



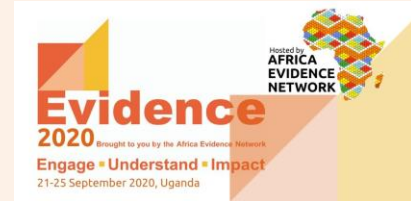
AFRICA
EVIDENCE
NETWORK

Only together can evidence-
informed decision-making
become reality.

NEWSLETTER || December 2019

What will 2020 bring for the Africa Evidence Network?

The year 2020 rings in **elections** at either the local or the national level in 18 countries on the African continent: what an opportune moment for EIDM in action! The **Africa Evidence Network** hopes to capture the relevance of all this as we garner momentum for our biennial conference, **Evidence 2020** (21-25 September 2020, Uganda). Dedication and commitment from our partners around the continent to collaborate on a multitude of activities means that we have an exciting year ahead focused on issues and topics of importance to our network members. This will dovetail with our new strategic plan that aims to enhance our role as a leader and broker within the global field of EIDM.



Evidence 2020 – an event like no other The Evidence conference is the biennial conference hosted by the Africa Evidence Network.

Photo: Africa Evidence Network

The **Africa Evidence Network secretariat** successfully hosted the first-ever **Africa Evidence Week** that took place from 9-13 September. This virtual celebration of Africa's evidence-informed decision-making by African organisations involved 13 partners and hosts. The AEN also hosted the first **reference group** face-to-face meeting in June this year, which facilitated a great sense of community within the group.

The **AEN** is spearheading a study on organisations in Africa that subscribe to advancing evidence-informed decision-making. The aim is to get a better understanding of the needs and interests of current as well as potential members at the continental level. We are also exploring institutional capacity, demand and opportunity for organisational collaboration.

Last year, the **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation** funded the **Africa Evidence Network** to implement the **Africa Evidence Leadership Award** for EIDM in Africa. The second beneficiary for this award is **Mapula Tshangela** who will give a keynote address at the **Evidence 2020 conference** in Uganda. The AEN will fully cover her attendance as part of her award.

The **South African National Research Foundation** has awarded **AEN** chairperson Professor Ruth Stewart a B1 rating, recognising her as an internationally acclaimed researcher. The **NRF rating system** recognises researchers who produce high-quality outputs in high-impact journals.

Mark your calendars

4 March 2020: **Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Research Symposium**, Cape Town, South Africa.

21-25 September 2020: **Evidence 2020**, Uganda.

Opportunities

- **Apply now** for a research and policy coordinator post.
- **Call for applications** open: four-month fellowship at the University of California.
- **Great opportunity for postdocs!**
- **Opportunities** available for early-career researchers with a doctoral degree.
- **Training on impact evaluation for evidence-based development.**
- **Vacancies** at Young 1ove.

Precious Motha, the AEN coordinator, shares this year's highlights for the **Africa Evidence Network** in the final **blog** of 2019.

View all blog posts **online** and use the Network to share your work – submit your AEN blog **here**.

Lessons learnt from enhancing the evidence-informed policy-making field

Norma Altshuler and Sarah Lucas from the [Hewlett Foundation](#) wrote a thought-provoking [article](#) on the lessons they have learnt from strengthening the field of evidence-informed policy-making. One of their key lessons is that there are ‘many siloes but few bridges’. In other words, many organisations work single-handedly without support from others. However, only a small number of organisations act as connectors. To strengthen the EIPM field, funders can play a role of connecting communities to ensure that organisations plus individuals benefit from each other’s work.



What can we learn from enhancing the field of evidence-informed policy-making? Zenabu Abrahamanu (right) and Asetu Somana (left) sell bananas at Agbogbloshie Market in Accra, Ghana.

Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

According to the latest [United Nations](#) Climate Change [news](#), the only way to solve the climate change challenge effectively is through taking definitive steps in implementing policy using different support techniques. In addition, the study indicates that the government should work together with other people who share the same interest to ensure that policies achieve the intended results.

In a recent [London School of Economics and Political Science](#) impact [blog](#), Sharon Koppman and Erin Leahey emphasise the need for innovation in social science research. They note that researchers can produce new information through conducting unorthodox research, working with key institutions and establishing multidisciplinary identities. They also highlight that sometimes the advancement of science may be non-beneficial to scientists.

[Dr David Chambers](#) writes an interesting [blog](#) on the introduction of an open access-training programme by the [National Cancer Institute](#), which seeks to bridge the gap between research and implementation through establishing researchers’ publication and execution ability. He also says that the purpose of dissemination and implementation research is to establish a body of knowledge that promotes the best use of evidence and evidence-based practices in policy.

Hot off the press

[Breuer et al](#): ‘Integrated policymaking: choosing an institutional design for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)’

[Coon et al](#): ‘Developing methods for the overarching synthesis of quantitative and qualitative evidence: the interweave synthesis approach’

[Graham et al](#): ‘Exploring the frontiers of research co-production: the Integrated Knowledge Translation Research Network concept papers’

[Jakobsen et al](#): ‘Organisational factors that facilitate research use in public health policy-making: a scoping review’

A large number of organisations are now using Twitter data more as a measure of success, says [Rayna Harris](#) in her latest [blog](#); she argues this increased use makes it worthwhile to know how to interpret this data. For this reason, she explains how to use R to examine Twitter data to find out more about who is tweeting at conferences and the effect these tweets have.