



## Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || June 2019

### Successful partnerships: UNICEF's scale-up

In a recent blog, Sobhan McDonough, Lilian Lehmann, and Jeffery McManus shared a success story of the [embedded learning partnership](#), explaining how UNICEF Kenya has made use of evidence from [IDinsight](#) to improve their integrated sanitation and nutrition programme. In response to the challenge of child deaths linked to undernutrition and diarrhoea in Kenya, UNICEF and the Kitui County Public Health Office came up with a solution by designing a programme called SanNut which combines sanitation as well as nutrition programmes for caregivers. After evaluation of the programme, IDinsight found that SanNut had an overall positive influence on caregiver knowledge and practices.



#### Partnerships have positive influences

Caregivers in Kitui County, Kenya, discuss ways to improve sanitation and nutrition practices in their households to protect the health of their children.

Photo: IDINSIGHT

South African president Cyril Ramaphosa should maintain and strengthen evidence-based policy-making (EBPM) in the South African government, writes [Laurenz Langer](#) and [Promise Nduku](#), researchers at the [Africa Centre for Evidence](#) in a recent [Conversation article](#). Some EBPM interventions such as the social grant system in South Africa have resulted in positive effects such as poverty reduction.

If you are a writer, you will find Pat Thomson's recent [blog post](#) beneficial: she offers excellent writing advice termed "chunk writing" that involves concentrating on a single aspect of an argument at a time. She suggests that this way of writing enables writers to meet deadlines by maintaining their path of reasoning and avoiding disruptions.

In an interview with Njiraini Muchira, the executive director of [African Institute for Development Policy](#), Eliya Zulu points out the importance of [evidence-informed decision-making](#). Policy-makers should always make use of authentic and accurate evidence before making any decisions to improve people's welfare. He urges policy-makers to cultivate a "culture of evidence" which promotes evidence use.

Charles Dhewa, chief executive officer for [Knowledge Transfer Africa](#), argues in a recent [blog](#) that governments in Africa should use data to guide farmers on what to produce. The ever changing economic and weather conditions, argues Dhewa, makes it difficult for farmers to make decisions.

### Putting the spotlight on...

...an emerging organisation!

[Afrobarometer](#) is a pan-African survey research network that has operated successfully for 20 years (in 38 countries so far), giving a voice to Africans and providing an evidence base for good policy development across the continent.

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

### Evidence events

9-12 July: [2<sup>nd</sup> Africa Evidence to Action Conference](#), Accra, Ghana.

2-13 September: [2019 annual Development Training Programme in Africa \(DETPA\)](#), Gauteng, South Africa.

21-25 October: [7<sup>th</sup> Biennial SAMEA Conference](#), Gauteng, South Africa.

22-26 October: [Uganda Management Institute's 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference](#), Kampala, Uganda.

In this month's [blog](#) – Mapula Tshangela – the 2019 winner of the Africa Evidence Leadership Award shares how others have shaped her contribution to the evidence-informed decision-making field. View all blog posts [online](#) and use the Network to share your view – submit your AEN blog [here](#).

### Danger of single studies in policy-making

In a recent [blog post](#), executive director of the [International Initiative for Impact Evaluation \(3ie\)](#) Emmanuel Jimenez highlights the dangers of using single studies to inform policy. Sharing important lessons about the significance of endorsing research transparency as well as replications, Jimenez also points out that if the available evidence is not enough to synthesise, it is critical to produce more evidence. Jimenez flags that policy decisions are dependent on more than just the available evidence. He cites the public disagreements in the Philippines where researchers and senior officials depended on the results of one study to introduce a vaccine into that country.



**Risking a lot using a single source** A nurse administers a vaccine to a patient. Much public disagreement currently circulates the decision to introduce a vaccine in the Philippines.

Photo: 3ie

### INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

Are literature reviews a thing of the past? Gorgi Krlev thinks so. In the latest [London School of Economics and Political Science Impact blog](#), the author suggests replacing literature reviews with dynamic [knowledge maps](#) that display the connection between new research and current literature.

A new working paper suggests that women usually score lower than men on [grant proposals](#) based on specific words they use. To prevent gender biases when evaluating grant proposals, applicants do not have to change their writing style but proposal reviewers should be carefully chosen and trained, argues [Annette Brown](#) editorial leader of [R&E Search for Evidence](#).

[James Georgalakis](#), director of communications and impact at the [Institute of Development Studies](#), points out that the researchers based at international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) should be given more credit for displaying exceptional [research capacity](#). He recommends that academic institutions should effectively collaborate with these types of institutions to produce excellent research and improve evidence-use for development.

### Evidence from academia

[Maleka et al](#): 'Research collaboration on community health worker programmes in low-income countries: an analysis of authorship teams and networks'

[Nutley et al](#): 'New development: What works now? Continuity and change in the use of evidence to improve public policy and service delivery'

[Wieringa et al](#): 'Decision aids that facilitate elements of shared decision making in chronic illnesses: a systematic review'

### Announcements

- Apply now: [Masters' in Biostatistics](#) in 2020 at Stellenbosch University.
- Do you want to study full time in 2020? Apply for Master's or PhD funding from [National Research Foundation](#).
- The Africa Centre for Evidence welcomes [another intern](#) from the McMaster Health Forum in Canada.
- [Vacancy](#) at the United Nations University: apply now!