Minister Naledi Pandor wins 2016 AAAS Science Diplomacy Award

South Africa's Minister of Science and Technology, the Honourable Naledi Pandor, has been awarded the 2016 Award for Science Diplomacy by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). According to AAAS, the Minister has been honoured for her work in integrating science in policy-making within South Africa, as well for advocacy for young scientists and women scientists by supporting initiatives that encourage international collaboration for both groups. Commenting on the award, Minister Pandor said the role of science diplomacy is more important than ever and added she is humbled and honoured to have received this award. In addition, the Minister expressed how science does not only enable a more decisive response to major societal challenges but also plays a critical part in helping to foster international partnership, friendship, and solidarity.

Minister Naledi Pandor
Image: aaas.org

An opinion piece by Commissioner Mohamed Ameermia of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) discusses how the synergy between Statistics South Africa and SAHRC is crucial for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. He argues that disaggregated data are essential in measuring whether governments globally are reaching the SDGs.

AFIDEP's latest blog looks at the harmful traditional practices that impact adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Kenya. In response to these harmful practices the 2015 National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health policy has five broad objectives, one of which aims to increase gender equity policy and use evidence-based interventions and programming.

The Gender Centre for Research and Training (GCRT) in Sudan shares the importance of using evidence to mainstream gender in policy-making. Through the Vaka Yiko grant, GCRT provided capacity-building sessions to mid-and high-level policy-makers from two ministries in Sudan on gender and gender analysis to inform policy.

The latest article in SciDev.Net examines how language is still a major barrier to accessing scientific knowledge. A survey of over 75,000 papers in 16 languages revealed that a majority of papers are still written in English. The numbers suggest that non-Anglophone researchers receive low visibility.

Evidence events

28 February: Going beyond 'context matters' webinar 5: Organisational capacity for using knowledge in policy, Webinar, 13:00-14:15 (GMT)

6 March: Evidence-informed decision-making in a complex world, Webinar, 16:00-17:30 (GMT)

Announcements

- Call for bursaries application for the Global Evidence Summit 2017 from Campbell Collaboration

- Call for proposals for the Human Heredity and Health in Africa

The latest AEN blog features Ms Adeline Sibanda, the Africa Evaluation Association's (AfrEA) Interim President, on AfrEA's journey in building evaluation capacity in Africa since its establishment in 1999 and highlights the eighth AfrEA conference. Submit your AEN blog here.

Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || February 2017

Is there a distinctly 'Scottish approach' to evidence?

The Alliance for Useful Evidence and Carnegie UK Trust hosted the Scottish Approach to Evidence roundtable in 2016. This roundtable produced a discussion paper which focusses on the specific policy context in Scotland and the impact this has on use of evidence in policy-making. The paper explores whether there is really such a thing as a 'Scottish approach' to public policy and evidence production and research. It is argued that Scotland is in a strong position to build upon its world leading outcomes based National Performance Framework and become expert in delivering participatory, outcomes based public service. The paper sets out five steps that Scotland should take to shift towards a more participatory public services: (1) Strengthen the outcomes approach and promote the use of the National Performance Framework at local level; (2) Build a strong evidence base for the Scottish approach; (3) Develop robust and appropriate methodologies; (4) Help decision-makers at all levels identify to use a mix of high-quality evidence; and (5) Learn from policy and evidence developments across the UK.

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

A new Overseas Development Institute post by Elizabeth Stuart urges researchers to publish more development progress stories to attract aid. She explains that the public's perception of development aid efforts is wasted. However, she suggests that examining progress is not just important for public perceptions; it is just as important for policy-makers to understand the myriad ways positive change happens.

Wilton Park has released a new report on tracking development progress and evaluating development partnerships in the post-2015 era. This report is from a Wilton Park meeting which sought to address some of the key challenges affecting partnerships and evaluations of the Sustainable Development Goals, including policy priorities, the need for new approaches, tools and methods; and support for country-level evaluation.

The World Bank features Duncan Green's blog on a handy NGO guide to Social Network Analysis (SNA) by the International Rescue Committee. The guide sets out how to run a relationship mapping exercise and how to examine the influence of the different network members over a development challenge that is being addressed. In addition, the guide also highlights the key to understanding SNA, analysing the relationships between the actors and considering their location within the network and the overall structure of the network.

Evidence from academia

Mutatina et al: 'Identifying and characterising health policy and system-relevant documents in Uganda: a scoping review to develop a framework for the development of a one-stop shop'

Phipps et al: 'Determinants of successful knowledge brokering: a transnational comparison of knowledge-intermediary organisations'

The Alliance for Useful Evidence lists top ten resources on the use of evidence. These are guides for improving the quality, design and methods for effective evidence use. The list includes the Bond Evidence Principles and checklist-this guide is specially designed for NGOs, and assists in assessing and improving the quality of evidence reports, research reports and case studies. The Magenta Book: Guidance for Evaluation from the UK Treasury is also included. It is organised around a number of questions frequently asked about policy evaluation and analysis.