

Africa Evidence Network moves forward

What an exciting year this has been for the **Africa Evidence Network** (AEN)! Not only does the Network have ambitious plans for interacting with its members more in the future, but this year has also seen the AEN receive its first funding grant from the **Hewlett Foundation**. The grant has allowed the Network to appoint its first senior manager, thereby growing AEN's secretariat – at the **Africa Centre for Evidence**. The Network team already has great plans underway, with the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework as well as preparations for **Evidence 2018** currently in the pipeline.



Funding With the grant received from the Hewlett Foundation, the Africa Evidence Network will develop a strategic plan, refine its membership consultation, and broaden its funding base in 2018

Picture via Hewlett.org

The evidence synthesis team at **Africa Centre for Evidence** has successfully completed an **EPPI-Centre** and United Kingdom **Department for International Development** effectiveness **systematic review**. The review answers the question: what is the effectiveness and design features of interventions to support women's wage labour participation in low and middle-income countries?

The UK's **Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation** (ESPA) programme funded a year-long synthesis project at the **Africa Centre for Evidence** (ACE). The programme comes to an end in early December 2017, with many **outputs** published via the ACE site: a map of ecosystem service evidence from Africa, and two thematic syntheses, among others.

The **Collaboration for Environmental Evidence Johannesburg** (CEE Joburg) is currently developing a **database** of practitioners, decision-makers, civil society, and researchers with an interest in environmental evidence. This database is part of our plans to offer a responsive evidence services in 2018.

Membership of the Africa Evidence Network has grown from just under 1000 members in 2016 to 1262. The Network also published a new **report** this year on evidence synthesis capacity within Africa. AEN Chairperson Ruth Stewart's **plenary address** at the **Global Evidence Summit** was another highlight from 2017, as is our coming **Evidence 2018**.

Evidence events

16 January: [Creating Research Data Policy in a Changing Data Landscape: A workshop](#), London, United Kingdom

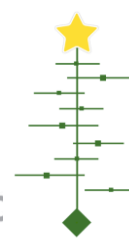
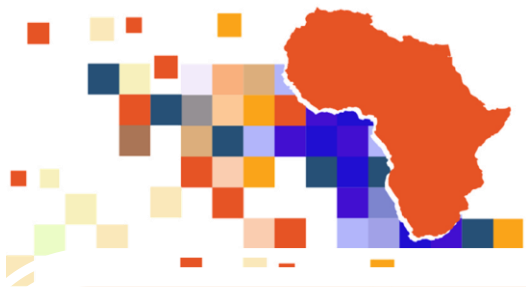
22-23 March: [Ghana Education Evidence Summit 2018](#), Accra, Ghana

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

Announcements

- **Recruitment drive:** Jameel Poverty Action Lab is hiring until 12 January 2018.
- **Updated database:** view the updated Africa Evidence Network capacity-building resources database.
- **Funding call:** Strengthening the Use of Evidence for Development.
- **Funding call:** Health Systems Research Initiative – call five.

On the blog now: AEN senior manager Siziwe Ngcwabe **shares** where the Africa Evidence Network is going post-2017. View all blog posts **online** and use the Network to share your view – submit your AEN blog **here**.



'Science wars' researcher defends science

Retired French sociologist Bruno Latour has **defended** the importance of science for the post-truth era. In the late 1970s, Latour argued that communities of scientists construct facts. This argument proved particularly troubling for those within these communities of scientists: many accused Latour and his colleagues of jeopardising trust in science. Now, in the context of climate change, Latour is fighting to restore trust in science. Stating that science on important policy issues can never be unbiased, Latour urges scientists to “explicitly state their interests, their values”, and recognise the different common realities that create different sets of common facts.



Science wars Latour and colleagues' controversial arguments have become useful in the fight against alternative facts.

Picture via sciencemag.org / U.S. O.C.S./PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DPA/AP IMAGES

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

Have you used **Cochrane Classmate**? This useful tool facilitates the teaching of evidence production to participants for a variety of purposes: traditional classroom teaching, virtual learning, events or workshops, and fundraising activities. Based on its citizen science counterpart – **Cochrane Crowd** – one of the tasks currently offered by Classmate includes randomised controlled trial identification.

Last month, **experts in disaster risk reduction met** in Geneva to update the Global Risk Assessment Framework. Disaster risk management issues that overlap with attempts at reducing poverty and addressing climate change were the focus of discussions during the course of the two-day-long meeting.

Harvard researchers wanting to **quantify the impact of the news media** on public discourse in the United States collaborated with 48 news outlets during a five-year-long experiment. The findings of the experiment, published in **Science** last month, pointed to the importance of small news outlets in the United States that were found to shape national dialogue.

Evidence from academia

Stewart et al: 'Practical reflections on combining workshops and mentorships to build capacity in demand and use of evidence in government organisations'

Greenhalgh & Russell: 'Reframing evidence synthesis as rhetorical action in the policy making drama'

Aryeetey et al: 'Evidence-informed decision making for nutrition: African experiences and way forward'

Vollan et al: 'Do campaigns featuring impact evaluations increase donations? Evidence from a survey experiment'

Are you involved in an academic-practitioner research collaboration? Consider using this **Rethinking Research Partnerships (RPP)** discussion **guide and toolkit** to guide critical discussions in your research partnership. Pulling together two years' worth of reflection and learning from RPP, the toolkit highlights questions that should be considered by anyone looking to enter into a research partnership.