



Ever changing times, ever learning scientists

‘Science changes – and so should rational behaviour’ this is the title of the newly published The Conversation article by our AEN secretariat, **Ruth Stewart**, the **Africa Centre for Evidence (ACE)** director and Co-director of ACE, **Carina van Rooyen**. Science is no stationary matter because the world is ever changing with the times. These changes bring about a shift in knowledge often leading to uncertainty particularly for those using science to inform their decisions. Ruth and Carina discuss the reasons behind the shift in science, how to embrace uncertainty in this COVID era. The conclusion highlights the need for developing science literacy levels among citizens and journalists so they can better understand research, ask critical questions, and engage with reliable bodies of evidence.



Research on COVID-19 is growing and changing because good science doesn't eliminate uncertainty: it explains it.

Photo: The Conversation / James D. Morgan/Getty Images

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Have you heard of **Measure for Impact (Mfi)**? Sierra Leone's first non-governmental organization focused on increasing data availability to meaningfully contribute to providing better data for socio-economic development decisions in Sierra Leone. Mfi recently became **a partner to the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data**. **Read more about their 5-year strategic plan and a four-way approach to enhance their country's Monitoring and Evaluations capacity**. See how you can **get involved!**

Kenya will host the fifth **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2)** from 28 February to 2 March 2022 in Nairobi. This event will **highlight pollution as a critical environmental issue** and propose that governments take action to establish a Science Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution.

The **Evidence-Policy-Action Forum (EPA) 2021** themed **'Connect the data and policy research to transform the agricultural sector through research data'** saw support of key policy stakeholders in the agricultural sector of Benin including Deputy Director of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Mr Abdoulaye TOKO who chaired the event

Men abusing alcohol are **three times more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence or gender-based violence against women**. So goes the finding of an evidence review conducted by the Southern African Alcohol Policy Alliance and the South African Medical Research Council. Some policy recommendations captured by a panel discussing the findings suggest reducing the number of alcohol outlets.

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

Welcome **Chinedum Anayo**, a Nigerian lawyer who values the importance of evidence in effective decision making and is inspired by the AEN motto!

Want to spotlight you or your organisation? **Let us know** and you could be featured.

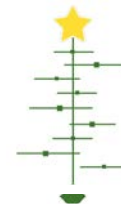
Mark your calendars

19 January: The fourth instalment of the **#EvidenceCapacitiesWebinar** series, **online**.

22-24 February: The Evidence Synthesis Hackathon's Evidence Synthesis & Meta-Analysis in R Conference (**#ESMARConf2022**), **online**.

This month, we feature the **Research to Action blog** based on the **Africa Evidence Network (AEN) #EvidenceCapacities** webinar series, 'Indigenous Capacity Development for Evidence Uptake: An African-led approach' by Tishara Rajagopal.

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



Global Commission on Evidence makes latest evidence accessible

The **Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges** aims to publish in early 2022 a report with recommendations for strengthening the use of evidence by decision-makers, both for crisis situations and longer-term societal challenges. The Commission **invites input on this report** by all stakeholders within the evidence ecosystem. Stay updated with the work of the Commission by **subscribing to their monthly newsletter**. Monopolising on the “once-in-a-generation” focus on using evidence for decisions that has been the result of the pandemic, the Commission describes its stakeholders as anyone “who make or can influence decisions about whether and how evidence is used” for societal challenges.

Global Commission on Evidence
to Address Societal Challenges

Collaborating on evidence-use The Commission's draft report sections are available online and easily accessible to anyone who wants to contribute to drafting them.

Photo: Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges logo

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

Writing for **Nature**, Smriti Mallapaty argues that travel bans implemented against travellers from southern African countries where Omicron has been detected are ineffective, and may slow the study of the new SARS-COV-2 variant. Scientists sequencing the virus genome argue that the travel bans came into place too late to be effective against reducing the spread of the new variant. Now, all they serve to do is potentially limit scientists' ability to sequence the genome rapidly enough.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced this week that the centre of the country's government would be **moving toward making evidence-based decisions**. Part of India's endeavour to grow being a \$5 trillion economy, the Prime Minister reiterated the necessity of tools that can help “government departments in devising policies” as well as uncover implementation fraud.

Duncan Green discusses on his blog **'From Poverty to Power'** some of the most **common 'moans' about non-governmental organisations** when trying to ensure research to impact. In conversation with Save the Children, Green shares the benefits of a hyper-localised way of working, comments on the fact that policy briefs will be read or not based on 'natural selection', and the importance of peace-time relationship building.

Hot off the press

Jessani et al: 'Integrated Knowledge Translation in Non-Communicable Disease Research in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Comparison of Systematic and Ad Hoc Stakeholder Engagement'

Firebanks-Quevedo et al: 'Using machine learning to identify incentives in forestry policy: Towards a new paradigm in policy analysis'

Opportunities

- **Bursary applications** for about 80 bursaries of 100 USD (c. 8000 USD total) to support people attending **ESMARConf2022** online now open!
- The **PRIORITIES2022 Conference call for abstract submissions** is now open until 15 January 2022.
- Apply to the **2022-23 Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity programme** at the London School of Economics and Political Science by 10 January 2022.