

Africal Leadership Institute and Uganda Management Institute Short Course



MODULE: COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS IN CONSTITUENCY MANAGEMENT

Module Leader: Dr. Lazarus Nabaho

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Uganda Management Institute
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MANAGEMENT**

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1. Introduction

The most important principle in a democratic society is that all people have an elected representative and that decisions are taken in consultation through the representative. One of the key functions of the Members of the Parliament (MP) is the representative function and a Member of Parliament is a guardian of public interest. Therefore, direct communication with citizens is key for MPs, as well as other elected officials, to effectively represent and respond to their constituents' needs in Parliament. Legislators are most likely to represent constituents' interests when (a) they know precisely who their constituents are, (b) they interact with them frequently, and (c) their political futures depend on gaining and keeping constituent support. While national leaders often speak in the abstract about the "people", legislators in functioning systems usually see constituents as people from a specific place, from whom they can learn how government policies are working, and whose support they value.

However, there is anecdotal evidence that some MPs are not using the mechanisms for consultation and obtaining feedback to obtain issues from the constituency and present them to Parliament. This denies the constituents their democratic right to representation and to guarantee that ensuring that decisions taken, policies and legislation adopted and general discourse is intrinsically tied to the public. It is against the above backdrop that AFLI has designed, pilot tested and is rolling out a software called 'MPSCAN' to facilitate a social media platform that will establish a 24-hour accessibility interface between the MPs and their constituents. Through this initiative, citizens will be able to reach out to their elected representatives and draw their attention to issues of concern that they would like the MPs to raise in Parliament or follow-up on their behalf per their constitutional obligations and responsibilities. The citizens will also be able to remotely receive feedback and vital information from their respective MPs. This has been pilot tested and is now being rolled out.

2. Module Aim

To enhance Parliamentarians' knowledge and skills in obtaining feedback from the constituency and communicating it to Parliament and relaying feedback from the Parliament to the constituency for more responsive and inclusive governance.

3. Module Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, participants should be able to:

- Conduct outreach and policy discussions
- Discuss the strategies for obtaining feedback from the citizens and communicating the feedback to Parliament to the citizens
- Use feedback from the citizens/constituents to develop more responsive and inclusive
- Identify the best practices for obtaining feedback and communicating it
- Effectively communicate the feedback to the various parties

4. Module Content

Day One: The Constituency Outreach Function of an MP

- (a) Meaning of constituency outreach
- (b) The purpose and constituency outreach
- (c) Benefits of constituency outreach to an MP and the constituents
- (d) Obstacles faced by MPs in Uganda in executing the constituency outreach function

Day Two: Tools for Effective Feedback

- (a) Mechanisms for obtaining feedback and communication
 - Establishing and running an effective constituency office
 - The social media as a feedback mechanism
 - Leveraging Local Council meetings to obtain feedback
 - The MPSCAN software as a feedback tool

- (b) Building a cordial relationship with the District Council for effective feedback

Day Three: A Critique of the Existing Communication and Feedback Mechanisms

- (a) Challenges of existing communication and feedback mechanisms
- (b) Strengthening the current communication and feedback mechanisms

Day Four: Conducting Constituency Case Work

- (a) Conducting Constituency Outreach Activities (Activities for an MP and activities for the Political Assistant)
- (b) Organizing a Policy Discussions: purpose and tips

Day Five: Effective Communication of Feedback

- Packaging issues of national concern on the floor
- Communication tips during raising questions on the floor
- Packaging petitions from the constituency
- Providing feedback on Parliamentary work: Options and tips
- Civic education and engagement

5. Teaching and Learning Methods

- Interactive lectures
- Case studies
- Group work

6. Assessment Strategies

There shall be NO assessment because the module is intended to raise awareness and conscientise the learners as a strategy to enhance the performance of the MPs in the outreach function.

7. Facilitators

- i. Dr. Lazarus Nabaho
- ii. Dr. Sylvester Kugonza
- iii. Dr. Kiiza Kenneth Alfred
- iv. Dr. Andama Felix Adibur'u
- v. Dr. Beinebyabo Adria

8. Reading List

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