

Mbale Clinical Research Institute Meeting Parliamentary Committee on Science Technology and Innovation



MCRI - A Collaborative Centre for Research Excellence in Eastern Uganda

Report on the Proceedings of the STI Parliamentary visit



MCRI Premises, Mbale

October 19, 2023

Acronyms/ Abbreviation

ADM	Assistant Data Manager
HRM	Human Resource Manager
IDEA	The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access
LAB	Laboratory
MCRI	Mbale Clinical Research Institute
MP	Member of Parliament
PA	Personal Assistant
PEO	Public Engagement Officer
SSC	Study Site Coordinator
STI	Science Technology and Innovation
TCO	Trial Clinical Officer
TMO	Trial Medical Officer

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Executive Summary

On Thursday 19th October, the STI Parliamentary Committee paid a visit to the Mbale Clinical Research Institute (MCRI) site to carry out inquiries, oversee the activities and monitor the functionality of the facility. The STI committee comprising of 25 team members was well represented and headed by the Deputy Chairperson of the committee.

The major purpose of the visit was to establish how the Institute promotes Science, Technology and Innovation as laid out in the government and several collaborating stakeholders' agenda. The team was pleased with the progress made in research and development. Top management of MCRI expressed their commitment to promoting STI at the institute and beyond.

The visit began with a scheduled meeting as per the program with the MCRI Administration and the relevant Department heads. The Executive Director, introduced his team and welcomed the Committee members. He then presented about the MCRI's strategic plans, policies, and programs to support and promote innovation.

During the meeting, the Departmental heads had presentations highlighting the key activities they carry on to support research, science and innovation. MCRI video clip highlighted the overall activities MCRI is involved in summary



Figure 11: MCRI EXECUTIVE Director

Introduction

Parliamentary Committee on Science Technology and Innovation (STI) in fulfillment of its mandate held a visit to Mbale Clinical Research Institute (MCRI) on the 19th October 2023, at the institute's premises. The event which brought together all the MCRI staff and Members of Parliament had key sessions including: climate setting and preview of the programme, official opening, and update on the progress of MCRI research work and projects, Sharing experiences and open discussion and closing session.

1.0 Session One: Climate Setting And Preview Of The Programme

This session was facilitated by the MCRI Executive Director who called the meeting to order at 09:30a.m and welcomed all members to the meeting

Opening prayer

The opening prayer was led by a staff member of MCRI

2.0 Session Two: Official Opening /Remarks By The Host

The official opening was still moderated by the Executive Director of Mbale Clinical Research Institute. He introduced his workforce team and welcomed the Committee members to Mbale Clinical Research Institute. He gave participants a brief geographical insight of Mbale with emphasis on its unique and beautiful environment.

3.0 Session Three: Update On The Progress Of Mcri Research Work

The MCRI Executive Director presented about the MCRI's strategic plans, policies, and programs to support and promote innovation. He also pointed out the challenges MCRI faces with regard to Clinical research being at the boarder. Finally, he emphasized the need for teamwork and support from various stakeholders without forgetting the government's political will and support in addressing the outbreak of epidemic diseases affecting people within our community and illustrated this by citing the teamwork in Mbale as exemplified by the presence of the top hospital leadership at the meeting.

This included presentations from the Epi fellows on the emerging and re-emerging diseases response e.g Ebola



Figure 2: Epi-fellow presenting

4.0 Session Four: Remarks By The STI Representative

The **Senior Clerk Assistant to Parliament** called the house to order and led us in a word of prayer. She then invited the Chairperson of the STI Parliamentary Committee to continue with the proceedings of the meeting inform of Parliamentary arrangement

Self-Introductions

The STI Parliamentary committee members who included members of parliament from various districts, legal officers, social economists, Research Officer, Security Officers, introduced themselves and the details are reflected in the attendance list (Appendix I).

Remarks by the STI Chairperson

The Deputy Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Science and Innovation, conveyed apologies of the STI Committee Chairperson, who could not attend in person because he was not feeling well.

- Applauded the role of medical researchers in responding to disease outbreaks, which she noted was at a higher rate.
- The chairperson then explained their visit purpose. According to her, the visit was focused on understanding how MCRI directs research and innovation in the region. It also focused on the challenges it faces in the area.

“We are here to look at the MCRI’s research and innovation activities. We are here to learn and gain insights into the MCRI’s research agenda, contributions to scientific advancements, technological innovation, and overall development in the region. Research and innovation are

vital drivers of development. Understanding how the Institute is directing its efforts in these areas can provide valuable information for policymakers and stakeholders”, Hon. Hon. Dr Asimwe Florence Akiiki said.

- The STI Deputy chairperson further informed members that the STI Parliamentary Committee was established in 2016 to review and adjust STI in the country; monitor and evaluate what is happening in the country and report to parliament; monitor the use of funds given and guide on science. “MCRI is doing great in developing innovations, the level of expertise, skill and attention given to the different health issues is amazing,” Hon. Dr Asimwe Florence Akiiki said.
- The Chairperson also appreciated and noted the inclusiveness of women MCRI exhibited during the presentations that promotes women emancipation
- Generally the Committee members commended MCRI’s innovation works in research and noted that despite being an independent institution, the MCRI has established itself as a center of excellence for research and innovation. This is done by displaying research medical innovators’ creativity and dedication. The IDEA Fellowship students displayed several innovations. These were focused on solving the current problems of society.
- Finally, the Chairperson pledged government’s continued support to research institutions, in particular MCRI and its projects.
- He then wished participants good deliberations in the meeting.

Session Five: Sharing Experience and open Discussion/Concerns Noted

- There was a mention of the disease that was killing community members in Budaka and MCRI was involved in carrying out research to know the cause and were able to manage it (MPs tabled this during their parliamentary sessions and they needed to know what disease this was)
- More information was needed to know if there is any close relationship with the MOH of recent
- Concern was raised on the criteria used in identifying facilities of extending research services (other near facilities are left and far ones are considered)
- Team needed to know any problems encountered in translating research to better access to healthcare.
- There was a concern raised why we have more funding from outside counties and asked if there are any institutions involved in research receiving government grants (Team promised to support in areas they are able)
- The members asked to know if there is any MOU signed between the Institute and government and this commitments has been fulfilled

- In response to some of the concerns raised, the Director of MCRI responded to them and others were highlighted in the financial report giving the accountability of initial funding of UGX 103,000,000, which supported the implementation of the Covid-19 research project.



Figure 3: Session in progress.

6.0 Session Six: Way Forward/Recommendations

The team recommended on the need to organize for the symposium of all researchers in eastern region that will enable them to form a research group that will be able tackle a specific health problem that eventually will enhance the intellectual property aspect.

The Members appreciated MCRI for sharing information with the community through their position of community engagement. They noted that this is important since these are the users of the knowledge developed from the research work and encouraged MCRI have the need to continue to document and give the wider public information on how to handle different diseases using easily accessible medical means.

The team noted that challenge remains limited funding which affects the effective implementation of research activities that promote science and research innovation and thus padded total support in mobilizing for financial support

Appendix I: Meeting program

PROGRAM FOR THE OVERSIGHT VISIT BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION.

VENUE: MCRI Conference Room 1 Date: 19th Oct 2023 Time: 09:00 am

Time	Activity	Responsibility
08:30 – 09:00	Arrival / Registration	Ms. Anna Mary Nagudi
09:00 – 09:05	Prayer	Dr. Charles Okalebo
09:15 – 09:20	Welcome remarks	Prof. Peter Olupot-Olupot
09:20 – 09:25	Introductions	All
09:25 – 09:35	Remarks from the STI Committee	STI representative
09:35 – 10:10	MCRI Presentations	MCRI Scientists & Managers
10:00 – 10:30	Health Break	All
10:30 – 11:00	Site Tour	All
11:00 – 11:30	Overall Discussions	All
11:30 – 11:35	Group Photo and Departure	Dr. Charles Okalebo

Appendix II : Attendance List

NAME	TITTLE	
Zawedde Victorious	MP	
Odoi Onen	MP	
Owari Polycarp	MP	
Katenya Isaac	MP	
Okot Boniface Henry	MP	
Gloria Acayo	Legal Counsel	
David Senjonjo	Senior Economist	
Noeline Nakanjakko	Research Officer	
Nakayiwa Lydia Jane K	P.O.U Staff	
Kentose Ronald	P.O.U Staff	
Engola Betty	MP	
Bingi Patrick Nyanzi	MP	
Joanne Okia	MP	
Alex Niyonsaba	MP	
Jacquiline Mulumbise	Senior Clerk Assistant	
Asimwe Florence Akiiki	MP	
Ssasaga Isaiah	Woman MP	
Eng Irene Muloni	Woman MP	
Najjuna Sarah	Woman MP	
Kinobere Herbert	MP	
Katenga Isaac	MP	
Aabuka Okuullo J. Antony	MP	
Christoper Omoding	O/C MRRH Post	
Namukoda Joyce	Police	Mbale
Bamutale P	Police	Mbale
Chemutai Doreen	Police	Mbale

Opiyo Flonic	OC CID	Mbale
Okumu Stanslaus	TRAFFIC	Mbale
Charles Kiyaga	National Sickle cell Coordinator	MOH
Prof Peter Olupot-Olupot	Professor/ED	MCRI
Dr. Stephen Obbo	Hospital Director	MRRH
Rita Muhindo	LAB Manager	MCRI
Charles Okalebo	Pharmacist	MCRI
William Okiror	TMO	MCRI
George Paasi	TMO	MCRI
Felix Opio	ADM	MCRI
Adyango Catherine	HRM	MCRI
Paul Ongodia	TMO/SSC	MCRI
Cate Namayanja	PAEDIATRICIAN	MCRI
Linus Ochen	TCO	MCRI
Scovia Namataka	IT	MCRI
Anna Mary Nagudi	PA	MCRI
Ebitu Caleb Daniel	IT	MCRI
Crace Abongo	Data Manager	MCRI
Charles Elyanu	Security	MCRI
Denis Amorut	Trial Manager	MCRI
Laban Jeremiah Chelangat	Accountant	MCRI
Linda Isabirye	PEO	MCRI

END