

Focus on Governance



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What is governance?

“Governance refers to, among others, the way governments make decisions and appropriate resources, how parliaments conduct oversight and representation of citizen’s interests, accountability and transparency processes, tracking expenditures, and citizens’ participation and involvement in government decision-making.

Poor governance and leadership is one of the biggest barrier to development in Africa. Evidence is the lifeblood of good governance. You can’t have good governance without evidence.

As AFIDEP, we believe that if the many governance challenges are addressed in Africa, then development efforts will achieve much more, and evidence has a big role to play in improving governance.”

- Rose Oronje



“Evidence is the lifeblood of good governance. You can’t have good governance without evidence.”



Improving performance of parliamentary committees in Malawi

By Rose Oronje

Parliamentary committees play a critical role in delivering parliament mandates of resource appropriation, oversight, legislation, and representation. Weak committee systems therefore greatly undermine the performance of parliament. This is the case with Malawi Parliament, where parliamentary committees face many challenges that can be categorised in three broad areas including: weak or lacking committee performance management system, weak capacity of MPs and staff to perform committee functions, and inadequate resources (both finances and staffing numbers) to facilitate committee performance.

Our collaborative programme of work with the Malawi Parliament aims to, among others, strengthen the committee system in order to improve parliament's performance. During the October-December 2018 period, we worked with the leadership of parliament, committee chairs, and committee clerks to undertake various activities that are contributing towards strengthening committees.

In a workshop with committee clerks and senior staff from the Parliaments of South Africa and Uganda, we facilitated critical reflection on current committee practice in Malawi and other parliaments, identifying

specific actions to address challenges. From this reflective workshop, Malawi Parliament committee clerks committed to, among others:

- Develop and implement a Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation (MLE) system for managing committee performance
- Develop and steer the implementation of annual work plans for all committees
- Initiate the development of committee legacy reports in order to document committee performance and challenges
- Link more effectively with other sections in parliament (such as the research section) in order to support committees better, especially with technical advice

In a workshop with committee chairs, MPs identified gaps in parliament's legal framework as well as gaps in the current system used by parliament to manage the committee system. They made recommendations that need to be implemented to address these gaps as captured in the text box overleaf. They further committed to present their recommendations to parliament's leadership and plenary so that the recommendations can be implemented.

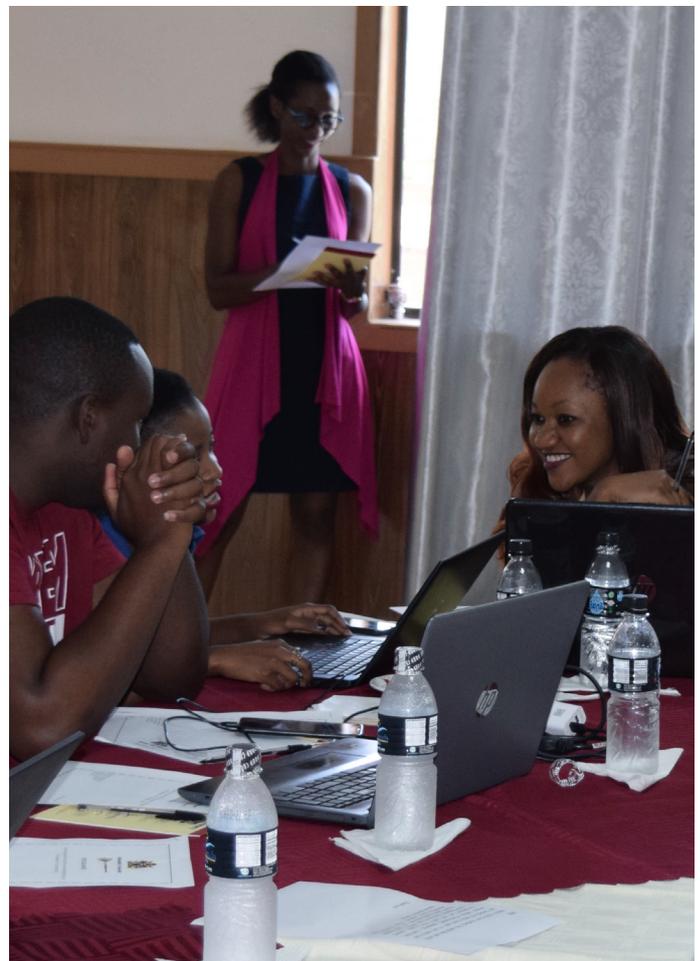
Recommendations for improving the management of committees in Malawi Parliament

- Train committee chairs and vice-chairs on effective committee leadership.
- Allocate one researcher to each committee to improve technical support to committees.
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation unit in parliament to help monitor committee performance and implementation of committee recommendations.
- All committees to prepare and implement annual work plans, and legacy reports at end of parliament.
- Increase duration of committee sittings tied to the annual work plans developed.
- Conduct training of new MPs within six months of joining parliament to equip MPs with knowledge and skills on their roles in committees.
- Require party leaders and whips to follow the criteria provided for assigning MPs to committees to ensure MPs are assigned to relevant committees.

Recommendations for improving the legal framework to improve committee performance in Malawi Parliament

- Amend Standing Orders to address the Executive's failure to respond to committee reports adopted by the House.
- Review and harmonise mandates for all committees to avoid overlaps.
- Develop criteria for joint committee meetings to avoid duplication of efforts where different committees investigate the same issue in case of cross-cutting issues.
- Amend Standing Orders to require Committee of Chairs to report to the House every six months on implementation of committee work plans.
- Amend Standing Orders to introduce a clause gives specific requirements that have to be made for the waiving the rules. This will address the current misuse of this provision.

“Parliamentary committees play a critical role in delivering parliament mandates of resource appropriation, oversight, legislation, and representation.”





Strengthening budget analysis capacity in Malawi Parliament

By Evelyn Kasambara & Rose Oronje

Budgeting is a critical oversight function of any parliament and therefore a key focus area for AFIDEP’s project, Malawi Parliamentary Support Initiative (M-PSI). M-PSI aims to improve the capacity and performance of Malawi Parliament in carrying out its oversight, legislative and representation functions.

To contribute towards improving Malawi Parliament’s performance in scrutinising budgets proposed by the Executive, tracking expenditure, and strengthening the country’s fiscal policies, a training with 25 Parliament staff working in the newly formed parliamentary budget office, research department, and committee section was held on 18-19 September 2018 in Mponela, Malawi.

Some of the topics covered included: the Malawi budget process, the budget/fiscal framework, techniques for budget analysis, applications to Malawi budget framework, budget analysis from a human rights-based perspective, budget analysis reporting, and analysing the financial implications for bills.

The training was facilitated by one of Malawi’s leading economists and a partner on the M-PSI project, Professor Winford Masanjala from the University of Malawi.

There was a consensus among participants that the training was apt.

“The workshop has assisted a lot in that I have knowledge on what the budget cycle is all about. I have learnt about the sequence of the budget; how the budget is prepared, how it is approved, how it is executed and also how it can be controlled. As a research officer, the major thing that I will improve on is scrutinising the laws that come with the budget not only celebrating that the budget has been passed,” Ms Marie M. Chibwe, Research Officer.

“This training is so important as it has enlightened us on the budget processes in which we didn’t have much knowledge before. We now understand how the budget is formulated and how the resources are allocated to different government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), the skills gained will help us understand the national budget better and also help us to holistically analyse the budget,” Mr Gibson Kanyerere, Policy and Planning Officer.

“This training gives me a better understanding of how to analyse the budget. My department being responsible for budgeting, this training is beneficial and it will help in formulation, analysis and implementation of the budget,” says Mr Mkwezalamba, Policy and Planning Officer.

Through the project, AFIDEP has developed a budget analysis manual and legislative research guidelines to help institutionalise a culture of quality decision-making in parliament. In addition, a training and mentorship programme was established within parliament to ensure that parliament staff develop skills to understand and conduct budget analysis, financial scrutiny, and legislative research. The goal is to improve the quality of the Secretariat staff as they assist parliamentarians and ensure that there is continuity of the culture of evidence-informed decision-making in parliament regardless of political power change.

The Malawi Parliamentary Support Initiative (M-PSI) is a one-year project, supported by USAID/Malawi through the Malawi STEPS grant to Counterpart International and implemented by a sub-grantee, the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP).

A meeting of the minds: Charting the future of evidence informed policymaking

By Evans Chumo

In August 2018, AFIDEP's Executive Director, Dr Eliya Zulu, joined a group of global champions for the use of data and evidence for improved policymaking at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Lake Cuomo, Italy. During the three-day meeting, participants shared experiences, took stock of the current state of the emerging field of evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM), examined opportunities for advancing the field and proposed a plan of action and vision for other actors in the wider field to ponder.

Why advance the field of EIPM?

There have been growing calls for increased use of evidence in policy formulation and implementation to ensure that public policy decisions are objective, with development interventions designed and implemented with the best chance of maximising their impact in improving people's lives. However, due to all sorts of bottlenecks on the part of both the producers and users of evidence, critical public policy decisions are made with very limited reference to timely, practical, and comprehensive evidence. A number of organisations and actors, including AFIDEP, have emerged over the last decade or so to address these bottlenecks and work towards institutionalising a culture of evidence use in government. These efforts are largely fragmented, poorly resourced, and the ideals of EIPM are not well integrated in research and policy training programmes. The Bellagio meeting brought together some of the actors working in diverse areas of EIPM to explore the necessity and opportunities for building an EIPM field characterised by individuals and institutions with similar aims, a common vocabulary and theories, and complementary approaches that are connected to promoting learning and greater impact.

According to Dr Zulu, "The Bellagio setting, which has given birth to many international development initiatives, provided the dream environment for participants to debate and challenge each other to think outside the box, and imagine beyond what they or their institutions are doing, and explore what needs to be

done to accelerate efforts to institutionalise a culture of evidence use in public policy decision-making". Dr Zulu further noted that the meeting helped to bring clarity and connections among individuals and organisations working towards the common goal of increasing the degree to which public policies and programmes are informed by high-quality data and research evidence.

Ideas to advance EIPM

Bellagio participants agreed that the time to build EIPM as a field is ripe, and they came up with four ideas on how to make this happen. The description of the ideas below is largely drawn from the meeting report. While these ideas are not prescriptive to the advancement of the evidence movement globally, they are meant to serve as a bridge between the current understanding of the field and what its future would look like should these ideas be enacted, and provide a platform for other good ideas to build on.

1. Conceptualising the EIPM field

At the moment, evidence professionals, to a large extent, only rally together around topical or methodological communities, rather than around the focus of systematically integrating evidence throughout government decision-making. Conceptualising the field of EIPM would lay a strong foundation for the field through the clarification of the goals, principles and a conceptual understanding that the majority of actors in this field already share – uniting them under a sustained global evidence movement that cuts across generations, spheres and professional disciplines.

One of the first steps towards conceptualising the field can be in the form of a working group or commission. The commission would be entrusted with advancing a shared consensus on the meaning and modes of evidence-informed decision-making. It would conduct inclusive consultations among evidence communities, undertake background research and pilot projects intended to conceptualise the field.



A second commission comprised of a set of highly respected, diverse individuals with a storied legacy of significant contributions to evidence-informed decision-making can be formed to facilitate discussions and action at national, global and regional levels. They would provide an open-minded perspective to advance a more diverse field and steer engagement with the broader evidence community.

2. Strengthening the messaging and stimulating public engagement around EIPM

It has been demonstrated that policymakers are more likely to practice evidence-informed decision-making if the public actively supports it. Participants at the Bellagio forum noted that getting the public on-board will require the development of a messaging framework that's adaptable across various contexts, and brings together the most compelling justifications for evidence use. Secondly, converting the public to EIPM champions will also involve a set of campaigns to stimulate public engagement around governments using evidence in decision-making. The resulting messaging framework will then serve as a resource for the evidence community and also feed into subsequent evidence uptake campaigns. At a later stage, various ways of campaigning can be explored, including leveraging on mass media, targeted media, person-to-person

outreach, political engagement at the regional and global levels, among other means.

3. Institutionalising evidence use in government

Institutionalising evidence use in government decision-making will require supporting the systematic embedding of evidence use into the routine practices of organisations in the public sector, and keeping them accountable to ensure that these systems are used, and used well. This can be manifested, among other ways, through supporting independent watchdog organisations or networks to track and publicise instances where strong evidence was ignored, and also give recognition to when it was used well, during either the formulation or implementation of public policy. There is also a need to develop shared tools for operationalising this effort such as a set of indicators to incentivise evidence use in governance, or regulations that require transparency of programme data.

4. Rallying actors in the EIPM field under a global banner or platform

The evidence movement is based on a simple idea – making and implementing policies that positively affect people's lives. However, in reality, this picture is more complicated. There are many forms of evidence, a variety of actors who often work at cross-purposes, and in convoluted political contexts,

and sometimes with very limited capacity to have the most impact despite having the best intentions.

However, should governments make global commitments that create spaces, incentives and resources for a complex set of actors in the field of EIPM to pull in the same direction, this will go a long way in improving the systematic use of evidence in many a context. It will also give policymakers an incentive to commit to using evidence and to follow through on these commitments. Also, by using a rewards system, policymakers can gain international recognition and credit for pledging to change the status quo, and acknowledging the efforts of governments that follow through on their commitments – while sanctioning governments that do not.

What difference will the Bellagio forum have moving forward?

Asked about the usefulness of the Bellagio meeting and what difference it will make, Eliya Zulu noted that the Bellagio group recognises that they are part of a bigger community of practice attempting to structure the field. Thus, for these ideas to have a game-changing effect, they acknowledge they are not the only voices that matter, and invite other players and stakeholders – especially governments – for their engagement, input and buy-in to make these and other ideas a reality.

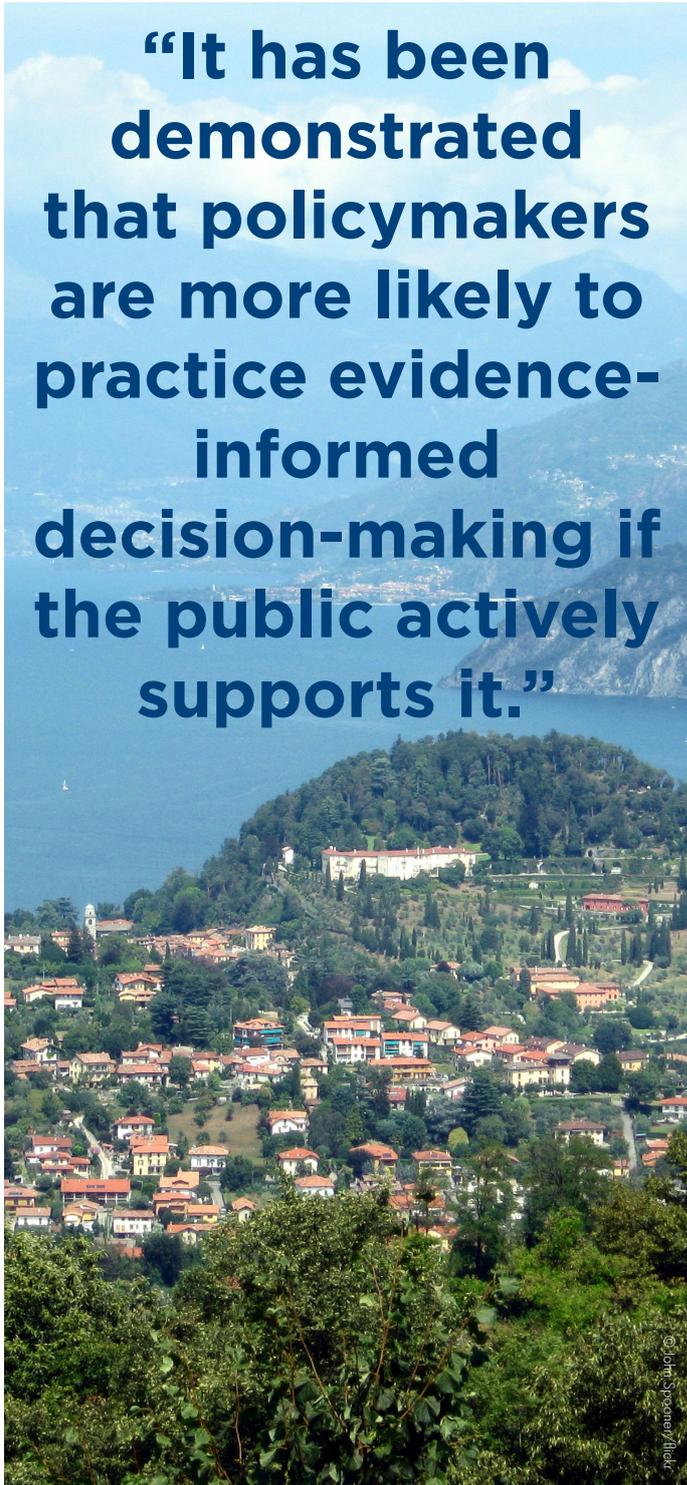
The Bellagio meeting was very timely in consolidating the gains being made in institutionalising evidence use in government. Incentives to progress and monitor Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have created a political window for increased use of data and research evidence, while an increasing number of networks and organisations, like AFIDEP, have pioneered and continue to advance evidence-use in decision-making among African governments.

AFIDEP's commitments following the Bellagio meeting

Alongside the forum's other participants, AFIDEP's Executive Director, Eliya Zulu made commitments following the forum to advance the field of EIPM. He committed to infusing the ideas developed at the Bellagio meeting into AFIDEP's strategic planning process – AFIDEP is currently drafting its 2020 -2024 strategic plan, and thus this meeting could not have had better timing. Dr Zulu also committed to connect AFIDEP's efforts with those of government actors, organisations and networks in the African region that also operate in the evidence for decision-making field, such as the Africa Evidence Network (AEN) – a community of people that includes researchers, practitioners and policymakers from universities, civil society and government who work in

Africa and have an interest in evidence, its production and use in decision-making. Finally, he pledged to work within the framework of global efforts to inspire global commitments towards evidence-informed decision-making, including the global open data and open government movements.

The Bellagio meeting was convened with support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, to bring global evidence experts together to craft a plan of action that would lead the charge towards increased collaboration among players in the field of evidence-informed decision-making and more coherence in their actions to advance the field.



“It has been demonstrated that policymakers are more likely to practice evidence-informed decision-making if the public actively supports it.”

Using evidence to improve policy implementation: Reflections from a peer-learning workshop

By Violet Murunga

On 23-25 July 2018, Results for All, AFIDEP and IDinsight convened a workshop that brought together policymakers, researchers, civil society members, funders, and other partners to discuss how evidence can be used to improve policy implementation. The two-and-a-half-day workshop aimed to foster dialogue, exchange of ideas and insight, and active engagement among participants, to more deeply understand policy implementation challenges and lessons from different contexts; and introduce tools and approaches for improving implementation using various types of evidence.

The workshop emphasised participation of multi-sectoral government teams working on a range of policy issues to bring out the complexity of policy implementation as well as draw similarities and differences across sectors and policy issues. A total of ten government teams representing health, education, gender and social welfare, science and technology, environment and planning and finance sectors from nine countries participated in the workshop. Countries represented included Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda from East Africa, Ghana and Nigeria from West Africa, Malawi and South Africa from Southern Africa, Chile and Mexico from Latin America. Three of the government teams (Chile, Mexico and South Africa) included government evaluation agencies purposively selected to draw lessons on how this arrangement has worked, the benefits and challenges.

The government teams presented a range of policy issues and related implementation challenges on evidence use that they were grappling with and hoped the workshop would address. Policy issues presented were on education equity and quality (Chile and Mexico), waste disposal (Ghana and Nigeria), reproductive, maternal,



newborn, child and adolescent health, including family planning and prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV (Kenya and Rwanda), targeting beneficiaries for social support services (Malawi), violence against women (South Africa) and social sector development (Uganda). Some of the teams were grappling with how to better monitor and evaluate their policies (Ghana, Malawi and South Africa). Whereas some teams sought to understand how to use data and evidence to advocate for policy change and/or enhance policy outcomes (Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda), Chile and Mexico presented baseline results and plans for monitoring and evaluating their policies.

The workshop discussions revealed that across sectors, use of evidence to improve policy implementation is not happening optimally largely because of limited attention to planning for monitoring and evaluation of policies during the policy development process. However, at the root of the problem is the lack of a culture of evidence use. Bitange Ndemo, a professor at the University of Nairobi and also the immediate former Permanent Secretary for Kenya's Ministry of Information and Communication, articulated this point in his remarks at the opening session of the workshop on what needs to be done to improve the use of evidence to inform policy implementation. The keen interest in using evidence to improve policy implementation among government



teams attending this workshop shows that such initiatives could be useful in unearthing and contributing to a shift towards a culture of evidence use. However, lessons from other related initiatives, including AFIDEP's SECURE Health programme, which aimed to optimise the use of evidence in the health sectors and parliaments of Kenya and Malawi, show that lasting changes in norms require institutional adjustments that favour evidence-informed decision-making.

Government, industry, academic/research institutions and civil society organisations including media should institutionalise structures and processes that incentivise evidence-informed decision-making. They need to promote interaction of a wide range of actors as well as synthesis, exchange, and use of evidence. Structures and processes that promote interaction of actors can nurture trust and relationships among the various actors with the goal to create a shared understanding of decision-making and research processes and contexts, which are widely acknowledged to facilitate evidence-informed decision-making. Professor Ndemo, echoed the importance of government, industry, and academia interacting and working together and noted that this is happening sub-optimally in Africa. He further noted that there is a lot of evidence that is being generated but not being used because of limited access to evidence. He challenged 'big data' generators including government

and private sector to openly share their data so that it can be analysed by interested parties and used to inform policy implementation.

The work of IDinsight, a non-profit organisation that designs, deploys, and promotes evidence-generating tools to help people eliminate poverty worldwide, shows how making government data accessible to other actors for further analysis can be beneficial. IDinsight worked with the Zambia Ministry of Community Development to recode and reanalyse data from their social cash transfer programme to assess its performance and used GIS mapping technology to present the data. The new analysis showed gaps in the reach of the programme that informed adjustments in the programme's implementation. Finally, funding is critical and, therefore, government and development partners must allocate funding to support the generation of relevant, timely and quality evidence, synthesis, exchange and use of the evidence, and skills development.

The workshop was timely and attempted to take a deep dive into a discussion on using evidence to improve policy implementation, identify challenges and introduce tools and approaches that could be useful. The discussions and participant feedback point to an appetite for information on how to enhance their performance and the need for follow-up initiatives to facilitate cross-learning as well as research to build the knowledge-base in this area. In fact, workshop participants agreed to form a network to serve as a platform for ongoing knowledge sharing and capacity strengthening to enhance the use of evidence in policy implementation. This platform could potentially be evaluated to assess its effectiveness.

“Government, industry, academic/research institutions and civil society organisations including media should institutionalise structures and processes that incentivise evidence-informed decision-making.”

Beneficiary of AFIDEP's capacity strengthening programme wins Africa Evidence Leadership Award

By Evans Chumo

The Africa Evidence Network (AEN), at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), launched the first annual Africa Evidence Leadership Award (AELA) to recognise and honour individuals who champion the use of evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) in Africa.

Ms Velia Manyonga, Head of the Research Division at the Parliament of Malawi, is the first recipient of the AELA. "It is so wonderful to have been chosen for this award to acknowledge and support Africa's achievement in evidence-informed policy-making", says Ms Manyonga.

Speaking of how she champions evidence-informed decision-making in her current role, Ms Manyonga says "My work involves accessing, synthesising, and

helping Members of Parliament to apply evidence in their decision-making roles within Parliament." Ms. Manyonga is a beneficiary of AFIDEP's programme on strengthening the capacity of health policymakers and legislators in accessing, interpreting, and using research evidence in decision-making processes.

"This award has been made possible by the support we got from think tanks like AFIDEP..." – Ms Velia Manyonga

The winner of the prestigious award, worth over USD4000, was chosen by AEN members and the network advisory group which includes individuals from Africa and across the globe working in EIDM.



"It is so wonderful to have been chosen for this award to acknowledge and support Africa's achievement in evidence-informed policy-making"



“There is a lot of good work being done by Africans for Africa and our hope is not only to celebrate those who are giving back but to also encourage the spirit of *Ubuntu* in others. We need to acknowledge the innovative leadership in evidence-informed decision-making happening in Africa and showcase it to the world,” explains AEN Senior Manager Siziwe Ngcwabe, UJ.

Ms Manyonga was selected out of a pool of government officials, civil society, and researchers – among others – who were all eligible to apply for the award. She emerged the best out of a shortlist of five strong candidates drawn from various countries across the continent.

As part of the award, she received a travel bursary to attend an evidence event of her choice. She chose

to attend the Evidence 2018 conference where she was a keynote speaker sharing experiences on her EIDM work with the Parliament of Malawi. The annual conference aims to promote evidence, its production and use in decision-making in Africa.

In addition to the winner of the AELA, two honourable mentions were selected for their impressive work in EIDM in Africa: Dr Patrick Okwen of Cameroon and Ms Jennifer Mutua of Kenya.

The aim of the award is to showcase the status of Africa in global EIDM discussions by recognising impactful, insightful, and innovative engagement with EIDM in Africa. Administered by the AEN secretariat as a travel grant, the award will be awarded annually by the AEN.

Interview: AFIDEP at Evidence 2018

By Victory Kamthunzi

At AFIDEP, we believe that evidence has a critical role in development efforts. If evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) played a bigger role in development efforts, Africa would accomplish more in reducing the levels of poverty and improving the quality of life of its people. From 25 to 28 September 2018, AFIDEP experts joined other EIDM players in Pretoria, South Africa at Evidence 2018, a conference convened by the Africa Evidence Network (AEN) on evidence, its production and use in decision-making in Africa.

The event connected individuals and activities across various initiatives, organisations and fields creating an opportunity to network and share knowledge on EIDM in Africa.

In this interview, AFIDEP's Dr. Rose Oronje (Director, Public Policy and Communications) who is a member of the Scientific Programme Committee and the leader of the Good Governance Strand at the Evidence 2018 shares on the importance of such an event and the role of AFIDEP at the conference.

What role did you and AFIDEP play at the EVIDENCE 2018 conference?

I've been involved in the Evidence 2018 conference because of my role at AFIDEP. AFIDEP's work is about strengthening governance and government systems so that they can effectively tackle development challenges and evidence is critical in the work of governments and in governance. I've been part of the scientific committee that has led and driven the scientific focus of this conference.

The conference has four different strands; quality education, communicable diseases, mental health, and good governance. I've led the Good Governance Strand – defined what governance means, the central role of evidence in improving governance, the scope of papers the strand is interested in, promoted the strand through social media and other online channels, and led the review and selection of papers to be presented at the Evidence 2018 conference.



Dr. Rose Oronje

AFIDEP Director, Public Policy and
Communications

Member of the Scientific
Programme Committee and the
leader of the Good Governance
Strand at the EVIDENCE 2018
conference held 25-28 September,
2018 in Pretoria, South Africa

I presented two abstracts based on the work that AFIDEP has been doing in African parliaments. One paper shares lessons from our work with the Network of African Parliamentary Committees on Health (NEAPACOH). And the other paper shares findings on a study we've done on understanding the ecosystem of evidence use in African parliaments.

I was also part of a panel in the final plenary where they had the leaders of the four strands on a panel reflect on what is emerging from the conference.

I co-facilitated one of the satellite forums happening on 25 September 2018 co-hosted by IDRC (International Development Research Centre) and AFIDEP on citizen evidence. It looked at how we can strengthen citizen voices in decision-making processes.

Other AFIDEP experts involved in the conference, either presenting papers or as part of panels included Violet Murunga, Diana Warira and Dr. Eliya Zulu.

Why governance?

Poor governance and leadership is the biggest barrier to development in Africa. I believe evidence is the lifeblood of good governance. You can't have good governance without evidence. And governance here refers to, among others, the way governments make decisions and appropriate resources, how parliaments conduct oversight and representation of citizen's interests, accountability and transparency processes, tracking expenditures, and citizens participation and involvement in government decision-making. This is why AFIDEP is involved in this conference. We really believe that if the many governance challenges are addressed in Africa, then development efforts will achieve much more. And evidence has a big role to play in improving governance.

Why was this particular conference important to AFIDEP?

For the first time, this conference recognised leadership in evidence-informed policymaking in Africa. The first winner of the Africa Evidence Leadership Award was the Head of Research in the Malawi Parliament, Ms. Velia Manyonga, and as you know, we have worked a lot with the Malawi Parliament since 2013.

At AFIDEP we are very proud of Ms. Manyonga because we know that she is a product of the Institute's sustained work in the Malawi Parliament. She has explicitly noted that she is able to champion evidence in Parliament because of the work of AFIDEP.

The AFIDEP abstracts that were presented at the conference are;

- Knowledge Translation Capacity, Practice and Support Among Researchers in Low and Middle-income Countries: A Structure Review of the Published Literature at 11h00 – 12h30 in the Diamond Auditorium on Thursday 27th. By Senior Knowledge Translation Officer, Violet Murunga;
- Promoting evidence-informed adolescent sexual and reproductive health decisions in Kenya: Lessons from the ensure adolescent sexual and reproductive health project at 09h20 – 09h30 on Thursday 27th, POD 2. By Senior Knowledge Translation Officer, Violet Murunga;
- Oral poster presentation on Making the Dividend Count: The Role of Communication in Bridging Demographic Dividend Research and Africa's Policy Processes at 09h40 – 09h50 on Thursday 27th, POD 3. By Communications Officer, Diana Warira;
- Oral poster presentation on The evidence ecosystem map in Kenya in relation to communication of the demographic dividend, at 12h20 – 12h30 in the Emerald Auditorium on Thursday 27th. By Communications Officer, Diana Warira;
- Contribution of a Network of Parliamentary Committees of Health to the Ecosystem of Evidence Use in African Parliaments, at 11h00 -12h30 in the Ruby Auditorium on Thursday 27th. By Director – Science Communications & Evidence Uptake, Dr. Rose Oronje;
- Ecosystem of Evidence in the Parliaments of Kenya, Malawi and Uganda, at 13h30 – 15h00 in the Diamond Auditorium on Thursday 27th. By Director – Science Communications & Evidence Uptake, Dr. Rose Oronje;
- Plenary Session 2 on Good Governance at 09h00 – 10h30 in the Diamond Auditorium on Friday 28th. By Director – Science Communications & Evidence Uptake, Dr. Rose Oronje

Drivers of African fertility transition in the 21st century

By Sabu Padmadas &
Nyovani Madise

According to the United Nations' medium variant projections, the world's human population will reach 10 billion by 2055. Much of this growth will happen in low- and middle-income countries, where fertility rates - the average number of children a woman will have in her lifetime - are high. Nearly 13% of the world's population lives in sub-Saharan Africa. Projections show that by 2055, this population will be more than 2.3 times the current population of under 1.1 billion.

Between 2017 and 2050, the projected increase in the population is as high as 219.7 million in Nigeria, 134.4 million in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 94.7 million in Tanzania and 85.9 million in Ethiopia. The youth population in Africa as a whole is projected to increase from 20% to 35% during the same period. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that there is interest in and concern about the consequences of such population trends. Economies in Africa are already strained when it comes to the provision of services to the current populations. Spikes in population growth as projected will be unsustainable for these economies, not to mention the strain on natural resources and the environment.

Both policymakers and researchers, alike, are paying closer attention to factors underlying these trends.

Low levels of socioeconomic development, low female education, poor access to health services and weak family planning programmes are the major challenges that have affected the fertility transition in Africa. With increases in modern contraceptive use, fertility rates are gradually falling in most parts of Africa, with the exception of central and western regions.

In sub-Saharan Africa, although many countries have registered significant falls in child mortality since 1990, the under-five mortality rate is still very high with an estimated 82 deaths per 1000 live births, according to demographic and health surveys. Countries that have made progress in lowering birth rates have done so by improving child survival and empowering women through education and participation in the wage labour market. When child mortality is high, couples adopt "replacement" strategies to compensate for child losses. When child mortality rates start falling, couples adjust their fertility downwards.

Low female education is also a key factor in Africa's fertility transition. Female education delays entry into marriage and increases chances of participation in wage employment which lowers fertility. Evidence from 22 countries in sub-Saharan Africa shows that increasing women's education across different socioeconomic groups is very effective in reducing overall fertility levels. While the economically privileged attain higher education and have fewer children, the effects gradually trickle down to the less privileged through diffusion of ideas, such as smaller family sizes, and social development. However, a few years of schooling are not sufficient for meaningful fertility reduction since such couples abandon traditional forms of child spacing, such as postpartum abstinence, without adopting the use of modern methods of contraception consistently.

Programmes looking to change behaviour and attitude towards socially-constructed practices are important. Cultural norms and preferences for large families are still prevalent in Africa, but these attitudes diminish with female education and



empowerment. Adolescent childbearing is also rooted in some cultures in Africa. High teenage childbearing and child marriages, that is, before 18 years, ultimately lead to high fertility. There is a need for policymakers and stakeholders to focus on an integrated investment framework with a particular focus on universal access to contraceptives, longer periods in school, as well as the empowerment of girls and women.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by the global community in 2015 make provision for sustained fertility reduction if the targets are achieved.

In particular, if significant progress is made in SDG 1 - no poverty); SDG 2 - good health and wellbeing; SDG 4 - quality education; and SDG 5 - gender equality, including target 5.6 to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, then many of the factors described above will be addressed. Put simply, investing in girls' education, ending poverty, achieving gender equality, investing in good health services to lower child mortality, and ensuring that all who need access to contraception receive good quality services, will go a long way to addressing the rapid growth of the human population.



Elizabeth Kahurani
*Policy Engagement &
Communications Manager*

Elizabeth has over 10 years experience as a communications specialist, devising communication strategies and leading teams to implement communication activities for various projects in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America.



Emma Heneine
Research Fellow

Emma supports the health systems strengthening projects in Southern and Eastern Africa, predominantly those funded by the Liverpool School of Medicine.



Evelyn Kasambara
Research Fellow

Evelyn supports AFIDEP projects related to the strengthening of the Malawi Parliament, oversight, representation, legislation and budget analysis.



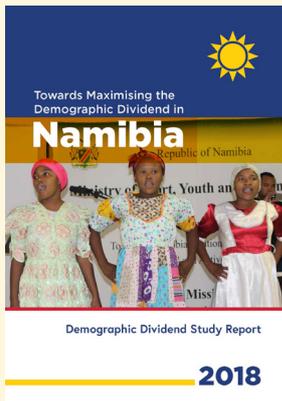
Joy M. Kyalo
Finance intern

Joy assists the Finance and Administration department in safeguarding financial processes and record-keeping.



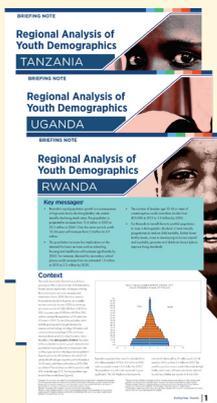
Vincent Otieno
*Senior Knowledge Translation
Officer*

Vincent is a Ph.D. candidate in Population Studies at the Population Studies and Research Institute (PSRI) – University of Nairobi, with a Master of Science degree in Population Studies from the same Institute of the University (2008). He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and Chemistry (2003) from Kenyatta University.



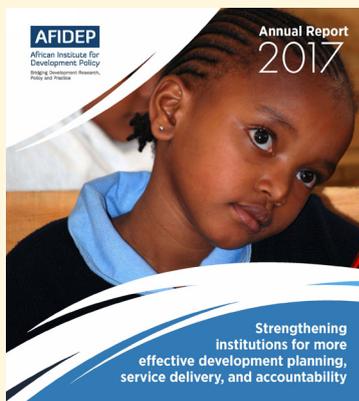
Towards Maximising the Demographic Dividend in Namibia

The primary objective of this study was to assess Namibia’s prospects for harnessing the demographic dividend and to identify priority options for maximising the dividend. Demographic change has implications for the realisation of these ambitions. This report, therefore, outlines the key policy recommendations on how Namibia can harness the potential of her youthful population to achieve socio-economic development. The Demographic Dividend paradigm offers a framework that is congruent with the needs of Namibia’s long-term development aspirations as well as the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Regional Analysis for Youth Demographics - Research briefs

This briefing notes summarise a review of literature and policies on youth demographics and implications from our scenario modelling of the short, medium and long-term projections of the youth population in Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda respectively, and their demand for essential services.



Annual Report 2017

In 2017, AFIDEP contributed to promoting the value of evidence in policy formulation and development planning in Africa. We worked with government officials in Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, Rwanda, Botswana, Zimbabwe and eSwatini to co-produce evidence on the prospects for harnessing the demographic dividend.

There was a major shift whereby we increased focus on strengthening capacity for evidence use at sub-national levels of government.

We further worked towards promoting institutionalisation and a culture of evidence-use in the public sector across Africa; and enhancement of the role of African parliaments in promoting democratic governance and accountability in service delivery and use of public resources.



African Development Perspectives

This issue of the African Development Perspectives brings you a wide range of lessons, experiences, and insights drawn from past and ongoing efforts to increase the use or consideration of evidence in development efforts in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Issue is a collage of interesting topics covering capacity building for evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM), evidence in African parliaments, the role of evidence in unlocking the policy implementation impasse in many resource-poor countries, designing evaluations that can be used in informing government decisions, networks promoting EIPM in Africa, the central place of politics in EIPM, and monitoring and measuring EIPM efforts.

Education systems in Africa need urgent reforms and increased investments to drive economic growth on the continent

By Victory Kamthunzi

The urgent need for reforms and increased investments in education systems in African countries is increasingly being recognised as critical if these systems are to drive economic growth on the continent. Speaking at Kenya's 3rd Conference on Education in September 2018, Dr Eliya Zulu, AFIDEP's Executive Director, called on the Kenyan government to prioritise education in order to accelerate the country's socio-economic growth.

"The exclusion of education and skills development in the Kenyan Government's "Big Four" development agenda calls for urgent action among stakeholders to step up their efforts and advocate for its inclusion. If Kenya is serious about maximising the demographic dividend that it can harness from its youthful population and attain high-income status, education and skills development must be in all development priorities," Dr Zulu said.

He further called on policymakers and education experts to focus on evidence if they are to effectively address the many challenges facing the education system in the country. He said, "If the country is to achieve universal secondary education, which is a critical starting point towards developing quality human capital for the 21st-century labour market, something must be done about high school dropout rates." He noted that the evidence on school dropouts is

clear, and efforts to reduce dropouts must address the issues identified by this evidence.

Dr Zulu attended the conference, which was hosted by Kenyatta University, as a keynote speaker. The conference's theme was '*Re-Weaving Education to Meet the Demands of the 21st Century*'.

Dr Zulu challenged African universities to take their thinktank role more seriously and ensure they are routinely at the "policy-making" table to provide evidence-based advice to governments on key development issues. He urged African Universities to develop policy and evidence uptake strategies in order to institutionalise their engagement with government policy organs; train their research staff on how to effectively promote uptake of evidence in policymaking processes; and institute courses on evidence-informed decision-making.

The conference brought together leading academic scientists, researchers and scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results on issues currently affecting education in Kenya. The conference provided an interdisciplinary platform for policymakers, top managers, researchers, practitioners and educators to discuss the most recent innovations, reforms, and concerns as well as solutions in the field of education in Kenya. The conference was presided over by Prof. Paul K. Wainaina, the Vice Chancellor of Kenyatta University.

AFIDEP

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