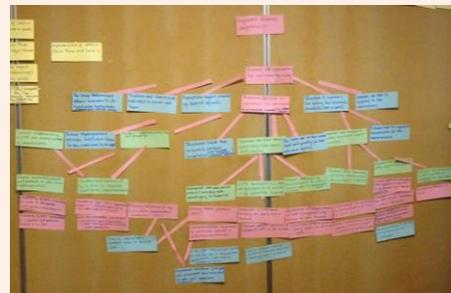


### Increased use of theory of change within DPME

For three years, the South African Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation ([DPME](#)) has been implementing the National Evaluation Policy framework. Currently 39 evaluations are in the evaluation system but this fledgling system has to contend with a number of issues, one being the varying nature and quality of programmes in government. The DPME has used theory of change (ToC) both to assess programme performance and as a way for officials and other relevant parties to collectively reflect on how the programme was designed and expected to work. A recent ToC workshop and design clinic hosted by the DPME and facilitated by 3ie culminated in broad agreements about programme logic and performance metrics, and a shared understanding of the evaluation questions departments want answered. The NEP process continues to prove valuable in supporting the use of ToC in public management.



**DPME ToC:** Draft theory of change of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement.

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### LOCAL NEWS

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In today's world, accurate reporting is paramount to keeping the public informed, especially in Africa. Websites such as BudgIT and Africa Check are hoping to [improve fact-checking services](#) and in the process, dispel commonly accepted myths about Africa as sometimes portrayed by international news sources.

Funded by the National Research Foundation and with Government's full backing, [the first research chair in science communication in Africa](#) has been awarded to Stellenbosch University's Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology. The new chair will create opportunities for postgraduate students and researchers to study science communication within an African context.

The Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation (PFDE) held a meeting entitled 'Towards a Global Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation' early in October. To continue growing the PFDE in regions such as Africa, parliamentarians from groups worldwide met to discuss – among other things – existing forums' updates, new emerging groups, and [the establishment of a Global PFDE](#).

The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), through its SECURE health programme, held a fruitful [stakeholders' meeting](#) in September to promote the use of research evidence in health policymaking in Kenya. The high-level meeting attracted policymakers in parliament and various experts in the health industry.

### Upcoming events

29 October: [Rapid evidence assessments for environmental management: seminar](#), Centre for Anthropological Research, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

25-28 November: [Africa Evidence Colloquium](#), University of Johannesburg, South Africa

1-5 December: [Systematic Review and Meta-analysis course](#), Makerere University, Uganda

### Announcements

- The UJ-BCURE open-access [capacity-building tools](#) are available on the AEN website and comprise of training, secondment, and mentorship guideline documents. Feedback is welcome!
- Vacancy: Zimbisa is looking for a [product development mentor](#) to offer technical advisory support to its research partners.
- A [call](#) for systematic review proposals from 3ie and others.

### Better understanding the use and impact of Open Educational Resources (OER)

The [Research on Open Education Resources for Development in the Global South](#) (ROER4D) project is a three-year multi-country and institutional research project hosted by the University of Cape Town. ROER4D's general objective is to improve educational policy, practice and research in developing countries by better understanding the use and impact of OER which would allow governments, policymakers and institutional leaders to make decisions about educational policy based on evidence. The IDRC funded programme comprises 12 sub-projects in three regions (South America, sub-Saharan Africa and south/south-east Asia). The project will soon be extended to include up to 10 OER impact studies funded by DFID.



Image courtesy of [www.ROER4D.org/about-us](http://www.ROER4D.org/about-us)

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### INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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The actual effect of development impact evaluations – often [assumed to make a difference](#) in the lives of poor people – are being questioned due to poorly defined target populations and poverty measures. [Findings are less useful](#) to programme implementers when measurements are ill-defined.

The myth that 'clean cookstoves' reduce the risk of rape has been found to lack evidence. The cookstoves, designed to reduce indoor air pollution, were claimed to reduce the amount of wood required to cook food and thus decrease the risk of rape for the women journeying to collect the wood. Some supporters of this claim have been [accused of oversimplifying a complex social issue](#) in [research conducted earlier this year](#).

A [short blog piece](#) touches on the importance of creating feedback loops among stakeholders in research to foster greater data engagement and evidence uptake. The Baltimore CitiStat Database – which allows city officials from different departments to see what is happening at a particular point in the city – is discussed as an example of stakeholders successfully engaging with evidence for the benefit of policy.

To be successful, budding monitoring and evaluation specialists [require a thorough understanding of four key areas](#): methods used in social science; statistical methods, research design, and outcome measurement; evidence-based decision-making; and cost-benefit analysis. There are multiple courses, degree programmes, and workshops offered to cultivate these skills.

### Evidence from academia

#### New [research report](#):

Mapping the social science research landscape in Kenya

New [policy research working paper](#):  
Exploiting externalities to estimate the long-term effects of early childhood deworming

#### New [journal article](#):

Uptake and impact of research for evidence-based practice: lessons from the Africa Health Systems Initiative's research component

#### New [journal article](#):

Forwards and backwards evidence-based learning on climate adaptation

#### New [journal article](#):

What constitutes 'good' evidence for public health and social policy making?  
From hierarchies to appropriateness