



# REPORT OF THE AFRICA EVIDENCE NETWORK **EVIDENCE 2018 CONFERENCE**

25 – 28 SEPTEMBER 2018



Africa Evidence Network

Africa  
Centre for  
Evidence



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG







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# ACRONYMS

<b>ACE</b>	Africa Centre for Evidence
<b>AEN</b>	Africa Evidence Network
<b>AFIDEP</b>	African Institute for Development Policy
<b>AfrEA</b>	African Evaluation Society
<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>BEPPAAG</b>	Bureau of Public Policies Evaluation and Government Actions Analysis
<b>CLEAR-AA</b>	Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results for Anglophone Africa
<b>CSIR ICC</b>	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research International Convention Centre
<b>ConfSA</b>	Conference Consultancy South Africa
<b>DPME</b>	South African Department: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>EDCTP</b>	European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership
<b>EIDM</b>	Evidence-Informed Decision-Making
<b>GEIS</b>	Global Evidence and Implementation Summit
<b>HSRC</b>	Human Sciences Research Council
<b>ICT</b>	information and Communications Technology
<b>IDRC</b>	International Development Research Centre
<b>IER</b>	Impact Evaluation Repository (IER)
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>3ie</b>	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
<b>SAMRC</b>	South African Medical Research Council
<b>SANHANES</b>	South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey
<b>RCT</b>	Randomized Controlled Trial
<b>RIA</b>	Research Use and Impact Assessment
<b>SPC</b>	Scientific Programme Committee
<b>UJ</b>	University of Johannesburg
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund





## Evidence 2018: Message from the Africa Evidence Network (AEN) chairperson

The Evidence conferences are the biggest platform for evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) enthusiasts across Africa - attracting friends from beyond the continent too - creating invaluable networks and partnerships. We include researchers, data specialists, evaluators, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officers, knowledge brokers, public servants, government officials, members of civil society, and students. We come together to focus on our shared interest in EIDM because we want to see more systematic and well-appraised decisions and practices for our continent.

Evidence 2018 covered the broad themes of engagement (with one another within our evidence ecosystem), understanding (of evidence and how it can make a difference) and impact (on decision-making and on priorities in our region). In response to feedback from you and our other Network members, we had dedicated time during Evidence 2018 to focus on priority issues for Africa, exploring how EIDM can make a difference for our region.

As with previous Evidence conferences, we met in an informal and friendly environment, with innovative approaches to facilitate networking and knowledge exchange. There were opportunities to attend workshops, for organisations to arrange their own satellite sessions, and for exhibition space.

This report is a tribute to all that we achieved together during Evidence 2018. It was the highlight of my year.

With thanks!

**Prof Ruth Stewart**  
ACE Director

# 1. What did we want to achieve with Evidence 2018?

Under the guidance of events management company Conference Consultancy South Africa (ConfSA), the AEN secretariat envisioned an event that would leave a lasting impression on participants; this is how Evidence 2018 came into being.

Evidence 2018 carried forward the momentum from the highly successful Evidence 2016 conference. Grounded in the themes *Engage, Understand, Impact*, the Evidence 2018 conference programme focused on four areas of priority in Africa: quality education, communicable diseases, climate resilience, and good governance. This focus on current priorities aimed to further encourage and promote EIDM in Africa, thereby contributing to the development of effective public policies, efficient implementation of services, as well as joint learning on interventions that tackle poverty and inequality in African countries. There was a need to communicate these advances, share lessons learned and explore opportunities for the application of EIDM in Africa. And last but not least, we wanted to build a community of relevant institutions, organisations and professionals through the AEN to act as a regional resource hub.

## **The objectives of the conference were to:**

- Share lessons learnt and advance discussions in supporting EIDM in Africa;
- Increase engagement across AEN membership and build relations with relevant institutions and professionals in EIDM; and
- Situate the AEN as a key player in, and umbrella body for, EIDM in Africa.

# 2. Who attended Evidence 2018?

This sections highlights, following from the Evidence 2018 background and objectives, who physically attended the conference and those who participated online.

A total of 213 delegates registered for Evidence 2018, with 160 physically attending the conference in Pretoria from different sectors including academics, civil servants and practitioners. A total of 32 countries were represented, 28 African countries and 6 from outside Africa. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the all countries that were represented at Evidence 2018.

A total of 308 individuals from 52 different countries participated on Evidence 2018 online platform over the course of conference, including those that registered but could not physically attend the conference. This increased the global coverage both 9 and 15 African countries and non-African countries respectively. Figure 2 depicts the global representation thereof.

FIGURE 1: Global map of country distribution and numbers of Evidence 2018 delegates

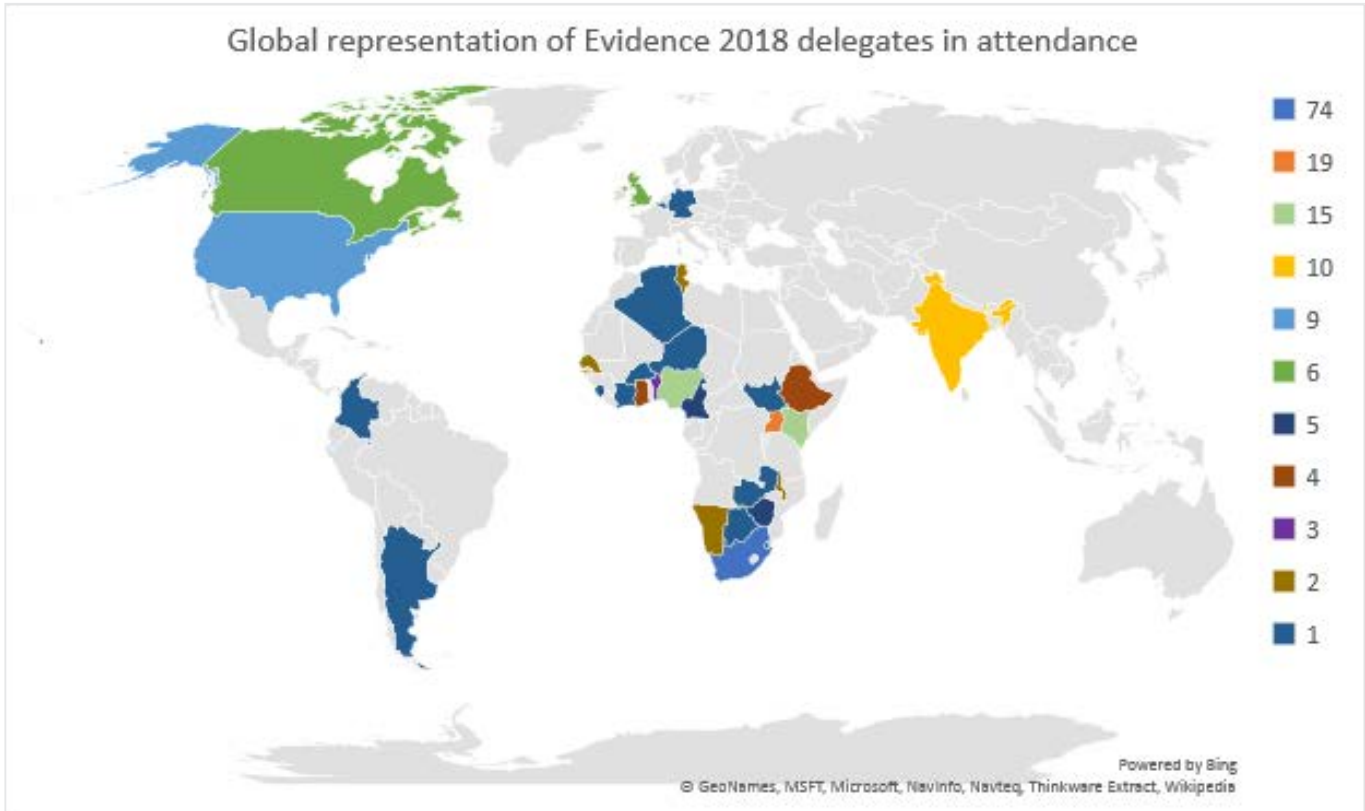
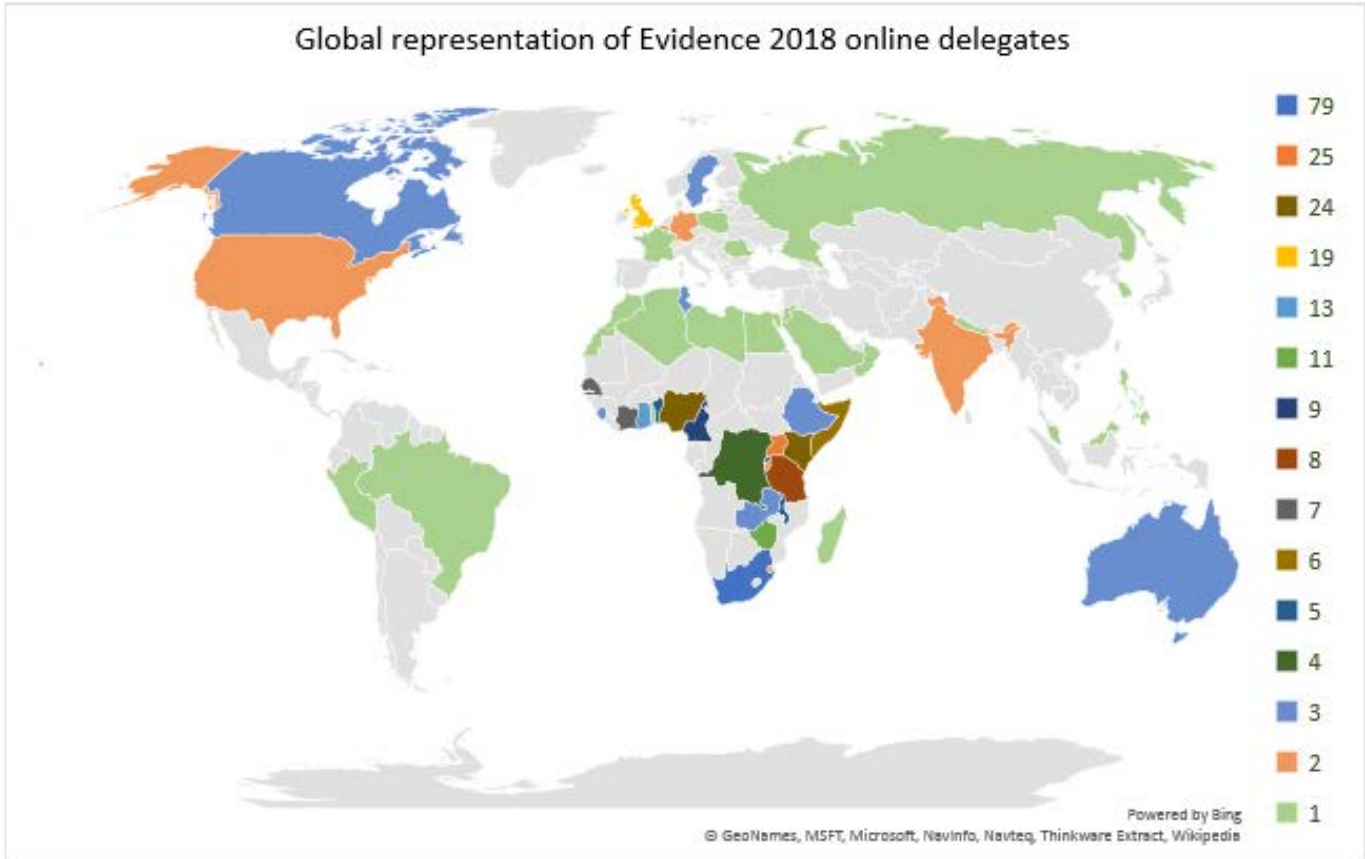


FIGURE 2: Global map of country distribution and numbers of Evidence 2018 online participants





### 3. What was new at Evidence 2018?

As with all our Evidence conferences, we carry out evaluations that are key to support future offerings and planning.

The Evidence 2016 evaluation was crucial in deciding the venue for Evidence 2018 as we solicited information regarding building and facilities, parking, accessibility, networking opportunities, and the take-home value and content of the event. The response was encouraging, averaging 94% across these different areas, recorded as the highest conference score ConfSA had seen in 20 years of conference evaluations. Our planning was informed by this positive response and we used the same venue to host Evidence 2018. During the Evidence 2016 evaluation we also learnt of the reluctance of delegates to rate conference chairs and amended the evaluation for Evidence 2018 accordingly. For the Evidence 2018 evaluation we wanted to get additional feedback on our conference offerings and included questions around the registration experience, and the likelihood of delegates attending Evidence 2020 amongst others. Needless to say, we also gathered from the 2016 delegates the need for more time on networking and for continued training opportunities during the conference. To that end, we included a set of satellite sessions coupled with workshops on the day before the conference, to allow individuals, organisations and initiatives to share, interact and learn from one another. Further, drawing on insights from our annual AEN member survey, and as a result of the inclusion of a new online component at Evidence 2018, we also carried out interviews during the conference proceedings to learn more about how delegates came to learn about Evidence 2018, and their intentions to use the post-conference material. Further details are provided in section 5.

#### Evidence Online 2018



Evidence Online 2018 studio

The AEN is always striving to extend our reach into Africa for those who are unable to attend the physical conference. We are sensitive to the cost of travelling to South Africa, the resource constraints that researchers, civil servants, and others face, as well as the difficulty that getting visas timeously can present. In response to these challenges and in line with the AEN's commitment to be member-driven and inclusive of members, we piloted for the first time a virtual component to the physical Evidence event.

Evidence Online 2018 saw some of the sessions during the physical conference being live-streamed to the almost 300 registered delegates from 44 countries across Africa. In addition to this content, a live studio was built on the premises of Evidence 2018 where expert interviews and short discussions with conference delegates were filmed and live-streamed. The content of the virtual conference included unique abstracts not featured in the physical event.

The evidence online conference live studio was funded by the University of Johannesburg (UJ) Humanities Faculty. As part of creating capacity building content for AEN an online conference was launched. The aim of the content was to continue conversations until Evidence 2020, also to offer capacity building workshops to our members.

## Africa Evidence Leadership Award



AEN senior manager and chairperson with the 2018 award winner

The AEN felt a duty to recognise the growth of innovation in EIDM in Africa observed across the Network. Supported by funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the AEN in 2018 established the first award for EIDM in Africa. The award was open to all within the evidence ecosystem – from government officials to researchers, to knowledge translation specialists and everyone in-between.

The inaugural winner of the award was Ms Velia Manyonga, the head of the research division at the Parliament of Malawi. In her work with parliamentarians, Ms Manyonga supports the use of evidence in decision-making processes there, providing parliamentarians with evidence and often sensitizing them to the necessity of using evidence as one of the factors when making decisions. Ms Manyonga presented a keynote address at Evidence 2018 as part of her award, had her attendance at the conference fully covered by the AEN, and was partially subsidized to attend the Global Evidence and Implementation Summit (GEIS) between 22-24 October 2018 held in Melbourne, Australia. There she presented a poster on: Evidence use in child friendly budgeting: The case study of parliament of Malawi. The total value of the award was USD 4 000 in subsidies.

Bestowing the Africa Evidence Leadership Award will be done on an annual basis and will move from an application to a nomination process. The membership of the AEN will still be invited to ratify the shortlisted candidates, with feedback from the AEN reference and advisory groups feeding into the final decision made by the AEN secretariat.

## Meet your hosts welcome reception



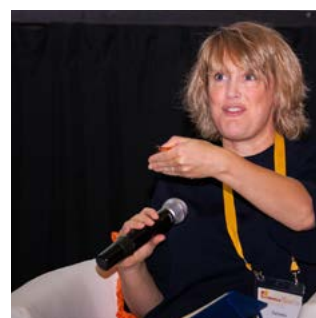
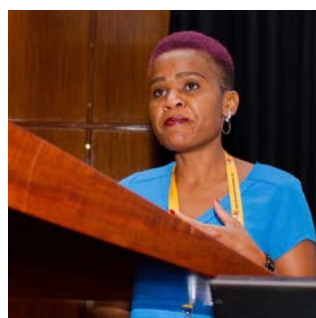
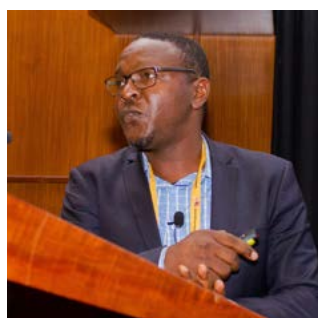
AEN team hosting delegates at Evidence 2018



Evidence 2018 saw substantial growth from the 2016 conference with 85 more delegates attending the physical conference. With this increase, the AEN saw an opportunity to not only welcome first-time Evidence delegates, but also to remind members who may be new to the Network of the importance of their participation in the activities of the AEN.

During the welcome, members of the AEN secretariat based at the Africa Centre for Evidence (ACE) at UJ introduced themselves and what their roles within the AEN were. These included Ms Siziwe Ngcwabe, Ms Precious Motha, Mr Promise Nduku, Dr Yvonne Erasmus and Ms Natalie Tannous. The event was informal and delegates were invited to interact with AEN secretariat members after short presentations of their roles.

## Strands



### Evidence 2018 strand leaders

Acting on feedback from delegates of Evidence 2016, the AEN secretariat undertook a consultative process during 2017 to develop strands or thematic areas to structure the content of Evidence 2018 around. The purpose of the strands was to allow Evidence 2018 to be more thematically representative of the sectors that attendees work in, while retaining the broader remit of EIDM the AEN is known for.

The strands were developed through a consultative process which began with a broad desktop search for issues that currently affect the African continent. Sources consulted included the World Bank and the African Union (AU) – among other organisations. Sixteen development issues pertinent to Africa were identified and circulated to the AEN membership. Members were invited to vote for what they felt were the most pertinent issues for Africa that could then be developed into the strands of Evidence 2018.

The four issues that members voiced as being most important were good governance, communicable diseases, climate resilience, and quality education. Each strand was led by a strand leader – an invited expert in that specific field to participate in the reviewing of abstracts and the construction of the programme under the leadership of the Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) chairperson.

Whilst the four strands featured prominently at Evidence 2018, the programme development was also guided by the abstract submissions received from members. As such, there were six additional thematic areas more closely aligned to EIDM that were included in the programme. These were: the role of M&E in EIDM; strengthening the supply side of EIDM; timely and responsive evidence; evidence and citizens; mechanisms and networks in EIDM; and evidence and funders. In addition to the abstract-driven content of the programme, Evidence 2018 also featured the oral poster-pods where the EIDM landscape maps and other abstracts were presented.



## 4. What happened at Evidence 2018?

### Pre-conference day

#### Pre-conference satellite sessions

The satellite sessions were a chance for related organisations and initiatives to engage with Evidence 2018 attendees and wider audiences in in-depth discussions, sharing and networking. Satellite sessions were organised by the following organisations: Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), ACE and the South African Department: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), GESI, Results For All, and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Evidence 2018 offered these organisations the opportunity to showcase their work, research and programmes, or draw more attention to a specific subjects or areas. These 10 sessions covered various topics as described below.

<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	Evidence value chain: Showcasing the dimensions of evidence from projects undertaken by the Research Use and Impact Assessment (RIA) unit of the HSRC
<b>HOST/S</b>	HSRC
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	The satellite sessions aimed to highlight projects undertaken by the institution's RIA unit, and sought to collaborate with researchers and institutions with similar interests. The RIA unit aims to contribute to the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy based on evidence. The unit takes approaches to EIDM from a social science perspective. Two projects were discussed during this satellite session, namely the evaluation of the impact of the South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (SANHANES), and the policy implementation barometer in Uganda.
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	The participants consisted of policy-makers, academics, researchers, professionals, donor organisations, and practitioners in different industries that rely or make use of research evidence.

<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	Measuring evidence use: The value of contribution tracing
<b>HOST/S</b>	3ie
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	This interactive satellite session explored how 3ie is attempting to improve the monitoring and evaluation of their own research, in an effort to strengthen the claims their work can make. The session focused specifically on how trace monitoring and measuring research uptake is improving that organisation's rigour of research work. Sharing their experience of applying contribution tracing to a project to measure change from a portfolio of completed impact evaluations and systematic reviews, 3ie also shared what they are learning about the indicators used to measure change. Attendees at this satellite session were able to apply their learning practically through group work that invited them to apply contribution tracing techniques to develop testable evidence-use claims and ways to collect data to measure evidence-use.
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	This session was of interest to anyone responsible for monitoring, measuring and reporting on whether what they have produced is being used.



<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	Exploring synergies between evidence maps and rapid response services to support evidence-informed policy-making: Towards collaboration and shared learning
<b>HOST/S</b>	ACE and DPME
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Mechanisms to support evidence-informed decision-making were explored in this satellite session, specifically the relationship between evidence maps and rapid response services. The session brought together experts from not only different fields but also from different evidence synthesis methodology backgrounds to tease out the possibilities of collaboration and synergies between different sectors and methodologies, and whether rapid response services could be used as a substitute to systematic reviews outside of healthcare when it came to supporting EIDM in Africa. A key discussion point during the session was how it might be possible to institutionalise such services within specifically South African government decision-making processes, where examples of such work already currently exist.
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	Attendees were largely government colleagues in South Africa who are familiar with ideas around evidence use in government.

<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	Strengthening evidence use in Uganda: What's working and what's next
<b>HOST/S</b>	3ie
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	This satellite session took on a talk-show style where panellists Ms Josephine Watera (Uganda Parliament M&E unit), Dr Rhona Mijumbi-Deve (Africa Centre for Systematic Reviews and Knowledge Translation) and Mr Timothy Lubanga (Office of the Prime Minister in Uganda) all shared what had worked – and what had not – in terms of evidence-use in Uganda. The conversation between the audience and the panellists focussed on current evidence needs, what panellists perceived as the next steps for continuing to increase the access to and use of quality evidence, as well as what challenges still needed to be overcome to support evidence-use at country level.
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	The session was of interest to participants working to improve evidence use at country level and in understanding the challenges of promoting evidence use by a range of influencers on government, as well as government itself. It was most useful for people with some background and practice in promoting evidence use with one or more of these stakeholders.

<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	Invisibility and evidence: Time's up for evidence that doesn't consider gendered drivers of inequality
<b>HOST/S</b>	3ie
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Participants who attended this satellite session were invited to share their experiences of gender inequality and inequity in EIDM. Moreover, they were invited to share the ways in which they were – or thought they could be – overcoming these issues. This session aimed to foster a sensitivity in its participants to the diversity of gendered challenges in EIDM as part of a challenge to Evidence 2018 to hear and do EIDM differently when returning to their home countries after the conference. Indeed, gender inequality became a theme throughout the conference, with many speakers expressing their sensitivities to these issues during the event.
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	The session was of interest to participants who produce, translate and/or use research or evaluation evidence. Familiarity with research and evaluation methods, critical appraisal and writing for academic publication was useful background for attendees to have.

<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	A peer learning network for government policy-makers to advance evidence use in Africa: An emerging strategy
<b>HOST/S</b>	Results For All
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<p>The objective of the satellite session was to share and solicit feedback on the strategy and structure for a global evidence network. The network would aim to support governments in advancing evidence-informed policy-making, and collaborate with the AEN and other existing initiatives.</p> <p>Over the last year, Results for All has interviewed government policy-makers and their partners in research, advocacy, and donor organisations. They used different methods to collect data. The session aimed to share the findings of their year-long process, outline a strategy and structure for the proposed global evidence network, and solicit feedback from participants.</p> <p>This session discussed the questions below allowing participants to brainstorm and give feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposed network strategy reflect the needs and experiences of its intended members?</li> <li>• Does it propose realistic ways to respond to challenges and opportunities to advance evidence-informed policy-making?</li> <li>• What thematic issues or areas should the network address?</li> <li>• What should the governance structure of the network look like?</li> <li>• How should the network collaborate with and complement existing groups and initiatives like AEN?</li> <li>• How can we create a financially sustainable network?</li> </ul>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	The primary target group was government policy-makers, funders, researchers and evidence producers, and civil society organisations.

<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	Capacity development to use evidence in decision making: working towards partnerships and building space to use approaches that work
<b>HOST/S</b>	AEN and 3ie
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<p>The objective of the session was to take forward the regional dialogue on capacity to produce and use evidence by focusing on what needs to be done to start improving how we design and deliver capacity development in the region.</p> <p>The session also focused on identifying the challenges, models and innovations that have worked in various contexts, and how to share best practices to foster mutual understanding and collaboration on what works to improve capacity to produce and use evidence in the region. The session was a continuation of a dialogue started by 3ie at the African Evaluation Association Conference in Kampala in March 2017 that continued at the Global Evidence Summit in Cape Town in September 2017.</p>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	This session was aimed at participants who were both interested and experienced in capacity development.



<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	Citizen evidence and evidence-informed policy-making: Whose knowledge counts?
<b>HOST/S</b>	IDRC
<b>COLLABORATORS</b>	African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<p>The session aimed to explore the place of citizen knowledge as an essential element of evidence-informed policy-making by surfacing emerging practices, opportunities and challenges, and to identify potential areas of collaboration for building an agenda for action.</p> <p>The session was building on an initial discussion held during the African Evidence Informed Policy Forum in March 2018 in Nairobi, and sought to continue the conversation with a broader audience of evidence experts. Through a participatory process including break-out groups and a “fishbowl” methodology, the session addressed the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the stories of success around citizen knowledge being used as evidence by policy actors?</li> <li>• What approaches/mechanisms and partnerships can help to systematically support the use of citizen knowledge in evidence-informed policy-making?</li> <li>• How can facilitators and enablers of citizen knowledge in evidence-informed policy-making help navigate power dynamics and work towards an equitable environment in which knowledge is received, interpreted and shared?</li> </ul>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	This session was aimed at participants who were both interested and experienced in the use of citizen evidence to inform policy-making including researchers, community organisers and advocates, donors, and policy-makers. In addition, it was of interest to those who wish to promote the co-creation of knowledge, at the intersection of civil society and research, or have worked on social audits or citizen monitoring.

<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	GESI Network needs assessment
<b>HOST/S</b>	GESI and EPPI-Centre
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	The session aimed to build on the results of the GESI Network needs assessment and to work with Network members attending the session on potential solutions to answer these needs or to draft a list of what needs to be done to answer these needs through collaboration with other Network members and supported by GESI Secretariat.
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	The attendees were the GESI Network members

## Pre-conference satellite sessions

### Summary of each workshop

There were four workshops facilitated at Evidence 2018. The topics covered during these workshops were suggested by AEN members through a survey that was conducted in April 2018. This consultation process assisted the AEN secretariat in responding to its members' needs.

The first of the four workshops was titled: Introduction to evidence synthesis and systematic reviews. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Sandy Oliver from the EPPI-Centre, University College London. The objective of the workshop was to introduce systematic review methods that address questions that arise at different stages of policy development, questions about: understanding the nature and scale of a problem; comparing the policy options; and implementing the chosen policy. The session was designed to suit participants thinking of using systematic reviews, commissioning systematic reviews, or conducting systematic reviews. They might be looking for an introduction to the evidence synthesis and systematic reviews, or wanting to know more about the broad range of approaches available and how to make them more relevant for policy discussions.

The second workshop was titled: Can research organisations more effectively transfer research knowledge to decision-makers? Workshop on finding and using research evidence. The workshop was facilitated by Professor John Lavis from McMaster University. The objective of the workshop was to understand the questions that need to be answered by organisations so that they can position themselves within the ecosystem of organisations supporting the use of research evidence by decision-makers.

The third workshop was on: Networking between Francophone and Anglophone Africa: Bridging a post-colonial divide. The workshop was facilitated by Ms Beryl Leach of 3ie and consisted of five speakers: Mr Abdoulaye Gounou, Chef du Bureau de l'Evaluation des Politiques Publiques, Presidence de la Republique du Benin, Ms Michele Tarsilla, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Dakar, Ms Siziwe Ngcwabe, AEN senior manager, Mr John Njovu, African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) board member, and Hon Olfa Cherif Tunisia member of parliament who provided their perspectives on why the divide exists, and how networking in Africa has been influenced by it. The audience was invited to share their insights and experiences and identify what changes they would like to see.

The fourth workshop was titled: Introduction to EIDM. It was facilitated by Ms Tamara Kredo from Cochrane South Africa, South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC). The objectives of the workshop were to: define EIDM, briefly describe the role of systematic reviews in EIDM, outline the GRADE 'Evidence to Decision' framework for policy development, and discuss barriers to and facilitators of EIDM.



## Exhibition

Exhibitions were a chance for conference delegates to get to know other organisations. Evidence 2018 offered exhibition space for the duration of the conference at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research International Convention Centre (CSIR ICC). The exhibitor area was centrally located in the foyer close to other meeting and refreshment break areas, and provided a networking space for delegates. The following organisations had exhibits: AEN, SAMRC, the African Development Bank (AfDB), Twende Mbele, HSRC, and 3ie.



Evidence 2018 exhibitors.



## Evidence 2018 contributors

Evidence 2018 thanks all the contributors who made the event a huge success. These organisations contributed to by hosting satellite sessions, exhibition stands, the online live studio, and bursaries for delegates and panellists.

Their logos are shown below:



# CONFERENCE 2018

## DAY 1

**Conference happenings**  
(Meet your host welcome reception, opening plenary, cross-governmental panel, plenary 1)

### Meet your host welcome reception

This welcome event aimed to introduce the AEN team to first-time attendees of the Evidence conferences and took the form of a showcasing and networking session. The event introduced the people behind the daily work of the AEN, putting faces to names, and giving first-time attendees a better understanding of the work of the AEN and how it is fuelled by the dedication of its members.

The format of the event deviated from the traditional academic presentation style and consisted of short, informal presentations by the AEN core and support team on their work. Delegates were then invited to network with each other and the AEN team over refreshments.



## Opening plenary



### Opening plenary chair and speakers

The opening plenary session of day one of Evidence 2018 was chaired by Dr Rhona Mijumbi-Deve from the Makerere University, Uganda and co-chairperson of Evidence 2018. Professor Ruth Stewart who is the chairperson of the AEN, opened and welcomed all delegates. She began her talk by quoting African and Ghanaian proverbs that state that "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" and "Wisdom is like a baobab tree: no one individual can embrace it". She went on to suggest a variation on these which could be an AEN proverb: "Evidence is like a baobab tree: no one individual can embrace it". She highlighted that making EIDM a reality in Africa needs all of us.

The keynote address was delivered by Mr Mark Heywood, Executive Director of SECTION 27, South Africa. His topic was: Evidence and 21st century democracy: Does the evidence still "speak for itself" or does it need advocates? He shared some of his reflections on evidence with the focus on evidence and truth; evidence and political economy, evidence and democracy and evidence and activism. He concluded by saying that it is important to recapture the power of evidence.

Dr Rhona Mijumbi-Deve shared the background and objectives of Evidence 2018. She stated that the conference theme *Engage, Understand, Impact* resonates particularly well with current priorities and concerns in South Africa and the African continent on a number of levels. First, there is a need to encourage and promote EIDM in Africa, thereby contributing to the development of effective public policies, efficient implementation of services, as well as joint learning on interventions that tackle poverty and inequality in African countries. Second, there is a need to communicate these advances, share lessons learned and explore opportunities for the application of EIDM in Africa. Third, it is important to continue building a community of relevant institutions, organisations and professionals through the AEN to act as a regional resource hub.

### The objectives of the conference include the following:

- To share lessons learnt and advance discussions in supporting EIDM in Africa;
- To increase engagement across AEN membership and build relations with relevant institutions and professionals in EIDM;
- To situate the AEN as a key player in, and umbrella body for, EIDM in Africa.

Ms Sarah Lucas William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, United States of America and Dr Diakalia Sanogo IDRC, Dakar presented an overview and summary of the discussions held at the Evidence Informed Policy Forum in Nairobi, Kenya on 5-6 March 2018. The objective was to continue discussions with leading decision-makers in various institutions on key themes in EIDM in Africa.



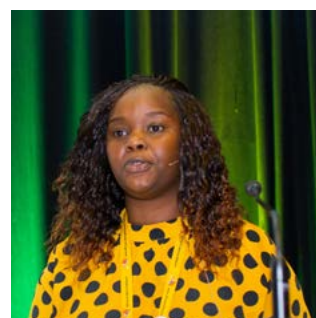
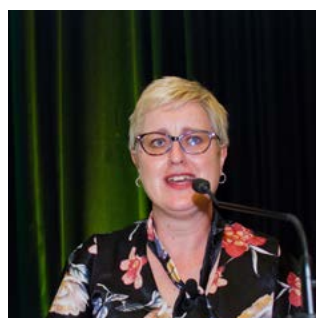
## Cross-governmental panel



### Cross-governmental panellist

The afternoon of the first day of Evidence 2018 was kicked off with a cross-governmental panel titled: Sharing institutional insights into evidence-informed policy-making approaches in Africa. This session was moderated by Dr Diakalia Sanogo from IDRC. The panelists were Mr Herbert Akampwere, Northern Uganda Social Action Fund - Office of the Premier, Uganda, Ms Nana Amaako, Office of the President, Ghana, Ms Matodzi Amisi, formerly from DPME, South Africa, Mr Abdoulaye Gounou, Bureau of Public Policies Evaluation and Government Actions Analysis (BEPPAAG), Benin, Mr Timothy Lubanga, Acting Commissioner, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda. The panelists shared their perspectives on EIDM, drawing on their own institutional insights. From such a diverse panel we gained a fresh perspective on the politics of evidence use in governments, how partnerships are used to encourage evidence use, and what some successful strategies are to promote evidence use in government in Africa.

## Plenary session 1 – Introducing the conference strands



### Session chair and speakers

This plenary session of day one of Evidence 2018 was chaired by Professor Ruth Stewart, chairperson of the AEN. The plenary session had three speakers namely: Dr Rasheed Draman African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs, Ghana, Ms Shingai Machingaidze European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), South Africa, and Dr Surette van Staden Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, University of Pretoria, South Africa. These speakers shared their experiences and expertise on EIDM in governance, communicable disease and quality education as an introduction to the conference thematic strands.



## Online programme

For the first time Evidence 2018 had an online conference, giving both members and non-members who were not able to physically attend the conference the opportunity to engage and participate in the conference virtually. The online conference was a combination of a physical conference and a virtual conference running simultaneously. The online conference drew its content from the physical conference and in addition generated its own content too by means of a digital studio. The online conference attendees interacted and engaged with the physical conference by using a digital conference platform that was accessed on the internet.

Online attendees were able to interact with the physical conference by chat and Q&A, and were also able to engage with sponsors by downloading brochures, visiting sponsor websites and engaging with sponsors through the interviews. Evidence Online 2018 took place for the duration of the physical conference - 26-28 September 2018. 5 Plenary Sessions. Overall it included 4 breakout sessions, 4 breakout sessions recorded, 9 Studio Sessions with 29 interviews, 18 hours of content broadcast and 25 hours of total content recorded.

Day one of the online conference began with an opening and welcoming session and a build up to the sessions. Hosts for the conference were Ms Natalie Tannous and Mr Zafeer Ravat.

### **Speakers for the morning session included:**

- Prof John Lavis who spoke about his expectations of the conference and what he thought were important topics for discussion;
- Ms Danielle Mason who spoke about the importance of EIDM in quality education;
- Ms Getrude Matsebe on the following topic: Towards evidence-based policy: Reviewing the impact of skills development within EPWP projects on economic participation and poverty reduction;
- Ms Elizabeth M Asimwe on the following topic: The question of evidence for governance: Exploring evaluation utilization among Ugandan Ministries;
- Dr Rhona Mijumbi-Deve and Dr Shanil Haricharan as conference co-chairs on the objectives of the conference;
- Dr Rose Oronje who spoke about the importance of EIDM in good governance;
- Mr Thabo Hlope on the following topic: OVC Social safety net cash transfer project in Eswatini: lessons learned;
- Ms Beryl Leach on the satellite sessions 3ie presented on the pre-conference day.

### **Speakers for the afternoon session included:**

- Ms Beatrice Simo-Kengne on the following topic: Does population aging predict health expenditures in South Africa?;
- Professor Morankar Sudhakar on the following topic: Progress in evidence map of propagating evidence in policy making and guideline preparation in Ethiopia and Sub-Saharan Africa by the Ethiopian Evidence Based Health Care Centre;
- Mr Sibonelo Mbanjwa who spoke about the importance of EIDM in climate resilience;
- Ms Norma Altshuler on why the conference is important from the perspective of a funder.



Evidence 2018 Online hosts



A tweet by Prof John Lavis sharing his experience of being interviewed by EvidenceOnline2018 host Mr Zafeer Ravat.





## DAY 2

### Conference happenings (Thematic sessions)

The thematic sessions were drawn from the abstracts submitted by delegates. The submissions were grouped into ten sessions, including the four conference strands.

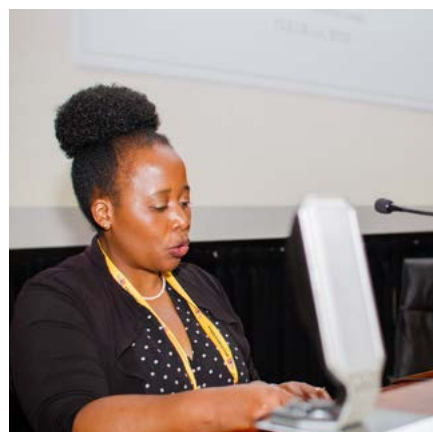
**The sessions are listed below:**

- Evidence in environmental management and climate resilience
- The role of M&E in EIDM
- Strengthening the supply side of EIDM
- Evidence in health care and communicable diseases
- Evidence in promoting good governance
- Evidence for quality education
- Evidence and funders
- Timely and responsive evidence: Rapid evidence services and living reviews
- Evidence and citizens
- Mechanisms and networks in EIDM



Chair and speakers of the session: Evidence in environmental management and climate resilience.

**Evidence in environmental management and climate resilience chaired by Mr Sibonelo Mbanjwa.** Dr Julian Bagyendera, Using evidence to institutionalise and scale up sustainable, multi-sectoral climate change interventions at central and local government level – What worked well in Uganda, Ms Emily Hayter and Mr Samuel Quaye, Supporting organisational change for improved use of evidence at the Environmental Protection Agency in Ghana, Professor Colleen Vogel, Catching soap in the bath – Meaning making with and for climate change in complex settings.



Chair and speakers for the session: The role of M&E in EIDM.

**The role of M&E in EIDM chaired by Ms Adeline Sibanda.** Mr Thabo Hlophe, The OVC social safety net cash transfer project in Eswatini: Lessons learned, Ms Matodzi Amisi, Government M&E units: The underdogs of evidence-informed policy and programmes, Dr Ian Goldman, Six years of South Africa's National Evaluation System - Findings from an evaluation of the system, Professor Maria-Laura Alzua, Capacity building for conducting locally based impact evaluations in Africa.



Chair and speakers of the session: Strengthening the supply side of EIDM.

**Strengthening the supply side of EIDM chaired by Ms Beryl Leach.** Dr Aloysius Ssenyonjo, Strengthening capacity of schools of public health in policy analysis and influence for health improvements in the global south: Experience from SPEED partnership, Makerere University Uganda, Dr Nasreen Jessani, University curricula in EIDM: Integrating best practice, innovation and experience for effective teaching and learning, Ms Violet Murunga, Knowledge translation capacity, practice and support among researchers in low- and middle-income countries: A structured review of the published literature.





Chair and speakers of the session: Evidence in health care and communicable diseases.

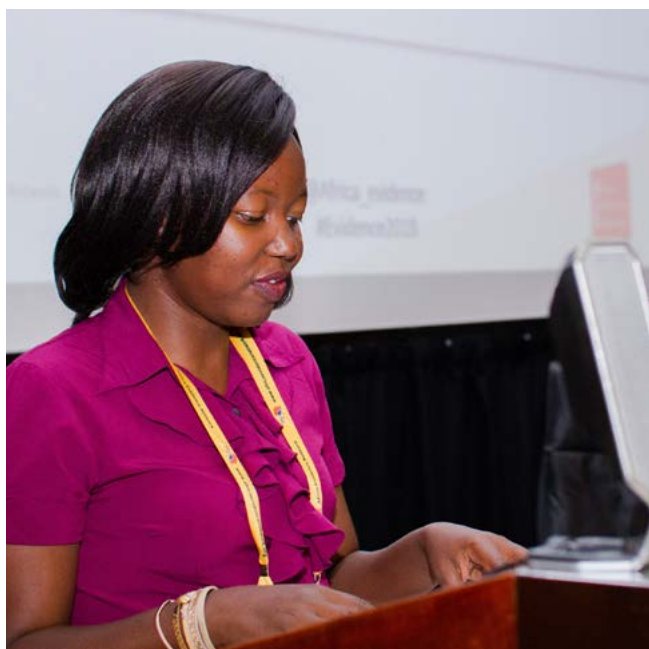
**Evidence in health care and communicable diseases chaired by Dr Ekwaro Obuku.** Mr Nicholas Dellasanta, A cross-country analysis of map utilisation in strategic national malaria documents intended for programme financing and design, Mr Emmanuel Kamga, Engaging health systems with evidence from existing networks for the treatment of uncomplicated malaria in children less than five years in Cameroon, Mr Jorge Miranda Montano, Understanding HIV research in Sub-Saharan Africa: Analysis of 300 HIV studies from the Impact Evaluation Repository (IER), Dr Rose Oronje, Contribution of a network of parliamentary committees of health to the ecosystem of evidence use in African parliaments, Mr Rigobert Pambe, Promoting equity and access and quality healthcare in Africa by translating available evidence into French.





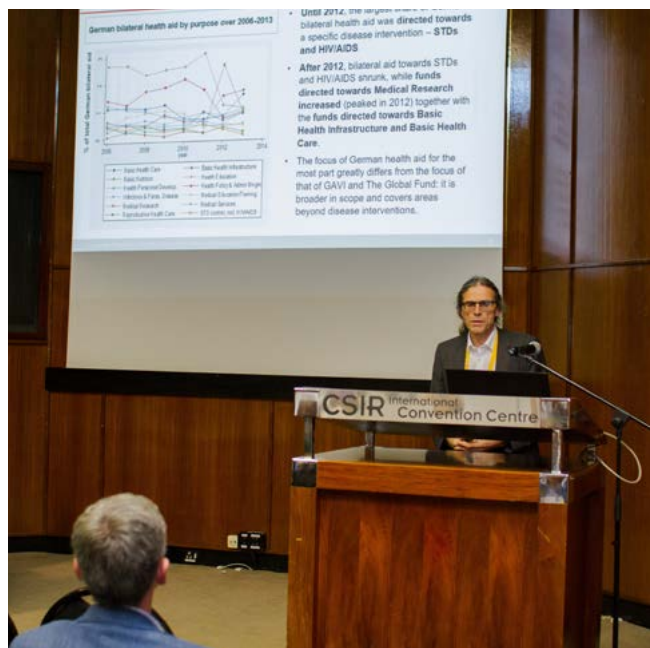
Chair and speakers of the session: Evidence in promoting good governance.

**Evidence in promoting good governance chaired by Honourable Olfa Cherif.** Mr Ronald Munatsi, Exploring the motivation of using research evidence in policy-making by Zimbabwean policy-makers, Dr Rose Oronje, Ecosystem of evidence in the parliaments of Kenya, Malawi and Uganda, Dr Martin Atela, Utafiti Sera (Research-Policy): Novel and innovative approach to evidence-informed policy actions, Dr Mark Johnson, Evidence in promoting good governance, Dr Ejemai Eboreime, Implementing initiatives for improving health system outcomes in decentralised LMICs: A Nigerian case study.



Chair and speakers of the session: Evidence in promoting good governance.

**Evidence for quality education chaired by Ms Josephine Watera.** Mrs Fernanda Soares, Professional learning communities: A cross-country comparative analysis, Ms Laura Poswell, Teaching at the right level: A case study in moving from evidence to action, Mr Zafeer Ravat, Evidence mapping as a tool to inform policies in early grade mathematics, Dr Laurenz Langer, What can global education and global health learn from each other to support the use of evidence?



Chair and speakers of session: Evidence and funders .

**Evidence and funders chaired by Ms Norma Altshuler.** Dr Paul Marschall, What about evidence? Germany's development cooperation on global health reconsidered, Ms Danielle Doughman, Using knowledge brokerage to strengthen African voices in global decision-making on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, Ms Karen Rot-Münstermann, Entry points for evidence in African Development Bank (AfDB) Group decision-making.



Chair and speakers for session: Timely and responsive evidence: Rapid evidence services and living reviews.

**Timely and responsive evidence: Rapid evidence services and living reviews chaired by Ms Tamara Kred.** Ms Hlengiwe Moloi, Setting up a rapid evidence synthesis service in the Western Cape, South Africa, Ms Natalie Tannous, Co-producing a responsive evidence synthesis service in South Africa with and for environmental decision-makers, Professor Sandy Oliver, How the worlds of policy and research interact to produce evidence for public policy decisions.





Chair and speakers of session: Evidence and citizens.

**Evidence and citizens chaired by Ms Emily Hayter.** Ms Laura Poswell, Publicising debates in Sierra Leone, Ms Masego Tabane, The role and position of civil society organisations in the policy-making cycle: The South African Case, Dr Peter Taylor, Citizen Knowledge in turbulent times – speaking truth to power, Ms Anim van Wyk, Fact-checking organisations: Evidence brokers between scientists and citizens.

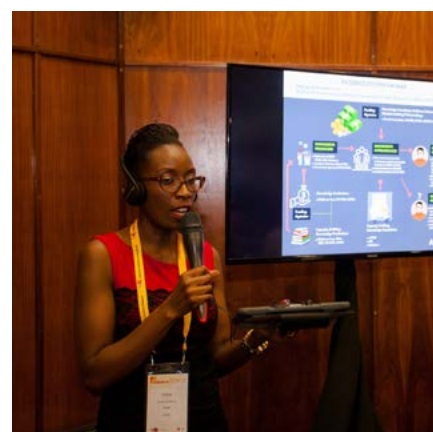
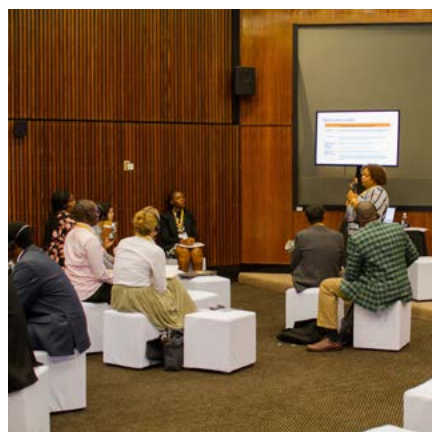


Chair and speakers of the session: Mechanisms and networks in EIDM.

**Mechanisms and networks in EIDM chaired by Ms Siziwe Ngcwabe.** Mrs Sunet Jordaan, How do mentorship programmes increase the use of evidence in decision-making in the South African government context? A literature review for a mentorship framework, Dr Chandré Gould, Strengthening intersectoral collaboration in production and use of evidence to prevent violence against women and children: Lessons from the Dialogue Forum, Mr Ari Gondolfo, A global peer learning network to accelerate evidence use in government: Join the conversation, Dr Laurenz Langer, The art and science of using evidence in Africa: Developing networks and identifying mechanisms.



## Oral posters and landscape maps



Oral posters and landscape maps presentations.

The oral posters and landscape maps presentation sessions ran concurrently to the other abstract-driven sessions on day two of Evidence 2018, and were divided into two sessions. Oral poster presentations took place before lunch, while the landscape maps presentation session took place after lunch in the same venue. Oral poster presentations were drawn from abstract submissions, while landscape maps presentations emanated from 23 bursary recipients supported by AEN and 3ie. The table below lists the presenters, their topics and the country they represent.

PRESENTER	TOPIC	COUNTRY
ORAL POSTERS		
Dr Bola Akanji	Optimizing agricultural investments by harnessing the best of good practices: Using randomized controlled trials (RCTs)	USA
Mr Rigobert Pambe	Assessing information and communications technology (ICT) interventions for promoting access, equity and quality education in Cameroon using the Evidence Barometer	Cameroon
Ms Violet Murunga	Promoting evidence-informed adolescent sexual and reproductive health decisions in Kenya: Lessons from the enSURE adolescent sexual and reproductive health project	Kenya
Dr Aloysius Ssenyonjo	Research priority setting for health systems development to advance universal health coverage in Uganda: The stakeholder engagement processes and perspectives	Uganda
Professor Faustin Change	A Health Technology Assessment Agency in the Democratic Republic of Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo
Mr John Njovu	The evaluation of social cash transfers in Zambia and its uses	Zambia

Ms Diana Warira	Making the dividend count: The role of communication in bridging demographic dividend research and Africa's policy processes	Kenya
Dr Yvonne Erasmus	What is the evidence on the links between ecosystem services and poverty alleviation in Africa? A demand-led evidence map for decision-making	South Africa
LANDSCAPE MAPS		
Dr Julian Bagyendera	Using Evidence to Institutionalise and Scale Up Sustainable - Multi-Sectoral Climate Change Interventions at Central and Local Government Level	Uganda
Ms Rachel Emaasit	A representation of the key players in the evidence ecosystem of the parliament of Uganda	Uganda
Dr Teferi Hailemichael Hassen	An overview of role players central to evidence- informed metropolitan good governance in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Ms Aimtonga Amini	Tanzania evidence ecosystem: Experience of socio-economic research and M&E institutions	Tanzania
Dr Olabisi Oduwale	Evidence ecosystem for knowledge translation in Nigeria	Nigeria
Mr Emmanuel Kamga	General overview of the research and evidence-informed decision-making landscape for managing malaria in Cameroon	Cameroon
Dr Chukwudi Nnaji	Mapping the vaccine and immunization evidence ecosystem in Nigeria	South Africa
Ms Jenna Patterson	Evidence-Based vaccinology in South Africa	South Africa
Professor Sudhakar Morankar	Electronic rapid landscape review map: Ethiopian Evidence Based Health Care Center	Ethiopia
Dr Ekwaro Obuku	Rapid landscape review map: A navigation guide to the R2P jungle in Uganda	Uganda
Mr Thabo Hlophe	An overview of role players facilitating health evidence-informed decision-making in Eswatini: a landscape review of Health Research	Eswatini
Mr Alioune Seydi	Building resilience to recurring food insecurity in Senegal Project, Senegal	Senegal



## Online programme

Day two of the online conference was facilitated by the hosts, Ms Natalie Tannous and Mr Zafeer Ravat.

### **Speakers for the morning session included:**

- Professor Ruth Stewart who spoke about the work of the AEN, the importance of the conference, and expectations for the future;
- Ms Diana Warira Poster on the following: Making the dividend count: The role of communication in bridging demographic dividend research and Africa's policy processes;
- Mr Marcel Korth who provided a summary of the session on the role of M&E in EIDM.

### **Speakers for the afternoon session included:**

- Dr Patrick Okwen on the importance of the EIDM in healthcare and communicable diseases;
- Dr Ssenyonjo Aloysius on the following: Research priority setting for health systems development to advance Universal health coverage in Uganda: The stakeholder engagements and perspectives;
- Professor Chenge Faustin on the following: A Health Technology Assessment Agency in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Achievements and challenges ahead eighteen months after its launch;
- Ms Voilet Murunga on the following: Promoting evidence-informed adolescent sexual and reproductive health decisions in Kenya: Lessons from the enSURE adolescent sexual and reproductive health project;
- Dr Ekwaro Obuku provided a summary of the session on evidence in healthcare and communicable diseases;
- Hon. Olfa Sharif on why evidence is important for parliamentarians;
- Dr Yvonne Erasmus on the following: What is the evidence on the links between ecosystem services and poverty alleviation in Africa? A demand-led evidence map for decision-making;
- Mr John Njovu on the following: Evaluation of social transfers in Zambia and its uses;
- Professor Maria-Laura Alzua on the following: Importance of impact evaluations for decision-making, and comparative lessons from Latin America.

### **Speakers for the late afternoon session included:**

- Mr Rigobert Pambe on the following: Assessing ICT interventions for promoting access, equity and quality education in Cameroon using the Evidence Barometer;
- Ms Josephine Watera who provided a summary of the session on evidence for quality education;
- Ms Norma Altshuler Summary who provided a summary of the session no evidence and funders.



# DAY 3: IMPACT

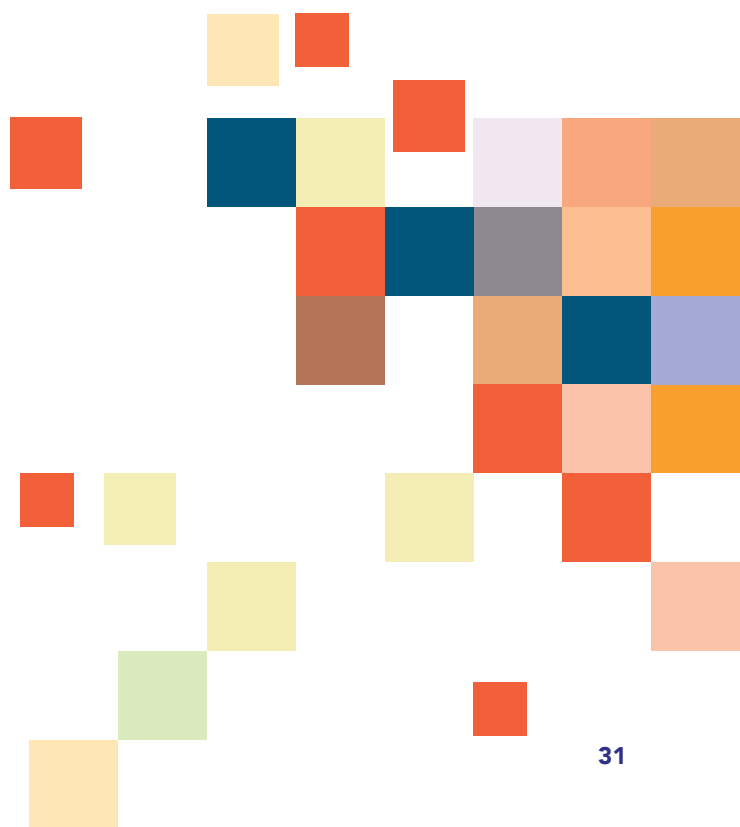
## Conference happenings (Plenary 2, closing plenary )

### Plenary session 2 – Consolidation of the conference strands



#### Session chair and speakers.

Plenary 2 was chaired by Dr Yvonne Erasmus, ACE, UJ, South Africa. This was a panel discussion with all four strand leaders with the aim of drawing together what had been learnt at the conference in relation to the strands. Panellists included: Ms Danielle Mason, Education Endowment Foundation, United Kingdom: strand leader for quality education, Dr Patrick Okwen, Centre for Development of Best Practice in Health, Cameroon: strand leader for communicable diseases; Mr Sibonelo Mbanjwa, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa: strand leader for climate resilience and Dr Rose Oronje, AFIDEP, Kenya: strand leader for good governance.

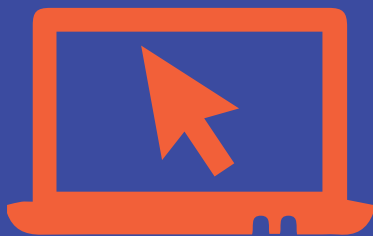


## Closing plenary



Session chair and speakers.

The closing plenary session was chaired by Dr Shanil Haricharan, co-chairperson of Evidence 2018. In this session there were four speakers: Ms Siziwe Ngcwabe, AEN, South Africa: she presented an overview of the AEN, Ms Velia Manyonga, Parliament of Malawi, and Africa Evidence Leadership Award winner: presented on Evidence use among members of parliament: A case study of Malawi, Professor John Lavis, McMaster University, Canada: presented on The next five-year agenda for supporting evidence-informed decision-making? Building bridges, adapting innovations and learning across issues and contexts, Dr Shanil Haricharan, co-chairperson of Evidence 2018: he wrapped up the three days with the conference key messages and way forward. Professor Ruth Stewart, chairperson of the AEN officially closed the conference.



## Online programme

Day three of the online conference was facilitated by the hosts, Ms Natalie Tannous and Mr Zafeer Ravat.

### Speakers for the morning included:

- Ms Siziwe Ngcwabe who provided a summary of the session on mechanisms and networks in EIDM;
- Ms Emily Hayter who provided a summary of the session on evidence and citizens;
- Professor Sandy Oliver who shared some highlights of the conference and crucial debates to be taken forward;
- Ms Veila Manyonga, Africa Evidence Leadership Award winner who shared what winning the award means to her and what her career plans are for the future.

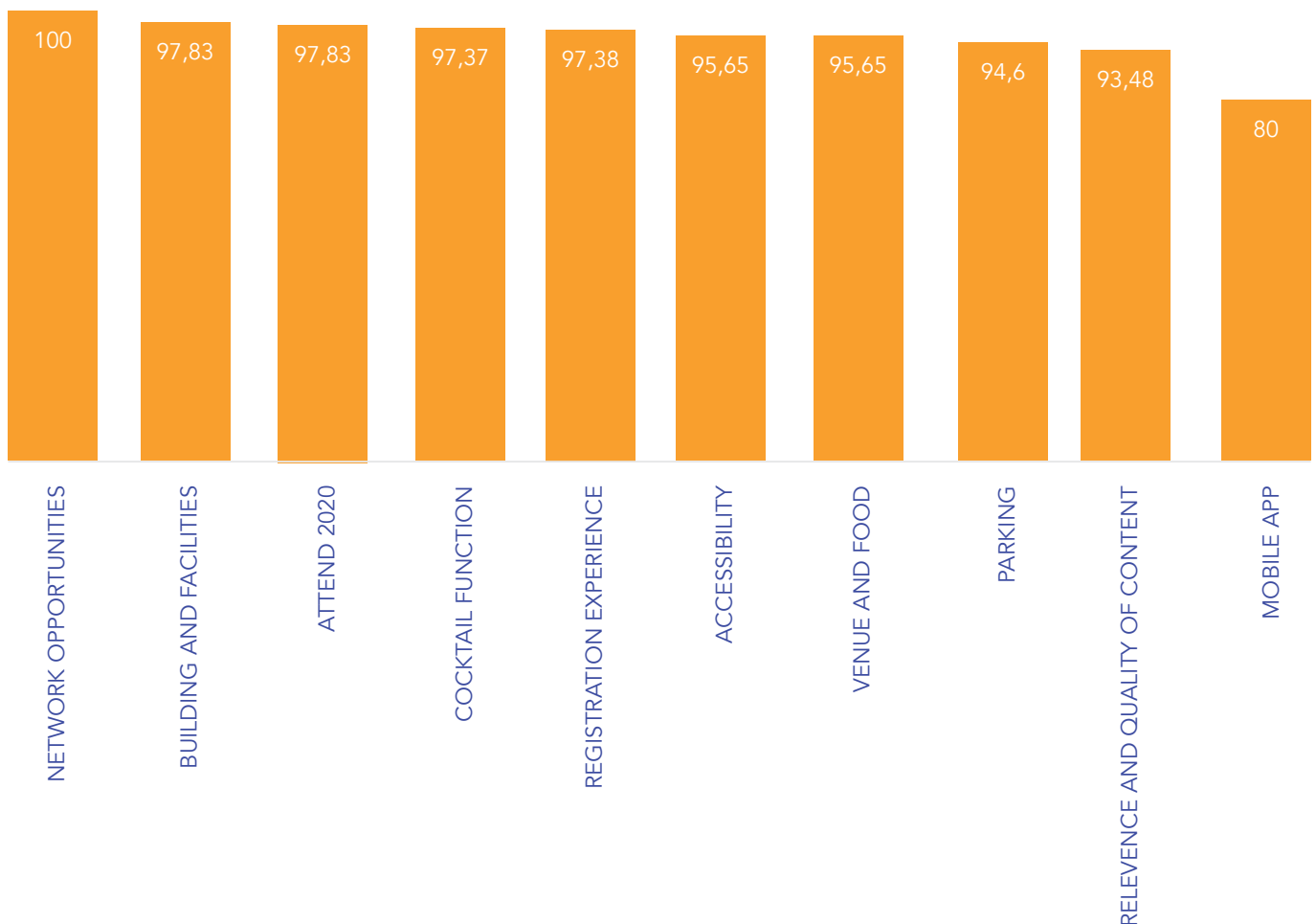
## 5. What was said about Evidence 2018 and Evidence Online 2018?

### Delegates views

Out of the 222 delegates that attended the event, 46 participated in evaluating the conference.

Figure 3 below indicates the overall ratings of various conference components as a percentage of delegates who rated the component to be above average (good plus excellent ratings). All delegates are of the view that the conference provided an above average platform for networking opportunities. Overall, the delegates found the registration process to have been smooth. The building and facilities, parking, cocktail function, accessibility, the venue and the food received above average ratings from approximately 96% of delegates, indicating great satisfaction with the overall quality of the location, facilities and offerings. On average 93% of the delegates who completed the evaluation found the content that they were exposed to of quality and relevant to their work. Technology wise, 80% of the delegates rated the mobile app as above average. Finally, as much as approximately 98% of the delegates indicated a fair chance of attending Evidence 2020.

Figure 3. Delegates ratings of Evidence 2018 in percentages<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Registration experience ratings is an average of pre-conference registration process, pre-conference delegate liaison and on-site registration. Relevance and quality of content averages work relevance and content quality. Venue and food is an average rating of the two components.



Twenty delegate interviews were conducted during Evidence 2018 to gain more insights on the overall experience both before and during the conference. Participants were asked how they learnt about Evidence 2018, their impressions of the hybrid format (physical and online format) of the conference, their intentions to use the online content or post-conference material, and their intentions to interact with other AEN members. We learnt that a majority of these delegates found out about Evidence 2018 from colleagues as opposed to other channels such as twitter and newsletters. In relation to the online conference, 70% (14/20) of the participants had attended a virtual conference before, either as online participants or in physical attendance. About 65% (13/20) indicated no knowledge of a virtual conference at Evidence 2018, while 60% (12/20) confirmed that they would have physically attended the conference even if they had known of the virtual conference beforehand. There seemed to be a great interest in the use of the online content after the conference, with 95% of the delegates also confirming their intended use of the material.

Importantly, we also asked delegates if they felt that the AEN supports them in achieving their most important work goal, for example through activities such as Evidence conferences.

Other feedback from delegates at Evidence 2018 regarding the value of the conference on their work.

1. Yes. Capacity building. Meeting authorities in the field. Learning trends and new approaches.
2. Yes. The conference and ongoing interactions.
3. Contributes through creating a platform for access to some evidence or data and best practices. Opportunities for synergies.
4. Yes. This conference and need for organizations to have frameworks to use evidence. Champions are key. Networking for continuous sharing is key for continuous improvement and broadened my understanding of evidence.
5. Yes, this conference. Learnt new terms and ideas as well as networking.
6. Yes. This conference. Collaborations at the institutional level.
7. Certainly, in many ways than one. The satellite sessions were helpful and the dynamism of the conference.
8. Yes. The conference. Engagement and personal engagement and growth.
9. Yes. Can be able. One can draw expertise within the network.
10. The conference gave us an opportunity to learn about crucial aspects of our work.
11. Yes. Different angles of analysis. Trying to improve the quality of decisions that are made by policy makers. The information gain from the conference, use of evidence mapping for example.

## Media coverage

### Social media

Twitter has become crucial in the sharing of information and connecting people before and during events. The AEN as a host of the conference used its Twitter handle @Africa\_evidence to both facilitate conference discussion and to promote networking among conference delegates. The Evidence 2018 conference received 588 mentions and the conference hashtag #Evidence2018 generated 97 000 impressions, meaning that tweets were delivered to the timelines of a number of Twitter accounts. Tweets were coming from users in South Africa, Kenya and the United States of America. The most retweeted content was about citizen evidence, good governance and more general conversations about the conference. Most of the tweets mentioned an individual presenter/researcher either by tagging them or by name and this broadens the conversation online. This resulted the AEN twitter account receiving 123 new followers and the #Evidence2018 hashtag trended on TrendWiki South Africa from 26-27 September 2018.



**TWEET HIGHLIGHTS**

**Top Tweet** earned 3,900 Impressions

Word of thanks from **#AEN** chairperson acknowledging all our sponsors and organizers. **@Hewlett\_Found @3ieNews @go2uj @UJ\_Humanities @MRCza @TwendeMnE @HSRCza @evaluationafdb** and organizers **@conf\_sa @ACE\_UJ** photographer and **#EvidenceOnline2018** organizes. See you all **@ #Evidence2020**  
[pic.twitter.com/Ypygfe8TUe](https://pic.twitter.com/Ypygfe8TUe)



12 20

**Top mention** earned 151 engagements

**ACRES\_makchs**  
 @RRS\_Makchs · Sep 26

Beautiful pictorial **#summary** of session1 at the **#EVIDENCE2018**  
**#EvidenceOnline2018 @Africa\_evidence @rhona\_ona** [pic.twitter.com/PwmO419oyi](https://pic.twitter.com/PwmO419oyi)



2 13 17

[View Tweet](#)

**SFP 2018 SUMMARY**

Tweets	88	Tweet impressions	97.1K
Profile visits	2,626	Mentions	588
New followers	123		

AEN Twitter highlights from Google Analytics.

Broadening the conversation through tagging by name

**AEN @Africa\_evidence** Oct 5

**#Evidence2018 #quotesoftheday**

"I believe citizen evidence can contribute to unlocking the policy implementation problems in Africa."  
**@roseoronje @Afidep**

cc: **@deewarira @EliyaZulu @ibumurunga @ptaylor\_ottawa**

**#Evidence2018highlights**  
**#citizenevidence2018**  
**#Africalovesevidence**



2 23 35

**TrendWiki South Africa @Tr...** Sep 26

\*\*\*New Trend Alert\*\*\*

1. Will Smith
2. Old Trafford
3. parliament
4. Naledi
5. #CapricornFMDanceOff
6. #EndTB
7. #Evidence2018

1 2

**TrendWiki South Africa @Tr...** Sep 27

\*\*\*New Trend Alert\*\*\*

1. Kavanaugh
2. #capricornfmdanceoff
3. #evidence2018

1

#Evidence2018 trending on TrendWiki South Africa on 26 and 27 September 2018.

A tweet is by the AEN quoting speaker Dr Rose Oranje and tagging her organisation and colleagues.

## Evidence 2018 media coverage

The conference marketing team had a number of campaigns to promote the Evidence conference to a wider audience through both social media and traditional media. The AEN's social media campaigns informed potential delegates what to expect at the conference and sharing activities one can do in Pretoria for those traveling to South Africa for the first time. In addition, the AEN marketing team wrote a number of articles and press releases to promote the conference to different networks. This was made possible through UJ's communications platforms and its access to the South African press. We published and promoted press releases about the launch and the winner of the **Africa Evidence Leadership Award** and the keynote speaker of the conference **Mark Heywood**. The AEN chairperson Professor Ruth Stewart wrote an article for *The Conversation* titled '**Africa takes steps to earn its stripes in using evidence to inform policy**', this article discussed the importance of using reliable evidence to inform policy in order to tackle some major problems in Africa. The article was featured in other media publications such as the **Alternative Africa**, **Polity**, **The Conversation Australia** and **Quartz Africa**. AEN members also promoted the Africa Evidence Leadership Award and the conference within their networks: the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results for Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) promoted the launch of the award; while **AFIDEP** interviewed the first recipient of the award Ms Velia Manyonga; McMaster Forum and Cochrane South Africa promoted the conference in their newsletter. After the conference ended on Friday 28 September 2018, the AEN chairperson Professor Ruth Stewart and the Evidence conference co-chair Dr Shanil Haricharan were interviewed by the Cape Times newspaper and an article was published on 1 October 2018 titled '**Focus on decision-making**' which highlights the 3-day conference.

# Focus on decision-making

Evidence the key word at Pretoria conference

Cape Times 1 Oct 2018 OWN CORRESPONDENT

We attracted the world's attention, with delegates from around the world joining the digital event. Professor Ruth Stewart Africa Evidence Network chairperson

SOME of the continent's evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) thought leaders and finest minds convened at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) International Convention Centre in Pretoria for the 3rd Biennial Evidence 2018 conference.

The three-day event, which ended on Friday, was hosted by the Africa Evidence Network (AEN) and is described as one of Africa's leading platforms for promoting the use of



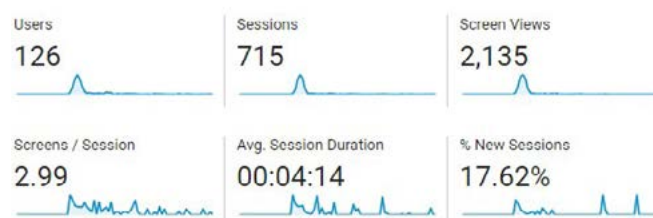
**EVIDENCE 2018 conference chairs Dr Shanil Haricharan and Dr Rhona Mijumbi-Deve, SECTION27 executive director Mark Heywood and AEN chairperson Professor Ruth Stewart. |**

The Evidence 2018 conference was featured in the Cape Times Newspaper.



## Mobile App

The EVIDENCE 2018 mobile App was used to keep the delegates up to date with the programme prior and during the conference. The mobile app was also used to contact other attendees and speakers as well as submit feedback to polls. The statistical report for the mobile App is detailed on the charts below:



Screen Name	Screen Views
	2,135 <small>% of Total: 100.00% (2,135)</small>
1. Home	533 (24.96%)
2. Programme	446 (20.89%)
3. Attendees	130 (6.09%)
4. Log In	120 (5.62%)
5. Download Programme	89 (4.17%)
6. Alerts	78 (3.65%)
7. Online Streaming	76 (3.56%)
8. Messages	69 (3.23%)
9. Shuttle Services	69 (3.23%)
10. Activity stream	64 (3.00%)

Mobile App statistics for the conference programme.

## Evidence 2018 blogs

Evidence 2018 conference blogs were another marketing campaign that the AEN marketing team executed. On 12 January 2018, the conference co-chairs, Dr Shanil Haricharan, Dr Rhona Mijumbi-Deve, and the chairperson of the AEN, Professor Ruth Stewart, wrote the **first blog** introducing Evidence 2018 and what people can expect at the conference. This was followed by a number of blogs which were a build-up to the conference and topics covered were: **EVIDENCE 2018: Early catch a great discount on registration fees; Strands and leaders at EVIDENCE 2018; Evidence 2018 to discuss four crucial topics for Africa-Part 1; EVIDENCE 2018 to discuss four crucial topics for Africa – Part 2; Abstracts are in! Preliminary reflections on submissions for EVIDENCE 2018; Innovative EVIDENCE 2018; Let's get the conversation started! Satellite sessions at EVIDENCE 2018; An evidence leader's thoughts on evidence-use in Africa; Connecting the dots between different communities: Mark Heywood looks forward to EVIDENCE 2018; What to do in Pretoria at Evidence 2018; What to expect at Evidence 2018 and Introducing Evidence Online 2018.** Ms Thesandree Padayachee from Health Systems Trust was our guest blogger during the conference and her blogs captured themes and discussions of **Day 1, Day 2** and **Day 3** of the conference. Ms Natalie Tannous reflected on the **final day** of Evidence 2018. In addition, the AEN team summed up the conference blogs with a **blog** stating five reasons to attend Evidence 2020.

## 6. What will happen next with Evidence?

The annual member survey run by the AEN secretariat revealed some exciting opportunities related to the Evidence brand and other events offered by the AEN. Going forward into 2019/2020 the AEN secretariat is planning to action these opportunities in two ways.

During 2019, the AEN secretariat plans to host up to six smaller-scale events in different countries across Africa to kick-start the conversations the Network members feel should be the focus of Evidence 2020. These smaller events will be more locally-focussed, organised by in-country members of the AEN, and outcomes reported back to the AEN secretariat to shape the planning and development of Evidence 2020. The intention with these events is twofold: first, to respond to members' requests for more in-country AEN events and second, to increase the representativeness of the Network at physical events. Face-to-face interaction was indicated by members in the 2018 annual member survey as being the preferred platform for interaction between members.

The second way in which the AEN secretariat is implementing some of the feedback received from members during our annual member survey in 2018 is to host the biennial Evidence conference in a country other than South Africa. Despite challenges with doing this before now, the AEN secretariat has taken the commitment to host Evidence 2020 outside South Africa. Partnering with in-country AEN member organisations to execute Evidence 2020 to the same standard, we are excited to potentially welcome even more members. Again, it is the intention of the secretariat that by hosting Evidence 2020 in a different African country, we will be steering the AEN according to members' desires, enhancing the inclusivity of the Network, and showcasing the AEN as a truly African Network that is representative of all on this great continent.



@Africa\_evidence #Evidence2018



Africa Evidence Network



Africa Evidence Network



Africa Evidence Network

[www.africaevidencenetwork.org](http://www.africaevidencenetwork.org)

