

AEN celebrates the 2021 Africa Evidence Leadership Award winner

Diana Warira-Njeri is the Africa Evidence Leadership Award (AELA) winner for 2021. She stands as a strong advocate for the role that development communications can play in reaching across silos within the evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) ecosystem, using different communications activities and tools. Talking the walk, Diana has written multiple blogs and articles [sharing lessons from within the EIDM ecosystem](#), [encouraging other communications professionals that they do indeed have a role in serving the African EIDM ecosystem](#), and [sharing her communications capacities](#) with researchers and policy-makers to enhance better dialogue between these two groups of stakeholders. In her incumbent role as [policy manager at the Gender and Economic Agency Initiative based at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab](#) in Kenya, Diana's work exists at the nexus between producing evidence and supporting the use of that evidence to shape decisions related to poverty in Africa.



AELA 2021 winner, Diana Warira-Njeri, policy manager at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab. Photo: Diana Warira Njeri

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Daniel Inkoom, a visiting associate professor at [Wits University](#) in South Africa, advocates for urban development researchers in Africa to use the C-19 pandemic to "build back better" African cities. In a recent [ISC blog](#), Inkoom argues for sound research to inform policies on human settlements in Africa. He argues this is a way to also addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the [African Union's Agenda 2063](#).

An [op-ed article](#) by [Dr Njeri Mwangiri](#) alerts us to how conspiracy theories threaten to derail plans to achieve herd immunity against C19 in South Africa by the end of the year. Mwangiri sustains that misinformation can lead to vaccine hesitancy, thereby derailing government's targets.

Scientists from the [African Population and Health Research Center](#) (APHRC) share six tips for '[Turning findings into policy](#)'. Noting the tremendous growth in the number of studies in sub-Saharan Africa in the past two decades, they also recognise the use of findings from these studies to inform the development of policies as low. [The Conversation](#) article highlights the obstacles to the use of research in policy-making experienced and proposes six important steps researchers can follow.

Want to know what we learned from hosting EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE? View our lessons, reflections, and highlights from the virtual gathering in the [EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE report](#), live now.

**Putting the spotlight on...
...a new member!**

[Thokozile Malaza](#), a Policy Associate at [J-Pal](#). She believes that evidence-based policy-making is essential in securing the economic stability and prosperity of Africa and her people. Thokozile, we welcome you!

Want to spotlight you or your organisation? [Let us know](#) and you could be featured.

Mark your calendars

[22 April: Research dissemination webinar - Empowering frontline maternal health workers for better mental health outcomes for adolescent and adult mothers, **online**.](#)

[26-29 April: Data Driven Policymaking Week webinar, **online**.](#)

[19-20 May: IEEE 7th International Conference on Web Research, **online**.](#)

This month, Diana Warira-Njeri pens a post entitled: [AELA 2021: The Culmination of a Passion that Became a Career](#).

View all blog posts [online](#) and use the Network to share your AEN blog [here](#).

Evidence-informed guidance shared for school reopening during C19

With more and more schools reopening for the new academic year globally, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention - [CDC guidance on schools](#) was shared in an [Op-Ed on Scientific American](#). The guidance acknowledges the diverse array of evidence produced arguing for and against re-opening of schools. As one of the most controversial aspects of the COVID-19 response, the pandemic has greatly affected schooling around the world. The [author](#) highlights the arguments about school openings during COVID-19 and reflects on their perceived ongoing failure of science and society towards school children in the COVID-19 era, arguing that during this time, academics and policy-makers are posited to share responsibility.



Hot topic An artist depicts a school classroom in the era of COVID-19

Photo: Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

In a recent [LSE blog](#), [Richard Bronk](#) notes that western democracies have experienced a loss of public trust in scientific expertise in recent years, mainly resulting from online conspiracy theories and the promotion of alternative facts. He posits that some blame is attached to the manner in which governments apply scientific data to policy questions. He continues that science can neither substitute political choices between competing goals nor can it replace the need for nuanced judgment of the multifaceted nature of specific problems.

Are you a policy-maker or decision-maker anywhere in the world involved in pandemic planning? The University of Southampton would like to get your thoughts about priority areas and knowledge gaps. Please complete their [very short survey](#) and see also the [project webpage](#) for more information.

Kendall Science Fellow at [the Union of Concerned Scientists](#), [Michael Latner](#), penned a [blog post](#) highlighting the roles and responsibilities of science and democracy for the public good. Latner argues for why scientists need democracy and explores arguments for why democracy needs scientists. He concludes with a reminder of the support the evidence-based policy-making model provides in protecting against further erosion of the democratic process for the greater public good.

Hot off the press

[Belita, E. et al](#): 'Development and content validation of a measure to assess evidence-informed decision-making competence in public health nursing'

[Momoti, N.G](#): 'A model to foster the use of records for evidence-based decision-making by senior managers in Western Cape governmental bodies, South Africa.'

[Pulford, J. et al](#): 'Guidance and conceptual tools to inform the design, selection and evaluation of research capacity strengthening interventions'

Opportunities

- [World Trade Organisation](#) 2022 Young Professionals Programme [applications are open](#) until 29 April 2021.
- Call for papers by the [African Evaluation Journal](#) - submission deadline 10 May.
- [The Wellcome Trust African Population Cohort Consortium](#) deadline for expressions of interest is 14 May 2021. [Apply now!](#)
- [Applications for the Next Generation Foresight Practitioners Awards](#) close on 26 May 2021.