

### What do we know about what policy makers want?

A recent article on the Research to Action website by Laura French-Constant focuses on **Lessons from 2014: What policy makers want from researchers**. An increasing number of academics are trying to communicate their research findings to policy makers in order to increase research uptake. However, it is important to understand what policy makers expect from academics and researchers and how they would like information to be communicated. The author summarises some recent studies that have investigated this question and asks how these contribute to what we already know about how policy makers access and use information. The author concludes by highlighting what she regards as the main question still to be investigated: "...where academics have gone wrong trying to influence policy and what they have learnt from the process. Essentially, do academics understand what is expected of them by policy makers?"



### LOCAL NEWS

What does the evidence suggest as the best way forward for the recapitalisation programme the South African government adopted as part of its land reform strategy? The Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) commissioned a review of this scheme, the findings of which formed part of a [recent discussion on recapitalisation in parliament](#).

An edited volume titled [Evaluation Management in South Africa and Africa](#) by Fanie Cloete, Babette Rabie and Christo de Coning was recently published. The collection combines theory and case studies to explore important themes in the field of evaluation. It caters for a wide audience and discusses evaluation at different institutional and project levels, as well as different sectors of society (e.g. public and private).

[A recent article](#) discusses the availability, accessibility and quality of data that exist about the African continent. The article argues that a lack of good quality data not only adversely affects decision making, but also makes it difficult to challenge perceptions about the continent. One of the conclusions of the article is that in order to more adequately address the continent's challenges, better quality data, not more data, are required.

[This blog](#) follows the ongoing debate about the replication of original studies that had in the past strongly informed policy decisions. The discussion looks specifically at Miguel and Kremer's 2004 worms study that evaluated mass deworming treatment at schools and comments on the areas of disagreement highlighted when the original data were re-analysed.

### Upcoming events

9-13 March: [2015 UNEG Evaluation Week Conference, New York, USA](#)

19-20 March: [Taking responsibility in M & E for systematic change Conference, Wageningen, The Netherlands](#)

14-15 April: [Strengthening Evaluation & Evidence Based Policy Conference, Sydney, Australia](#)

### Announcements

- 3ie has published an article on the ['The Role of Networks in evidence-informed policy in Africa'](#)
- The [New Cochrane library](#) is online
- Call for abstracts: [World Social Science Forum](#) – deadline 1 March
- Ms. Hazel Zaranyika is leaving the University of Johannesburg at the end of February and will no longer coordinate the AEN. We want to thank her for her hard work on the AEN and UJ-BCURE. Best wishes from all of us.

The SECURE Health programme recently completed [a study](#) on the barriers to research use in Kenya and Malawi, specifically in the health sector. The study identified a number of factors that act as barriers to the greater use of research evidence by policy makers within the Ministries of health and parliament in these two countries, specifically barriers to access, and barriers at institutional and individual levels.

## India's Evaluation Week 2015

As 2015 is the International Year of Evaluation, [India Evaluation Week in New Dehli](#) was one of the first of this year's events to promote EvalYear. The conference theme was 'Evaluations for Good Governance'. One of the central objectives was to promote dialogue with policy makers and government officials on evaluation matters. The need to create an enabling environment for evaluations through sensitization of culture, policy support to evaluations, strengthening evaluation capacities and evidence informed decision-making was emphasised. Challenges in evaluation frameworks and methodologies were highlighted at this conference and emphasis was placed on innovative approaches to evaluation as well as the role of academia in evaluation. 3ie hosted a seminar titled '*Delivering effective development: the value of synthesized evidence*'. Senior Evaluation Specialist, Hugh Waddington's presentation focused on the importance of synthesized evidence in development through improving effectiveness of programmes such as microcredit. A panel discussion followed, where participants deliberated on the importance of evidence synthesis. Participatory approaches to evaluation through involvement of key stakeholders were also discussed.



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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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[A new audit system](#) by independent researchers in New Dehli has minimized the chances of false reporting amongst auditors working in high pollution industrial plants. The Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) in conjunction with researchers made use of RCTs to determine the effectiveness of a third party audit system. The reports showed improved audit accuracy in pollution statistics.

[Investing in data through funding](#) can improve its generation and use. An article by Claire Melamed, from the Overseas Development Institute presents some of the key areas in which data can be funded, i.e. funding for official statistics, innovation, technology and people power, data literacy and use, as well as partnership and leadership.

Why is it difficult to obtain [evidence-based social policy in the USA](#)? In his book, Ron Haskins, from Brookings Institute outlines ways in which legislature and policy can best be informed by empirical evidence. He stresses that evidence and policy in governments are more likely to thrive in an environment where well thought out evaluations exist and when feedback is implemented.

A Policy Research Working Paper reveals that [impact evaluations](#) are useful in the delivery of development programmes. The study findings show that projects on which impact evaluations are done have a better implementation record and are completed in time. Furthermore, emergent problems are solved as the programme is delivered.

## Evidence from academia

Journal of Evidence and Policy: [Call for papers](#): Advancing evidence-based sustainable development policies: new approaches addressing the science-policy interface.

New journal [article](#): Reviews: Rapid! Rapid! Rapid!...and systematic

Journal article: 'Quality evidence for policymaking: I'll believe it when I see the replication' is now available as [open access](#)

Can aid agencies fund evaluation programmes which promote good governance? Ruth Levine & William Savedoff's paper on ['The Future of Aid: Building Aid Collectively'](#) explores this question. They emphasise that development institutions should channel their efforts towards financing programmes and impact evaluations, for example through 3ie.