



Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || May 2017

Malawi First Lady launches Parliamentary Caucus on Population and Development

Her Excellency the First Lady of the Republic of Malawi, Dr Gertrude Mutharika, **launched** the Parliamentary Caucus on Population and Development on 24 April. The purpose of the Caucus is to promote advocacy and legislative reforms aimed at tackling Malawi's population and development challenges. This event was attended by over 100 members of the Malawi Parliament. In her speech, the First Lady congratulated the Members of Parliament (MPs) for taking the initiative to address Malawi's population and development challenges. The MPs are hoping for greater support and resource allocation in order to address population and development issues with the First Lady as their patron.



Her Excellency the First Lady of the Republic of Malawi, Dr. Gertrude Mutharika makes her remarks at the launch of the Parliamentary Caucus on Population and Development on 27th April 2017. Photo: Diana Warira/AFIDEP

The **South Africa Demographic and Health Survey 2016** is a new report from **Statistics South Africa** which indicates the health status of South Africa's population. The report shares key findings including South Africans awareness of HIV and AIDs testing. In this regard 93% of those being tested are aware of their medical condition. In 2016, 96% of delivery of children was in a clinic, up from 83% in 1998.

A new **policy brief** by Theminkosi Twala from the **Human Sciences Research Council** shares lessons from South Africa's Gauteng Department of Education in its challenges to implement the new district realignment policy. The policy provides a national framework for the organisation and staffing of education district offices and delegated authority.

In the most recent **article** in the **Conversation**, Jane Battersby looks at Africa's rapid urbanisation and how Africa's research universities can drive an urban agenda. Historically African governments have neglected urbanisation. Concerted policy attention to urban issues has created opportunities for African universities to engage with government.

The latest **blog** by **Evidence for HIV Prevention in Southern Africa** imparts useful tips for researchers and policy-makers to maximize evidence uptake and usage in parliaments. Some of the tips include, but are not limited to, researchers being aware of political contexts in which they operate, and for policy-makers include holding parliamentary research weeks.

Evidence events

22 May: **Evidence Synthesis in Africa Exchange** in Johannesburg, South Africa

16 -18 August: **Symposium on Financing for Universal Health Coverage** in Kampala, Uganda

13 -16 September: **Global Evidence Summit** in Cape Town, South Africa

Announcements

- **Call for abstracts and workshop proposals** for the 6th Biennial SAMEA conference 2017
- Dr Florence Etta is **appointed** as new Global Evaluation Advisory Committee (GEAC) chair

The latest **AEN blog** is by Caitlin Mapitsa from the Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA). The blog shares how through the Twende Mbele initiative peer learning, collaboration, and network development has strengthened African evaluation methods. Submit your AEN blog [here](#).

Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || May 2017

Launch of CaSE's new report on the use of evidence in policy-making

On 24 April at New Prospect House near London's Southbank the **Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE)** launched a new evidence report on improving the use of evidence in government policy-making in the United Kingdom. This report was a collaboration between CaSE and the University College London. The launch included a panel discussion and was followed by a networking event. The panelists included the Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, Stephen Metcalfe MP; the Co-Director of Policy at Manchester at the University of Manchester, Professor Andy Westwood; and the Director of Research & Development of Public Health England, Professor Bernie Hannigan. This event was chaired by CaSE Executive director Dr Sarah Main. The panelists were joined by 60 people from across policy and political communities. The panel discussion and the Q&A that followed with the audience highlighted the timeliness of the report.



(L-R), Professor Andy Westwood, Professor Bernie Hannigan, Dr Anusha Panjwani of CaSE, Dr Sarah Main, and Stephen Metcalfe MP. Photo: CaSE

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

INASP shares [ten videos](#) on evidence to policy which feature researchers, policy-makers and practitioners from all over the world discussing key issues in evidence-informed policy. The first video features Louise Shaxon of the Overseas Development Institute explaining the concept of evidence-informed policy-making. The second video focusses on the challenges of in getting research into policy in Nigeria.

Louise Ball of [Overseas Development Institute \(ODI\)](#) highlights the global march for science that took place on 22 April in Washington DC in the United States. This was one of over 500 marches by scientists and their supporters in hundreds of cities around the world. The march represented the science community defending evidence-based thinking against the rise of post-truth politics.

According to the [World Bank](#) stunting has declined in most regions, but is increasing in Africa. Since 1990 the number of stunted children has declined in many countries and are on course to meet the global target of reducing stunting 40% by 2025. However, in Sub-Saharan Africa an absolute number of stunted children increased from nearly 45 million in 1990 to 57 million in 2015. This means the region will not meet its target.

Evidence from academia

[Birken et al](#): 'Organization theory for dissemination and implementation research'

[Cairney and Oliver](#): 'Evidence-based policymaking is not like evidence-based medicine, so how far should you go to bridge the divide between evidence and policy?'

[Haddway et al](#): 'A framework for stakeholder engagement during systematic reviews and maps in environmental management'

[Jessani et al](#): 'Enhancing evidence-informed decision making: strategies for engagement between public health faculty and policymakers in Kenya'

Reminder: The [Health Systems Evidence](#) is a free continuously updated database that has a rich repository of syntheses of research evidence. The research articles focus on governance, financial and delivery arrangements within health systems, and implementation strategies that can support change in health systems.