

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.



Technology as a solution to inform policy There is so much research data, and evidence in the world, it difficult to manage

Photo: Shutterstock

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.

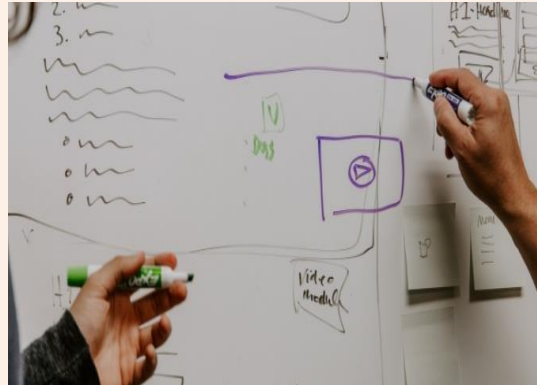
2-13 September: [Development Training Programme in Africa](#), Gauteng, South Africa.

21-25 October: [7th Biennial SAMEA Conference](#), 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 policy-makers' 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.



High quality research evidence informs good decision-making An illustration of the political nature of the evidence-based policy-making process

Photo: The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

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.