

Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || October 2017

The AEN welcomes a new senior manager

After being awarded a 19-month **funding grant** from the **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation: Global Development and Population**, the Africa Evidence Network (AEN) has appointed a new senior manager to the **AEN team** based at the **Africa Centre for Evidence**. As the new director of operations for the AEN, Siziwe Ngcwabe will lead in developing the Network's strategic plan, refining its membership consultation, and broadening its funding base. Siziwe has a social work background and has worked for many years in the health NGO sector in South Africa. With her passion for social justice, Siziwe is a valuable asset to the AEN secretariat team.



New leader Siziwe Ngcwabe joins the AEN team as director of operations

Rose Oronje of the **African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)** reflects on **lessons learnt** in promoting evidence use in Kenya's parliamentary caucus for promoting evidence use. One lesson was how the evidence forums, organised as part of the caucus's activities, generated greater demand for evidence than supply could meet; not meeting such evidence needs risks disillusioning decision-makers.

A first-of-its-kind **study** by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** states how poverty trends in Africa remain much higher compared to other developing regions, despite economic progress made over the last 25 years. The authors suggest improved human capital distribution as a way to address income disparities in the region.

The research team under the Structural Change and Productivity Growth in Africa **project** has released a new **impact case study** that details how the project has achieved conceptual, capacity-building, and connectivity impacts related to growth in Africa. The report also shares the engagement activities which proved useful in achieving the project's impacts.

Population Council has published a research brief on the **effects of school violence on education in Malawi**, which reports how girl and boy schoolchildren in Malawi are both likely to experience school violence. The brief also states that domestic violence – also found to be common – affects both boys and girls, albeit in different ways.

Evidence events

23 October: **CLEAR-AA Global Seminar**, Johannesburg, South Africa.

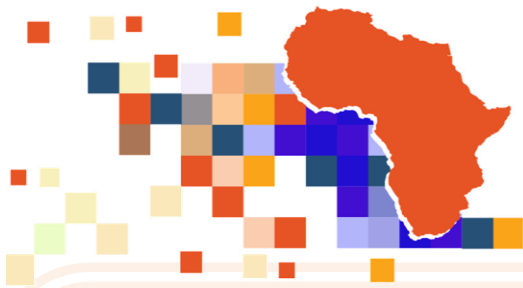
23-24 October: **ICED Introduction to systematic and meta-analysis**, Morogo, Tanzania

23-27 October: **SAMEA sixth biennial conference**, Johannesburg, South Africa

Announcements

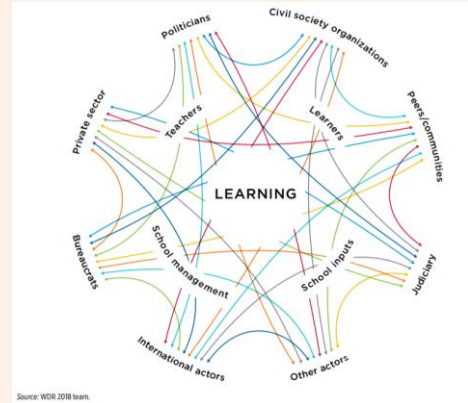
- **Opportunities for Africa: scholarships and fellowships**
- **Evidence 2018: Registration** is open and programme development is underway
- **DFID-funded UJ-BCURE: summary report** published on website now

This month's **AEN blog** features Alicja Magdalena Herbowska from the European Commission. She shares highlights of the EU4Facts conference on 'Evidence for Policy in a post-fact world'. View all blog posts **online** and use the Network to share your view – submit your AEN blog **here**.



World Bank: first development report focused exclusively on education is published

LEARNING to Realize Education's Potential is the **World Bank Development Report 2018** that focusses exclusively on education by sharing three dimensions of the learning crisis: low learning outcomes, schools that fail learners, and systems that fail schools. Not ending there, readers are given hope through three potential policy responses. One such response calls for the measurement of learning to track progress. While the three policy responses are presented separately, the report reiterates that they are dependent on one another to achieve learning success. The report cautions against hiding the exclusion of low learning, describing tackling this as an overarching priority.



Learning more complicated The World Bank Development Report 2018 describes the complex relationships that affect learning

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

Independent evaluation is critical for development because it closes the feedback gap between beneficiaries and funders, **says Caroline Heider of the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group**. Of the complexity of working towards the Sustainable Development Goals, Heider states evaluation's greatest challenge will be understanding how to operate in an interconnected context.

A **map** of evidence maps relating to sustainable development in low- and middle-income countries has been produced by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie). Captured in a four-page **brief**, the map details how health remains one of the sectors with a high number of evidence maps. However, economic policy is an example of one sector for which there are currently no maps.

In an **address** originally delivered as a closing address to **Evidence Day – part of Global Innovation Week** – the director of the **Global Development and Population programme of the Hewlett Foundation** Ruth Levine made the moral case for how evidence-informed decision-making represents 'a call to be our best selves'. Advancing the argument that championing evidence-use in public policy is partly about justice, she draws on the idea that distributive justice depends on evidence to be fair.

Evidence from academia

Alla et al: 'How do we define the policy impact of public health research? A systematic review'

Jobin & Lawal: 'Application of game theory and new institutional economics in establishing a National Voluntary Organisation for Professional Evaluation in Nigeria'

Ndhlovu et al: 'The search for a method to unpack urban complexity: Case study of the City of Johannesburg'

Sutherland & Wordley: 'Evidence complacency hampers conservation'

Witter et al: 'Generating demand for and use of evaluation evidence in government health ministries: lessons from a pilot programme in Uganda and Zambia'

Over 1300 delegates convened at the Global Evidence Summit in Cape Town last month. Since then, the organisers shared **these highlights**, including the blog entitled 'What I learned about evidence networks at the Global Evidence Summit'.