

## Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || September 2016

### The Africa Evidence Network to host Evidence 2016 Conference in Pretoria

The Africa Evidence Network (AEN) will be hosting delegates from 15 countries at the [Evidence 2016](#) conference from 20-22 September 2016 at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria. The conference delegates will be welcomed by Prof. Ruth Stewart, chairperson of the AEN, and the South African Minister of Science and Technology, Hon. Naledi Pandor, will give a keynote address. The theme of the conference is 'Engage, Understand, Impact', resonating with the current priorities and concerns in evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) across Africa. The Evidence 2016 [programme](#) has an impressive line-up of thought leaders in the field of EIDM from around the world. The conference will share daily updates through [live tweets](#) and [blog](#) posts on its [website](#).



Prof. Ruth Stewart, AEN chairperson, addressing delegates at the [first biennial](#) conference in 2014.

Malawi hosted the [National Conference on Population and Development](#) from 6 to 8 September 2016, where the country's demographic dividend [report](#) was also launched. The report outlines key policy recommendations on how Malawi can harness the potential of its youth population to achieve socio-economic development. It is estimated that about 80% of Malawi's population is below 35 years of age.

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) in the African Region launched a [toolkit](#) aimed at helping both health and non-health professionals to better address the root causes of what makes people sick or healthy. It is a practical online resource, which aims to strengthen learning and problem-solving skills to address a wide range of public health concerns.

[AFIDEP](#) and partners, through the [SECURE Health programme](#), hosted a [graduation ceremony](#) for officials from the Ministry of Health in Kenya who completed a course in evidence-informed policy-making. A total of 34 officials participated in the course: of these 13 participants authored policy briefs on various urgent health challenges in Kenya.

The [Evaluation for Africa blog](#) is dedicated to evaluation in service of Africa's development. Further it provides updates on what is happening on evaluation from around the continent. The latest [blog](#) analyses whether organisations can learn anything if evaluations don't provide useful material to learn from.

### Evidence events

[20-22 September: Evidence 2016 conference in Pretoria, South Africa](#)

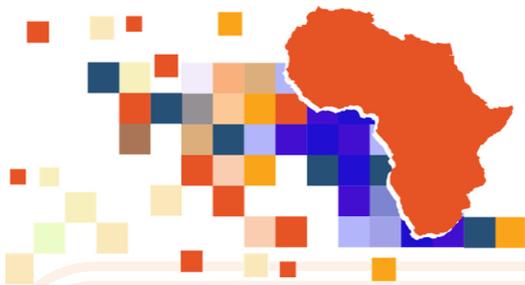
[26-28 September: What Works Global summit in London, United Kingdom](#)

[06-07 October: Monitoring and evaluation capacity-building workshop series in Cape Town, South Africa](#)

### Announcements

- [Call for proposals](#) for SAMEA, CLEAR-AA and CREST research partnership
- [Call for proposals](#) for national professional conference organiser to the 8<sup>th</sup> Africa Evaluation Association conference in Uganda

The latest [AEN blog](#) is by Dr Shanil Haricharan the Evidence 2016 conference chair, who shares his thoughts about the upcoming conference. The blog highlights the exciting range of plenary, small group and oral presentations expected from academic and public sector delegates from 15 countries across Africa. Submit your AEN blog [here](#).



### Start from context: How to promote a better interaction between knowledge and policy

The [Politics and Ideas \(P&I\)](#) and the [International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications \(INASP\)](#) have produced a practical [paper](#) which stems from a conceptual framework under the project entitled 'Going beyond context matters'. The first [conceptual framework](#) focused on helping policymakers, researchers, practitioners and donors to better define windows of opportunity in different contexts to focus efforts on promoting better interaction between knowledge and policy. This focus was illustrated in the recent [webinar](#) on 7 September 2016. The practical paper proposes concrete ways in which the framework can be used to take action on concrete projects and initiatives that seek to enhance the interaction between research and policy. The paper suggests two main types of content that might help with practical implementation and gives concrete ideas on how to apply the framework to different uses. It also points out useful tools which helps with complexity of efforts to promote the use of research in policy.

#### Starting from context:

how to make strategic decisions to promote a better interaction between knowledge and policy



July 2016  
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## INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The [Conversation blog](#) shares how Brazil decreased child stunting over the past 10 years. Statistics show that in the 1970s, 55% of children in the north east of Brazil were stunted. By 2006, the figure was reduced to 6%. The pro-poor public policies that were introduced between 1995 and 2006 contributed to the decrease of child stunting.

The [Hewlett Foundation blog](#) provides a list of global events in the evidence-informed decision-making field. The list includes African events such as the [Evidence 2016](#) conference hosted by the [Africa Evidence Network](#), and the [Ghana Education Evidence Summit](#) co-hosted by [Innovation for Poverty Action \(IPA\)](#) and the Ghana Ministry of Education. The list also includes international events such as the [What Works Global Summit](#).

The [Impact of Social Sciences blog](#) discusses how proximity and trust are key factors in getting research to feed into policy-making. It is argued that policy-makers frequently fail to use research evidence in their work, and that academia moves too slowly for the policy world. The United Kingdom's Department of Health is used as a case study to outline how research most likely has an impact as a result of personal interaction between individual researchers and policy-makers. One major downside of embodied knowledge is when individuals change or leave jobs.

## Evidence from academia

[Brinkman et al](#): 'Efficacy of infant simulator programmes to prevent teenage pregnancy: a school-based cluster randomised controlled trial in Western Australia'

[Haby et al](#): 'Designing a rapid response program to support evidence-informed decision-making in the Americas region: using the best available evidence and case studies'

A new [case study](#) by [INASP](#) showcases the training and mentoring programme provided by the Jimma University to the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) to improve the Ministry's capacity for using evidence in policy-making. The Jimma University team conducted a needs assessment for FMOH and discovered that institutional culture, staff capacity and evidence availability were three key obstacles faced by the Ministry. Therefore, the university team devised a three part training course that enabled a total of 21 participants from 11 departments in the FMOH to better understand, access, appraise and use research evidence.