



**AFRICA
EVIDENCE
NETWORK**

*Only together can evidence-
informed decision-making
become reality.*

NEWSLETTER || April 2020

The AEN advocates for EIDM during COVID-19

We cannot recall a time where evidence has played such an important role for **immediate decision-making** on the same topic across the entire globe. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented effort globally to determine, share, and implement initiatives to stem the wrath of this one virus and disease. This has created immense opportunity for evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM). Unfortunately, it has also unleashed a swath of misinformation. The AEN is committed to ensuring that we walk alongside all of you as you fight the good fight of contributing to relevant and reliable EIDM on the continent while dispelling the misinformation that can be stressful at best but dangerous at worst.



The AEN shows its commitment to advocate for EIDM during COVID-19

EIDM plays a significant role during this difficult time of the pandemic

Photo: Africa Evidence Network secretariat (AEN)

.....
Frejus Thoto from Benin is the 2020 winner of the **Africa Evidence Leadership Award**. The AEN secretariat first established the AELA for EIDM in Africa in 2018, with funding from the **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation**. Frejus receives a travel grant for an event or course on evidence-informed decision-making as part of the award.

The **Africa Evidence Network** is changing its **biennial in-person** event to a **digital event**, taking place from 21 to 25 September, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Excitingly, there are plans to host an in-person **celebration event** in Uganda when it is safe to do so; details of this celebration event will be forthcoming.

As part of its efforts to stand in solidarity with the evidence community around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Africa Evidence Network** has launched a page on its website dedicated to gathering and sharing African examples of **evidence-informed decision-making** (EIDM). Anyone can submit open access examples of EIDM in action relating to COVID-19 through the **AEN secretariat**.

The African Union recently published a **report** which shares the impact of COVID-19 on the African economy, highlighting the extreme effects at all levels of the economy. The authors propose possible solutions for both the immediate term and the aftermath.

Putting the spotlight on...

... an emerging organisation!

International Growth Centre is a research institute that has a goal of supporting evidence-based policy-making in the country and creating philosophies for Ghana's development.

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

Mark your calendars

1-5 June: **gLOCAL Evaluation Week, online.**

21-25 September: **Evidence 2020, online.**

2-4 December: **Africa Knows! Conference, The Hague, Netherlands.**

The **Africa Evidence Leadership Award** winner for 2020, Frejus Thoto writes this month's **blog post**, where he focuses on what the award means to him. He mentions that it is a celebration of his personal commitment to EIDM in Africa. View all blog posts **online** and use the Network to share your work – submit your AEN blog **here**.

Evidence synthesis and COVID-19

Evidence synthesis specialists play a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic, says Ciara Keenan and colleagues in a recent [blog post](#). Rumours and a lack of verified information about COVID-19 can cause widespread concern and anxiety among the general public. In response to this crisis, a team which comprises evidence synthesis and health science experts from around the world developed an interactive geographic map to make it easier for users to search for and explore emerging resources on COVID-19. The map also aims to promote networking and collaboration between members of the evidence synthesis community around the world.



Collating syntheses on Coronavirus and COVID-19

An interactive geographical map reflecting emerging evidence sources collated from different sources

Photo: Campbell Collaboration UK & Ireland

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

In an attempt to [address the COVID-19](#) pandemic in Australia, the chief scientist is working together with Australia's leading academies to develop a [COVID-19 searchable database](#) of experts. This platform encourages evidence-informed decision-making as it allows governments, the private sector, the research sector, and other decision-makers to easily find essential knowledge they need to inform their decisions.

A group of digital learning specialists from [International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications](#) share lessons about learning online in a [blog](#) to assist knowledge organisations from around the world transition their usual face-to-face events to an online setting. The authors suggest that content should be transformed to suit online requirements and that it is important to reflect on the context as well as the audience when going digital.

Do you find yourself struggling to focus on writing during these difficult times, with the transition of working from home? [Chris Smith](#) provides useful, timely, and relevant [strategies](#) to cope with interruptions and concentrate. The author's first strategy is keeping a distraction diary, which helps you to deal with any disruptions during the writing process. He points out that you can only cope with distractions once you understand how to respond to them.

Hot off the press

[Andreea et al](#): 'To what extent does evidence support decision making during infectious disease outbreaks? A scoping literature review'

[Nakagawa et al](#): 'A new ecosystem for evidence synthesis'

[Newman et al](#): 'A mixed methods examination of knowledge brokers and their use of theoretical frameworks and evaluative practices'

Opportunities

- [Applications](#) for Infectious Diseases Research Fellowship close 24 April.
- Call for [PhD fellowships](#) applications close 31 May.
- Enrol for a free mini-course on creating impact with [evidence-based implementation](#) by 18 May.
- [Access free online learning](#) and community resources during COVID-19.
- Call for research and innovation ideas to [address COVID-19](#): no closing date!