



Informing the C19 response: assessing the African National Academies of Science's role

Phyllis Kalele and Stanley Maphosa penned an article focused on **national academies of science in Africa** and their response in providing **science advice to policy-makers** in their respective countries. Highlighted are thirteen of the 27 existing national academies in Africa on how they played a role in supporting their respective countries' responses to COVID-19 through providing credible, independent, and evidence-based **scientific advice to decision-makers**.



AAAS Science & Diplomacy January 2021 special issue Online features article by Ms. Phyllis Kalele and Dr. Stanley Maphosa, both in the employ of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf).

Photo: Pexels

Following his appointment to lead a **ministerial advisory committee** on combating COVID-19 last year, **Professor Salim Abdool Karim** has focussed on increased **science engagement**. The professor now sets an example of how public visibility in the media can help build trust between **scientists and society**. **Marina Joubert** explores this journey.

We're building our gallery of stories of African evidence-informed decision-making. Want to feature your story? **Reach out to us!** We're looking for examples of evidence making difference in policy design, resulting in positive results after implementation, or strengthening a system.

A **case study** highlights lessons about climate change adaptation from **Malawi** and **Zambia**. Using consultation processes to raise awareness, share knowledge between different actors, and promote inclusion the lessons were aimed at helping **communities use evidence to adapt to climate change**.

Young southern African scientists argue for **multi-sectoral response** to COVID-19, including the psycho-social and political sciences representation in **policy decision-making processes**. They argue the pandemic warrants the use of social measures and people's everyday experiences to inform COVID-19 regulations.

Putting the spotlight on... ...an individual!

This month, we welcome the Centre of Global Development Edward Kadozi from the Centre for Development Policy (CDP) based in Rwanda. The CDP builds "capacities of organizations and professionals to drive development Africa needs" and hopes to "jointly promote evidence-based policy-making in Africa". Welcome Edward!

Want to spotlighted? Reach out to us at ace@uj.ac.za.

Mark your calendars

02 March: How can policy-makers use behavioural science?, [online](#).

04 March: Institutional arrangements, evidence and policy pathways to safe domestic energy, [online](#).

We're throwing back to a **blog post from 2020** that takes us on a journey with researchers at the coal face of COVID-19.

View all our blog posts **online** and submit your AEN blog **here!**



USA restoring trust in government through scientific integrity and evidence-based policy-making

American President Joe Biden has committed to using evidence-informed decision-making to restore trust in government through issuing a [Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking](#). The memorandum directs all federal agencies to put scientific integrity and **evidence at the core of their policy-making**. Doing so aims to ensure that scientific and technological information, data, and evidence plays a central role in the development and iterative improvement of sound policies and to the delivery of equitable programs.



Source: The White House

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

A [research-policy collaboration](#) in the United Kingdom last year brought together researchers, funding bodies, and policy-makers to identify what is already known and uncover current research gaps around a set of issues that will help Britain's medium- to long-term recovery from the pandemic. Published as '[Areas of Research Interest](#)', the process is described in this [blog](#).

A winning essay on [courts and public policies](#) authored by [Rafael Monnerat](#) uses Brazil as a case study to highlight the relationship between the [judicial court system and science](#). Examining how the courts are informed to make decisions, particularly [decisions shaping public policies](#), in a developing democratic regime.

A virtual workshop on [Tools and Methods for Welfare Measurement and Analysis in the Western Balkans](#) hosted experts from the World Bank, European Commission, National Statistics Offices (NSOs), and academia to discuss innovations and challenges for data collection and [evidence-based policy-making](#). Workshop participants examined how NSOs adapt from the conventional methodologies to collect data and to measure economic and social progress in a timely and policy-relevant way during COVID-19.

Hot off the press

[Movsisyan et al](#): "Adapting evidence-informed population health interventions for new contexts: a scoping review of current practice"

[van der Graaf et al](#): "Co-production in local government: process, codification and capacity building of new knowledge in collective reflection spaces. Workshops findings from a UK mixed methods study"

[Wanko Keutchafo et al](#): "Mapping evidence of nurses' attitudes toward older adults in Africa: a scoping review protocol"

Opportunities

- Apply for the [online science communication course](#) at the University of Stellenbosch before 21 May 2021.
- Apply for the [Fulbright Foreign Student Program 2022-23 academic year](#) by 14 May 2021.
- Apply for the [TWAS Research Grants Programme in Basic Sciences \(Individuals\)](#) by 14 April 2021.