Poverty reduction in Africa slow, report finds
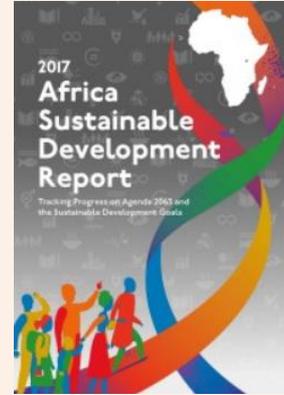
The 2017 Africa Sustainable Development Report measures Africa's progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the goals set out in Agenda 2063. Despite growth within the region over the last decade, the report finds progress towards achieving the goals set out in these two development frameworks has been slow. The report also comments on the disproportionate experience of poverty for youth and women, and calls for structural transformation and reduced inequality within Africa if the continent hopes to achieve these two sets of goals. Measuring Africa's progress against the two sets of goals is possible because of the convergence at the level of goals, targets, and indicators.

Work to do Report outlines ways in which Africa can improve its progress on Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals

On 29 October to 4 November, Statistics South Africa hosted the 28th International Population Conference of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population in Cape Town, South Africa. Over 2000 scientists, policy-makers, and practitioners in the global population community converged at the conference to address issues such as international migration and poverty.

In a recent interview, senior research and policy analyst with the Parliamentary Research Services in Kenya – Marale Sande – shared her experience of championing evidence in the Kenyan parliament through the Evidence Informed Policy Caucus. The caucus works with parliamentarians from both sides of the house to enhance evidence use.

Two of six barriers African policy-makers face when using evidence include a lack of personal relationships between evidence users and producers, and the unclear communication of research results. The Conversation article concludes that building relationships is key to overcoming the 'Big Six' barriers to evidence use in Africa.

A keynote delivered by Professor Janine Mariara of the Partnership for Economic Policy at the Putting Children First conference in Ethiopia emphasised how "child poverty is everyone's problem". The event focused on bringing together people from policy, practice, civil society, and academia to share experiences in tackling child poverty.

Evidence events

28 November: Evidence use in African Parliaments, webinar
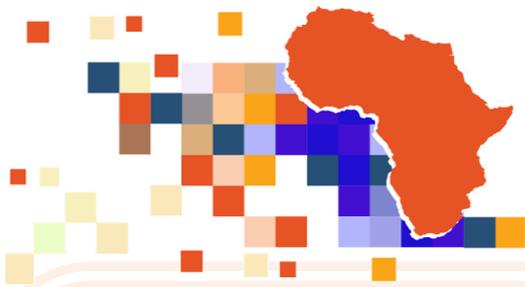
7-8 December: Science Forum, Pretoria, South Africa

16-20 April 2018: Second International Conference of the Collaboration for Environmental Evidence, Paris, France

Announcements

- Position at the African Institute for Development Policy: apply here
- Call for abstracts: Second International Conference of the Collaboration for Environmental Evidence
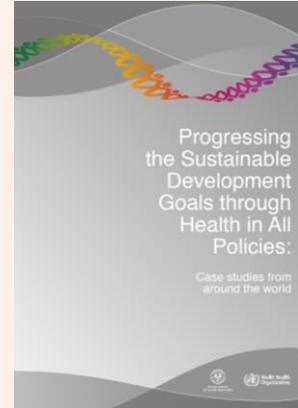- Scholarship opportunities from the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab

On the blog now: Jerusha Govender from Data Innovator shares her reflections from the 6th South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association conference.

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

Cases of Health in All Policies shared in WHO report

A World Health Organisation (WHO) report has been published that details the approaches that several countries are taking to achieve Health in All Policies (HiAP) as a way of advancing countries' commitments to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report features the experiences of HiAP approaches from countries such as Sudan, Zambia, and Namibia, where a national HiAP strategy is being produced. Within the report, the WHO emphasises the importance of HiAP in achieving the SDGs, stating that the approach facilitates "policy coherence for sustainable development" by providing common reference points for practices required for policy coherence.

Consolidating learning The World Health Organisation report shares the Health in All Policies experiences of countries from around the globe

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

A challenge common for many researchers is the pressure to publish in high impact journals, an action which often sidelines relevant languages, topics, and regions. So goes the argument published in a blog via the London School of Economics and Political Science Impact blog. The authors share different approaches to counter this imbalance, such as the Norwegian model.

Data about developing countries continues to be lacking or challenging to access, states the Data for Development highlights report, making it difficult for some countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the report shares six actions that development partners can take to overcome the data divide.

A recent blog post on the Oxfam From Poverty to Power blog shares examples of evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) from the Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence programme, funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development. These instances of EIDM include the co-production of an evidence map in South Africa as well as the development of an evidence dashboard in India. The article concludes by asking readers, what else works for EIDM?

Evidence from academia

Cronin & Sadan: 'Use of evidence in policy making in South Africa: An exploratory study of attitudes of senior government officials'

Land et al: 'A five-step approach for stakeholder engagement in prioritisation and planning of environmental evidence syntheses'

Slyer: 'Unanswered questions: implications of an empty review'

Gray et al: 'South African Health Review: 2017'

Wotela: 'A proposed monitoring and evaluation curriculum based on a model that institutionalises monitoring and evaluation'

Trying to get your research used in the United Kingdom Parliament? Taylor & Francis, Sense about Science, and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology say you should be blogging about your research, among other things.