

## Evidence 2018 – an event to remember

**Evidence 2018** was hosted by the **Africa Evidence Network (AEN)** this year on 25-28 September, and what an event it was! Delegates were able to attend nine **satellite sessions** covering various topics by hosts like the **International Initiative for Impact Evaluation**. The AEN hosted four workshops and challenging thematic sessions focused on issues related to Africa's development. Examples of conversations at the conference included how to cross bridges between Franco-phone and Anglophone Africa. Presentations from **day two, three, and four** of the conference – as well as **blogs, videos and images** – are available now.



**Three days of conversations, networking, and EIDM** Delegates attending Evidence 2018 hailed from countries all across Africa and the world.

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If you are not a magician, avoid thinking your research will magically influence policy in the absence of trusted relationships with key decision-makers. **So writes** Dr Rose Oronje, director of science communications and uptake at the **African Institute for Development Policy**. Dr Oronje argues that research is inherently political, and that researchers should aim to understanding the policy-making cycle.

In the wake of the Brexit vote and US election scandals, Facebook is **working closely** with **Africa Check** to bring local contextual knowledge to complement the artificial intelligence effort to remove up to 1-million false accounts daily. The ultimate aim for the fact-checking agency is to support informed decision-making by the public and policy-makers.

Working with **International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications and Policy & Ideas**, Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) **assessed** the current state of their evidence-use by applying the **Context Matters framework**. The EPA states that advocacy and engagement are important for evidence-use.

Scientists based at the University of Ghana's West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens have **launched a network** to showcase African contributions to science. The **African Science Initiative** is also a platform to support the capacity-development for, and collaboration between, young African scientists from across the globe.

## Evidence events

5-8 November: [SciDataCon 2018: The Digital Frontiers of Global Science](#), Gaborone, Botswana.

7-8 November: [3ie London Evidence Week conference](#), London, United Kingdom.

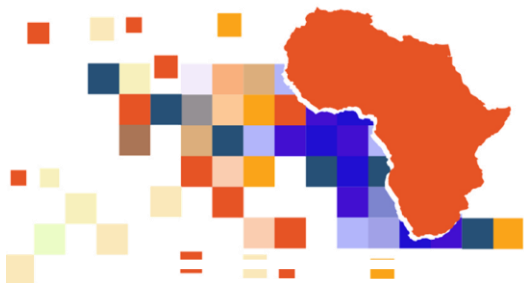
15-16 November: [Data Artistry: Presenting data in dashboards](#), Johannesburg, South Africa.

15-18 November: [The 5th International Conference on Family Planning](#), Kigali, Rwanda.

## Announcements

- **Call for expressions of interest** by researchers in sub-Saharan Africa.
- The next **#AfricaEvidence webinar** will take place during the first week of December: watch this space!
- Evaluate Evidence 2018: emails sent to delegates this week with link.
- Check out the 2018 annual member survey report **online now**.

AEN members Thesandree Padayachee and Natalie Tannous share their experiences of Evidence 2018 in this month's **blog**. View all posts **online** and submit your blog post **here**.



## Develop metrics to measure successful co-production

Current metrics to determine the value of research remain narrow and poorly suited to incentivising co-production, [write](#) Catherine Durose, Liz Richardson and Beth Perry in a recent *Nature* comment. Similarly, the authors argue, the process of peer review to value research can often result in scientists being the only voices in determining what is legitimate knowledge on especially complex and cross-boundary issues. A central challenge to valuing co-production is that such collaborations seldom take the form of an academic paper published in a high-impact English journal; one solution to this that the authors suggest are to develop the rigorous and replicable metrics that measure – and reward – co-production done right.



Picture: Africa Evidence Network

### Develop ways to measure success

Whether research is valuable and useful requires developing metrics that acknowledge the value of co-production, specifically for complex social problems.

## INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The [Centre for Homelessness Impact](#), in collaboration with [the Campbell Collaboration](#) and [Heriot-Watt University](#), has [published](#) two evidence gap maps on homelessness across the globe. The first map – known as the ‘what works’ map – maps out studies about the effectiveness of interventions to reduce homelessness, while the second ‘why-and-how-things-work’ map tracks the mechanisms necessary for the best results.

A [new book](#) entitled *Measuring the Unmeasurable in Education* edited by Elaine Unterhalter explores the sociological, epistemological and philosophical issues around developing metrics for unmeasurable constructs such as human rights in education. The book draws insights from both national and international examples of current practice and critical thinking about how the unmeasurable can and should be measured in education.

What is the implication of artificial intelligence (AI) on research methods such as systematic reviews? A [comment](#) in *Nature* explores the blossoming potential of using AI to make research processes more efficient. Technologies like Iris.ai currently group papers based on text but the developers envisage a future where research will be clustered based on hypotheses explored within papers.

## Evidence from academia

[Chol et al](#): ‘Health system reforms in five sub-Saharan African countries that experienced major armed conflicts (wars) during 1990–2015: a literature review’

[Clist](#): ‘Payment by results in international development: Evidence from the first decade’

[Mayne et al](#): ‘Using evidence to influence policy: Oxfam’s experience’

[Ridde et al](#): ‘How Burkina Faso used evidence in deciding to launch its policy of free healthcare for children under five and women in 2016’

In a [guest blog](#) on Duncan Green’s *From Poverty to Power* blog, Emily Brown ([Oxfam](#)), Rebecca Haines and Tam O’Neill ([CARE International UK](#)) reflect on three reasons to adopt a gender-sensitive perspective when undertaking political economy analysis. Adopting a gender lens allows political economy analysts to holistically diagnose poverty and inequality, avoid reinforcing existing power relations, and finally find new pathways to and agents for change.