

Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || January 2016

UJ-BCURE releases three films

The University of Johannesburg- led programme Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (UJ-BCURE) has released three short films which showcase the work of the programme in 2015. The first film titled '[UJ-BCURE 2015: A Year of Implementation](#)' focuses on the work in 2015, highlighting the overall success of the project such as the mentoring programme provided for government officials. The second film '[UJ-BCURE Malawi](#)' showcases how UJ-BCURE in Malawi implemented evidence-informed decision-making in two districts, Ntchisi and Mchinji, where the project was rolled out. The third film '[UJ-BCURE: Making a difference in Malawi](#)' focuses on different cases of applied learning through capacity-building activities.



Capacity-building workshop in Ntchisi, Malawi

The first [Africa Evidence Network \(AEN\) roadshow](#) takes place in Zimbabwe on the 5th February 2016. AEN has partnered with the [Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network \(ZeipNET\)](#) in co-hosting a panel discussion. The discussions will focus on the national evidence infrastructure in Zimbabwe, which seeks to strengthen the institutional landscape to support evidence-informed policy-making.

Gabon plans to invest in [online health care](#) as it has failed to meet its Millennium Development Goals in health. With the help of the World Bank, the government of Gabon aims to transform its public health care through its eGabon project. The project will strengthen the National Health Information System to improve access, quality of care and the broader economy.

[OXFAM's Policy and Practice blog](#) features an [article](#) by Daniel Morchain which shares lessons on conducting vulnerable risk assessments, a tool for assessing and categorizing the hazards that social groups are exposed to. Identifying key issues and social groups in a landscape will contribute to more evidence-based and targeted development strategies.

The [Centre of Learning on Evaluation on Results-Anglophone Africa \(CLEAR-AA\)](#) has released their latest workshop [report](#). This report is full of stories on drivers of demand for evaluation from African countries. These countries share their experiences in institutionalizing and improving evaluation capacity for National Evaluation Systems.

Evidence events

[05 February: AEN and ZeipNET Roadshow in Harare, Zimbabwe](#)

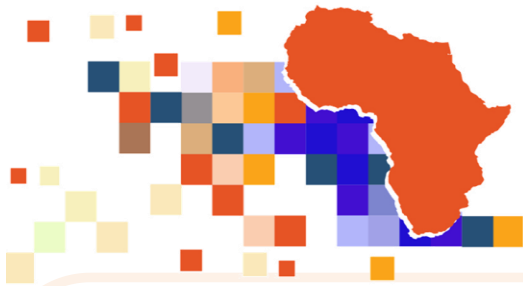
[04 March: AEN and HSRC Roadshow in Cape Town, South Africa](#)

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

Announcements

- [Pre-announcement](#) of funding from the Campbell Collaboration.
- [Call for papers](#) for the international APPAM conference.
- [Vacancies](#): Two Research Directors at the HSRC, South Africa.

The latest [AEN blog](#) by Louis Gerald Maluwa from UJ-BCURE carries an interesting discussion on the role of Theories of Change and Logic Models in evaluation. Louis argues that the use of the above tools can lead to the development of more relevant and accurate evaluation questions. AEN blog submissions are welcome on our [website](#).



Impact evaluation report: The medium-term impacts of a cash transfer programme in Malawi

3ie's report evaluates the impact of Malawi's Zomba Cash Transfer Programme (ZCTP) two years after it ended. The ZCTP was rolled out during the 2008-2009 period. This intervention entailed giving cash transfers, both conditional on schooling and unconditional, to never-married young women in the age group 13-22 years. The cash transfer was strategically introduced at a period of transition from adolescence to adulthood to ensure lasting effects. The study investigates the impact of ZCTP on four key domains for the recipients of the cash programme. These domains are education, marriage and fertility, health and nutrition, and sexual behavior of young females. The overall study findings reveal that the benefits of unconditional cash transfer did not sustain beyond the programme period. This evaluation provides important lessons for policy-makers when thinking of designing cash transfer programmes as part of their social protection policy.



INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

A 'write shop' was held between **DFID** policy advisors and **Young Lives** researchers at the University of Oxford in September 2015. The meeting discussed collaborative ways of getting evidence into policy. This was driven by the desire to inform busy policy advisers with the latest research. It resulted in these two groups committing to a writing partnership which produced a range of products through the **HEART blog**.

The **Fast Track Impact blog** shares a four-step guide on writing **policy briefs** that will have a real impact. This guide covers design and planning, writing and feedback loops, distribution, engagement and impact. The guide assists in aligning the policy brief's objective with the needs of policy-makers. It is also suggested that establishing trusting relationships with policy-makers and co-producing policy briefs can be other effective ways of achieving real impact.

Why do we do systematic reviews? is a series written by Jon Brasseley from the **Rapid Reviews Info**. Through the series, Jon explores the various reasons for undertaking systematic reviews. The initial survey identified four reasons as the most popular, and out of these four, a subsequent online poll identified 'To see what has been done before, to see if new research is needed' as the major reason for people's engagement in systematic reviews.

Evidence from academia

Carr-Hill et al: 'The effects of school-based decision-making on educational outcomes in low- and middle-income contexts: A systematic review'

Njovu: 'Zambia's experience in building capacity for evaluation'

Santiago-Delefosse et al: 'Quality of qualitative research in the health sciences: Analysis of the common criteria present in 58 assessment guidelines by expert users'

The **Alliance for Useful Evidence** and its Evidence Exchange programme, which supports knowledge sharing and learning across the United Kingdom, has started a webinar. The webinars discuss the question 'What is Good Evidence?' The **first webinar** provides an overview of the standards of evidence used by Nesta, Project Oracle and the Scottish Government. It also highlights how policy-makers make use of these standards of evidence to affect change. The **second webinar** focuses on how to make use of standards of evidence and how to experiment and innovate without losing quality.