

# The impact of community advocacy fora on public service delivery - The role of information and delin

December 6, 2019

## Abstract

This report presents the results from the impact evaluation of community advocacy forums (Baraza) in Uganda, a project implemented by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), funded by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluations (3ie). This report was prepared as a “mock report”, which contains the analysis for a core set of primary measures to test a set of primary hypotheses. Once the data has been collected, this report will . The document was prepared using Lyx, and all R code is contained in the document using the R package knitr. This document was also placed under revision control using git.

## 1 Introduction

This report tests the effectiveness of barazas as a policy intervention to improve public service delivery. The project also wants to explore pathways through which community advocacy forums may affect outcomes. In particular, using a two by two factorial design, it differentiates between the impact of (1) providing citizens with information related to budgeting and planing, and (2) the impact of letting citizens engage with public servants and politicians in a questions and answer session.

The outcomes can be categorized into four broad sectors: agriculture, health, education and infrastructure (including drinking water and roads). In this report, we select a few key outcomes in each sector, and combine the outcomes in the four sectors into a single index following [Anderson \(2008\)](#)

## 2 Background of the baraza impact evaluation

Since Uganda’s independence in 1962, the Uganda’s development efforts have been thwarted by political turmoil and economic mismanagement. In the mid-1980s, after attainment of relative stability, the Government of Uganda (GoU)

supported by development partners, initiated reforms to address development challenges of the time. Notable among these initiatives was the liberalization of the economy and the introduction of a decentralized system of governance (Francis and James, 2003, Benin et al., 2007). Decentralization was particularly viewed as a suitable mechanism for addressing welfare and political challenges by improving efficiency of public service delivery, formulating more appropriate services, bringing representative governance closer to citizens and empowerment of local stakeholders (Steiner, 2007, Francis and James, 2003). This is in contrast to centralized governance where participation in decision making is restricted to political and economic elites only (Steiner, 2007), and the cost of information sharing between central government actors and beneficiaries is relatively high. A major ingredient of decentralization is to enhance empowerment and build a sense of ownership of the local citizens to actively participate in planning, implementation and evaluation of development interventions in their locations, so as to improve accountability and responsiveness of local leaders and service providers (Burki et al., 1999).

Until recently, this empowerment component has been largely lacking in Uganda's decentralization process. The realization of benefits of decentralization in Uganda has been greatly affected by ineffective monitoring and weak accountability mechanisms, especially with respect to beneficiaries holding the service providers accountable (Björkman and Svensson, 2009, Reinikka and Svensson, 2004). In this regard, the GoU, under the stewardship of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), initiated community advocacy forums (or citizen barazas) in 2009 with the general objective of "enhancing public involvement in holding the government accountable for service delivery in relation to the resources spent" (OPM, 2013).

Citizen Barazas (or barazas) are viewed as platforms for enhancing information sharing between policy makers, development partners and beneficiaries of public goods and services. In addition, it provides the opportunity for citizens to ask questions to their leaders and deliberate among themselves, ultimately contributing to effective monitoring, accountability and transparency among all stakeholders. With barazas, citizens in particular have the opportunity to participate in the development cycle by directly engaging with service providers, and to demand accountability of the use of public resources.

Barazas have been implemented in Uganda for the last four years. Barazas were first piloted in the financial year 2009/10.1 The initial pilot barazas were undertaken in eight lower level local governments<sup>2</sup> (hereon generically referred to as "subcounties"<sup>3</sup>) of the four districts of Masaka, Bushenyi, Kumi and Nebbi, which are respectively located in the four geographical regions of Uganda: Central region, Western region, Eastern region, and Northern region. Since then, efforts have been underway to roll out barazas in all subcounties in the country. During the full-scale implementation phase in the financial year 2010/2011, 16 more subcounties in 8 districts had held a baraza meeting. And, by the last quarter of 2011/2012, 267 out of the country's total of 1,340 subcounties, spread in 112 districts had held a baraza meeting. At the beginning of 2012/2013 however, changes in implementation were suggested: subsequent barazas would

target district-level reporting so as to increase participation at a higher level. Currently, about 18 district-level barazas have been conducted. Our field observations in the recent district-level barazas we attended and other anecdotal information indicate that the level of intensity is significantly lower in district-level barazas as compared to subcounty-level barazas. For this reason, subsequent discussions in this proposal exclusively focus on subcounty barazas, unless otherwise indicated.

It is imperative that rigorous empirical studies are carried out to independently evaluate and document the impacts arising from the implementation of barazas in Uganda. The GoU shares the same aspiration so as to inform policy on program effects of service delivery to local communities (OPM, 2013) since there has not been any formal study conducted to test the actual achievements of the baraza initiative so far against the set objectives. The proposed study intends to fill this gap by examining impacts of barazas using careful analytical strategies and testing the sensitivity of the results to varying assumptions.

The remainder of this proposal document is structured as follows: The next Section discusses the objectives of the study. Section 3 theoretically motivates the analysis, situates it in the relevant literature, and proposes a theory of change on the basis of which the hypothesized impacts of the barazas design can be tested. This is followed by a description of the baraza institutional setup in Section 4. The methods proposed for data collection and analysis are laid out in Section 5, while Section 6 presents the expected outputs. Administrative and logistical details are covered in Sections 7 and 8: The former contains information about the project management, the activities and work plan, and the latter presents the budget.

### **3 Impact pathways of community fora: information and deliberation**

The baraza intervention fundamentally seeks to improve public services through improving downward accountability of local public decision makers and service providers. Within this scope, two features of the barazas contrast in terms of their focus on information versus deliberation (more specifics on the baraza design are provided in Section 4). Figure 1 below illustrates the conceptual role of each of these two elements representing the hypothesized pathway from the baraza design features to improved public service delivery. These are both important in downward accountability of service providers and local public leaders, and have been analyzed in the academic literature both theoretically and empirically.

#### **3.1 The Information Mechanism**

One of the ‘political market’ imperfections that looms large in public service outcomes for the poor is lack of information on the part of citizens about the actions and performance of public agents (Keefer and Khemani, 2005). Even

where democratic institutions are strong and public decision makers are compelled to take into account citizen preferences in their policy and public expenditure decision making, limited access to information by citizens can be a serious hindrance to their policy preferences being realized.

Information imperfections in this context can take two fundamental forms: Lack of information about available publicly provided goods, services, and infrastructure; and lack of information about public agents' efforts (including actions, policies and expenditures). The first type of information constraint can lead residents to fail to take advantage of the services that are in fact available to them, and thus it ultimately brings about poor usage of even extant services. The second type of information constraint makes it difficult for residents to hold public decision makers accountable, leading to potential undersupply of the needed services. When either type of information constraint is, furthermore, more binding among the poor in society than among the non-poor, all else equal, this results in negative distributional effects of service provision. The hardest type of information deficit to overcome—and potentially the most important for outcomes—is a particular combination of both lack of knowledge about services and about public efforts, namely the challenge for citizens to be aware of the causal link between public actors' efforts and the existing services.

Rigorous channeling of information to citizens about the quantity, modality, and quality of public services, as well as about the investments and policy decisions made by politicians, bureaucrats, and service providers, can increase the ability of the users to hold the leaders accountable to improve service provision. For example, Pandey, Goyal and Sundararaman (2011) establish using a field experiment in India that community information campaigns about states' school management obligations had a positive impact on school performance. Gilens (2001) identifies a significant influence of providing policy facts on the public's political judgment.

### 3.2 The Deliberation Mechanism

Theory on the deliberative process explores the effects of greater both-way interaction between citizens and leaders (versus only one-way information provision, as in the first mechanism described above), and of interaction among citizens with each other. Much of the work on local deliberative processes have as their foundation broader theories of deliberative democracy (e.g. Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Gutmann, 1996; Rawls, 1997). Features of deliberative democracy include, among others, that agents are given the opportunity to articulate their diverse positions to each other; that these positions are conscientiously mutually vetted based on the evidence presented in their support; and that an agent's political standing, economic status, or other characteristics reflecting their power is not a factor in the weight placed on their arguments (Fishkin, 1991).

The seminal literature on this topic especially highlights three contributions of deliberation. Firstly, it has a legitimating effect on decisions arrived at in this fashion (Cohen, 1989). These follow from the particular features, as described

above, that highlight equal voice of the arguments of both marginal and advantaged agents, and the role of evidence that support the positions articulated. Secondly, it is judged to have the ability to more effectively distil social choice than simple voting and majoritarian rule, in part by building of consensus both among citizens and between public servants and citizens (Miller, 1992; Fishkin, 1997). Thirdly, it is said to have a positive impact on the vigor and breadth of subsequent citizen involvement in community affairs (Cohen, 1997). In deliberation with public officials, citizens get to observe how leaders respond to their queries and expression of dissatisfaction with services, which can have an effect of feeling empowered that they can in fact ask for, and are entitled to, better or more resource allocation to the public services that they need. The perception that one is entitled to and can demand changes in public action is an important precondition for holding public servants accountable to improve services. There are several reasons why this perception on the part of citizens can be low—especially in authoritarian systems but to some extent even in democratic systems. Thus, the fact that this feature is being addressed through the baraza intervention allows testing for its hypothesized effectiveness to improve service delivery. Impacts of deliberative processes have also been the subject of empirical analysis. For example, experimental evidence shows that deliberative processes make decision outcomes less sensitive to the institution (e.g. voting) rules that bring them about (Goeree and Yariv, 2011).

## 4 Outcomes

This study aims to assess the impact of barazas on service delivery. What ultimately matters to the citizens are the actual changes that take place in service delivery due to barazas. This study will therefore analyze changes in the indicators of service delivery as follows:

- Agriculture: The following outcomes will be considered in assessing the effectiveness of baraza to change service delivery in agriculture.
  - extension at home: measured as the percentage of households in our sample who report that they were visited by an expert (e.g. crop or livestock extension agent, or community based facilitator or another experienced farmer) at the home in the last 12 months (baraza.B2).
  - extension visits: measured as the percentage of households in our sample who report that someone in the household visited an extension office or a meeting/training organized by an extension officer or visited a demonstration site/ model farmer (baraza.B3 or baraza.B3.3).
  - NAADS in village: measured as the percentage of households in our sample that reports that presence of a farmer association/group supported by NAADS or Operation Wealth Creation (baraza.B4.1).
  - input use: measured as the proportion of households in our sample that report using inorganic fertilizers (DAP, Urea, NPK, Foliar, TSP,

- SSP, MOP) or improved seed in the last 12 months (baraza.B1 or baraza.B1.5).
- marketing help village committee: measured as the proportion of households in our sample that report they received help in marketing their produce from the village procurement committee/village farmers forum in the last 12 months. (baraza.B5.2)
- marketing help cooperative: measured as the proportion of households in our sample that report they received help in marketing their produce from the Cooperative/Association in the last 12 months. (baraza.B5.3)
- Health: The analysis will examine the availability of public health facilities in the community, the distance to the nearest facility for households and the services offered (including maternity care, ambulance, child care, immunization, etc.) The study will also establish if there are enough health workers, their behavior, and quality of services provided and whether citizens pay for any services at the facility.
- Infrastructure: This study focus was primarily on water and road infrastructure.
  - unprotected water source in dry season: measured as the share of households that report that the main source of drinking water during the dry season is rain water, surface water, water obtained from a tube well or borehole, an unprotected dug well or and unprotected spring. (baraza.C1)
  - distance to water source: measured as the distance in km of the primary source during the dry season (baraza.C1.2)
  - waiting time: measured as the average time in minutes one has to wait to collect water at the primary source during the dry season? (baraza.C1.3)
- Education: In this sector, the analysis will assess the changes in the availability of primary, secondary and technical schools within the community and the distance from the household to the nearest of each of these. The study will also obtain information on the households' perception of the standard quality indicators of services provided by the mentioned educational establishments such as teacher absenteeism, class size, availability of books, etc.

For continuous variables, 5 percent trimmed values will be use (2.5 percent trimming at each side of the distribution). Logarithms will be used if skewness exceeds 1.96. Trimming will always be done on end results. For instance, if the outcome is yield at the plot level, then production will first be divided by plot area, after which logarithms are taken and the end result is trimmed. Outcomes for which 95 percent of observations have the same value within the relevant sample will be omitted from the analysis and will not be included in any indicators or hypothesis tests.

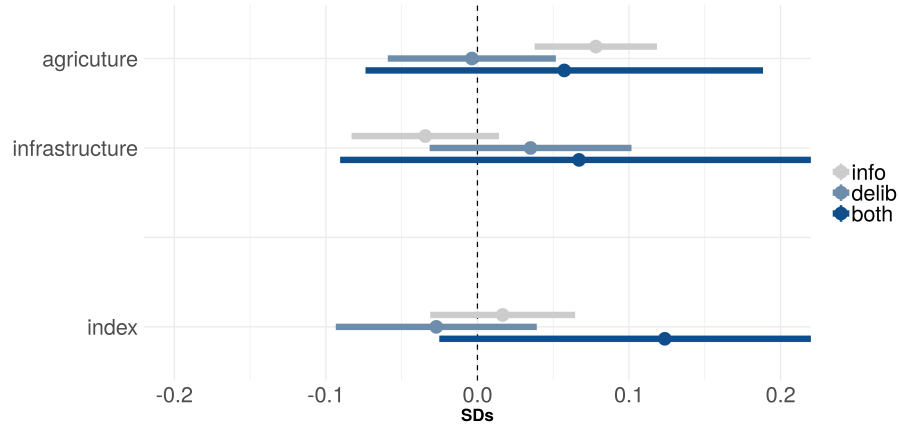


Figure 1: Summary of baraza impact

## 5 Implementation challenges and subsequent design adaptations

Summary of baraza impact  
Results

### 5.1 Between estimator

In this section, we present results for a simple treatment-control comparison.

### 5.2 Ancova

### 5.3 Difference-in-difference

### 5.4 difference-in-difference

Here we use all baseline data.

### 5.5 matched difference-in-difference

We also look at how impact changes over time. A graphical approach uses non-parametric smoothing to look at the average impact depending on the time between treatment assignment and endline data collection.

## 6 Threat to validity

### References

- Anderson, M. L. 2008. “Multiple inference and gender differences in the effects of early intervention: A reevaluation of the Abecedarian, Perry Preschool, and Early Training Projects.” *Journal of the American statistical Association* 103 (484): 1481–1495.