

Evidence Commission issues wake-up call and path forward for relying on evidence:

World can be better prepared for future societal challenges than was the case with COVID-19

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'Slow burn' societal challenges like educational achievement, health-system performance and climate change have taken a backseat to the global pandemic, now entering its third year. But a global [commission report](#), released today, finds that decision-makers responding to present-day societal challenges and tomorrow's crises have an unprecedented opportunity to build on what has worked in using evidence before and during the pandemic.

"Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, I've never before seen so much interest – from political leaders of many political persuasions and in diverse countries – in drawing on evidence to inform their response," said John Lavis, co-lead of the secretariat for The Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges. "This is an incredible opportunity to dramatically up our game in supporting political leaders to use evidence to address societal challenges at a global, national and local level."

"The cohort of decision-makers who were involved in COVID-19 decision-making, especially high-level government policymakers, now has direct experience with using many forms of evidence and with leveraging strategies that support its use," reads the report. The report's 24 recommendations call for decisive action by multiple stakeholders to ensure evidence is consistently used to address societal challenges. Among its top eight recommendations are the following:

- **Wake-up call** — Decision-makers, evidence intermediaries and impact-oriented evidence producers should recognize the scale and nature of the problem.
- **Resolution by multilateral organizations** — The UN, the G20 and other multilateral organizations should endorse a resolution that commits these multilateral organizations and their member states to broaden their conception of evidence, and to support evidence-related global public goods and equitably distributed capacities to produce, share and use evidence.
- **Landmark report** — The World Bank should dedicate an upcoming World Development Report to providing the design of the evidence architecture needed globally, regionally and nationally, including the required investments in evidence related global public goods and in equitably distributed capacities to produce, share and use evidence.
- **National (and sub-national) evidence-support systems** — Every national (and sub-national) government should review their existing evidence-support system (and broader evidence infrastructure), fill the gaps both internally and through partnerships, and report publicly on their progress.
- **Evidence in everyday life** — Citizens should consider making decisions about their and their families' well-being based on best evidence; spending their money on products and services that are backed by best evidence; volunteering their time and donating money to initiatives that use evidence to make decisions about what they do and how they do it; and supporting politicians who commit to using best evidence to address societal challenges and who commit (along with others) to supporting the use of evidence in everyday life.
- **Dedicated evidence intermediaries** — Dedicated evidence intermediaries should step forward to fill gaps left by government, provide continuity if staff turn-over in government is frequent, and leverage strong connections to global networks.
- **News and social-media platforms** — News and social-media platforms should build relationships with dedicated evidence intermediaries who can help leverage sources of best evidence, and with evidence producers who

can help communicate evidence effectively, as well as ensure their algorithms present best evidence and combat misinformation.

- **Funding** — Governments, foundations and other funders should spend ‘smarter,’ and ideally more, on evidence support. They can commit to ensuring that 1% of funding is allocated to national (and sub-national) evidence infrastructures.

The Evidence Commission report defines ‘evidence’ as research evidence comprising data analytics, modeling, evaluation, behavioural / implementation research, qualitative insights, evidence syntheses, technology assessment/ cost-effectiveness analysis, and guidelines. The report recognizes the value of both local and global evidence. Local evidence is drawn from the best available studies (i.e., what has been learned in a specific national or sub-national context) while global evidence is drawn from the best available evidence syntheses (i.e., what has been learned from around the world, including how it varies by groups and contexts).

“The time is now to work out how we can build on existing strengths and fill gaps in domestic evidence infrastructures and leverage a more fit-for-purpose global evidence architecture,” says Dr. Jeremy Grimshaw, the Co-lead for the Evidence Commission Secretariat.

The Evidence Commission report: A wake-up call and path forward for decision-makers, evidence intermediaries, and impact-oriented evidence producers will be available in seven languages.

About the Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges

The [Evidence Commission](#) grew out of a global network of 55 partners—the COVID-19 Evidence Network to support Decision-making (COVID-END) came together to provide a more coordinated evidence response to COVID-19 and first identified the need for the commission. The Evidence Commission brought together 25 commissioners including government policymakers, organizational leaders, professionals and citizens who address a range of societal challenges in their respective roles. The Evidence Commission is funded by partners in three countries and its secretariat is hosted at the McMaster Health Forum at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada.