

Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || November 2015

Senior officials trained in using evidence effectively in policy

The [University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice \(GSDPP\)](#) in collaboration with the [Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation \(DPME\)](#) and the [Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development](#) presented the Evidence-Based Policy-Making and Implementation [executive course](#) to senior government officials across South Africa, as well as from Lesotho, Benin and Uganda on 28-30 October 2015. The programme was aimed at strategic managers in the public service, engaging with them to deepen their understanding of the value of using evidence to inform policy-making and implementation. Minister Jeff Radebe, the Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, joined by GSDPP director, Prof Alan Hirsch, conducted a conversation about the importance of evidence-based policy-making.



GSDPP director, Prof Alan Hirsch (left) and Minister Jeff Radebe, the Minister in the Presidency (right) Photography: GSDPP

The [Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network \(ZeipNET\)](#), in partnership with the United States Embassy Public Affairs Section, hosted a [knowledge café](#) on evidence-informed policy-making (EIPM) highlighting the challenges and opportunities for the use of evidence in Zimbabwe's policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and review. ZeipNet's [video](#) shares their experience in promoting EIPM.

A recent [article](#) in [The Conversation](#) tackles the impact of scientific research on economic development in South Africa. Even though South African scientists are making their mark internationally, South Africa spends little on education. For research and development goals to succeed, it is recommended that R3 billion more a year be allocated to research and development.

Asian after-school learning [programmes](#) are on the rise in South Africa according to Dr Linda Zuze from the [Human Sciences Research Council \(HSRC\)](#). This rise is driven by a desire to keep up with global standards. The East educational solutions might equip South African students if applied correctly but there is doubt whether this will lead to an education revolution.

[Policy Action Network \(PAN\)](#): Children from the [HSRC](#) has released [five policy briefs](#) which are based on a study that explored available policy options for addressing poverty traps and social exclusion among children in South Africa. This study was commissioned by the [South African Human Rights Commission](#) and the [United Nations Children's Fund South Africa](#).

Evidence events

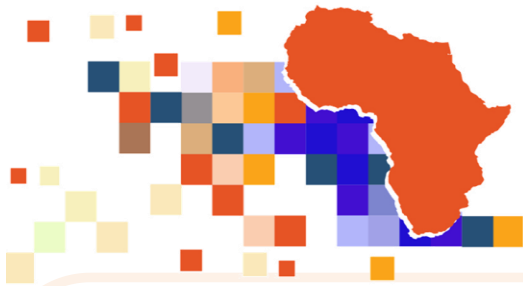
23-27 November: 2016-2020 [Global Evaluation Agenda](#)

08-09 December: Science Forum [South Africa](#)

Announcements

- Call for [Emerging Voices for Global Health 2016](#)
- Call for [proposals on enhancing online literature usage](#)
- Call by [CLEAR](#) for [affiliates](#)

The latest [AEN blog](#) features a guest blog by Louise Ball from Overseas Development Institute. The blog captures what civil servants in Ghana and Zimbabwe really think about evidence-informed policy-making. Check out the last [post](#) of a three-piece series of blog by Laurenz Langer. AEN blog submissions are welcome on our [website](#).



Listening to leaders: Which development partners do they prefer and why

A new [report](#) by [AidData](#) reveals the perception of decision-makers in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) vis-à-vis the involvement of development partners in domestic reform efforts. The report contains information gathered from interviews with 6,750 policy-makers and practitioners from 126 LMICs. The interviews focused on their experiences with development assistance from Western and non-Western sources between 2004 and 2013. The results of the survey were then used to determine the ability of partners to influence the reform agenda in their target nations. One interesting finding in the report is that when aid agencies spend a disproportionate amount of money on 'experts', government is less likely to be influenced by them.



INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The [Guardian](#) features an [article](#) written by Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah from [CIVICUS](#). The article shares some insight on why donors seem unable to fund local NGOs directly. One of the reasons is that a lot of southern and smaller civil society organisations lack capacity to spend money effectively. CIVICUS has published their annual [State of Civil Society Report](#) which focuses on resourcing for civil society.

Howard White in his latest [article](#) featured on [LinkedIn](#) calls for the responsible use of Big Data. It highlights the need for the development of Big Data systems to support evidence-informed decision-making based on accurate analysis. This comes from the reality that no matter how big, Big Data correlations do not equate to causation. Data are full of correlations, however, some data sources lack credibility.

The latest [article](#) by the [World Bank](#) written by Claudia Costin focuses on the road ahead for the [Education 2030 framework for action](#). The framework is to guide countries through the implementation of the new [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 4](#), which states that all children should receive free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education by 2030. The World Bank is committed to supporting countries that request financing or technical assistance to be able to reach this SDG goal. It also emphasises the need for mobilizing domestic resources and making education systems stronger.

Evidence from academia

[Abrahams](#): 'A review of the growth of monitoring and evaluation in South Africa: Monitoring and evaluation as a profession, an industry and a governance tool'

[Rachel et al](#): 'Ethnic heterogeneity and public goods provision in Zambia: Evidence of a subnational "diversity dividend" '

[Taylor & Watson](#): 'The impact of study guides on "matric" performance: Evidence from a randomised experiment'

The [Knowledge Sector Initiative \(KSI\)](#) has started a series of interviews with policy-makers, policy researchers, intellectuals, and development practitioners. The aim of these interviews is to share different perspectives and personal experiences with knowledge-to-policy processes and evidence-based policy-making. These interviews will be published on a monthly basis. The first edition of the [KSI Interview Series](#) is with Mari Pangestu, a seasoned policy-maker who served as Indonesia's Minister of Trade from 2004 to 2011, and as Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy from 2011 until October 2014.