



BCURE Annual Meeting held at the DFID Offices, London

The 2014 [BCURE Annual Meeting](#) for all six of the programmes working in various countries to build capacity to use research evidence in policy-making was held on the 3rd and 4th of December 2015. The meeting focused on experiences and approaches of the BCURE projects in different countries. Positive feedback and country specific contextual issues were key discussion areas largely defined by the nature and responses, uptake and challenges, sustainability and impact to evidence informed-policy implementation in the respective countries. Common challenges alongside solutions were also discussed which included issues on per diems to government officials, the intended path of handing over programmes in future, and lessons from programme failures. The UJ-BCURE team to London consisted Drs. Yvonne Erasmus and Isaac Choge, the Malawi and South African team leads respectively. As BCURE is a 3 year programme, issues of impact and sustainability were pertinent. The BCURE evaluation team emphasized on theory of change and the need for the programme's desired impact.



BCURE Annual Meeting

LOCAL NEWS

RCTs have proved useful in efforts by Zambia's Ministry of Health to improve its employment strategy for [Community Health workers](#) in rural communities. The RCTs focused on the effects of an organization's mission statement, peer comparison and work autonomy on employee performance and how these attracted health personnel to work in villages.

A programme led by the [African Universities' Research Approaches](#) (AURA) has been launched to enhance research and teaching practices in nine of Africa's universities. The project has a dual benefit in that it will enable academics to produce research whilst at the same time developing their students' research capabilities. Agriculture, health and economics form the programme's main domains. The programme seeks to establish progressive economies with sound governance practices.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will soon adopt an [open access](#) policy on research funded by the institution. Such an approach will enable researchers to access and utilize evidence from existing research and to advance their research in various fields. It is hoped that this will encourage other funders to follow suit.

A World Bank article reveals that [development practitioners'](#) negative views of the poor can be harmful to the development initiatives that they try to implement. The results were based on a question posed on whether the poor viewed their future as mostly depended upon themselves. The results were contrary to what development practitioners thought. 80% of the poor were in agreement with this view.

Upcoming events

9-12 February 2015: [ResUp MeetUp Symposium and Training Exchange](#), Nairobi, Kenya

19-21 February 2015: 3ie-led [Systematic Review Workshop](#) in Cairo, Egypt

March and April 2015: EPPI-centre training on [Systematic Reviews](#) in London

Announcements

- We are happy to have published our first set of [films](#) online. These outline activities of the AEN & UJ-BCURE's work in South Africa and Malawi
- The [reports and pictures](#) of our 1st AEN Colloquium held in November 2014, at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa can now be found online!

Statistics reveal that there has been a notable [decrease in HIV infections](#) compared to the number of people being treated with anti-retroviral drugs. The year 2013 was seen to yield commendable results of this attainment. Access to treatment potentially reduces the probability of transmission of the virus and thus showing great strides in this area.

Research shows the increasing importance of impact evaluations for agency performance.

A special edition of the Journal of Development Effectiveness focusses entirely on the application of impact evaluations to agency performance. Our featured article titled 'Measuring results in development: [The role of impact evaluation on agency-wide performance measurement systems \(AWPMS\)](#)', authored by Richard Manning and Howard White, argues that there is growing recognition that outcome monitoring does not provide useful data on the effectiveness of development interventions. Hence, the increase of impact evaluations at agency level. The authors discuss the "Triple A principles for an AWPMS – alignment, attribution and aggregation. They also describe ways in which to design and implement agency-based impact evaluations. They conclude by "urging greater cooperation between those chartered with measuring results and those conducting impact evaluations in order to develop AWPMS that can meaningfully report on agency performance".



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The Obama administration is known for its emphasis on evidence-informed policies and interventions. The administration has, for example, developed six domestic [policy initiatives](#) that incorporated evidence of effectiveness into the grant selection process. These initiatives include education, teen pregnancy, employment and training, health, and community-based programs. A new book, *Show Me the Evidence: Obama's Fight for Rigor and Results in Social Policy* has been published in this regard.

In keeping with the renewed emphasis on the importance of impact evaluations, the UNICEF Office of Research, in collaboration with three key partners, has produced a series of [methodological briefs](#) and videos on impact evaluations.

Bruce Wydick examines the reasons for the continued use of [narrative as impact](#). One of his findings is that in combination with data analysis, narrative data can add value. He argues, however, that standards for the utilization of narrative data is required. As researchers increasingly adhere to such standards when combining data types, the quality of evidence used will improve.

An interesting article estimates that [85% of research is wasted](#), resulting in reputational and financial loss. It is in large part the quality of the research design and methodology that determines whether research is wasted or not. Failure to disseminate or publish research also results in wastage. Utilization of appropriate methods (as described in the article) will reduce research wastage.

Evidence from academia

[New Special issue on:](#) Mapping the field in evidence-informed policy and practice: international perspectives

[New journal article:](#) The role of inquiries in shaping child care practice. Is there a role for evidence to inform policy?

[New journal article:](#) The policy role of systematic reviews: past, present and future

The Policy Lab, which works in [evidence-based design](#), has released two papers on the topic of reintegrating ex-combatants into society. The papers identify evidence-based approaches to reintegration.