

## Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || September 2017

### A new network for healthcare decision-making in Africa

Cochrane launched its new healthcare decision-making network, [Cochrane Africa](#) at the Global Evidence Summit in Cape Town South Africa on 15 September 2017. The vision of the Network is to increase the use of best evidence to inform healthcare decision-making in the sub-Saharan African region. Cochrane Africa is part of the global, independent Cochrane network of researchers, professionals, patients, carers, and people interested in health. The Network currently comprises of four hubs: the [Coordinating Hub](#), [Francophone Hub](#), [West Africa Hub](#), and [Southern and Eastern Africa Hub](#). For more information on Cochrane Africa's new structure and functions policy, see [here](#).



Delegates at the Cochrane Africa Network meeting and launch at the Global Evidence Summit in Cape Town, South Africa. Image credit: Tamara Kreda, Twitter

Dr Charles Shey Wiysonge of the [South African Cochrane Collaboration](#) discusses how the centre is promoting evidence-based healthcare in Africa. Dr Wiysonge remarked that the use of health research in decision-making in African countries is generally weak. For this reason, the Cochrane centre advocates for the dissemination and use of evidence, and for the building of partnerships to promote evidence-informed healthcare in collaboration with decision-makers.

A new paper by [INASP](#) and the [African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs \(ACEPA\)](#) focusses on the internal information support structures that gather and deliver evidence to decision-makers in African parliaments. Also, the paper describes the key features of information support systems in African parliaments.

[Human Rights Watch](#) commends Ghana's new President – Nana Akufo-Addo – on his pledge to deliver free secondary education. Removing school fees is a big step towards helping students stay in schools. However, there are other barriers to education such as the cost of food and transport. To ensure all children benefit equally the government must consider these issues too.

According to the [Statistics South Africa poverty report 2017](#), government policies are failing the people of South Africa. Statistics in this report show that 30.4 million of South Africa's 55 million citizens in 2015 lived in poverty. This is three million more people than in 2011. Due to high unemployment, the rise of poverty has reversed previous gains made.

### Evidence events

**26 September: EU4FACTS: Evidence for policy in a post-fact world conference, Brussels**

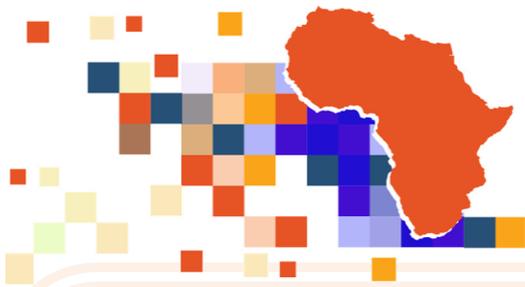
**09 October: Africa Centre for Evidence launch, Johannesburg, South Africa**

**23-27 October: SAMEA conference in Johannesburg, South Africa**

### Announcements

- The AEN has a **new manager**: Siziwe Ngcwabe will be joining us from 2 October.
- **AEN consultation** on the Evidence 2018 strands continue – share your views. Deadline 22 September 2017.

This month's [AEN blog](#) features Dr Rhona Mijumbi-Deve of Makerere University in Kampala reflecting on her experience of the 2017 Global Evidence Summit in Cape Town, South Africa. Members are always welcome to submit their blogs [here](#).



### Cochrane and partners host a successful Global Evidence Summit in South Africa

Cochrane joined forces with the [Campbell Collaboration](#), [Guidelines International Network](#), [International Society for Evidence-based Health Care](#), and the [Joanna Briggs Institute](#) to host the first [Global Evidence Summit \(GES\)](#) in Cape Town, South Africa from 13-16 September 2017. The event aimed to advance the use of reliable research evidence in addressing the world's most serious health and social challenges. GES was attended by 1400 people from 77 countries and had an amazing jam-packed [programme](#) including five plenaries, 12 threaded sessions, 99 long oral sessions, 100 short oral sessions, and 559 posters. There were inspiring and experienced speakers representing all sectors including health education, and the environment. The [highlights](#) of the Summit were the discussions, sharing, and networking that continued beyond the sessions.



Plenary one speakers at GES 2017. From left to right: South Africa's Former Minister in the Presidency Trevor Manuel, Professor Ruth Stewart, and Dr Patrick Mbah Okwen.

### INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

It is important to understand the policy process and the demand for evidence within it to make evidence count. Paul Cainery shares a [five step strategy](#) to make evidence count. (1) Respect the positive role of politics. (2) Reject simple models of evidence-based policy-making. (3) Tell a simple story about your evidence. (4) Tailor your story to many audiences. (5) Clarify and address key dilemmas with political choice, not evidence.

Nadine Marshall and Chris Cvitanovic have compiled [ten top tips](#) for social scientists seeking to influence the policy arena. These tips are taken from their research of 348 years of cumulative experience shared by 31 experts across three continents. Although the focus of the research is in relation to environmental challenges, the advice generated can be extended to help scientists from any discipline.

[What have we learned from disaster?](#) Zoe Tabary reports that in the last 20 years about 1.5 million people have died in disasters. According to Britain's Department for International Development, crises such as hurricanes and severe droughts cost 30 billion USD a year across 77 of the poorest countries in the world. Different experts were hosted by the Overseas Development Institute in London to discuss lessons learned from such disasters, one of which was the need to organise disaster research in such a way that it accommodates affected communities.

### Evidence from academia

[Davidson](#): 'Storytelling and evidence-based policy: lessons from the grey literature'

[Baekgaard et al](#): 'The role of evidence in politics: motivated reasoning and persuasion among politicians'

[Quimet et al](#): 'Use of systematic literature reviews in Canadian government departments: Where do we need to go?'

[Ozawa et al](#): 'Estimated economic impact of vaccinations in 73 low- and middle-income countries, 2001–2020'

Interested in sharing your science more widely? The [Imperial College London](#) has put out a [practical Pop Up Science guide](#) to transform empty shops into creative spaces for science engagement. The purpose of Pop Up Science is to embed science engagement into a community setting, reaching diverse people in places that are familiar to them and where they already spend time.