

## Academy of Sciences launched in Malawi

This month [the United Nations \(UN\) Technology Bank and The Network of African Science Academies supported the launch of the Academy of Sciences in Malawi](#). The launch was attended by distinguished speakers from the Government of Malawi, Ministry of Education, the Network of African Science Academies, and the National Commission for Science and Technology. The academy aims to play a critical role in advising government on STI policy development and implementation to address socio-economic challenges and promote development as per UN Technology Bank objectives. The academy will contribute to the implementation of the Malawi 2063 strategic and development goals, in collaboration with other government ministries and bodies in Malawi.



**Launching the Academy of Sciences in Malawi**, lighting up lives: Training women in Malawi to become solar power engineers

Photo: UN Women/Gaganjit Singh UN Technology Bank

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[Africa Check welcomed funding from the United Nations Democracy Fund \(UNDEF\)](#) which will be used to implement a four-year multi-pronged project to fight misinformation and strengthen democracy. The project "Media Literacy for Evidence-based Decision-making in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa" will be one approach to fight misinformation that is used.

AEN member Lesedi Senamele Matlala shared [his Story of Change](#) for inclusion in the [Gallery of African EIDM Stories](#) (evidence-informed decision-making). He shares with readers what participating in Africa Evidence Week 2019 meant for his understanding of evidence-informed decision-making and its role in South Africa's education sector.

With the high demand for effective vaccines against C19, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, some authors argue that the provision of vaccines [ought to be decided by a country's actual health needs](#). In a recent article, [Mark Paterson](#) explains how access to vaccines has widened the global north/south divide.

[The International Center for Tropical Agriculture](#) published a study examining bean productivity among smallholder farmers in Tanzania. The study helps researchers understand why [evidence suggests that gender discrimination threatens crop yield among smallholder farmers in Africa](#). The study further argues that issues of concern to women are often ignored at policy level.

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

Welcome to new member [Carolyn Okallo](#), a communications practitioner from the [International Centre for Reproductive Health](#) in Kenya, says "joining the network is a great opportunity to interact with like-minded individuals and organizations".

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

## Mark your calendars

[24 May: Societal impact using evidence in policy: Launching the evidence management guide for SEIAS, online.](#)

[27 May 2021: Evidence dialogues: Using implementation research to strengthen nutrition interventions, online.](#)

[31 May-4 Jun: gLocal Evaluation Week, online.](#)

This month, the [AEN blog](#) highlights the significant role an information specialist plays in the production of quality systematic reviews as narrated by Alison Bullen.

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

### C19 poses threat to evidence-based medicine

A Nature article by Helen Pearson walks us through the [practice of evidence-based medicine before and after C19](#). Explaining how the pandemic has stress-tested the production of evidence in the field of medicine, Pearson notes challenges introduced by the pandemic in relation to using evidence-based medicine and producing these evidence bases. Citing examples of physicians who draw on medications investigated in studies with small sample sizes, or replication within systematic reviews, Pearson names initiatives like living systematic reviews as a potential way to combat these challenges. Pearson names [COVID-END](#) specifically of an example of how living reviews can be used to “better coordinate COVID-19 evidence syntheses and direct people to the best available evidence” in combatting C19.



**Living reviews to combat C19** The pandemic has impacted all of society, including how evidence is used to make medical decisions.

Photo: Illustration by Jasiek Krzysztofak/Nature

### INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

An increasing number of researchers are [conducting policy engagements](#) as part of their work. In a recent [LSE Impact blog](#), United Kingdom based researchers [Jasper Montana](#) and [James Wilsdon](#) use findings from a qualitative study of professionals in the evidence-policy field to present a new taxonomy for understanding the different groups working at this intersection, with advice on how to make engagements effective at different stages of their research.

The [COVID-19 Evidence Network to support Decision-Making \(COVID-END\)](#) is inviting global decision-makers to keep current about C19 responses by [subscribing](#) to the COVID-END twice monthly newsletter. Expect to receive an email containing hyperlinks to global spotlights and horizon scans of emerging issues.

A [Nature editorial](#) celebrates Archie Cochrane, a Scottish doctor and seminal figure in pioneering evidence-based medicine. The editorial features Cochrane’s legacy and warns that some of the shortfalls experienced in recent medical practice due to the C19 ‘vaccine race’ may threaten this legacy. The editorial concludes by urging medical practitioners to maintain the fundamental principles of evidence-based medicine even in the face of the pandemic.

### Hot off the press

[Bamouni et al](#): ‘From training to practice: a report of professional capacity development in Health Research in West Africa.’

[Jessani et al](#): ‘Integrated knowledge translation to advance noncommunicable disease policy and practice in South Africa: application of the Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, and Sustainment (EPIS) framework.’

### Opportunities

- [Apply for the Introduction to Global Health](#) short course by Stellenbosch University. Applications due 24 Jul 2021
- [ACED](#), in partnership with 3ie and with the support of USAID and Save the Children invite all NGOs calls for [expressions of interest](#) for a capacity development programme. Due 31 May 2021.
- [South African Medical Research Council](#) is sponsoring 30 bursaries for online registrations to attend the [Cochrane Nigeria Africa Indaba](#) on 13-15 July 2021. Bursary deadline is 21 Jun.