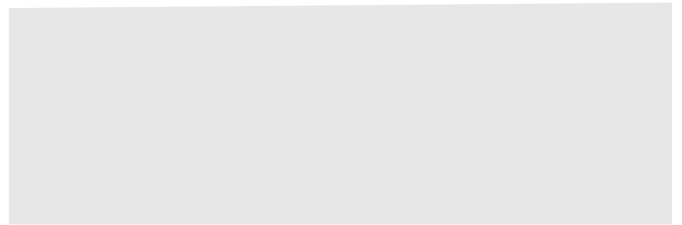


COVID-19 has created a once-in-a-generation focus on evidence among governments, businesses and non-governmental



Four stories drawn from the weekly magazine, The New Yorker, illustrate how these four types of decision-makers can use evidence to learn and improve, and how they may be able to learn better and improve faster.

### Government policymaker, Mohamed Nasheed

First, we have Mohamed Nasheed, the former president of the Maldives and the current speaker of its legislature, who faces a very strong motivation to address climate change: his country – an archipelago in the Indian Sea – will one day be fully underwater. An interview with him, conducted by Bill McKibben, describes his efforts to put in place climate-adaptation strategies in the Maldives while also advocating on behalf of the 48 Climate Vulnerable Forum countries to re-structure their countries' debts to free up the funds needed to implement these strategies. Nasheed is keenly aware of the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the evidence it has generated about the future – or what some call the existential risk – his country faces. He needs to bring great judgement to his simultaneous pursuit of three goals: 1) convincing high-income countries to take dramatic action to slow down the rate of increase in man-made contributions to climate change to allow his proposed debt re-structuring; 2) building climate resilience in his own country; and 3) preparing for the possibility that he will have to evacuate his first two goals and his fellow citizens will one day have to leave a submerged archipelago. What is less clear from the story is where he should look for evidence about, say, the climate-adaptation strategies he should be considering.

### Organizational leader, Alvaro Salas Chaves

Second, we have Alvaro Salas Chaves, the former head of several Costa Rican health organizations, who created many opportunities for improving the health of his fellow citizens, starting with his work in a very small clinic and culminating in his leadership of the country's social-security agency in the early 1990s. The author of this story, Atul Gawande, describes how Salas progressively shifted the health system from one where health workers 'reacted' to the patients who walked through the doors of clinics and hospitals – by treating whatever problem brought them in – to one where a team of health workers assumed responsibility for the health of all patients in their local area. Each team organized themselves to proactively reach out to their patients (with more frequent contact among those with the greatest health and social needs) and to provide



The first six chapters of the Evidence Commission report provide the context, concepts, and shared vocabulary that underpin the Evidence Commission's recommendations. These six chapters can be used by many people, not just those positioned to make changes necessary to ensure that evidence is consistently used to address societal challenges. The seventh chapter provides Evidence Commission's recommendations about how we can and must improve the use of evidence, both in routine times and in future global crises.

The report includes 52 sections that can be separately downloaded from the Evidence Commission website. Drafts of these sections were shared publicly at key junctures in the work of the Evidence Commission, both to elicit feedback about how to strengthen them and to begin building momentum for action. These sections often include one or more infographics. They have been designed to be easily used in presentations, reports, and other formats. The Evidence Commission encourages you to 'share freely, give credit, adapt with permission.'

The commissioners and secretariat hope that this report is the start of a serious set of conversations about what is going well and where we can do better. We have undertaken this work very rapidly and with limited financial support, and we have inevitably made some mistakes and missed key evidence syntheses and other documents. We have covered a lot of ground and spoken about a great diversity of societal challenges, and we have inevitably over-generalized and missed some important nuances. We have tried to avoid reference lists that run to dozens of pages, and hence we have inevitably failed to honour all of those whose ideas we have built upon. Again, we welcome feedback so that we can make corrections in the additional products that we – and we hope many others – will create based on this report.

The remainder of this chapter comprises eight sections:

- [1.1 Desirable attributes of commissions](#)
- [1.2 Commissioners](#)
- [1.3 Commissioner terms of reference](#)
- [1.4 How the commission builds on and complements past work](#)
- [1.5 Connection to COVID-END](#)
- [1.6 Timeline of key developments in using evidence to address societal challenges](#)
- [1.7 Equity considerations](#)
- [1.8 What success looks like](#)

The equity section is particularly key because equity is a thread that runs through the entire report.

The seven appendices to this report complement these sections in important ways:

- [8.1 Methods used to inform commissioner deliberations and recommendations \(relates to \*\*section 1.1\*\*\)](#)
- [8.2 Commissioner biographies \(relates to \*\*section 1.2\*\*\)](#)
- [8.3 Secretariat \(complements \*\*section 1.2\*\*\)](#)
- [8.4 Funders](#)
- [8.5 Commissioner and secretariat affiliations and interests \(relates to \*\*section 1.2\*\*\)](#)
- [8.6 Advisors and other acknowledgements \(complements \*\*section 1.2\*\*\)](#)
- [8.7 Timeline \(expands upon \*\*section 1.6\*\*\)](#)