Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || October 2016

AEN expanding across Africa: Evidence 2016
The Africa Evidence Network hosted Evidence 2016 held in Pretoria from 20-22 September that drew 145 people from across Africa. Delegates from 17 countries enjoyed 17 plenary presentations, 23 abstract presentations, 36 landscape maps and oral poster presentations and two training workshops. The conference featured representation from 14 government departments across Africa, as well as members of national and international NGOs, and members of civil society groups who kept the discussion focused on real world problems. The conference recognised a need for country-focused events outside South Africa. Therefore, Evidence+ is a new brand of events that will take place across the continent. Plans for an event in 2017 in Uganda are underway.

Evidence 2016 delegates at the CSIR in Pretoria, South Africa.

South Africa's Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation has produced an evidence map in response to a high demand for policy-relevant evidence in the human settlements sector in South Africa. The evidence map was co-produced over nine months by a team of public servants and academics. In a short film, the team describe the process of co-producing policy-relevant evidence maps.

Jerusha Govender of Data Innovator shares her experience of attending Evidence 2016 in Pretoria, South Africa. The conference aimed to bring together research producers, translators, and users to explore current evidence-informed decision-making landscapes. Data Innovator presented a landscape map of health NGOs in South Africa.

The latest blog on SciDev.Net explores how to advance your career in science. There are common problems that most researchers face early in their career. These difficulties range from getting funding to making sure you are around the right people. These challenges can be overcome with research, planning and clarity of goals.

This Conversation article suggests the bottom-up approach is the only approach that will deliver on global health development targets. This approach entails a system of integration where the global goals are owned as part of the everyday workings of communities. This would replace the old system of control through vertical programme targets.

Evidence events

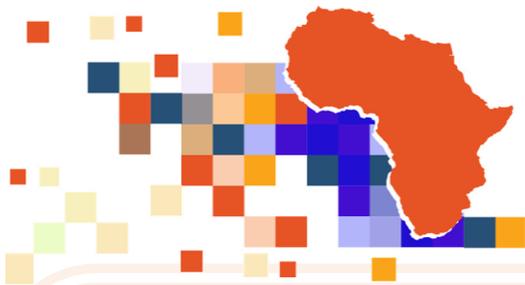24 October: PAN Children and PSPPD Early Childhood Development policy dialogue in Pretoria, South Africa

17-18 November: Evidence Aid International conference in Washington, United States of America

08-09 December: Science Forum in Pretoria, South Africa

Announcements

- 3ie will soon issue a request for qualifications for an impact evaluation of a health interventions in Cameroon

- Register for an online certificate in knowledge mobilisation

The latest AEN blog is by Ruth Stewart and Precious Motha of the AEN. The blog provides an overview of the Evidence 2016 conference hosted by the AEN in Pretoria in late September. The AEN welcomed 145 people from across the continent to the CSIR's International Convention Centre. Submit your AEN blog via our website.

3ie launches major review on education effectiveness

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) launched its policymaker-friendly summary report of the most comprehensive systematic review on education effectiveness in 52 low- and middle-income countries last month at the What Works Global Summit (WWGS). The review covers 216 programmes and 16 million children across 52 countries . It synthesised evidence on the effects of 21 different types of education interventions on children's school enrolment, attendance, completion and learning. The main findings, based on evidence from 107 studies, show that programmes that address child and household constraints to children's education may be particularly effective at improving participation outcomes. Cash transfers are most effective in improving school participation, while merit-based scholarships have been successful in improving learning outcomes. The summary report offers useful recommendations to governments and international agencies to meet the education Sustainable Development Goals.

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

The NFER blog highlights the What Works Global Summit held in London from 24-28 September that brought together participants from across the world. Campbell Collaboration CEO Howard White opened the summit by stating that evidence is good for absolutely nothing unless used in policy and practice. This address was followed by a rich array of sessions covering topics from evaluations to funding decisions.

The Digital Humanitarian Network (DHN) is a network of organisations that provide information-based response and relief services to communities affected by disaster events. DHN has a Decision-Maker's Needs Community focuses on determining what digestible products and services are needed to give information that can be acted upon in disaster scenarios. Resources provided include Big Data into Humanitarian Operations guideline.

The International Development Research Centre has developed a Program Manager's Guide to evaluation and the GeneraTOR. This is a new important resource for the evaluation community specifically because it focuses on commissioners and managers of evaluations. The guide aims to support decision-making throughout the process of an evaluation, from planning its purpose and scope, designing, conducting, reporting the findings and supporting the use of eveluations. The Guide and the integrated GeneraTOR can be accessed freely through the BetterEvaluation site.

Evidence from academia

GBD 2015 SDG Collaborators: 'Measuring the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 188 countries: a baseline analysis from the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2015'

The Lancet: 'GBD 2015: from big data to meaningful change'

Massey et al: 'Evaluating financial education initiatives in South Africa: The importance of multiple evaluation approaches'

International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) has released a report which reflects on different approaches to developing capacity for the use of evidence in policy-making. This was used by the Vaka Yiko programme in countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Different approaches were explored at the individual, organisational and systems level. The report summarises the range of methods used, and sharing examples and key lessons learned from the programme.