

Evidence champions listening to a presentation



Partner in focus: SECURE Health

One of the DFID-funded BCURE programmes in Malawi, the SECURE Health (Strengthening Capacity to Use Research Evidence in Health Policy) programme, is a collaboration of the SECURE Health consortium and the Ministry of Health and Parliament in Malawi. Led by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) and implemented in both Kenya and Malawi, the programme's aim is to strengthen individual and institutional leadership and capacity for increased evidence use in health sector decision-making, planning and programming. Among other, the SECURE Health programme is working with senior officials in the Ministry of Health, Parliament and research organisations (i.e. 'evidence champions') to strengthen and support their efforts in building institutional capacity for increased evidence use. For more information contact Ms. N. Mushani-Malawi (nissily.mushani@afidep.org), or Mr. J. Abisi-Kenya, (jones.abisi@afidep.org) or visit the AFIDEP website (www.afidep.org).

The Africa Evidence Network was well-represented at the 2014 Campbell Colloquium in Belfast. Members facilitated 12 presentations, for example promoting the use of evidence in environmental policies in Africa. The AEN team also presented a number of posters and delegates showed great interest in the network. The posters can be accessed on [our new website](#).

INASP recently reflected in a number of blog posts on how the organisation considers systems thinking relevant to their remit of putting research at the heart of development. Applying the growing discipline of complexity theory, INASP mapped the research systems it operates in to identify critical connections as well as leveraging its place in these research systems.

Zambia's Ministry of Health uses **rigorous evidence** in order to determine how best to recruit and retain community health workers. In collaboration with LSE, the ministry conducted a randomised experiment to evaluate strategies to recruit, motivate, and retain agents in the rollout of its National Community Health Assistant Programme.

A new **SciDevNet article** investigates how power imbalances compromise meaningful research collaborations between Northern and Southern research bodies. Convincingly the article argues that, 'if we are serious about changing policies through evidence-based research, we need to give much more ownership of it to Southern researchers'.

Upcoming events

1-5 September: ADB/3ie 'Making impact evaluation matter' conference in Manila, Philippines

21-26 September: 22nd Cochrane Colloquium in Hyderabad, India

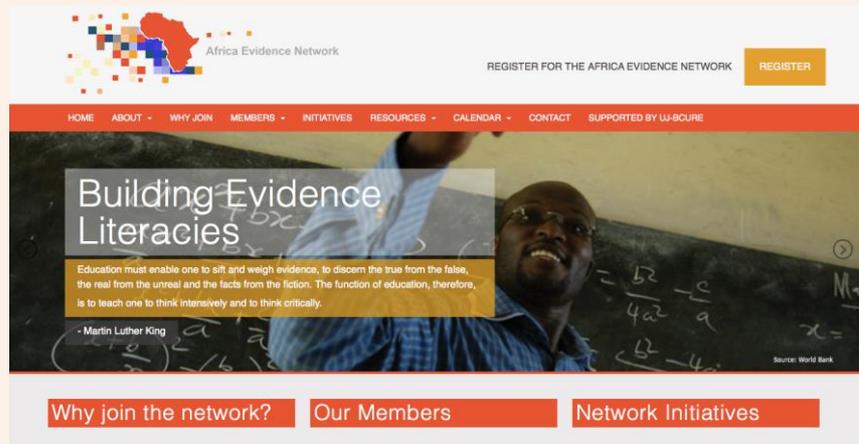
10-14 November: LIDC Short Course: Evaluation for Development Programmes

Announcements

- [Registration](#) for the Africa Evidence Colloquium in Johannesburg, 25-28 November is now open for AEN members!
- 3ie appoints [Emmanuel Jimenez](#) as new executive director
- Global Development Network - [Call for proposals](#): Doing research – assessing the environment for social science research in developing countries
- Impact Evaluation Network annual meeting – [Call for papers](#)

Launch of the new Africa Evidence Network website!

The new AEN website is online. We gave the site a new look and added a number of new features. You can now find a list of all members online, and sign-up has become more user friendly. Members can now also submit content and events to be shared on the site. We hope that the website will strengthen the linkages between network members and promote our shared remit of supporting the use of evidence in policy decisions on the continent. Information on the upcoming Africa Evidence Colloquium can also be found on the site. You can have a look at the new site at <http://www.africaevidencenetwork.org>



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Is evidence informed policy-making (EIPM) a **bottom-up or a top-down** approach to development, asks Kirsty Newman. She associates EIPM as a bottom-up tool that allows actors in the policy formulation process to consider (among other) reliable evidence. This inclusion of local information and knowledge empowers decision-makers to seek out policy solutions that are appropriate in their particular contexts. The AEN team will soon pick up on the same topic!

A new report attempts to explore how local policymakers in the Philippines perceive the use of 'evidence' in informing policy choices. Focusing on the **politics of evidence in policy making**, the study also follows a more pragmatic objective in evaluating the value of the use of 'evidence', particularly in winning an election. One of its fascinating (and verified) findings was that mayors claimed to 'always use evidence'.

Contextual influences have an important part to play in influencing the role of evidence in health policy development. Based on 72 in-depth interviews with policy-makers from India and Nigeria, a **recent presentation** showed that understanding context is essential in ensuring responsiveness of policy decisions to the needs of key policy actors within people-centred systems.

Evidence from academia

New ODI **toolkit**:
'Rapid Outcome Mapping Approach (ROMA) – a guide to policy engagement and influence'

New journal **article**:
'The cost of a knowledge silo: a systematic re-review of water, sanitation and hygiene interventions'

New **journal article**:
'A quality assessment tool for non-specialist users of regression analysis'

New **research report**:
'Measuring the Measurement Error: A Method to Qualitatively Validate Sensitive Survey Data'

Thought-provoking **essay**:
'Evidence-based medicine: a movement in crisis?'

In our next newsletter: *UJ-BCURE team visits Malawi + Information on the Centre for Social Development in Africa's newly launched RCT on how to improve youth unemployment in South Africa!*