement and expected outputs • Confirmation that the officer has begun work on the request, - the name and contact number of the team leader • Notice that the requestor should contact the lead researcher with any questions or modifications to the original request • A general estimate of how long the job will take
Data collection and analysis	<p>The team or RO gather necessary and available data relevant to the task, mostly from secondary sources – government departments, Think Tanks and desk research. The Department is not able to do primary field research.</p> <p>The information gathered is analysed and put together in a write up – briefs, report etc. – depending on the type of information requested and the purpose for which it is requested. With the assistance of STAR-Ghana,¹² the Research Department has developed a Research Manual to guide this process. At the time of writing, this manual had not yet been launched.</p>
Review/quality check	<p>An internal-review team carries out an informal review for quality assurance purposes, before the product is finalized.</p> <p>A review conducted by GINKS (2015) on the Parliament of Ghana notes that there are no rigorous systems in place to evaluate and assure the quality of evidence and information being produced by the relevant departments, such as a peer review.</p>
Provision of product	<p>Reports and briefs are provided directly to the requestor and in some cases these may also be uploaded on the website.</p> <p>The department is making efforts to standardize its research outputs. A series of trainings have been conducted on producing policy briefs and budget briefs and staff have demonstrated improved capacity and skills through the quality of briefs being produced.</p>
Feedback from users	<p>The mechanism for feedback is not as formalized as it is with the request. Currently, feedback is received verbally from MPs or by way of comments in research products.</p> <p>A Deputy Clerk to the Parliament of Ghana during an interview, also made similar observations, noting that “peer-review processes do not work, and it is unfair to expect MPs to provide constructive feedback because that is not their job”.¹³</p>

11. The form can be seen in the annex of the GINKS Parliament Review (GINKS, 2015).

12. A multi-donor assistance programme aimed at Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana. The first phase was implemented between 2009-2014. A second phase is currently being implemented.

13. Interview with Cyril Nsiah, Deputy Clerk, Parliament of Ghana, December 2016.

There are three key issues which affect the way this research request system works in practice. Firstly, lack of feedback processes to improve evidence, both in terms of peer review before the evidence is provided to the end user (MP) and in terms of feedback from the MPs themselves, constitute a significant barrier to quality and to the ability of the research and information support departments to identify and respond to policymakers' needs.

Secondly, at the level of the Research Department, the issue of standardizing research outputs remain an issue that will continue to have an impact on evidence uptake. Skills, tools and procedures for effectively communicating and packaging evidence into engaging, easily digestible products is an area of continued challenge for the Research Department.

Lastly, navigating short timescales is a major factor in influencing evidence use in the parliament of Ghana. Research Department interviewees noted the fact that most requests for information are made at very short notice. Not only does this put a strain on the capacities of research officers, it also affects the quality of work. Where the evidence is produced, MPs also have limited time within which to digest the information and make meaning out of it to inform their interventions in the House or at the Committee level.

In summary: While Parliament of Ghana has number of internal systems and procedures in place that could facilitate the improved use of evidence, lack of clarity around strategic direction and administrative and bureaucratic delays mean that Parliament's research and information support system is not able to fully realize the potential of its ample budget allocation to improve evidence gathering and use. Two important opportunities for evidence use appear to be emerging in the opening six months of the Seventh Parliament, however. The first is a new level of interest and commitment to evidence issues at the leadership level. The second is the formation of IDRIG, a new platform for inter-departmental collaboration between the information support units. Taken together, these early changes in institutional structure and culture appear promising.

Conclusion

The Parliament of Ghana, from the point of view of its information needs as well as its role in policy making, can be seen as an "Emerging Legislature". Parliament has evolved considerably over the years since independence, with the growth of multi-party democracy reflected in changes in the culture and organizational structure of the institution, including in its capacity for evidence use. While it has a number of internal systems and procedures in place that could facilitate the improved use of evidence, factors including the absence of clear strategic institutional direction have so far inhibited a concerted effort to strengthen systems for evidence use.

A fundamental institutional-level constraint is staff capacity in the Research Department. Improving the MP-researcher ratio by increasing the number of staff the research department could expand the thematic coverage of evidence gathering and also provide opportunities to begin to work at a more strategic/anticipatory level rather than purely responding to requests. Furthermore, it could enable improvements in evidence use by allowing researchers to support committee work more closely, which is often seen as more purposeful and constructive in terms of decision making as opposed to the more openly politicized and confrontational debates in the House.

Our analysis therefore suggests that, to a large extent, information flow in Parliament remains predominantly supply- driven rather than shaped by a strong and sustained demand for evidence from policymakers, as would be the case in an 'informed' or 'transformative' legislature. However, there is a growing appetite for information and evidence to support the work of Parliament, and in the 7th Parliament, early indications suggest potential for a significant shift in approaches to evidence within the institution.

References

GINKS (2015) *Review of Information Support Systems at Parliament of Ghana*. http://www.inasp.info/uploads/filer_public/2015/07/27/review_of_parliament_final_version_v9_final.pdf [Accessed 24/08/2018]

Hussain, F. (2017) 'Enabling access to research in public institutions: emerging insights'. INASP Blog, 14 June. Oxford: INASP. <http://blog.inasp.info/enabling-access-research-public-institutions-emerging-insights/> [Accessed 02/08/2017]

INASP (2016) *VakaYiko Evidence Informed Policy Making Toolkit*. <http://www.inasp.info/en/training-resources/courses/229/> [Accessed 02/08/2017]

INASP (2016b) 'Parliamentary Staff in Three African Countries Share Learning about Using Research and Evidence in Policy Making'. <http://www.inasp.info/en/news/details/221/> [Accessed 24/08/2017]

Newman, K., Fisher, C. and Shaxson, L., (2012) 'Stimulating Demand for Research Evidence: What Role for Capacity-building?' *IDS Bulletin*, 43(5), pp.17-24. DOI: 10.1111/j.1759-5436.2012.00358.x

Robinson, W.H. and F. Miko (1994) "Political Development Assistance in Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union: Some Lessons From Experience", in L.D. Longley (ed.), *Working Papers on Comparative Legislative Studies*, Appleton, Research Committee of Legislative Specialists of IPSA, pp. 409-430.

WFD (2017) 'Better laws for Ghana: making data accessible to legislators'. <http://www.wfd.org/better-laws-for-ghana-making-data-accessible-to-legislators/> [Accessed 02/08/2017]



INASP

2/3 Cambridge Terrace,
Oxford OX1 1RR, UK

Tel: +44(0)1865 249909
Fax: +44(0)1865 251060
E-mail: info@inasp.info

www.inasp.info
twitter.com/INASPinfo
facebook.com/inasp.info



INASP, 2017. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike Licence (CC BY-SA 4.0). Trainers are encouraged to reproduce material from this toolkit for their own training and publications under the same conditions as the materials are made available.

Charity No. 1106349
Company No. 04919576



VakaYiko is part
of the DFID
programme
Building Capacity
to Use Research
Evidence (BCURE)

Design: stevendickie.com/design