Technology is an effective information management tool to inform policy

Have you ever wondered what can be done to ensure that information and evidence is managed effectively in order to inform policy? In their latest Conversation article; Neal Robert Haddaway, Carina van Rooyen, Martin Westgate, and Witness Mapanga argue that technology is the solution. Haddaway and Westgate established the Evidence Synthesis Hackathon series in 2017 to promote the production of tools and frameworks that support evidence synthesis. EviAtlas is one such tool that provides graphics for evidence synthesis databases. As an eventual outcome, the Hackathons are aimed at bringing together like-minded researchers, data scientists, and network developers.

In 2014, the District League Table announced the use of a social accountability tool which is responsible for positioning the districts of Ghana through its social development and service delivery levels; which contributes to improving the quality of evidence for decision-making. Ghana anticipates using evidence to inform equity-focused decisions as a way of accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Last month, the Partnership for Economic Policy hosted their annual conference in Cape Town which connected over 130 delegates from 44 countries. On the last day of the event, there was a great discussion on how researchers can contribute to incorporating policy assessment and research-based evidence into policy design.

Jon Harle, the Director of Programmes at International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications shares six suggestions for how to do capacity development well. He says that capacity development is a political process of change which requires proficiency and time for it to be effective and equitable.

Solange Tetero, Chipo Msengezi, and Ronald Munatsi point out that Zimbabwe should improve capacities to efficiently use open data on malnutrition. In view of this, the Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network with the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition facilitated the establishment of the National Working Group on Open Data for Nutrition and Agriculture.

Putting the spotlight on…

…a new member! Ms Agnès Zabsonré joins the AEN from Burkina Faso. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Université Nazi Boni, and a research fellow at the Partnership for Economic Policy.

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

Evidence events

25 July: Webinar: ‘How can NGOs and civil society organisations enhance their production and use of research?’ Online.

30 July: Seminar: How are social grant beneficiaries using grants to generate income? Johannesburg, South Africa.

2-13 September: Development Training Programme in Africa, Gauteng, South Africa.


This month’s blog is all about the Africa Evidence Week and is written by Natalie Tannous of the Africa Centre for Evidence. View all blog posts online and use the Network to share your view – submit your AEN blog here.
Evidence-based policy-making is a political process
In the most recent LSE Impact blog, Niamh Hardiman and Saliha Metinsoy acknowledge the significance of using high-quality research evidence to inform policy decisions. Governments find it difficult to implement evidence-based policy because the policy-making process is political in nature and is not a structured process. Frameworks of policymakers’ assessments are shaped by the fundamental policy model. There are ideas that greatly influence policy in more basic ways than we might perceive but evidence remains an important aspect of evidence-based policy-making.

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE
During the last three years, EvalYouth has organised 47 presentations on evaluation consisting of 41 speakers in four different languages. EvalYouth is an initiative of EvalPartners which aims to encourage the young and emerging evaluators as well as incorporate all the young people in evaluations that are conducted at national, regional, and international levels.

The Science and Common Good Publishers recently published a new free book in French which is a compilation of approaches and advanced methods on the evaluation of complex interventions in global health. It is a collaborative effort by numerous authors from various countries and fields of study to present these interventions in a simple and accessible way.

Last month; the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance, Rainforest Alliance, and the World-Wide Fund for Nature launched an evidence website called ‘Evidensia’ in order to assist with the decision-making process of businesses, governments, and practitioners. The organisations hope to partner with researchers to develop knowledge on the effect of sustainability initiatives so that more informed decisions on sustainability can be made.

Evidence from academia
Gupta: ‘Research to support evidence-informed decisions on optimizing gender equity in health workforce policy and planning’

Macura et al: ‘Systematic reviews of qualitative evidence for environmental policy and management: an overview of different methodological options’

O’Connor et al: ‘A question of trust: can we build an evidence base to gain trust in systematic review automation technologies?’

Announcements
- Applications: research manager position at Abdul Latif Jameel Action Lab.
- Doctoral students can apply now to work in a policy organisation.
- Call for proposals to improve gender equality and diversity in science education.
- Registrations are now open for the 7th Biennial SAMEA Conference.