



A great connector for African scientists

Calling all African scientists to **register** on the **African Scientists Directory**. Join this network of scientists to collaborate, build trust, increase impact, and connect! The directory is a joint effort by the **International Science Council Regional Office for Africa** and the **Academy of Science of South Africa**, financed by the South African **Department of Science and Innovation**. It offers pertinent knowledge on African specialists in humanities, mathematics, engineering, natural, and social sciences. The directory aims to enable the free movement of experts and scientific information on the continent, accumulate and distribute important scientific information for Africa, as well as promote postgraduate training initiatives for early-career scientists, amongst others.



African Scientists Directory The directory promotes and facilitates capacity-building in Africa.

Photo: African Scientists Directory

The **Africa Evidence Network** secretariat is currently updating its online database of available resources, tools, guides, and opportunities for capacity-building in evidence-informed decision-making in Africa. Send your resources to Charity Chisoro on charityc@uj.ac.za. In sending us this information, you are agreeing that we can share the information within our online database.

Share your stories of success in evidence-informed decision-making with the Africa Evidence Network secretariat. For example: where evidence made a difference in policy design, resulted in positive results after policy implementation, or an individual/organisation grew in strength or developed because of evidence uptake.

In a recent **article** by **Damaris Matoke-Muhia**, women are encouraged to lead the response to coronavirus in Africa and play a significant role in fighting the pandemic, considering that they are the key caregivers in their societies. The author argues that an effectiveness COVID-19 response lies in accepting women's knowledge, strength, and resilience.

Nature recently published an **article** by numerous writers about how the use of data and synthesis is a necessity to prevent food insecurity caused by COVID-19. The **Africa Evidence Network** and **African Evaluation Association** link policy-makers to organisations that are committed to contributing to evidence-informed decision-making.

Putting the spotlight on...

...an emerging organisation! The **African Population and Health Research Center** is a premier research institution and think tank in Africa that generates evidence to drive policy action to improve the health and well-being of African people. Want to spotlight yourself or your organisation? **Let us know** and you could be featured.

Mark your calendars

21 August: [The gender lens - evaluation in Africa through the eyes of African women evaluators, online.](#)

8 September: [Evidence Synthesis Technology, online.](#)

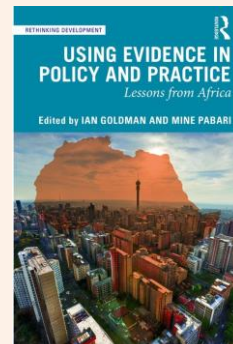
21-25 September: [EVIDENCE 2020 ONLINE, online.](#)

7-8 December: [Coronavirus webinar, online.](#)

Lesedi Senamele Matlala from **JET Education Services** writes this month's **blog** that highlights the importance of educational institutions' preparation for the rapid shift to online learning seen as necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic. View all blog posts **online** and use the Network to share your work – submit your AEN blog **here**.

New book hailed for lessons about evidence-use from Africa

To support evidence-use by decision-makers, consider whether such decision-makers have the political and fiscal space to make alternative choices based on new evidence, research, or data. **Ruth Levine** from IDinsight writes of the recently published book by Ian Goldman and Mine Pabari – **Using Evidence in Policy and Practice: Lessons from Africa** – that this unpacking of ‘context matters’ is one of the lessons that stood out for her as a reader. Another stand-out lesson is that the skillsets required to support evidence-use go beyond research methods skills. For many decision-makers, the skills necessary to support evidence-informed decision-making include management, how to facilitate evidence processes, and ways to engage in knowledge brokering and effective dialogue.



Using evidence in policy and practice A book that shares various case studies of exactly to go beyond ‘context matters’.

Photo: Taylor Francis & Group

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The publication of **research related to COVID-19** is unprecedented, making the diversity and volume of information for decision-makers to engage with overwhelming. **Y-Ling Chi** and colleagues of the **Centre for Global Development** argue for the use of evidence synthesis to ensure evidence is accessible and used when decisions are being made.

In a recent **comment piece** in **The Lancet Digital Health**, Benido Impouma and colleagues share some of the digital tools being used in the WHO African region to support preparedness for and response to COVID-19. One such tool is the Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources (EIOS), which monitors media content for references to COVID-19 among other things.

Many countries' COVID-19 decision-making bodies preclude "experts on non-COVID-19 health, social and societal consequences of COVID-19", write Dheepa Rajan and colleagues in a recent **BMJ commentary piece**. The authors call for more inclusive and multidisciplinary representation in national decision-making bodies, describing COVID-19 as a societal problem that "impacts every single person in society one way or another".

Hot off the press

Ade-Ibijola & Harley: ‘Battling Covid-19 with Artificial Intelligence: What Will Work in Africa?’

Goldman & Pabari: ‘Using Evidence in Policy and Practice: Lessons from Africa’

Preston Consults: ‘Driving Industrialization through Manufacturing Sector Growth – Policy Response to COVID-19 in Nigeria.’

Segobye et al: ‘What Possible Futures for Africa Post-Covid-19?’

Opportunities

- Apply for a **short online course** to engage with decision-makers by 30 September.
- Apply for the **Fulbright** South African research scholarship by 1 October.
- Submit **project proposals** on climate change in Sub-Saharan Africa by 25 August.
- The **Rhodes Trust** is accepting applications for the **Rhodes scholarships**.