

## Training on research communications and policy engagement

Last month, the [African Institute for Development Policy \(AFIDEP\)](#) and the [African Academy of Sciences \(AAS\)](#) hosted a training workshop on how to enhance the value of and strategies for [evidence-informed decision-making \(EIDM\)](#). The training consisted of practical sessions, which mainly focussed on early-to-mid-career researchers. The end goal of the training workshop was to increase the number of academic leaders advocating for EIDM in Africa and to enhance participants' commitment to being instrumental in institutionalising a culture of EIDM in their specific positions.



**Linking research to policy** Participants after receiving certificates for the five-day training event

Photo: [Ann Waithaka](#)

The [Southern Voice](#) recently released a [report](#) on the state of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). This new research focusses on the challenges facing the region in implementing the SDGs. The report emphasised the execution of three specific SDGs: education (SDG 4), energy (SDG 7), and economic growth and labour (SDG 8).

The [Ghana Statistical Service](#) introduced a five-year [corporate plan](#) to promote evidence-based decision-making, with [five crucial goals](#) to ensure that citizens are always informed about the current data trends in the country. The motivation behind the plan is that data is a very important part of democracy and the main ingredient for decision-making.

According to [Newsday](#), there is an urgent need for more [young leaders](#) in Africa because they bring in innovative ideas to run the nation of Nigeria efficiently and sustainably. The authors pointed out the significance of relevant and appropriate evidence-based policy, which will ensure that the continent moves in the right direction.

A group of scientists at [Makerere University](#) has developed a [machine](#) that will supply policy-makers and researchers with excellent data to monitor the direction of air quality for evidence-based decision-making around air pollution. This initiative seeks to address the gap in air quality monitoring in Africa.

## Putting the spotlight on...

... an emerging organisation! The [Center for Effective Global Action \(CEGA\)](#) is a network of researchers and innovators who believe that evidence must be used to make decisions about how development funding is spent.

Want to spotlight you or your organisation? [Let us know](#) and you could be featured.

## Mark your calendars

4 March: [Non-Communicable Disease Research Symposium](#), Cape Town, South Africa.

17-18 March: [Cochrane South Africa National Symposium](#), Cape Town, South Africa.

21-25 September: [Evidence 2020](#), Uganda.

Verity Warne from [INASP](#) and Agnes Titriku from [ACEPA](#) write this month's [AEN blog post](#), focusing on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in the [Parliament of Ghana](#) through the use of data. View all blog posts [online](#) and use the Network to share your work – submit your AEN blog [here](#).

## Evidence-use as a mechanism to support decision-making

In a recent [Conversation article](#), three authors recommend six ways in which members of the civil service can support evidence-use in decision-making. There are several challenges the authors identify for civil servants in using evidence to support decision-making. Instead of merely adding more scientists to work in the field, there is a need for a 'decision-making revolution' or what the authors refer to as a transformation in thinking. As a solution, the authors urge government departments to use 'horizon scanning', consider all options, and accurately organise evidence as some strategies to support this revolution of decision-making.



**Evidence must be categorised accurately**  
Authors argue there are six ways to kick-start what they call a 'decision-making revolution'

Photo: Rawpixel.com

## INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

In a recent [LSE Impact blog](#), Professor [Diana Mitlin](#) and colleagues share effective ways that academics can co-produce valuable knowledge for social movements. They point out that co-production of knowledge can be attained through examining the 'theories of change', integrating education, and dealing with status, amongst other methods.

The [George Institute for Global Health](#) in India and the [Atal Bihari Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis \(Bhopal\)](#) are collaborating to produce evidence to promote [evidence-informed decision-making](#) in healthcare, which will improve health services in that country. The main goal of this partnership is to inform health systems and policy decision-making through joint publications, forums, seminars, and other methods of publication.

Have you ever wondered if it is possible to have [value-free evidence](#)? A PhD candidate and research fellow at the University of Stavanger, [Jason Deegan](#), highlights the importance of contextualising the methods in which evidence-based policy is used and understood. The policy-making process is not exclusively objective but political in nature; hence, it is essential to incorporate values to attain the set goals.

## Hot off the press

[Boland et al](#): 'Building an integrated knowledge translation (IKT) evidence base: colloquium proceedings and research direction'

[Jessani et al](#): 'Enhancing evidence-informed decision making: strategies for engagement between public health faculty and policymakers in Kenya'

[Norström et al](#): 'Principles for knowledge co-production in sustainability research'

## Opportunities

- If you are involved in evidence-informed decision-making for vaccines, please complete this [survey](#) on behalf of the Vaccines for Africa team at the University of Cape Town.
- Net Academy is offering [online training courses](#) on big data and analytics.
- Submit an [abstract](#) for the [Evidence and Implementation Summit](#) by 26 April.