

Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || March 2017

Successful implementation of the SECURE Health programme in Kenya

The [African Institute for Development Policy \(AFIDEP\)](#) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Parliament of Kenya hosted a learning forum on 22 February 2017 at the International Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. This [forum](#) is a celebration of the successful implementation of the [Strengthening Capacity to Use Research Evidence in Health Policy \(SECURE Health\)](#) programme, a three year programme that started in 2014. The purpose of SECURE Health was to optimise individual and institutional capacity in accessing and utilising research evidence in decision-making in Kenya. The programme has implemented a wide range of interventions within the Ministry of Health, and has been very successful in improving capacity and motivation to use evidence in decision-making in Parliament.



AFIDEP in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Parliament of Kenya hosted a learning forum on 22 February 2017 at the International Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. Photo: Evans Chumo/AFIDEP

The latest [article](#) on [Devex](#) debates on the role of public versus private schools in delivering education in developing countries. According to the World Bank, an average of 16 percent of young people in education attend private schools across Africa. The rise of private schools in Africa has raised a debate among education experts about whether private schools will be crucial to meeting the sustainable development agenda by 2030.

The [Medical and Health Sciences Faculty of Stellenbosch University](#) in South Africa hosted the [Global Health Seminar Series](#). Professor Paul Garner from the Centre for Evidence Synthesis in Global Health at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine was the guest lecturer and he discussed the impact of systematic reviews on global health.

[INASP's](#) Emily Hayter [interviews](#) Kondwani Chikafa, Senior Research Officer in the Research Section of the Parliament of Malawi about overcoming challenges to using evidence in the Parliament of Malawi. Some of the challenges are access to up to date resources, awareness of the Research Section in Parliament and not having enough research personnel.

[Anna Sowa](#), a documentary film producer, discusses how she turned her academic paper into a film to drive social change. She created the film titled 'Aghbalou-The Sources of Water', which explores irrigation practices in a small river oasis on the southern slopes of the High Atlas Mountains, in the Todgha Valelly in Morocco.

Evidence events

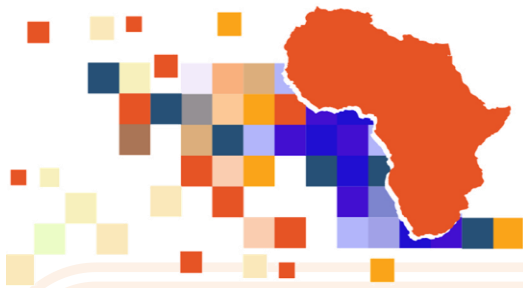
21-24 May: [7th African Unity for Renaissance International Conference and Africa Day Expo in Pretoria, South Africa](#)

28-31 May: [Maisha HIV and AIDS Conference 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya](#)

Announcements

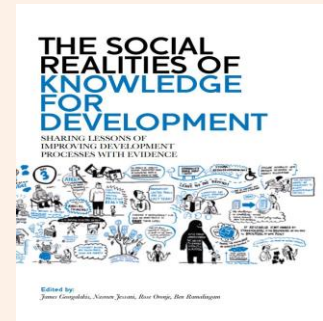
- [Early bird registration](#) for the Global Evidence Summit 2017 (open until 30 June)
- [Call for applications](#) for stipends and bursaries for the Global Evidence Summit 2017

The latest [AEN blog](#) is by Mapula Tshangela from the [Department of Environmental Affairs](#) in South Africa and Louise Shaxon from [Overseas Development Institute](#). They share how embedding an evidence-informed approach within a government department is a long-term commitment. Submit your AEN blog [here](#).



The social realities of knowledge for development

The [Impact Initiative](#) and the [Institute of Development Studies](#) has published a book entitled 'The social realities of knowledge for development'. This collection of peer-reviewed papers explores critical challenges faced by organisations and individuals involved in evidence-informed development through a diverse set of case studies and think-pieces. The dominant themes emerging from the contributions include: building networks and partnerships; contextualising knowledge and power dynamics; and modes of knowledge brokerage. An analysis of these themes, and the respective roles of researchers, non-governmental organisations, large programmes and policy actors, suggests that a common thread running throughout this book is the importance of social relationships. The research results show that the social and interactive realities of mobilising knowledge comprise several layers: (i) individual and collective capacities, (ii) individual relationships, (iii) networks and group dynamics, and (iv) cultural norms and politics: all are key to understanding how to make evidence really matter.



INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

A new [video](#) by [3ie's](#) Birte Snilstveit shows how to use evidence gap maps from 3ie's dynamic and interactive web platform. The evidence gap maps provide a colourful display of areas with strong, weak, or non-existent evidence on the effects of development programmes. Evidence gap maps are an important tool for informing strategic policy, programme and research priorities.

The latest [article](#) in the [Voices of the Governing Institute](#) provides five strategies for evidence-based policy-making that will help the state and policy-makers to ensure that taxpayers' money is being used in the most effective ways. These five strategies include adding requirements of and support to rigorous evaluation into existing funding streams.

Sarah Lucas of [Hewlett Foundation](#) shares six ways think tanks can overcome angst about impact. Think tanks around the world aim to provide timely, independent research that informs policy decisions and improves lives. However, many of these organisations struggle to explain how they measure the impact of their work. She explains, that for think tanks to overcome angst about impact they have to move beyond numbers and focus on the type of work and the people they are going to work with. They should focus on demonstrating influence on evidence-informed policy-making at a conceptual level.

Evidence from academia

[Milat and Li](#): 'Narrative review of frameworks for translating research evidence into policy and practice'

[Ngang](#): 'Civil society sustainability and local capacity development: a case study in Cameroon'

[Nooraie et al](#): 'Implementation of evidence-informed practice through central network actors; a case study of three public health units in Canada'

[Oya et al](#): 'Effects of certification schemes for agricultural production on socio-economic outcomes in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review'

[Episode 141](#) of the Terms of Reference Podcast hosted by Stephen Ladek features David Evans, a Lead Economist in the Chief Economist's Office for the African Region of the World Bank. This episode explores revolutions in development and aid assistance brought through the practice of impact evaluation.