

AEN welcomes Dr Rhona Mijumbi as acting AEN chairperson

The current chairperson of the Africa Evidence Network – Professor Ruth Stewart – will be taking a four month hiatus from heading the Africa Evidence Network. Stepping into her role will be Dr Rhona Mijumbi-Deve, a health policy analyst and specialist in knowledge translation based at Makerere University's [Africa Centre for Knowledge Translation](#) in Uganda. She is a medical doctor by training, although her career has led her to develop her interest in how best to build the capacity needed to strengthen health systems in low- and middle-income countries. In addition to her temporary role as AEN chairperson, she also currently acts as one of the three [EVIDENCE 2018](#) co-chairs. We look forward to an exciting four months under the guidance of her as the AEN chairperson.



Leading the Network Dr Mijumbi-Deve is based at the Africa Centre for Knowledge Translation, Makerere University in Uganda.

The [African Evidence Informed Policy Forum](#) took place on 6 and 7 March 2018 in Nairobi. This forum brought together think tank representatives, including young researchers, civil society actors, and high-level donors, among others, to understand how different actors engage in evidence policy processes in African contexts and are working to foster the use of evidence African policy-making.

The [Kenya Health Knowledge Translation Platform](#) (KTP) is designed to foster evidence-informed decision-making in Kenya's health sector. The KTP model brings two distinctive elements together in delivering on this promise: an online repository of research evidence and a non-online component that supports links between various stakeholders.

A [partnership](#) between Zambia's National Aids Council (NAC) and [AidData](#) was launched in the week of 6 March 2018 to upgrade the current paper-based NAC data collection and analysis system to support local decision-makers' use of evidence. The partnership was established as part of the [DREAMS Innovation Challenge award](#).

In a [post](#) on his [blog](#) this month, Duncan Green reflects on the whether evidence-based activism can actually bring about change? Green seems hopeful in his answer to this question after two days spent reviewing the strategy of [Twaweza](#). The East African non-governmental organisation – Twaweza – focuses on blending the use of rigorous research and civic participation for the benefit of primary education.

Evidence events

16-20 April: [Collaboration for Environmental Evidence second conference](#), Paris, France.

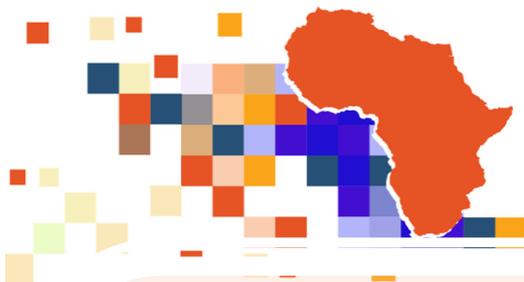
23-26 April: [JBI Comprehensive Systematic Review Training – Qualitative](#), Nairobi, Kenya.

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

Announcements

- The AEN [annual member survey](#) is up and running and will be open until 30 April 2018.
- [Call for proposals](#): International Initiative for Impact Evaluations (3ie); deadline 27 March.
- EVIDENCE 2018: [call for abstracts and bursary applications](#) now open.
- [Early career academic grants](#) available from the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Dr Patrick Mbah Okwen shares in this month's [blog](#) the development of clinical guidelines for Africa, by Africa. View all blog posts [online](#) and use the Network to share your view – submit your AEN blog [here](#).



Change the way you do policy research

After delivering a series of workshops on how universities could make their research more policy-relevant, [Tamas Wells and Emma Blomkamp](#) share three lessons learnt in a recent London School of Economics and Political Science [blog](#). Engagement with Australian policy-makers at various levels highlighted the shift in thinking required of researchers when undertaking policy research. This shift in thinking related to timeframes, research design, and research insights. Policy-makers explored whether a variety of research projects on different timeframes – from weeks to months to years – would be possible. Getting input from policy-makers on how research is designed could help researchers remain abreast of policy debates and political issues. Policy-makers also reiterated the necessity for “first-cut research insights” – that is, findings with clear messages that could assist in them in making defensible policy decisions.



Timeframes, design, and first-cuts Policy-makers in Australia expressed their research needs in a workshop series hosted by researchers at The Policy Lab.

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The [International Initiative for Impact Evaluations \(3ie\)](#) has recently published a mixed-method [evidence synthesis](#) that measures whether community-driven development does indeed drive social cohesion or infrastructure. Focused on low- and middle-income countries, the review draws on evidence presented in 25 impact evaluations. Success or failure factors are also presented.

In a recent [London School of Economics and Political Sciences](#) [blog post](#), authors Christina Boswell and Katherine Smith critique the often overly-simple call from funders for ‘impact pathways’ in funding proposals. The authors consider four approaches to understanding how knowledge and policy relate to one another, and question how these might influence how research impact is incentivized and measured in future research.

On the back of the immensely [successful 2017 campaign](#), [March for Science](#) is convening again on 14 April 2018. The initiative is encouraging ‘science supporters’ to attend or register satellite events in their areas in a global movement that aims to hold elected officials accountable to basing their decisions on evidence. So far, three events have been registered in Africa – in Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda.

Evidence from academia

[Doocy and Tappis](#): ‘The effectiveness and efficiency of cash-based approaches in emergencies’

[Dun et al](#): ‘Mediating the science-policy interface: Insights from the urban water sector in Melbourne, Australia’

[Pilankas et al](#): ‘Measuring collaboration and communication to increase implementation of evidence-based practices: the cultural exchange inventory’

[Rau et al](#): ‘From invisibility to impact: Recognising the scientific and societal relevance of interdisciplinary sustainability research’

In celebration of International Women’s Day on 8 March 2018, [Policy Press](#) is offering [free access](#) to articles that focus on women and gender until 31 March 2018. Included is a paper from Evidence & Policy exploring [feminist theory’s potential contribution to policy implementation challenges](#).