Africa Evidence Webinar 7

Spotlighting capacity enhancement activities, networks, and opportunities across EIDM organisations in Africa: an AEN study

GoToMeeting Online Platform, 14:00-15:15 (UCT +2), 30 June 2020

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Africa Evidence Webinar 7

**Chair:**
Siziwe Ngcwabe, Head of Operations, Africa Evidence Network

** Speakers:**
Dr Linda Etale, Researcher, Africa Evidence Network, South Africa
Dr Nasreen Jessani, Head of Strategy, Africa Evidence Network, South Africa
Impetus for the study

GOAL

• To understand the scope of work on EIDM across 90 organisations in Africa, their reach, their activities and how scale can be met through engagement with the AEN

AIM

• To explore the capacities and activities of African EIDM organisations
• To explore potential synergies for collaboration with the AEN
• To speak to senior members of the organisations (irrespective of AEN membership status)
In a nutshell, we wanted to:

- Better understand the organisations within the African EIDM ecosystem
- Capture information on existing capacities and capacity sharing endeavours across these organisations
- Document perceived interest and opportunities in institutional collaborations with the AEN
- Learn from other networks
- Explore the feasibility of institutional memberships (benefits and challenges)
- Utilize data to identify opportunities for the AEN
- Document and share results with the wider AEN community
Qualitative Approach

Participant selection & recruitment

Data collection

Data analysis

Results dissemination

6 Sep-2 Oct 2019
6 Sep-10 Dec 2019
11 Dec-27 May 2020
03 Feb-30 Jun 2020
Respondent selection

Organisation Inclusion Criteria

- Based in Africa
- Amongst the 250 orgs identified by a previous ACE study
- Core mandate is EID/PM

Organisation Exclusion criteria

- Research councils
- Research consultancies and think tanks
- Government departments
- Research centres and units

Individuals Selection

- Purposive & snowball sampling
- Inclusion & exclusion criteria

Targets & responses

- 90 organizations were targeted
- 32 organizations participated
- 252 individuals targeted
- 36 individuals participated

Unless there is a specific programme of work around EIDM or supporting the use of evidence in their core mandate, respondents need not be an AEN member if the above criteria met.
Making sense of the data collected

Qualitative analysis

Descriptive

Organizational overview

Respondent overview

Analytical

Thematic framework analysis

3 or more similar quotes speaking to the same idea qualified as a theme

Presented as tables & figures
Respondent Demographics

Response overview

Interviews:
252 invitations sent out;
80 responses were received.
Out of the 80, 66 were positive responses with 36 interviews conducted.

Respondents’ position:
7/36 (19%) identified as either director/team leader
6/36 (17%) identified as ED/CEO/DG respectively.
None identified themselves as an advisor or general secretary.
9/36 (25%) identified as other

Age of respondents (n=35)

- 18-24: 3%
- 25-34: 17%
- 35-44: 34%
- 45-54: 3%
- 55-64: 6%
- Older than 64: 0%

There was no respondent for the 18-24 years category

Sex of respondents

- 60% (21/35) Male
- 40% (14/35) Female

Membership status

23 (64%) out of 36 were AEN members
### Organisations that participated in the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Collaborator</th>
<th>Stand-Alone</th>
<th>Network &amp; Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa Centre for Evidence</td>
<td>Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi</td>
<td>In On Africa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
<td>Collaboration for Environmental Evidence (CEE) - Johannesburg</td>
<td>Kenya Medical Research Institute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Leadership Centre</td>
<td>Collaboration for Evidence Based Health Care in Africa</td>
<td>Nigerian Academy of Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association Senegalaise d’Evaluation (SenEval)</td>
<td>Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries</td>
<td>Office of the Prime Minister-Directorate of Monitoring, Evaluation &amp; Inspection (Uganda)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon Centre for Evidence Based Health Care</td>
<td>Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation</td>
<td>PACKS Africa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre d’Actions pour l’Environnement et le Développement Durable (ACED)</td>
<td>Effective Basic Services (eBASE)</td>
<td>Policy Action Network (Human Sciences Resources Council)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Development in Research and Evaluation International Africa</td>
<td>Ethiopian Evaluation Association</td>
<td>South Africa Medical Research Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Evidence Based Health Care (Stellenbosch University)</td>
<td>Ethiopian Evidence Based Health Care Centre, Jimma University</td>
<td>South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Health Policy (University of Witwatersrand)</td>
<td>Ethiopian Public Health Institute</td>
<td>The Ghana Monitoring and Evaluation Forum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **32** Organisations
- **10** embedded within another organisation
- **22** stand-alone
- **4** networks & **3** associations amongst the **32**
Reported sector engagement (k=32)

- Health: 27
- Environment: 22
- Education: 21
- Gender: 20
- Climate Change: 19
- Economic and Financial Governance: 16
- Agriculture: 16
- Public Administration: 15
- Human Rights and Democratic Governance: 14
- Urban Development: 13
- Human Capital Development: 13
- Private Sector: 12
- Financial Sector: 10
- Information and Communication Technology: 9
- Fragility, Conflict and Violence: 8
- Energy and Extractives: 8
- Transportation: 7
- Migration and Asylum: 6

Other

- Coordinating M&E for entire government
- Refugee response
- Disaster preparedness and management
- Strategic affirmative action
- Monitoring, evaluation & Learning
- Research methodologies and mechanisms for EIDM
- Leadership as an academic pursuit
- Children and youth sector
- Social Welfare
- Institutionalization of evaluation in government systems

NB: several mentioned above denote technical engagements rather than sector identification.
Organisations’ experience in the field of EIDM (k=32)
12 countries

21 out 28 (23%) org’s indicated that they were members of one or more networks/associations

7 out 30 (23%) org’s indicated that they were a network (4)/association (3)
Making sense of the data collected

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## Interview questions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>EIDM capacity enhancement</th>
<th>Engaging with the AEN</th>
<th>EIDM Networks and associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What kind of <strong>activities</strong> that enhance evidence use in decision-making does your organization engage in?</td>
<td>Elaborate on how the AEN might <strong>support your work</strong> towards increasing the use of evidence in decision-making?</td>
<td>Who does the network or association <strong>“serve”</strong>? (e.g. researchers, decision-makers, community activists, advocacy groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What factors <strong>enable</strong> your organization’s capacity development activities?</td>
<td>How can the AEN <strong>capitalize from your strengths and capacities</strong> as an organization?</td>
<td>How would you describe the network’s or association’s <strong>core functions</strong>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What factors <strong>constrain</strong> your organization’s capacity development activities?</td>
<td>How can the AEN <strong>collaborate</strong> further with your organization to achieve our shared goals?</td>
<td>Please mention the TWO most important <strong>barriers</strong> to the network or association’s functioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you consider to be the key <strong>priorities</strong> around EIDM capacity development that AEN could support at the <strong>individual</strong> level, <strong>organizational</strong>, &amp; <strong>network</strong> level?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Please mention the TWO most important <strong>enablers</strong> of the Network’s or association’s functioning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Capacity Development Activities (k=32)
Activities that enhance evidence use in decision-making in organisations (k=32)

Other activities:
- Evaluation of projects and programs
- Undertaking evidence synthesis and evidence mapping (co-producing),
- Developing tools for evidence uptake and implementation.
Factors that enable organisations’ capacity development activities

- Expertise and capacity in Niche areas
- Common Values
- Conducive Learning Environment
- Funding for Capacity Development
- Supportive Governance and Management of organisations
- Strong and Collaborative Partnerships
- Political will & demand for evidence in policy making
- HR Devt/ CD Approaches
Factors that constrain organisations’ capacity development activities

- Non-supportive Govt policy/Political issues
- HR and Organizational Infrastructure Capacity issues
- Funding issues on Capacity Development
- Language/Communication barriers
- Competing/Conflicting interests
Enhancing the African EIDM Ecosystem together
Recommendations around EIDM capacity development that AEN could support at the individual, organisation, and network levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Virtual Engagement</th>
<th>Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning from and celebrating an African EIDM Culture</td>
<td>• Website</td>
<td>Engaging with Policy Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Enhancement of all involved in EIDM (researchers and decision-makers)</td>
<td>• Learning hub</td>
<td>Sustainability of networks/Assns. Incl. membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Enhancement/ Embracing Non Traditional Communication</td>
<td>• blogs</td>
<td>Awareness creation, Learning &amp; Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E as part of EIDM</td>
<td>• webinars,</td>
<td>How AEN can enhance its own role, governance, communication, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful Networking &amp; collaborations</td>
<td>• Africa Evidence Week</td>
<td>Resource mobilization/ Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness Creation on EIDM</td>
<td>• Online festivals</td>
<td>Partnerships and collaborations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational</th>
<th>Research &amp; Reflection</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalization of EIDM</td>
<td>• ACE Geo-map</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy advocacy and EIDM/ Creating demand</td>
<td>• member surveys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to support prioritization and tracing/evaluating of E2P</td>
<td>• SoC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication &amp; EIDM/ KT</td>
<td>• Org Research Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning, sharing and collaborating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful Networking &amp; Collaboration</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can the AEN support organizations' EIDM activities? (areas of synergy)

- Platform for communication & marketing
- Platform for Accessing experts
- Platform for building relationships and collaboration
- Platform for Capacity development & opportunities
- Platform for Financial Resource mobilisation
- Platform for Learning and experience sharing
- Initiatives for recognition (awards)
How can other EIDM organisations support the AEN? (leveraging strengths and capacities)

The organizations with different capacities offered to:

- Help make connections in Francophone countries
- Provide resources such as guidelines & tools in specific fields
- Provide expertise e.g. M&E and EIDM
- Share lessons on policy advocacy in a fairly-politically restricted environment
- Work with others in resource mobilisation
- Share opportunities & information e.g. funding, collaborations, training
Opportunities for mutual capacity sharing

- Mentor & host students as we benefit from human resource
- Facilitate conferences & meetings that AEN has organized, e.g. sessions of Evidence Conferences
- Speak to each other when developing and disseminating products, e.g. evidence maps
- Co-designing advocacy agenda/strategy around evidence use
EIDM NETWORK QUESTIONS
Why include & understand networks and Associations?

- Reality about dealing with disperse set of members, not about their legal status.
- To learn from their experiences including their enabling and constraining factors.
- Identify similarities between the AEN and these associations & networks if any.
Membership Diversity of the Networks/Associations (n=7)

- **4 Networks**
- **3 Associations**

**Highest**

7 Orgs' indicated membership consisted of academia

**Lowest**

2 Orgs' indicated membership consisted of intermediaries/brokers
Networks or associations core functions

- CD initiatives for members
- Circulating CD opportunities
- Create a National M&E Repository
- Mobilizing resources
- Remunerate members for papers presented
- Professionalization of the society
- Providing a platform for scientific debates
- Public Relations
Factors that **enable** Network/Association functioning

- **Political/ Govt good will**
- **Interest and buy-in into what the network represents**
- **Commitment from members to support the growth of the network**
- **Sustainable funding for network activities**
Factors that **constrain** Network/Association functioning

- Sub-optimal External communication/ weak marketing
- Lack of sustainable funding for network expenses
- Human resource challenges
- Time constraints for network activities
- Member misunderstanding the purpose of network
Next Steps

- We have already incorporated some of the recommendations.

- We will reach out to organizations offering opportunities for collaboration.

- Some recommendations are outside the scope of the AEN and so we will not be able to respond to them.

- There are recommendations that we will keep them in mind for AEN’s future strategies.
Study limitations

- People that straddle between organizations
- Obtaining contact information was challenging
- Organizations with no available representation
- Non-responsiveness to emails
- Downside of targeting the top of the chain managers of organizations
- Some managers felt that the interview questions were too clerical
- Some managers could not respond to specific questions about their programming around EIDM
- Cancellation, declining and/or re-scheduling of interviews
- Bias: Habituation, Question-order
Acknowledgements

AEN Secretariat

ACE Staff

Organisational Study Respondents
Thank you

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