

## The 9th African Evaluation Association International Conference

The Board of the [African Evaluation Association \(AfrEA\)](#) worked in partnership with the Réseau Ivoirien de Suivi et d'Evaluation (RISE), African Development Bank and the Government of Ivory Coast to organise the 9th AfrEA International Conference, held in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire from 11 - 15 March. The aim of the conference was to encourage and support AfrEA's "Made in Africa" approach. This year's theme was "*Accelerating Africa's Development: Strengthening National Evaluation Ecosystems*". Some colleagues from the [Africa Centre for Evidence](#) and [Africa Evidence Network](#) senior teams participated at this conference, which allowed them to share knowledge, network and collaborate with many global institutions and individuals.



**Five days of collaboration, networking and sharing knowledge** Africa Centre for Evidence and Africa Evidence Network colleagues attending the conference

Photo credit: Africa Centre for Evidence

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[Emma Heneine](#), a research fellow from [AFIDEP](#) in a [blog](#), reports on the lessons from a workshop that focused on the gaps in evidence-informed decision making. The gaps in policy engagement and EIDM are reliance on donors, minimum public engagement, incompetent stakeholders and poor policy implementation; which can be bridged by [co-production of knowledge](#) and [having strong networks](#).

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There are high prospects that access to mobile data will promote sustainable development in Africa. The government of Kenya joined with the private sector to develop [a data privacy and protection framework](#) to improve capacity to share and use information in public service. Information from mobile phones will be shared for positive social impact.

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Latest evidence on waste-picking supports that it can ease the high unemployment rate and promote recycling yet it is not regarded as important at all levels in society, says [Lucas Nowicki](#) in an article. [South Africa must deliberate on integrating the waste pickers into the formal waste management sector](#) because it benefits both individuals and the society.

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Health policies in Africa can be enhanced if data collection and use is improved, says [Damazo Kadengye](#). Yet, countries come across [challenges such as data costs and coordination](#) which makes it problematic for them to develop evidence-based policies. It is crucial to shift the focus from data to information and knowledge to improve healthcare.

### Evidence events

25-26 March: [African Cochrane Indaba 2019](#), Cape Town, South Africa.

25-26 March: [Fourth Industrial Revolution Summit for Economic Development](#), Durban, South Africa.

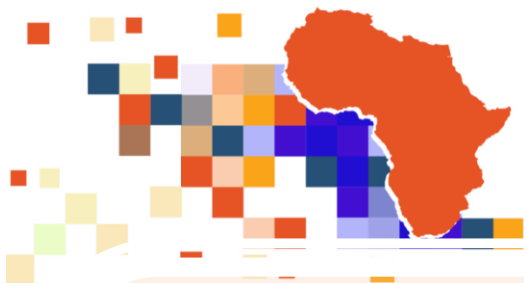
27 March: [Africa Evidence Webinar](#), Online, 14:00-15:00 (UCT+2).

21-22 May: [SANBio Annual Event 2019](#), Pretoria, South Africa.

### Announcements

- [Nominations](#) for the Africa Evidence Leadership Award are now open!
- [Funding opportunities](#) from the Centre of Excellence for Development Impact and Learning.
- [Vacant post for a senior evaluation specialist at 3ie](#): closing date is 24 March.
- BMJ is offering the [BMJ Global Health Grant](#) to one successful applicant: applications close on 31 March.

On the [blog](#) now: AEN member Luvuyo Zigana shares about how he has been "captured" by evidence. View all blog posts [online](#) and use the Network to share your view – submit your AEN blog [here](#).



## The rising voice of research in policy-making

The [2019 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\) Conference](#) in Bergen is an annual conference – initiated by the University of Bergen (UiB) and organised in collaboration with other Norwegian universities, the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – that exists to facilitate engagement with the SDGs. The aim of the conference is to address the inequality of knowledge. [Sverre Ole Drønen](#), the senior adviser of SDG Bergen reflects on this annual conference. One of the keynote speakers was [Silvio Funtowicz and his presentation centred on scientific advice and the societal impact of research](#). Based on his experiences, he offered advice on how researchers can deliver scientific guidance to policy-makers, saying that knowledge must be understood comprehensively, and citizens must be encouraged to participate in knowledge creation.



**The power of science advice: Discussions on the scientific advice and the societal impact of research**

Silvio Funtowicz presenting at the 2019 SDG Conference in Bergen

Photo credit: Eivind Senneset for the University of Bergen

## INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The practice of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can cause harm to either the environment, people or information, argues [Stephen Porter](#) in a recent blog. Porter discusses [safe M&E practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> century](#), which consist of having a harm prevention lens for evaluation; data rights, privacy and protection; plus strengthening safeguarding and evaluation skills.

Have you ever wondered what “fit-for-purpose” data means? [Paige Kirby](#) points out that the meaning is dependent on who you ask and what decision must be taken. Individuals who depend on data from country systems for programme planning and management generally find statistical data useful. But limitations such as the politicisation of statistics negatively impact the decision-making process.

In a recent International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) blog, [Leandro Echt](#) focusses on the “[context matters](#)” framework which was produced in 2016 by INASP and Politics & Ideas with the intention of improving evidence-use. Some of its benefits include raising organisational awareness on how evidence is a crucial component of government as well as broadening the range of evidence by considering other types of evidence such as citizen knowledge.

## Evidence from academia

[Johansson](#): ‘Evidence-based social service in Sweden: a long and winding road from policy to local practice’

[Oliver & Cairney](#): ‘The dos and don’ts of influencing policy: a systematic review of advice to academics’

[Ranchod & Vas](#): ‘Policy networks revisited: creating a researcher - policymaker community’

[Williamson et al](#): ‘Increasing the capacity of policy agencies to use research findings: a stepped-wedge trial’

The [International Growth Centre \(IGC\)](#) emphasises that women’s participation in the workforce should be increased because there are substantial social and economic benefits. There are numerous barriers that prevent women from actively participating in the labour market but their independence and involvement in the workforce increases if they get access to soft skills training and finance, according to IGC research evidence.