

Africa Evidence Network Newsletter – January 2013

Thank you

Thanks to all those who have been in touch since we formed this group in late 2012. This is the first of a series of monthly newsletters. In this month's newsletter we include:

- An overview of the Network
- News of our new website
- A request for information about training
- A request for information about systematic-review related activities
- News about an Africa-wide Evidence meeting in late 2014
- A chance to share your experiences of trying to access evidence databases.

Feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you know who would like to join the Network. If you would rather not receive these newsletters, please email ruths@uj.ac.za

Are you involved in training? Would you like training?

We would like to know what training around evidence is available across the region. If you provide training, have received training or would like training in any of the following areas, please reply to this message. The information you provide will be collated and fed back to the Network in our next newsletter.

We want to hear from you if you a) provide training b) have received training or c) would like training in:

1. Making evidence-based or evidence-informed decisions
2. Enabling others to access or use research
3. Conducting impact evaluations
4. Undertaking systematic reviews of evidence
5. Something else evidence-related not listed above

What is the Africa Evidence Network?

The Africa Evidence Network came into being following the Campbell Collaboration's mini-colloquium in Dhaka Bangladesh in December 2012. There were a number of delegates from Africa attending from a range of backgrounds with varying links to different systematic review and evidence-based decision-making organisations. Following a meeting of all of the African delegates we decided it would be helpful to have a network to share information, experiences and ideas.

The Network is open to anyone who works in Africa and has an interest in evidence, its production (in particular but not exclusively through systematic reviews) and use in decision-making. Our members include those who work with the Joanna Brigg's Institute, the Campbell Collaboration, the Cochrane Collaboration, the EPPI-Centre, the Collaboration for Environmental Evidence and others. We include researchers, practitioners and policy-makers from universities, NGOs and governments.

The Network is currently co-ordinated by a team at the University of Johannesburg and includes a monthly email sharing news and events. If you are not yet on our mailing list, please contact ruths@uj.ac.za and we will make sure you are included.

A website for the Network

We are pleased to report that we have just registered a website address for us –

www.AfricaEvidenceNetwork.org

We plan to upload news and links on to the site soon. This is your website so please share your ideas to help develop and improve the site. Whilst the website will allow more variety in our communication and networking, we realize not everyone has easy access to the internet so all news items on the website will also be included in monthly emails.

Are you involved in systematic reviews?

We would like to understand more about the systematic reviews being conducted across the region. Please let us know what you are doing in this area and we will collate and share news of activities with the Network.

We want to hear from you if you are a) doing any of the following activities or b) would like to be.

1. Commissioning systematic reviews
2. Conducting systematic reviews
3. Supporting others to do systematic reviews
4. Something else systematic-review related not listed above.

Are you interested in attending an Africa-wide Evidence Meeting?

Following the Campbell Collaboration meeting in Dhaka in December 2012, we have initiated discussions with possible funders about holding an Africa Evidence Meeting in late 2014. It looks likely that the event will be held in Johannesburg, but details are still to be confirmed. We will send you a further update on plans in our next Newsletter.

Access to evidence

One of the issues facing many of us working in Africa is limited access to research databases and research papers. Whilst we don't currently have any solutions to this problem, we would like to understand the problem better and explore possible solutions. We encourage you to share your experiences and ideas with us and we will collate them for the next newsletter.

Evidence initiatives and events

We will include dates of up and coming initiatives and events of relevance to the Network.

Please reply to this email to let us know of:

a) any related **initiatives** in Africa that any of us are involved in, or know of (including brief details and a contact name for further information

b) any related **events** in Africa that any of us are organising, or aware of (including when, where, who is included and a contact name for further information).
