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Assessment of the Staff Recruitment Process in the Decentralised System of Local Government: A Case Study of Mukono District

The study was carried out in Mukono District Local Government (DLG) with the major objective of assessing the recruitment process in the district. The specific objectives of this study were to establish the actual and potential sources of recruitment for Mukono district, to identify the problems surrounding recruitment of staff within the decentralised system of local government in Mukono district, to establish the effects of the recruitment process on staff performance in the district and to establish the attitude of the district staff and political leaders towards the recruitment procedures and retention of staff. The study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Target groups included serving officers in different categories ranging from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), middle level and junior officers. The lower local governments selected included the town councils of Njeru, Lugazi, Mukono and Nkokonjeru, plus the sub-counties of Goma, Najjembe, Kawolo and Nama. Also, some respondents were purposively sampled from National Service Commissions and a few line ministries. Methods used to gather data included questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. The data were analysed and presented as tables, graphs and charts. It was found out that Mukono district by virtue of the Constitution and the Local Government Act, Cap 243, is mandated to recruit, discipline, develop and dismiss its staff, except the CAO and Deputy CAO. The district recruits from within and from outside through a procedure that is well stipulated by the Public Service Commission (PSC). However, the recruitment is done with a lot of irregularities like political influence, bribery, no submissions from the CAO and or/Town Clerk, which is contrary to the relevant laws, guidelines, rules and regulations. This has resulted into wrong decisions being implemented, thus causing loss of revenue to the district through performance gaps, heavy workload and poor service delivery. Eighty percent of respondents pointed to the need to recruit basing on multiparty system while 20% were against it, 57% preferring radio as a means of communication in case short-listing is out, 57% were of the view that political influence has limited proper management of human resource matters in the district. It is recommended that there should be regular training of the District Service Commission (DSC) members and the public as well as on the procedures of recruitment and putting in place an efficient feedback mechanism. High labour turnover should also be studied and prevented from escalating. There is also need to set up quality assurance mechanisms, amendment of the law such that the DSC members are not appointed by the district council but by the MoPS in consultation with the PSC and their remuneration be channelled direct to the DSC account instead of sending it through the CAO. More still, the DSC should have the mandate to demand for some vital submissions from the CAO/Town Clerks instead of just sitting back to wait for submissions. In addition, the DSC should improve communication with shortlisted candidates through telephone calls, emails and text messages and feedback to those who aren't successful after the selection process. The rules on co-option of technical members need to be laid down clearly and tightened to avoid bias, nepotism and bribery. In conclusion, it is recommended that the applicants should submit verified academic copies with their applications to reduce cases of forgery. The DSC should also submit their quarterly reports to the District Council and the PSC on time.

Keywords: Staff recruitment, decetralisation system, local government, Mukono distrcit