

## Ten years of making a difference, together

Watch Africa Evidence Network (AEN) chairperson Professor Ruth Stewart share a celebratory note about the AEN's first decade. Twenty-twenty-two marks ten years since the establishment of the AEN, a pan-African network of diverse people who share a vision of ending poverty and inequality in Africa through the use of evidence in decision-making. The AEN has always advocated that only together, can evidence-informed decision-making become a reality. During the celebration of its first decade, the AEN plans to reminisce about its successes, showcase members' excellence, and dream about what the next ten years might look like. The secretariat is calling on members to join the celebrations by contacting them via [ace@uj.ac.za](mailto:ace@uj.ac.za).



**Turing ten together** Use the #AENis10 on social media to celebrate with us and share your dreams about what the next ten years might look like

Photo: The Africa Evidence Network

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**Community, passion and leadership** capture the spirit of #AfricaEvidenceWeek2021. The five-day virtual event showcased more than 104 activities celebrating the use of evidence across Africa, and specifically highlighting the role of decision-makers. The **Twitter feed** was abuzz with over six million organic impressions generated in a single week! **Research to Action** featured a blog on the event, calling it 'a triumph in its design and planning'.

In 2021, Africa Evidence Network members recognised **Diana Warira** as an individual who has demonstrated clear and enduring leadership in the field of evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) on the continent. Diana won the coveted **Africa Evidence Leadership Award** last year, and in an **awe-inspiring blog** shared her passion for EIDM communications and advocacy. We look forward to her keynote at EVIDENCE2022.

The **#EvidenceCapacities webinar series** launched during #AfricaEvidenceWeek2021 is continuing this year. Participants of this 12-part series discuss how capacities for evidence-informed decision-making in Africa should be developed. **Catch up on webinar recordings, blogs, and live LinkedIn engagements** before the next webinar on March 16.

In 2022, the Africa Evidence Network (AEN) grew its **Gallery of African Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Stories**. This jigsaw of stories captured the influence of the AEN on the personal and professional lives of its members in two series: **Evidence Matters** and **Stories of Change**. Stay tuned for our plans to grow the gallery in 2022.

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

Welcome **Gerald Onsando**, an African researcher and evaluation practitioner based in Australia with significant interests in research and evaluation practice in Africa.

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

## Mark your calendars

**2 February:** The United Nations Environment Programme - World Wetlands Day, [online](#).

**23 February:** UNEA Cities and Regions Summit 2022 - Flip the Script: Cities and Nature, [online](#)

Are you following the #EvidenceCapacities webinar blog series? Refresh your mind about the last webinar with the latest blog post by **Precious Motha**, and remember to leave your comments on our [LinkedIn page](#). Catch up with the other blog posts by **Likhwa Ncube** and **Charity Chisoro**.

View all our blog posts [online](#) and use the Network to share your work – submit your AEN blog [here](#) and feature your work to our 3000+ members in 2022!

## PhD and your mental health: what the evidence says

The beginning of the year is perhaps a good time to share evidence findings which suggest that PhD researchers are particularly vulnerable to poor mental health compared to their working professional peers. This finding is according to a [comparative survey of PhD researchers](#) and their peers from different professions, by Dr Cassie M Hazell and Dr Clio Berry. More than 3,300 PhD students studying in the United Kingdom and a control group of more than 1,200 matched working professionals participated in the '[Understanding the mental health of DOCTORal researchers \(U-DOC\)](#)' survey. Scientists compared the presence and severity of mental health symptoms between these two groups and answered key questions that have thus far been left unanswered in this area of research.



**A heavy load** There is considerable evidence on the commonality of mental health difficulties amongst PhD students. What can institutions of higher learning do to improve conditions for PhD students?

Photo: London School of Economics Impact Blog

## INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

A recent [Nature](#) article argues for an improved system and health research that keeps systematic reviews up to date for decision-makers using evidence-based living guidelines. Scientists cite as prime examples the system which was built for the Australian National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce, and for the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Therapeutics and COVID-19: living guideline. The article shares insights into how such continuous updating can be accomplished.

In the quest for living evidence, a recent blog featured on the [International Initiative for Impact Evaluations \(3ie\)](#) argues that [new research on food systems and nutrition still neglects priority topics](#). The authors share findings from their first-ever living [Evidence Gap Map on Food Systems and Nutrition](#) to build understanding about how quickly research evolves and its accessibility to decision-makers.

The latest bulletin from [Evidence Aid](#) includes four evidence summaries on the latest systematic review findings and their implications about topics like [emergency care by lay responders in LMICs and for underserved populations](#), [healthcare service delivery interventions in LMICs](#), and [interventions to address mental health issues in healthcare workers during infectious disease outbreaks](#), amongst others. To receive these bulletins directly, contact [Claire Allen](#) and [follow Evidence Aid on Twitter](#).

## Hot off the press

[Jessani et al](#): 'Evidence attack in public health: Diverse actors' experiences with translating controversial or misrepresented evidence in health policy and systems research'

[O'Connor et al](#): 'Evidence based education policy in Ireland: insights from educational researchers'

## Opportunities

- The [Africa Centre for Evidence \(ACE\)](#) at the [University of Johannesburg](#) will soon open applications for the **Practices of Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Short Learning (SLP)**. Watch the [ACE website](#) and [Twitter](#) page for more information on how to register for this year's intake.
- Stellenbosch University is offering two online courses related to Network Meta-analysis from February 2022. To apply contact Liesel Floor: [lieselfloor@sun.ac.za](mailto:lieselfloor@sun.ac.za)
  - [Primer in Network Meta-analysis Systematic Reviews](#)
  - [Global Network Meta-analysis Workshop](#)
- Job opportunities for Francophone candidates with [Innovations for Poverty Action](#); [apply today](#).