

### Africa Evidence Network: Malawi Branch Launch

The Malawi branch of the Africa Evidence Network (AEN) was officially launched this month. The launch comes in partnership with the UJ-BCURE Malawi programme, a DFID-funded development programme which aims to build capacity in evidence-informed decision making among senior policymakers and technical staff. AEN – a network of researchers, practitioners and policy-makers from universities, NGOs and governments – is open to anyone who works in Africa and is interested in evidence, its production and use in decision-making. The AEN branch in Malawi is growing quickly with members from government, research institutes and the private sector, and new members are invited to contact [cfar@uj.ac.za](mailto:cfar@uj.ac.za)



(Left) UJ-BCURE Malawi-lead, Dr Yvone Erasmus, (right) AEN Co-ordinator, Ms Hazel Zaranyika

### Progress on Malawi's Knowledge Translation Platform (KTPMalawi)

KTPMalawi held a week-long training for two new communities of practice, one on supply chain management and the other one on NCD-HIV integration. They will now work in the coming months on the production of two rigorous evidence briefs that will synthesise both global and local evidence.

The Effective States and Inclusive Development (ESID) project launched a new programme to enhance public sector reform in LICs. The project, to be implemented in four Sub-Saharan countries, will commence its activities in Malawi just in time for the policy window arising from the national elections this month.

The Mzuzu University's Centre of Excellence in Water and Sanitation in Malawi started a new research project funded by SHARE into private sector participation in the delivery of sanitation and hygiene services. A stakeholders' forum has been conducted and fieldwork is currently under way to collect data on service usage.

New Malawi science university (MUST) opened in Thyolo. MUST will offer degrees in health science, applied engineering as well as climate change science.

### Upcoming events

16 – 19 June: Campbell Colloquium in Belfast. Follow @C2update or #C2Belfast for live information!

21 July – 1 August: Impact evaluation of HIV/AIDS and health programmes, training in Pretoria, South Africa.

1 – 5 September: ADB and 3ie will be hosting an international impact evaluation conference in Manila, Philippines.

### Announcements

- Our new AEN website will be up and running in June, please watch twitter for updates!
- Members of the UJ-BCURE team will be visiting Malawi to meet with government and research partners between 7 and 18 July.
- Preparations are underway for the 1<sup>st</sup> Africa Evidence Network Colloquium from the 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> November 2014 in Johannesburg.

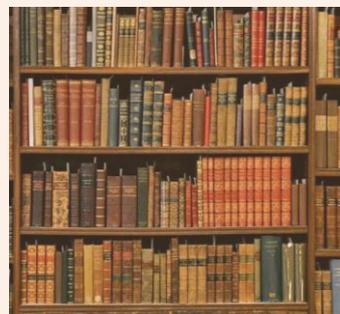


## Africa Evidence Network

NEWSLETTER || May 2014  
Malawi branch launch edition

### On the invisibility of Southern research

Jonathan Harle and Sioux Cumming from [INASP](#) examine the geography of academic research (only Nigeria & South Africa make it onto the map!) and find that whilst systematically disadvantaged, 'Southern' institutions may reinforce and contribute to this inequality. Institutions need to value local research and publications in their reward and promotion systems, rather than focusing on journal rankings and impact factors. Simultaneously, they need to actively work towards raising the standard of both research and means of publication. Together this might result in a re-valuation of Southern research, which is required to address its current invisibility.



### INTERNATIONAL NEWS

A Research to Action [blog](#) explains how African think tanks take great strides in building their policy engagement capacity. The blog reports on five key strategies that African think tanks have successfully applied to improve uptake of their research.

ODI published a new [working paper](#) on approaches to monitoring and evaluation of policy influence and advocacy. It presents case studies of current practice and trends to review how policy influence happens and how one could measure this process.

In the current debate (see [here](#) & [here](#)) whether rigorous evaluations in social science should apply 'blinding' more often, there seems to be [good reason](#) for social scientist to care about behavioral effects more than precision in impact measures.

The Alliance for Useful Evidence has released a [thought-provoking](#) piece on whether the 'wily policy fox' and the 'prickly research hedgehog' can work together?

### Evidence from academia

New journal [article](#):  
'Creating research impact: the roles of research users in interactive research mobilization'

New journal article:  
'Substitute is gonna put you down': an analysis of effectiveness of emerging actors as substitutes of local councillors in Malawi's decentralised system"

New [journal](#):  
The first issue of the 'Journal of Policy & Complex Issues' has been launched

[Evidence & Policy](#) Summer Promotion:  
Free Access to all issues of Evidence & Policy until end of May

[Caestos Juma](#) points out how linear, evidence-UNinformed thinking lead to rejection of ideas which could have aided developing countries.

Please contact Hazel ([hazelz@uj.ac.za](mailto:hazelz@uj.ac.za)) for questions and further information