



Africa Evidence Network

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Interest in evidence synthesis in Africa is growing

Evidence synthesis and evidence mapping dominated the evidence news headlines in Africa this month. Starting with the release of the AEN's Survey on Evidence Synthesis Capacity in Africa ([see here](#)), a range of events highlighted the need for synthesising evidence to inform decision-making on the continent. The Campbell Collaboration presented at evidence events in both [Kenya](#) and Uganda, emphasising the value of systematic reviews to public policy-makers. Similar activities were underway in South Africa where the [Africa Centre for Evidence](#) and the [Africa Centre for Systematic Reviews and Knowledge Translation](#) hosted an intra-African learning exchange on producing and using evidence synthesis. Both Centres are also part of the [Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative](#), which has a new [network](#) supporting research centres interested in evidence synthesis.



Africa Evidence Network
Capacity in Africa report

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The latest [blog](#) in [AllAfrica](#) shares the work of the Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) team at the World Bank on how Nigeria's use of Impact Evaluation (IE) research has driven innovation and improved health outcomes. For several years DIME has been working with the Government of Nigeria and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to conduct IEs on health issues such as maternal and child health, Malaria, and HIV/Aids control.

The [International Centre for Evaluation and Development \(IECD\)](#) is a newly formed Africa-based think-tank that promotes advanced evaluation theory, practice, and capacity to enhance development outcomes in the global South. IECD hosted its first Evidence to Action Conference in [Nairobi](#), Kenya; the next will take place in [Accra](#), Ghana.

The [African Development Bank](#) held its 52nd annual meeting at Ahmedabad in India on May 22-26, 2017. The key focus of the meeting was developing Africa's "grey matter infrastructure" through multi-sector investments in nutrition. Experts highlighted the importance of urgently fighting the scourge of malnutrition which impacts economic development.

Research scientists from the [International Center for Tropical Agriculture](#) in Kenya have launched a new online tool that aims to fight against malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa. The tool is known as [Nutrition Early Warning System](#) and it will be in use by the end of this year in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan.

Evidence events

29 June: [How do we manage the delicate balance between 'technical' and 'social' in translating evidence to action? Webinar](#), 14:00-15:00 BST

25-26 July: [Evidence to Action Conference](#) in Accra, Ghana

Announcements

- [SAMEA conference strand](#): Call for abstracts on using evaluation evidence for decision-making
- [INASP call for government agencies](#) - apply to improve the use of knowledge in policy

The latest [AEN blog](#) is by Dr Ekwaro Obuku from the Africa Centre for Systematic Reviews and Knowledge Translation at Makerere University, Uganda. The blog describes how South to South collaboration strengthens evidence use in Africa and highlights the discussion on evidence synthesis held by ACE. Submit your AEN blog [here](#).

Global evidence policy units in government

The [Knowledge Sector Initiative](#) in Indonesia has published a series on [global evidence policy units](#) in four very different countries. The series describes how policy units are embedded in government to evaluate policies and process, drive social accountability, enhance performance management, and inform decision-making with evidence. It presents key facts about the departments: how it was established, how it has evolved, and how it works today. The series also highlight how each country is trying to build demand for evidence. South Africa's Department for [Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation \(DPME\)](#) is one of the [policy units](#) featured in the series. DPME's role in South Africa is to assess the impact of government policies. It aims to make government ministries more accountable and collaborative, to encourage better service delivery and planning, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of these policies on society.



INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

An [opinion piece](#) by Leni Wild debates why big donor agencies need to change. Great strides have been made towards tackling poverty, however there are big development gaps that persist. For example in Kenya it will take almost five generations to achieve complete sanitation coverage. This reflects problems of equity and quality of services. Therefore it is suggested that development need to be done differently.

The latest World Bank's [Development Impact blog](#) discusses examples from Mexico where impact evaluations (IEs) found negative results, and policy-makers changed the policy as a result. Three examples show that IEs in Mexico did not show good results, and policy-makers used that information. In two cases the social programmes were cancelled. In the last example, a programme was improved due to evaluation findings.

The [Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia \(CARIAA\)](#) has launched a [Research-into-Use \(RiU\) learning guide](#) that aims to provide research teams with a bottom-up and experience-based tool to better understand the effectiveness and inefficiencies of different approaches to RiU. Key aspects of RiU are stakeholder engagement, communication, the development of strategic partnerships, evidence, capacity, and monitoring and evaluation.

Evidence from academia

[Harerimana et al](#): 'Social, economic and environmental risk factors for acute lower respiratory infections among children under five years of age in Rwanda'

[Lawrence et al](#): 'The evidence information service as a new platform for supporting evidence-based policy: a consultation of UK parliamentarians'

[Warira et al](#): 'Achieving and sustaining evidence-informed policy-making: effective communication and collaboration can go a long way'

A new [Oxfam blog](#) by guest Caroline Cassidy examines whether top academic and aid institutions are getting away with poor communications. This is linked to a message on writing by World Bank's chief economist Paul Romer who requested his team to communicate more clearly and that he would not clear a final report if the use of 'and' exceeded 2.6 percent.