

## Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || February 2016

### The successful first AEN Roadshow in Zimbabwe

On 5 February 2016, the [Africa Evidence Network \(AEN\)](#) co-hosted its first roadshow with the [Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network \(ZeipNET\)](#) at the Crowne Plaza Monomotapa Hotel in Harare, Zimbabwe. The roadshow was attended by 41 delegates including policy-makers, researchers, academics, civil society members, and the media. The roadshow had a [panel discussion](#) which comprised key representatives from government, academics, and industry. The meeting stimulated conversations on how key stakeholders can make collaborative efforts towards improving the production and use of evidence in Zimbabwe. The discussions and level of engagement at this forum demonstrated that roadshows are an effective way of bringing together multiple partners to deliberate on the role of evidence in policy-making.



Panelist represented in Government, Academics and Industry at the Crowne Plaza Monomotapa Hotel, Harare

The [African Institute for Development Policy \(AFIDEP\)](#), in collaboration with [Vaka Yiko](#) grantee [Politics and Ideas](#), has developed a new [online](#) evidence-informed policy-making course. The course is primarily targeted at mid-level civil servants and policymakers in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Ghana. The course [Terms of Reference](#) are provided. The deadline to submit applications is 2 March 2016.

The second [Africa Evidence Network \(AEN\)](#) roadshow takes place at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in Cape Town on 4 March 2016. AEN has partnered with the [Policy Action Network \(PAN\)](#) Children within the HSRC to co-host a panel discussion focusing on how to further build networks around evidence-informed decision-making.

The [AEN](#) wants to hear from you, our valued members. During the month of April and May, we will be carrying out a survey asking you what you find meaningful regarding the AEN and how we can improve this platform for you. Your responses will also help guide us in delivering an exciting AEN Conference for you in September 2016.

The [U.S. House of Representatives](#) passed the [Electrify Africa Act](#), a direct response to [600 million people](#) living in Sub-Saharan Africa who do not have access to reliable electricity. The [bill](#) directs the U.S. President to assist African governments by providing 50 million people with access to power by 2020.

### Evidence events

04 March: [AEN and HSRC Roadshow in Cape Town, South Africa](#)

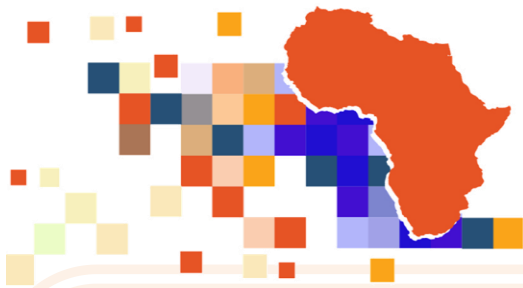
08 March: [AEN and Centre for Social Research Roadshow, Blantyre, Malawi](#)

02-06 May: [3<sup>rd</sup> Pan-African Capacity Development in Harare, Zimbabwe](#)

### Announcements

- Web streaming for the Cape Town AEN roadshow will be available
- [Proposals](#) requested by Campbell for new systematic reviews
- [Editors](#) required by Cochrane in the editorial unit; flexible location

The latest [AEN blog](#) by Ronald Munatsi, Director of [ZeipNET](#), reflects on the successful ZeipNET and AEN roadshow held on 5 February 2016 in Harare, Zimbabwe. The roadshow focused on Zimbabwe's national evidence infrastructure. AEN blog submissions are welcome on our [website](#).

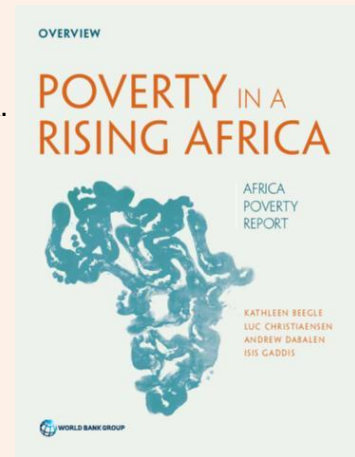


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### Poverty in a rising Africa: Africa poverty report

Poverty in a rising Africa is a [report](#) published by the [World Bank](#) that discusses the lack of quality data to measure and monitor poverty in Africa. Statistics show that Africa experienced robust economic growth over the past two decades, growing at an average annual rate of 4.5 percent. However, the report questions whether all countries and population groups benefited equally, or whether the progress came at the expense of rising inequality. The findings have been unclear because poverty data in Africa are weak. One of the contributing factors to this weakness is that in 2012, 25 of the 48 Sub-Saharan African countries had conducted only two household surveys over the past decade to track monetary poverty. The [World Bank Group and partners](#) have pledged to support the 78 poorest nations, including several in Africa, to conduct household-level surveys every three years. This will address huge data gaps hampering poverty-fighting efforts.



### INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The [Doing Development Differently \(DDD\) Manifesto Community explores](#) how to create real development partnership agreements that can lead to better development outcomes. DDD focuses on the relationship between donors and those implementing large development programmes. The success of the partnership agreement between the Knowledge Sector Initiative and the Australian government is highlighted.

The [Better Evaluation blog](#) looks at the need for Blue Marble Evaluators. This need is inspired by the Blue Marble perspective – thinking of the whole world and its people as the focus of evaluation. Global problems generally require global solutions and global systems evaluation. Therefore, evaluators need special perspectives and competencies to engage and evaluate these global efforts, which means bringing together the full collection of evaluation thinking, tools, and methods.

Kirsty Newman in her latest [blog](#) discusses the importance of holding decision-makers to account for evidence. Findings from the [‘Show your workings’ report](#) from the [Institute of Government](#) reveal that there is a lack of political penalties in place for failing to anchor decisions to the best available evidence. A framework was created to assess evidence transparency by decision-makers. This framework is regarded as a great tool in improving the systematic use of evidence to inform decision-makers.

### Evidence from academia

[Piza et al](#): ‘The Impacts of business support services for small and medium enterprises on firm performance in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review’

[Rathbone et al](#): ‘A comparison of the performance of seven key bibliographic databases in identifying all relevant systematic reviews of interventions for hypertension’

The latest [On Think Tanks interview](#) features Euphrasia Mapulanga, a Knowledge Manager from [Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research \(ZIPAR\)](#). The interview discusses ZIPAR’s effective approach in working with the media as part of their wider approach to influencing policy. ZIPAR has found that research covered by the media gets more attention from the government than published reports. For example, their project on government borrowing ‘Eurobonds’ was covered by the media and this got attention from the Ministry of Finance to the point that some of their recommendations were adopted.