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# Evidence 2020 ONLINE

23 - 25 September 2020, Online



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## EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE CONCEPT NOTE

### What is EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE?

EVIDENCE is the biennial gathering hosted by the Africa Evidence Network (AEN), a community of over 3000 individuals from across sectors with an interest in evidence-use in Africa. It brings together a variety of expertise from across the African evidence ecosystem – from government officials to civil society organisations, from health researchers to technology experts – with the aim to advance support for evidence-use in Africa. As the most diverse and innovative evidence-use gathering in the world, EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE promises to bring together people virtually with incredible evidence-use experiences who are willing to share their stories.

Are you one of these people?

### How will EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE work?

Unlike academic conferences, EVIDENCE events have evolved according to the needs of the AEN members. EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE will be no different. Given the immeasurable influence of COVID-19 in the months leading up to the event and likely beyond, we would be remiss not to reflect on impact of COVID-19 on all aspects of evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM), the demands and circumstances that the pandemic is putting on all of us supporting EIDM. The engagement and participation in the event will require an internet connection and there will be low data options available for participation. We acknowledge and realise that the world/Africa may be in lockdown again in September 2020, so we are planning for all eventualities. This year's gathering will have two stages of engagement:

**1) PRE-EVENTS (June – August 2020)** A variety of virtual activities building up to EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE will occur with the aim to kickstart discussions, engage as many colleagues as possible, and build excitement and set the stage for EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE.

**2) EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE (23-25 September 2020)** This three-day event is planned to be an interactive, dynamic, virtual working event with a focus on three key work streams that are described further below. During the event, participants will:

- Share their experiences and stories with each other, bringing their unique perspectives to working for a common purpose;
- Network and explore opportunities for collaboration with others;
- Share and enhance their own capacities;
- Collectively advance and finalise various engagements and processes conceived in working group-driven activities preceding EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE; and

- Share and learn from EIDM in Africa during COVID-19.

As part of addressing the immeasurable influence of COVID-19 on the world both in the months leading up to the event and likely beyond, the AEN secretariat will spearhead two initiatives in advance of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE to dovetail with EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE. These are:

- A dedicated webpage for EIDM during COVID-19 to capture the evolution of COVID-19 relevant evidence and its link to decisions on the African continent;
- A special blog series that invites reflections, opinions, and experiences related to the various aspects of COVID-19 on EIDM. Blogs posts will include, but will not be limited to, the three work streams above;

Content from the two EIDM during COVID-19 initiatives above can be perused by the three work streams to advance discussions at EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE. Any stories within the three work streams that speak to the impact of COVID-19 will be featured in this ongoing series. EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE will encourage discussions and reflections on the impact of COVID-19 on EIDM and our work in general as well as look ahead at future realities and priorities that we are likely to encounter as a result.

### What are the different types of sessions at EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE?

The programme will comprise four main types of sessions:

**Inspiration sessions:** There are three inspiration sessions in the programme (one in the opening). The idea is that these presentations are inspirational and provocative to stimulate discussions and ideas about specific aspects of the AEN's working streams. We encourage the speakers to build into their presentations breaks through audience engagement. The inspiration sessions will be live-streamed and pre-recording as backup.

**Working sessions:** There are three concurrent sessions in the programme; these are mostly for the use by the working groups and will involve practical collaborative activities that seek to contribute to concrete outputs:

- Collect and reflect on success stories of the six mechanisms of evidence use;
- Collect and reflect on success stories of alternative capacity development efforts for EIDM in Africa (including the principles underlying such efforts); and
- Collect and reflect on success stories of fostering connections and collaborations for EIDM in Africa, including updating a GeoMap of EIDM individuals and organisations in Africa.

**Networking sessions:** There are three collaborative sessions in the programme that are focused on exploring and enhancing collaborations between network members. It indicates how as the AEN Secretariat we value relationships and networking that we place these in the programme rather than just leaving them to happen over breaks (where there will also be spaces for networking and connecting). The objective is to create networking opportunities, and enhance how the AEN fosters collaboration.

**Collective reflections:** There are three such sessions in the programme, at the end of each day. These will allow for collective reflection on process and content of the day, and engender interest, commitment and a plan of action for future steps.

### How can I participate in EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE?

The EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE event will be a working meeting taking place on a virtual platform from 23-25 September 2020. The content will be available to wider audiences through the AEN EIDM hub. If you would like

to participate in this working gathering, you should [register to attend](#); registration will be open for the duration of the event.

Each participant must register online and create a profile for their participation at the virtual EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE. Registration to EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE is free. Participants will receive information on how they can participate and/or access in the information generated during EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE.

### What are the work streams of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE?

EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE will be rooted in three work streams (below) with COVID-19 being a cross-cutting thematic area. Participants of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE will actively contribute to the development of concepts, manifestos, or visualisations – among other things – within these different work streams.

#### Work stream one: Advancing the art and science of evidence-use in Africa

This work stream aims to advance the knowledge and understanding of how to support EIDM in Africa. It will focus on exploring what applied tools, strategies, and interventions have shown promise to support evidence-use on the continent. By the end of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE, this work stream hopes to have facilitated various sessions to achieve the following objectives:

Timing	Objective	Activity	Output/Product
Lead up to EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Advancing discussions on the art and science of evidence-use.	Convene a working group for Art and science of evidence-use in Africa work stream.	Plan sessions for EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE.
Lead up to EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Engage AEN membership in advance of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE.	Participatory meetings, webinars and blogs.	Blog / reflection document capturing experiences of AEN participants during these meetings, webinars.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Advancing discussions on the art and science of evidence-use.	Inspirational session by AELA award winner 2019: Ms Mapula Tshangela.	Presentations on advancing the art and science of evidence-use.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Collect and reflect on stories of successful evidence-use amongst the six different mechanisms of evidence-use.	<p>Story-teller to advance conversation on the art and science of evidence-use in Africa</p> <p>Inspiration session on: Science of using science in Africa – what do we know about what works? Highlighting six mechanisms of evidence-use and their contribution in supporting EIDM on the continent</p>	A compendium of stories success.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Capturing accounts of support for evidence-use in Africa.	Discussion on 10 principles for EIDM in Africa.	Final 10 principles of EIDM in Africa.

EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Engender interest, commitment and a plan of action for future steps.	Collective reflection to provide feedback about where are now, and what next. And get input from anyone.	Consensus-driven plan of action, list of contributors, and roles and responsibilities moving forward.
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### Work stream two: Enhancing evidence capacities

Participants in this work stream at EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE have an incredible opportunity to imagine a new agenda for capacity development for African EIDM, taking further the models already used, by sharing and discovering different ways of looking at how to develop capacity. By the end of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE, this work stream hopes facilitate various sessions to achieve the objectives listed below:

Timing	Objective	Activity	Output/Product
Lead up to EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Advancing discussions on evidence capacities and COVID-19 in Africa.	Convene a working group for evidence capacities in Africa work stream.	Plan sessions for EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE
			Draft manifesto of principles for alternative ways of approaching EIDM capacity development in Africa.
Lead up to EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Engage AEN membership in advance of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE.	Participatory meetings, webinars and blogs.	Blog/reflection document capturing experiences of AEN participants during these meetings, webinars.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Advancing discussions on evidence capacities and COVID-19 in Africa.	Inspirational session by the AELA award winner 2020. Mr. Frejus Thoto.	Presentation on advancing evidence capacities and COVID-19 in Africa.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Advancing discussions on the decolonisation of capacity development in Africa.	Inspirational session: Two speakers decolonising of evidence capacities	Presentation on advancing on the decolonisation of capacity development in Africa in Africa.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Collect and reflect on stories of successful alternatives of capacity development in Africa.	Story-teller to advance conversation on enhancing evidence capacities	A compendium of stories success.  5 case studies.
		Inspirational session on the 5 cases of alternative capacity development.	
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Capturing alternative ways of advancing evidence capacities for various stakeholders in Africa.	Discussion of alternative ways of advancing evidence capacities for various stakeholders in Africa.	Final report on the alternative ways of advancing evidence capacities for various stakeholders in Africa.

EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Capturing the of principles for alternative ways of approaching EIDM capacity development in Africa.	Discussion of principles for alternative ways of approaching EIDM capacity development in Africa.	Final manifesto of principles for alternative ways of approaching EIDM capacity development in Africa.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Engender interest, commitment and a plan of action for future steps.	Collective reflection to provide feedback about where are now, and what next. And get input from anyone.	Consensus driven plan of action, list of contributors, roles and responsibilities moving forward.

### Work stream three: Making connections and building collaborations

The third work stream at EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE, participants will be supported in brokering new connections and fostering collaborations with others engaged in or supporting EIDM in Africa. EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE will provide a platform for participants to work together.

At the end of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE, this work stream will have produced a comprehensive visualisation of EIDM organisations in Africa to act as a mechanism for enhancing connections and collaborations. Participants will have also progressed a draft paper on the different practices of collaborations to support EIDM in Africa. By the end of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE, this work stream hopes facilitate various sessions to achieve the following objectives as listed below:

Timing	Objective	Activity	Output/Product
Lead up to EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Advancing discussions on making connections and building collaborations and COVID-19 in Africa.	Convene a working group for Making connections and building collaborations work stream.	Plan sessions for EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE.
			Draft paper on the different practices of collaborations to support EIDM in Africa.
Lead up to EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Engage AEN membership in advance of EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE.	Participatory meetings, webinars and blogs.	Blog/reflection document capturing experiences of AEN participants during these meetings, webinars.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Produce and publish a GeoMap of EIDM individuals and organisations in Africa.	Interaction with and updating of the GeoMap.	Updated GeoMap.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Collect and reflect on stories of successful connection and collaborations in Africa.	Story-teller to advance conversation on making connections and building collaborations	A compendium of stories success.
		Discussion of different approaches to fostering connections and collaborations.	

EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Capturing the different approaches to fostering connections and collaborations in Africa.	Discussion of the different approaches to fostering connections and collaborations in Africa.	Final paper on the different practices of collaborations to support EIDM in Africa.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Create networking opportunities.	Convene 3 networking sessions to update our knowledge of who is working on what where in the EIDM space in Africa.	Networking report.
EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE	Engender interest, commitment and a plan of action for future steps.	Collective reflection to provide feedback about where are now, and what next. And get input from anyone.	Consensus driven plan of action, list of contributors, roles and responsibilities moving forward.