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Reflections on Building Evidence Informed Decision-Making Across Multiple Sectors and Contexts

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Objectives/aims
This informal chatshow session aims to stimulate discussion and share good practice on how evidence-informed decision-making is being fostered across a variety of sectors and contexts. Featuring chatshow guests from a multilateral organization, a private foundation, a university and a national evidence capacity-strengthening initiative, speakers will be asked to share individual and organizational perspectives on their efforts to ensure better use of evidence to inform policy, programmes and practice. They will also be asked to reflect on efforts to build a culture of evidence within their own organisations and operating environments more broadly.

The scope of discussion is likely to incorporate issues such as:

Human and Psychological Factors:
- the role of values and beliefs as well as formal evidence in decision-making;
- the most important skills necessary in evidence brokers and whether these skills can be created or are innate
- the perceived importance of evidence champions
- the politics of evidence especially when relaying unpopular messages

Institutional and Organizational Factors:
- whether evidence uptake and knowledge-brokering pathways differ across sectors, disciplines and contexts;
- how to build an organizational culture and incentives to promote the use of evidence in decision-making within our own organizations
- the most effective tools and systems to support such an evidence culture;
- overcoming systemic barriers to evidence production, generation and use

Evolving Contextual Factors:
- whether the current claim of a post-truth/alternative facts climate is a reality or fallacy;
- how do we best produce high-quality, rapid policy-relevant research;
- how to build sufficient momentum to ensure policies and programmes stay up to date and informed by evidence including the potential role implementation research and adaptive learning.

Panelists will be encouraged to share their most specific and powerful lessons and examples of effective evidence use in policy and programme development.

The session will be run in an interactive manner with questions and reactions from the audience and from prior solicitation via Twitter encouraged. Chatshow guests will be requested to interact with each other and to enable a discussion rather than to give formal presentations. Support will be requested to ensure roving microphones are able to solicit opinions and reactions from the audience.

In addition to working across differing sectors and contexts, panelists bring multi-disciplinary perspectives from the social and political sciences, law, criminology, public health, epidemiology,

nutrition, philosophy, political history, cultural studies and environmental policy and they will be encouraged to draw upon these when sharing insights.
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Methods
This panel is proposed as a Chatshow format to enable frank and open discussion in an informal manner. It will feature four guests with a fifth speaker preforming the role of the chatshow host.

<u>Kerry Albright</u> *(Main Contact/Chatshow Guest)*

Is the Chief of Research Facilitation and Knowledge Management at UNICEF's Office of Research – Innocenti, based in Florence, Italy. In this position, she plays a leading role in building a research and evidence culture across UNICEF's 190+ offices by providing essential guidance and tools and strengthening capacities for generation, communication and use of evidence in decision-making. She leads on governance of the research function across UNICEF, evidence synthesis, research capacity-building, research knowledge management and organizational learning and capturing research impact. Previously with the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID), she has drawn on this expertise to play a leading role in supporting the design of a vision for strengthening UNICEF's evidence-informed decision-making in the SDG era. @AlbrightKerry

<u>Fiona David</u> *(Chatshow Guest)*

Is the newly established Research Chair of the Minderoo Foundation, which was founded by Andrew and Nicola Forrest in 2001 and was originally known as the Australian Children's Trust. This incorporates the Walk Free Foundation, an organisation attempting to end contemporary slavery and human trafficking where Fiona was formerly the Executive Director of Global Research. Other research interests of the Foundation include early childhood interventions, ending cancer, environmental conservation, community development, employment and welfare policy, gender and migration. An international lawyer and criminologist, Fiona had worked with Governments from many countries, and advised several UN organizations on developing stronger responses to modern slavery, throughout the Asia Pacific and Africa regions. @fiona_david

<u>*Amanda Third*</u> *(Chatshow Guest)*

Is a Principal Research Fellow in Digital Social and Cultural Research at Western Sydney University. Her research focuses on the socio-cultural dimensions of young people's technology use including children's rights in the digital age, intergenerational dynamics and vulnerable young people. She leads the 'Connected and Creative' programme of the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre which unites young people with researchers, practitioners, innovators and policymakers from 75+ partner organizations across the not-for-profit, academic, government and corporate sectors to explore the role of technology in young people's lives and how this can be used to improve their mental health and wellbeing. @amandaj3rd

Yuki Lo (Chatshow host)

Yuki Lo is a Senior Research and Evaluation Officer at the Freedom Fund, an international non-profit organization dedicated to identifying and investing in the most effective efforts to end modern slavery, based in the United Kingdom. Yuki leads the Fund's work to measure the impact of its investments in countries with the highest incidence of slavery, as well as supports knowledge-sharing with the broader anti-slavery community. She is currently supervising research projects in Ethiopia, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Thailand on the topics of forced labour, child labour, forced marriage and sex trafficking. Prior to joining the Freedom Fund, she worked as a Manager of Evidence Measurement and Evaluation for the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and as an M&E Officer for UN Women in Cambodia. @yukilo

Main findings
This session has been proactively designed to draw upon insights and experiences from panellists from a multilateral organisation, academia, a private foundation and a national government. In addition, panellists have collectively worked in a range of geographical contexts and bring insights from sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, South Asia, as well as the Asia-Pacific region to the discussion. It is

therefore hoped that this will facilitate a wide-ranging discussion, drawing upon lessons and experiences from a range of geographical, sectoral and disciplinary contexts.

The chatshow format, run by an experienced 'host' or facilitator will ensure that conference energy and momentum is maintained through an opportunity for delegates who are not presenting to interact and engage more substantively than a traditional panel session allows.

Findings from the session will be shared widely on twitter, written up on the UNICEF Evidence for Action blog, will feed into evolving thinking about building an evidence culture across UNICEF's 190+ offices and national committees as well as influence work on building evidence ecosystems with national partners. Depending upon the level of interest and the nature of insights, these could also be documented in a more formal Innocenti Working Paper.