

Rapid response services and evidence maps: tools to support evidence-informed decision-making

Earlier this month, the [Africa Evidence Network](#) welcomed Dr Rhona Mijumbi as part of a three-day learning exchange between the [Africa Centre for Evidence](#), the South African Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, and [Makerere University, College of Health Sciences](#) in Uganda. The learning exchange culminated in a [public lecture](#) on the applicability of rapid response services and evidence maps in Uganda and South Africa respectively to support evidence-informed decision-making. The lecture was well-attended by representatives from civil society, local government, and academia within South Africa.



Collaborative learning Harsha Dayal of the Department for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and Dr Rhona Mijumbi of the College of Health Sciences at Makerere University at the Africa Evidence Network public lecture.

The scientific and decision-maker knowledge base of Kenya's settlement schemes is [being updated](#) as part of a project led by Catherine Boone from the [London School of Economics](#) and Dr Fibian Lukalo, Research Director of [Kenya's National Land Commission](#). Aiming to learn from what smallholder settlement schemes have been sustainable in Kenya, the project hopes to provide policy lessons for developing countries.

A [report](#) published in July by the [Overseas Development Institute](#) finds that – among other things – adolescents with disabilities from the global south are often excluded from secondary-level education and have few sources of emotional support. The findings are based on interviews with some 600 disabled youths and their caregivers.

The [World Bank](#) is administering a [new multi-partner fund](#) that aims to support African decision-makers in making better use of evidence. The Think Africa Partnership aims to make economic decisions more evidence-informed by supporting capacity-enhancement in the entire evidence-to-policy cycle.

In a recent [blog post](#), [AFIDEP](#) reflects on the success of a workshop co-hosted with [Results for All](#) and [IDinsight](#) that aimed to bring together scientists, civil society members, funders and decision-makers to discuss how evidence can be used to improve policy implementation. The workshop focussed on participants sharing their evidence needs and illuminating potential solutions.

Evidence events

29 August: [Africa Evidence Network Webinar](#), online

27-29 August: [Bio Africa Convention](#), Durban, South Africa

11-14 September: [Guidelines International Network conference](#), Manchester, United Kingdom

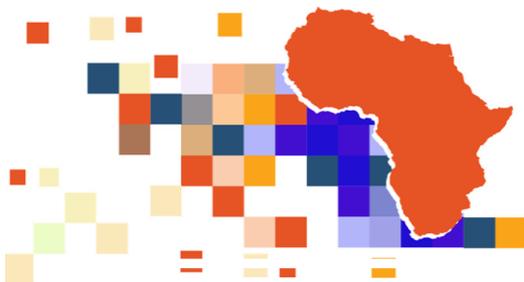
16-18 September: [Cochrane Colloquium](#), Edinburgh, Scotland

25-28 September: [EVIDENCE 2018](#), Pretoria, South Africa.

Announcements

- [Vacancies](#) at Apolitical.
- [Registration](#) is now open for the SAMEA capacity workshop series.
- [Free course](#) on human-centred design for social innovation from IDEO.org.
- EVIDENCE 2018 preliminary programme is now [available online](#).

Hear from Mark Heywood, Executive Director of [Section 27](#), in [this month's blog](#) about why he agreed to be the opening plenary speaker at EVIDENCE 2018. View all blog posts [online](#) and submit your AEN blog [here](#).



Is there need for a global evidence network?

Results for All recently published an **assessment** on the need for a global evidence network. The aim of the assessment is to determine the role that a global evidence network could play in supporting decision-makers' use of evidence, with the Africa Evidence Network being lauded as one of two networks to use a more inclusive definition of evidence. Over 50 peer learning networks to support the use of evidence by government were discovered throughout the world. The report also identifies a number of modes of member engagement: peer learning and exchange; working groups; independent chapters or nodes that emphasize action; and virtual networks that connect individuals on an ad hoc basis. The final summation is that there is space for a global network, if it looks a very particular way.



Scope for a global network There is space on the global landscape for a network that is global in scope, represented mostly by the global south and policy-makers, with institutional capacity to progress evidence-use, a policy-maker needs focus, and a broad definition of evidence.

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab** (J-PAL) has **pooled the experiences** of its affiliated researchers to **produce a resource**, aimed at specifically policy-makers, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and students for measuring girls' and women's empowerment within impact evaluations. Accurate measurement of various interventions' impact on outcomes is a key aspect of supporting policy change with evidence.

The **Wellcome Trust** is trying to make the data that supports the research it funds **more accessible** to other researchers in a new initiative with *Springer Nature*, the publishing giant. The funding-policy change, hopes to ensure that published research funded by the Trust can be scrutinised, accessed, reproduced, and combined with the aim of potentially generating different insights, says David Carr, Programme Manager at the Wellcome Trust.

One of the largest evidence synthesis groups – the **Campbell Collaboration** – is **seeking a new funding partner** after the support from the Norwegian Institute for Public Health comes to an end soon. The Campbell Collaboration has grown to include an international network of editorial teams that conduct evidence syntheses on social services domains, such as crime and injustice and education.

Evidence from academia

Einfield: 'Nudge and evidence-based policy: fertile ground'

Oronje et al: 'Contribution of a network of parliamentary committees of health to the ecosystem of evidence-use in African parliaments'

Topp et al: 'Knowledge management for policy impact: the case of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre'

Watt et al: 'EKLIPSE: engaging knowledge holders and networks for evidence-informed European policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services'

Cindy Huang, co-director of Migration, Displacement, and Humanitarian Policy and Senior Policy Fellow at the **Center for Global Development**, encourages **policy-makers to focus on three things** after an **unexpected turn** by the United States delegation at the recent World Health Assembly. First and foremost, policy-makers – argues Huang – should stay focused on the evidence. Specifically around the issue of breastfeeding, there exists robust and comprehensive research on its **benefits for infants in the long-term**.