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.

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.
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 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’


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.