

South Africa implements measures to fight the COVID-19 pandemic

On 15 March, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa **addressed the nation** in response to the outbreak of COVID-19, which was declared a global pandemic by the **World Health Organisation** earlier this year. After extensive consultations with Cabinet, several measures to fight the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa were put in place, such as imposing a country-wide travel ban, closing schools, and strengthening surveillance and testing systems to further support health responses. A WhatsApp chatbot has also been set up by the South African Department of Health, accessible to all residents in the country.



Response to the Coronavirus outbreak President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster

Photo: Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)

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Researchers and policy-makers in Uganda were encouraged to ensure that the evidence they collect is used in implementing policy in order to **bridge the gap** between theory and practice. However, there are some challenges faced in evidence-informed policy-making, such as the lack of ownership of evidence by policy-makers as they are not always involved in the research process, making partnerships crucial for evidence-use.

The **Makueni County government** in Kenya collaborated with scientists from **World Agroforestry** to design a **new resource hub**. The open access website will promote evidence-based decision-making for land restoration. This initiative aims to help alleviate the negative effects of inconsistent rainfall patterns.

In a **recent article**, African universities were encouraged to design programmes that produce progressive graduates who critically reflect on development issues to promote economic growth by the **United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa** and the **University of Ghana**.

In a **recent article** published in **Africa Times**, Dr. **Jemimah Njuki** illustrates how gender norms and attitudes contribute to what is considered socially acceptable activities for women in Zambia using the fisheries sector as an example. She points out that research evidence can be used to address the root causes of gender inequality.

Putting the spotlight on...

...**a new member!** Ada BIGNAUT, a knowledge management specialist at **Weknow Consultants**, joined the AEN because he is interested in networking opportunities for insight and research purposes. Want to spotlight you or your organisation? **Let us know** and you could be featured.

Mark your calendars

1-5 June: **gLOCAL Evaluation Week, online.**

21-25 September: **Evidence 2020, Uganda.**

5-6 November: **Evidence to enhance inclusive growth, Maputo, Mozambique.**

2-4 December: **Africa Knows! Conference, The Hague, Netherlands.**

This month's **blog post** is written by Patrick Okwen and Nain Mirabel from **eBASE Africa** and it focuses on how evidence recommendations can be used to improve the livelihoods of children with disabilities.

View all blog posts **online** and use the Network to share your work – submit your AEN blog **here**.

Private sector call to action to address COVID-19 pandemic

The **International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)** collaborated with the **World Health Organisation** to ensure that they provide the **global business community** with the latest and most reliable information about COVID-19 in an attempt to address the spreading pandemic. All economic actors including businesses, governments, and individuals were called on to work together to effectively reduce transmission and its effects on society. The ICC promised to communicate with its over 45 million network members so that businesses in different parts of the world could make informed decisions based on reliable evidence to protect their employees and the business itself.



Novel Coronavirus situation dashboard

An interactive dashboard/map provides the latest global numbers and numbers by country of COVID-19 cases on a daily basis

Photo: World Health Organization, Esri | WHO

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The **Office of Research-Innocenti** of the **United Nations Children's Fund** issued a new series of eight methodological **briefs on evidence synthesis** that will be essential resources for researchers in the evidence-informed decision-making sector. The use of evidence ensures that no child is left behind, by actively promoting inclusivity and enhancing capacities of children.

Following the **outbreak** of COVID-19, **Damelle Torres-Cortes** wrote an **opinion piece** which emphasises the need for scientists and policy-makers to work together in making policy decisions that are based on research evidence. She reiterates the importance of practicing evidence-based policy-making through the integration of science and politics since this will help in solving many of the biggest worlds' challenges.

The **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence** and **Health Technology Wales** entered into a strategic partnership to **strengthen their collaboration** and offer advice to care providers which will support them in making decisions based on research evidence. This partnership is beneficial to the Wales society as it contributes to the improvement of peoples' health as a result of an increased use of medical technologies.

Hot off the press

Chapman et al: 'Knowledge translation strategies for dissemination with a focus on healthcare recipients: an overview of systematic reviews'

Day & Goswami: 'Driving change with evidence and knowledge: Transforming knowledge services for the NHS across England'

Goldman & Pabari: 'Using Evidence in Policy and Practice: Lessons from Africa'

Opportunities

- **Apply** now for the 2020-2021 PRB Policy Communication Fellows Program.
- **Full scholarship opportunities** for African PhD students by the King's College London.
- Great **opportunity** for female researchers interested in climate change science!
- The University of Louvain in Belgium is offering **PhD scholarships**: the deadline is 10 April.