

AGENDA

African Evidence Informed Policy Forum

Background

There is extensive evidence to demonstrate that development research, done effectively, can improve public policy and help accelerate development progress. However, experience also indicates that in many Lower and Middle Income Countries (LMICs), data, evidence and analysis fail to significantly inform public policy processes. In such cases, how best can researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders bring timely, relevant, and reliable new knowledge to bear on policy decisions in LMICs? This is also a fundamental question for funders for whom the overarching objective of development research is to contribute to positive social and economic change.

The Think Tank Initiative (TTI) seeks to support effective evidence-to-policy systems as a way of catalyzing societal action in the face of complex, interlinked public policy challenges in LMICs. Over nearly a decade, TTI has demonstrated that think tanks can, and do, influence policies and practice in the global South. Lessons drawn from this experience are now leading to new forms of engagement with a range of policy research organisations, networks, and collectives in Africa as momentum for evidence informed policymaking builds on the continent.

Aims of the forum

Building on TTI's experience, IDRC and the Mastercard Foundation will co-convene a diverse group of key African evidence-to-policy actors in an '*African Evidence Informed Policy Forum*'. This forum will bring together think tank representatives, including young researchers, as well as civil society actors, donors, policymakers, academics, and members of the private sector in order to:

- Understand how different actors such as researchers, practitioners and thinkers engaged in evidence to policy processes in African contexts are working to foster a culture of using social and economic evidence, data and analysis in policy making, through their own efforts and also by working collectively with organisations or groups;
- Reflect on what experience and lessons suggest for future approaches to supporting evidence informed policy processes that promote sustainable development, including international policy frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals.

Specific Objectives

- 1) Share lessons and experiences from evidence-informed policymaking processes in Africa, including efforts to generate data, track progress, and provide feedback on policy implementation.
- 2) Increase understanding of how evidence to policy landscapes in Africa are evolving and identify key trends, opportunities and challenges (e.g. regional development agendas, Sustainable Development Goals, national specificities) influencing these landscapes.

Anticipated Outcomes

- 1) An understanding of the contextual factors that affect the extent to which evidence is used to inform policy decision-making in Africa.
- 2) A mapping of areas of support where a positive difference to emerging evidence informed policy efforts can be made.

- 3) Strategies and approaches for how best to animate evidence informed policy ecosystems with a view to identifying opportunities for future collaboration amongst government agencies, academia, policy research organizations, the private sector and funders.

DAY 1: Tuesday March 6, 2018

Arrival and registration (8:00 – 8:30)

Coffee/tea and light refreshments will be served.

Welcome and introductions (8:30 – 9:00)

This introductory session will set the stage for the African Evidence Informed Policy Forum with welcoming remarks followed by a brief background on the context and the overarching goals and objectives for the forum.

Lead Facilitator: Nick Perkins

Speakers:

- Diakalia Sanogo, Senior Program Specialist, Regional Office for sub-Saharan Africa, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- Lamia Naji, Associate Manager, Learning & Strategy, Mastercard Foundation
- Peter Taylor, Acting Director, Inclusive Economies, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Session 1 – Keynote Address: The politics of knowledge in Africa and the role of research and evidence in policy-making (9:00-9:30)

Speaker: Ian Goldman, Acting Deputy Director General, Evidence and Knowledge Systems, Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation, Government of South Africa

Session 2 – The evolving context for use of evidence in policy-making in Africa (9:30 – 11:00)

Objective: Develop a shared understanding of the evidence informed landscape in Africa

Moderator: Uduak Amimo, talk-show host of Cheche, on [Citizen TV](#)

Format: Chat show

Speakers:

- 1) **Rasheed Draman**, African Center for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA), Ghana
- 2) **Siziwe Ngcwabe**, Africa Evidence Network (AEN), Africa Centre for Evidence (ACE), South Africa
- 3) **Hon. Dr. Makali Mulu**, Member of Parliament and Chair of the Evidence Informed Policy Caucus, Kenya
- 4) **Sarah Lucas**, Global Development and Population, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, USA
- 5) **Tausi Kida**, Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Tanzania

This session will include an engaging “chat-show” discussion with representatives from government agencies, policy research institutions, universities, funders and media from across the continent, in response to the following key questions:

- What do you understand by “evidence informed policy” and what are the features of an “evidence-informed policy landscape”?
- What are the contextual factors in Africa that affect knowledge informed policy landscapes?
- What practices of evidence sourcing and use are currently found in Africa and what are the associated challenges?

Health break (11:00 – 11:30)

Session 3A – Lessons from Evidence Producers: How generators of evidence contribute to positive change in Africa (11:30 – 13:00)

Objective: Surface good practices and identify challenges that help shape evidence informed policy landscapes.

Moderator: Nick Perkins

Format: Five Break-Out Sessions

This session will involve break-out sessions that include presentations by evidence producers. These will showcase their engagement in evidence-informed decision making (EIPM) processes with various stakeholders. During the presentations and follow-up plenary discussions, participants will seek to document best practices of EIPM by identifying what works, where, for whom, how and at what cost.

Specific questions to guide the group discussions may include:

- What have evidence producers learned about how best to respond to opportunities and challenges through their engagement with different stakeholders?
- What are the most effective channels and strategies evidence producers have used for informing policy formulation and implementation?
- How do producers of evidence collaborate with each other and with knowledge intermediaries to influence policy and practice?

Break-Out Session 1

Presentation: Lillian M. Tamale, Research Fellow, Project Manager – Local Government Councils Scorecard Initiatives (LGCSCI), Advocates Coalition for Development & Environment (ACODE), Uganda
Evidence-informed empowerment of Local Governments and citizens for effective decision making and tracking of public service delivery and accountability: Experience of ACODE’s Scorecard program of building the capacity of politicians, Local Government officials and citizens as well as community-based researchers.

Break-Out Session 2

Presentation: Ibrahima Hathie, Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR), Senegal
Evidence-informed public policy decision-making in the agricultural sector: Understanding the role of the youths in transforming West African Agriculture

Break-Out Session 3

Presentation: Felix Asante, Institute of Statistical, Social & Economic Research (ISSER), Ghana

Governments' use of evidence in promoting effective and efficient climate public finance delivery: The experience of Ghana.

Break-out Session 4

Presentation: Edward Brown, African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET), Ghana
Youths' and women's financial inclusion in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and opportunities

Lunch (13:00 – 14:00)

Session 3B – Lessons from Evidence Producers: How generators of evidence contribute to positive change in Africa (14:00 – 14:30)

Objective: Synthesize lessons from break-out sessions and explore emerging ideas for strengthening strategic partnerships to generate, share, and use high quality evidence to support informed decision making on sustainable development issues and policy.

Moderator: Nick Perkins

Focus summary on:

- What was most interesting?
- What were the good practices and challenges identified?

Session 4 – Experiences of building strategic partnerships to promote evidence informed policy making in the African context (14:30 – 16:00)

Objective: Explore how collaboration has contributed to strengthening evidence informed policy and discuss the factors that made these partnerships successful.

Moderator: Uduak Amimo

Format: "Show and tell" session

Speakers: Mix of donors, policy makers, think tanks and universities

1. **Josephine Watera**, Principal Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Parliament of Uganda
2. **Rose N. Oronje**, Science Communications and Evidence Uptake, African Institute for Policy Development (AFIDEP), Kenya
3. **Emily Hayter**, Evidence Informed Policy Making, INASP, UK
4. **Abou Kane**, Department of Economics at Université Cheikh Anta Diop and the Ministry of Economics, Finance and Planning, Senegal
5. **Laurenz Langer**, Africa Centre for Evidence (ACE), University Johannesburg , South Africa

Guiding questions:

- What examples exist of productive partnerships between funders, policy research institutions, academic institutions, government agencies, CSOs and the private sector?
- What are the comparative advantages that each actor offers in terms of seeking to achieve change through evidence-informed policy?

- What collaborative practices have been most effective and what practices have proved most challenging?

Health break (16:00-16:15)

Session 5 – Exploring current trends, opportunities and challenges that global, regional and national development agendas present for strengthening evidence informed policy (16:15 – 17:15)

Objective: Take stock of what key practices, opportunities and challenges have surfaced throughout Day 1 and identify “hot topics” for deeper examination on Day 2

Moderator: Peter Taylor / Nick Perkins

Format: Fishbowl group discussion

This “fishbowl” session will build on the previous sessions’ focus on sharing lessons and experiences from evidence-informed policy making processes in Africa, including efforts to track, generate data, and provide feedback on policy implementation. It will provide a participatory space for taking stock of what key practices, opportunities and challenges have surfaced throughout Day 1 and to identify “hot topics” for deeper examination on Day 2 of the Forum. The following key question will help to drive the discussions:

- What are the key trends, opportunities and challenges that global, regional and national development agendas (including the SDGs) present for influencing the use of evidence informed policy formulation and implementation?

Contributors:

- **Amanda Chukwudozie**, Youth Division, Human Resources, Science & Technology Department | African Union Commission, Ethiopia
- **Thomas Munthali**, African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), Zimbabwe
- **Jane Kabubo-Mariara**, Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP), Kenya
- **Damien Lankoande**, Groupe de Recherche et d’Analyse Appliquées pour le Développement (GRAAD), Burkina Faso

Wrap-up for the day (17:15 – 17:30)

Facilitator: Nick Perkins

EVENING SOCIAL (18:30 to 20:30)

TTI will host an evening social at the Mt. Elgon terrace at the Radisson Blu Hotel. Hors d’oeuvres and light refreshments will be served, and a cash bar will be available.

Welcome (8:45 – 9:00)

Coffee/tea and light breakfast will be served.

Facilitator: Nick Perkins:

Session 6 – How to incentivize actors in the Evidence Informed Policy ecosystem to better work together to achieve impact (9:00 – 10:30)

Objective: Identify the incentives that support collaboration to generate, share and use evidence to inform policy and practice

Moderator: Uduak Amimo

Format: Chat show

Speakers:

1. **Mark Johnson**, Africa Cabinet Government Network
2. **Eliya Zulu**, African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), Kenya
3. **Rhona Mijumbi**, Makerere University's Africa Centre for Systematic Reviews and Knowledge Translation, Uganda
4. **Maurice Makoloo**, Ford Foundation, Kenya
5. **Blandina Kilama**, REPOA, Tanzania

Through an engaging, interactive “chat show” approach this session will provide the opportunity to hear from representatives of programs which have explicitly sought to promote evidence-informed policy making in different African national contexts through collaboration and from those that have participated in these programs. It will help draw out some frank, grounded lessons of what has worked in practice, what incentives have worked and how measurement can create incentives to learn. It will also draw out examples of what has worked less well. The session will explore both incentives that contribute to evidence informed policies and incentives that contribute to transforming the policy landscape to enable evidence informed policy making to become more sustainable. Participants will be encouraged to inquire into these experiences as a source of reflection for future action.

Guiding questions include:

- What are the current incentives to build relationships, trust, and collaboration among those that generate, share and use evidence? How can these incentives be capitalised upon, and disincentives overcome?
- To what extent is impact measurement both an incentive and disincentive to collaboration?
- Do we have the right balance of incentives to foster both accountability and learning?

Health break (10:30 – 10:45)

Session 7A – Diving deeper: Discussions around key issues (10:45 – 12:30)

Objective: Begin to build a narrative on the elements, guiding principles and practical ways forward for future collaboration amongst government agencies, academia, policy research organizations, the private sector and funders to strengthen landscapes for evidence-informed policymaking in Africa.

Moderator: Nick Perkins

Format: 7-8 Table discussions

This session will review the “hot topics” for deeper examination that had been identified on Day 1, as well as drawing on lessons and insights from the earlier Day 2 session. It will use an adapted “open space” format to allow participants to engage in group discussions around the “hot topics”.

Lunch 12:30 – 13:30

Session 7B– Diving deeper: Discussions around key issues (13:30-14:30)

Moderator: Nick Perkins

Format: Plenary reporting back from table discussions

Discussions may be guided by the following questions:

- What have we heard which works and that we would like to do more of?
- What should we do differently, if we are to make real inroads in evidence-informed policy making?

Network break (14:30- 14:45)

Session 8 – What next? Reflections, insights, and follow-up actions (14:45 – 16:00)

Moderator: Nick Perkins

Format: Panel and plenary discussions

Speakers: Speakers will be identified after Day 1 based on their contributions to ensure we are capturing key insights that emerge from the 2-days.

A number of participants will be invited to share their reflections and key insights from the two days of discussions, as well as offer suggestions for some follow-up actions. These interventions will be followed by a plenary discussion in which key elements of a follow-on agenda will be identified.