



# **The Alliance for Living Evidence**

*Annual Report to Council, December 2024*

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## Background

The Alliance for Living Evidence (Alive) was formed in late 2023 following a series of consultations and engagements with those involved in living evidence synthesis, as well as with those working to support the use of evidence in decision-making using collaborative approaches. Together we acknowledged the need for transformation in the world's evidence systems to provide decision-makers with trustworthy, high-quality evidence that is radically more timely, relevant, and affordable. The organizations and individuals from across the evidence ecosystem who came together to form the Alliance have spent 2024 developing a model for living evidence partnerships. This model is now being tested in a number of diverse settings to address a range of problems across health, environmental and social sectors. This report has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Alliance to provide an overview of the Alliance's work during the last year, including both the development of ideas, and the establishment of living evidence partnerships.

## Model development

During the last 12 months, the Alive model for living evidence partnerships has gone through two significant iterations. These have been developed by the Secretariat, with support from members of the Executive Committee, and gone through several rounds of comments and refinements. Early lessons from the application of the model<sup>1</sup>, led to revisions in September, when the current version was proposed.

Essentially the Alive model seeks to integrate evidence partnerships with evidence. While each of these are not new on their own, our approach uniquely combines:

- Facilitated partnerships of individuals and organisations with shared priorities.
- A global commons of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) data and analyses.

Initially the model focussed primarily on the marketplace for evidence, and emphasised a broker role for the Alliance enabling those who need evidence to purchase it from those who produce it. The model was grounded in the identification of common needs amongst multiple evidence users, and a cost-sharing approach that enabled them to purchase the evidence they need, when they need it, and at an affordable price.

Initial attempts to apply this approach within partnerships on the ground, led to the realisation that the appetite for sharing the costs of evidence production with others is

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<sup>1</sup> This included consideration of the model, and in some cases its application, in relation to treatments for type 2 diabetes, youth employment solutions in Africa, and national education policy.

currently limited. We also came to understand the extent to which the relationships between evidence brokers and users is crucial. We therefore began to reflect on how living evidence partnerships might support brokers in their work. In essence this led to a shift away from brokering personal relationships between producers and users, towards a data and evidence system that supports brokers and users. In working to refine the model, we unpacked the problems that we are trying to solve as an Alliance. We identified five key barriers to evidence use within the evidence ecosystem:

1. Dominance of high-resource settings in evidence generation<sup>2</sup>: Investment and participation in evidence generation does not currently align with the organisations and regions of greatest need and potential impact.
2. Irrelevance of evidence to the needs of decision-makers and their advisors: Globally accessible evidence rarely reflects the priorities of decision-makers, whilst evidence that feeds into local evidence support systems does not draw from, nor contribute to, this globally accessible evidence.
3. Static evidence not able to respond quickly to the needs of decision-makers and their advisors: Evidence is often out-of-date and fails to adapt to evolving user needs.
4. Fragmented, duplicative, wasteful evidence production: Evidence is fragmented and not reusable. Instead the same or similar data and analyses are produced many times, and in many cases not even used once.
5. Lack of common understanding of the evidence and aligned action amongst decision-makers: Lack of collective engagement with the evidence by decision-makers leads to multiple interpretations of the evidence and misaligned action.

These barriers then informed the development of a revised iteration of the model that put communities of evidence users at the forefront, complemented by the living evidence bases<sup>3</sup> that meet their needs in ways that are useful, dynamic, efficient, collaborative and fair. We therefore hypothesised that the barriers listed above can be overcome through an approach to living evidence partnerships that has these 5 characteristics:

1. Useful: Driven by the needs of decision-makers and their advisors
2. Fair: Prioritising equity in what we do, how we do it, and whom we do it for

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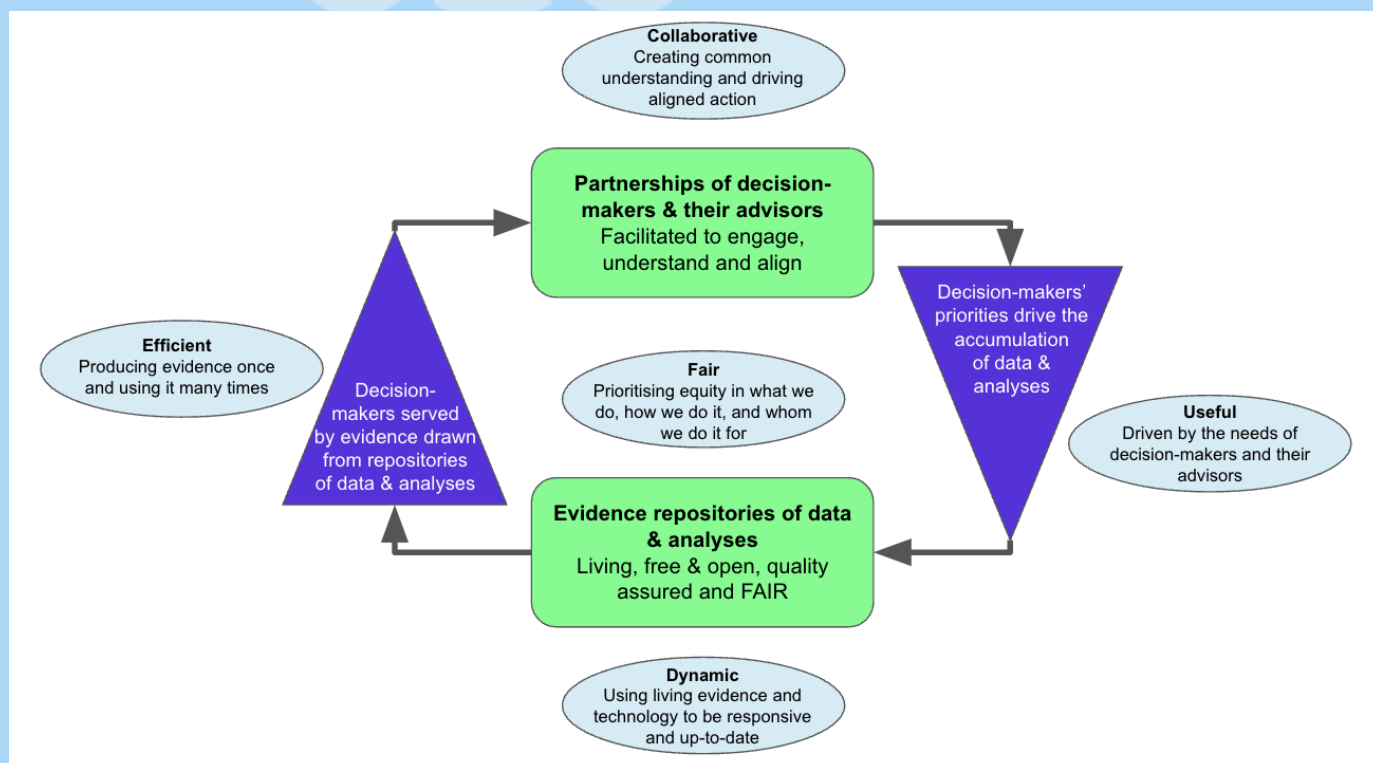
<sup>2</sup> In this context evidence generation relates specifically to evidence synthesis although the statement is true across all evidence generation.

<sup>3</sup> The best term for these evidence bases is yet to be decided upon. At times and by different actors these are referred to as living systematic reviews, evidence repositories, data commons, data assets, and/or evidence banks.

3. Collaborative: Creating common understanding and driving aligned action
4. Dynamic: Using living evidence and technology to be responsive and up-to-date
5. Efficient: Producing evidence once and using it many times.

This approach is captured in the latest version of the model below.

*The Alive Model: Updated September 2024*



Within the Alive model, partnerships have four interconnected processes.

1. Decision-makers' priorities drive the accumulation of syntheses, and the data and analyses that underpin them.
2. These data & analyses form evidence banks which are living, free & open, quality assured and FAIR.
3. Decision-makers are in turn served by evidence drawn from these evidence banks.
4. Decision-makers and their advisors are facilitated to engage, understand and align on evidence and action.

## The Partnerships

Over the last year, a number of living evidence partnerships have been formed across the Alliance. Details are provided in Table 1 below.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to these active partnerships, there are a large number of partnerships that have been explored on a broad range of topics.

- In health these include: allergy treatments, health in the humanitarian sector, malaria guidelines, Mpox response, pregnancy and perinatal care, rheumatology, stroke treatments, and type-1 diabetes.
- In the social policy sector these include: digital public infrastructure, disability and employment, education, strengthening democracy, and the science of using science.
- In the environmental sector, these include: carbon removal, climate and household behaviour, and coastal resilience.

Given that discussions are still at an early stage, details of these potential partnerships have not been included here. Should anyone wish to find out more about specific opportunities, or to share ideas for new partnerships, they are encouraged to contact [hello@futureevidence.org](mailto:hello@futureevidence.org)

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<sup>4</sup> This record of partnerships is maintained by the Secretariat. Any inaccuracies are our own. We are working on a platform through which partnerships themselves can update and share developments.

**Table 1: Active Living Evidence Partnerships (accurate as of 1st December 2024)**

Partnership	The purpose	The evidence-users	The lead organisation(s)	Other partners	Role of the Secretariat	Funding (if applicable)	Current status
Type 2 Diabetes	To enable and sustain perpetual evidence surveillance and rapid evidence updates underpinned by a consortium of organizations, clinicians, and researchers.	National and international clinical guideline groups	MAGIC Evidence Ecosystem Foundation	Monash University, The Finnish Medical Society, Duodecim, and the Future Evidence Foundation	Facilitation of the partnership, including living guidelines methods support, and including provision of a repository for data sharing	Cost-sharing & resource-sharing amongst partners	Analyses and GRADE evidence profiles are being used by guideline developers. Latest updates are currently under review.
Mental health research [GALENOS]	To allow the mental health community to better identify the research questions that most urgently need to be answered.	Wellcome's mental health research strategy and grantmaking.	University of Oxford	Cochrane, Complutense University of Madrid, Edinburgh University, Future Evidence Foundation, Kyoto University, MQ Mental Health Research, Ndinewe Foundation, Stellenbosch University, Technical University of Munich, University College London, University of Bern, and University of Zurich	Living evidence methods support, including provision of a repository for data sharing	Grant from Wellcome, 5 million GBP, April 2023 - January 2026.  Funds to Future Evidence Foundation = 361k GBP	
Youth Employment Evidence & Insights Hub [YEEIH]	To inform program design and investment decisions for solutions for youth employment in Africa	Mastercard Foundation teams	Pan-African Collective for Evidence	Centre for Rapid Evidence Synthesis, PACKS Africa, Effective Basic Services Africa, the Ethiopian Public Health Institute, LARTES Senegal, Comms Consult, the Future Evidence Foundation	Partnership coordination, and living evidence support	Grant from Mastercard Foundation, full amount not available, March 2024- March 2025  Funds to Future Evidence Foundation = 80k USD	Delivering rapid evidence responses. Reviewing what it might mean to move towards living mode.

HPV Living Evidence Partnership	To drive improvements in HPV vaccine implementation to improve the lives of young women in low-resource settings	National Departments of Health and Education, GAVI, UNICEF, WHO and others.	Future Evidence Foundation	To be confirmed	Establishing a new living evidence partnership in HPV vaccine implementation	Grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 5 million USD, November 2024-March 2027  Funds to Future Evidence Foundation = 3 million USD	Early set up stage
Education Policy and Practice	To explore potential for the Institute of Education Sciences in the USA to move to living education guidance	Institute of Education Sciences	Federation of American Sciences	Future Evidence Foundation	Provide living evidence methods support, and support a living evidence community of practice	Grant from Arnold Ventures, full amount not available. April 2024- March 2025.  Funds to Future Evidence Foundation = 80k USD	Work underway
Climate and Health Solutions [DESTINY]	Using artificial intelligence to drive the efficient delivery of rigorous evidence that is faster, cheaper and more useful for pressing decision problems in climate and health	Decision-makers at various levels from UN agencies to city leadership, and the researchers who seek to meet their needs for rigorous evidence including the SDG Synthesis Coalition	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)	University College London, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Centre for Rapid Evidence Synthesis, Effective Basic Services Africa, the Future Evidence Foundation, the University of Cape Town, the Campbell Collaboration, Cochrane	Alive is facilitating 6 living evidence partnerships  Other teams in Future Evidence Foundation are also involved as part of the development of digital evidence synthesis tools	Grant from Wellcome, for 12.1 million Euro. 2025-2028  Funds to Future Evidence Foundation for Alive = 600k Euro	Planning underway

## The structures of Alive

Alive is governed through two main governance structures: A Council, and an Executive Committee. It also includes a broad Forum for sharing and learning. In addition, each partnership has its own internal governance structure. The work of the Alliance is supported by a Secretariat at the Future Evidence Foundation. As we reflect on the progress made over the last year, across and within these various structures, we are also reflecting on how best to facilitate engagement, learning and development going forwards.

### The Alive Council

The Council was formed of a broad group of 32 individuals from around the world and across the evidence ecosystem [see below for membership of this group]. It was designed to oversee the development & execution of strategy directed at this aspiration. Its membership aimed to reflect the interests of a diverse global ecosystem to enable the Alliance to:

- Ensure our strategy is directed at and ultimately delivers better outcomes for people and the planet,
- Ensure our aspiration and strategy matches the opportunity for global impact, and
- Build legitimacy and create system-wide buy-in and advocacy for change.

The Council has met six times during 2024. Each meeting has been held twice in a 12-hour period, to allow for participation across time zones.

*Table 2: Alive Council Membership*

Name	Primary Organisation
Amir Qaseem	American College of Physicians & GIN
Amy Turner	American College of Rheumatology
Andile Madonsela	Africa Evidence Youth League, Pan-African Collective for Evidence
Angela Bednarek	Transforming Evidence Funders Network (TEFN), Pew Charitable Trusts
Annie Synnot [until Nov 2024]	Cochrane Australia and Monash University
Beibei Yuan	Peking University
Carolina Campos	Vozes da Educação
Chris Chibwana	Hewlett Foundation

Christine Chang	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Cristian Herrera	The World Bank
Daniel Ortega	CAF = Development Bank of Latin America
Elie Akl	American University of Beirut
Jan Minx	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
John Lavis	McMaster Health Forum, McMaster University, Canada
Jon Kay [replaced Becky Francis]	Education Endowment Foundation
Joseph Mathew	Postgrad Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) Chandigarh, India & GIN
Julian Elliott	Future Evidence Foundation
Karen Rott-Munstermann	African Development Bank Group
Kerry Albright	UNICEF & UN SDG Evidence Synthesis Coalition
Laura Boeira	Instituto Veredas
Laurenz Mahlanza-Langer	Pan-African Collective for Evidence
Maha El Rabbat	Middle East and North Africa Health Policy Forum
Per Vandvik	MAGIC Evidence Ecosystem Foundation
Racha Fadlallah	SPARK, American University of Beirut
Rebecca Morgan	McMaster University, Canada & GRADE
Sam Roberts	National Institute for Clinical Excellence
Shelly-Ann Hunte	Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development
Sultana al Sabahi	Ministry of Health Oman
Tamara Kredo	Health Systems Research Unit, South African Medical Research Council
Will Moy	Campbell Collaboration
Zoe Jordan	JBI
Zulfiqar Bhutta	Hospital for Sick Children, Canada

## The Alive Executive Committee

The Executive Committee was formed to define Alive's strategy and oversee the development and execution of tactics supporting this strategy. The Executive Committee was formed of three leaders from across the evidence ecosystem [John Lavis, Laura Boeira and Gillian Leng], along with the Alive Secretariat. This group was structured to drive fast, agile decision-making and mobilise rapid action so that the Alliance could:

- Capitalise on the appetite for change by turning it into meaningful progress,
- Test, learn and iterate our strategy and tactics quickly and maximise our progress.

The Executive Committee has met 15 times in 2024.

## The Alive Forum

The Forum is a network of all those who are involved in, or want to learn more about, living evidence partnerships. Over the last year it has provided an opportunity to keep the wider community informed about work, for members to share experiences and network. Forum meetings are held quarterly for one-hour long online meetings. We have held six online Forum meetings over the last year, and one in-person breakfast meeting at the Global Evidence Summit in Prague in September.

Individuals join the Forum by signing up on the Alive website, or through direct engagement with the Secretariat. They receive invitations to meetings, as well as a quarterly newsletter.

Work is now underway to understand how Forum members would like the Forum to evolve in 2025, with a greater focus on both learning and networking.

## The Alive Secretariat at the Future Evidence Foundation

Over the last 12 months, the Future Evidence Foundation, supported through the internal allocation of funds and via a grant from the Ian Potter Foundation, has provided the Secretariat for the Alliance. The team's roles initially included:

1. Convening meetings of the Alliance members, and the various Alliance structures [more on these below],
2. Development of the model for living evidence partnerships,
3. Direct support to early adopters of the model.

As learning has started to emerge from these early partnerships, the Secretariat has increasingly realised the value of getting involved in hands-on delivery for learning, and are now playing an active role in several partnerships. Over the last 6 months, we have therefore added two new roles which are currently under development:

4. A dedicated learning function to ensure the model is thoroughly tested,
5. Hands-on delivery of proof-of-concept living evidence partnerships to expose the team to the nuts and bolts of partnership delivery.

As learning accumulates within and across partnerships, the role of the Secretariat is likely to shift significantly to be less hands-on, and to focus on delivery of the tools and resources needed for others to employ the model.

## Events

There have been several opportunities in 2024 to share the work of the Alliance in wider Forums. At each event the Alliance has hosted side meetings, given presentations, and shared lessons from living evidence partnerships. Key events are listed in the timeline below:

Dates	Event
April	International Network for Government Science Advisors [INGSA]
June	What Works Climate Solutions Summit [WWCSS]
September	Global Evidence Summit [GES]
November	Transforming Evidence Network Conference [TEN]

## Lessons from 2024

Below are the key lessons emerging from the successes and challenges across the Alliance in 2024.

- ★ The Alliance has sought to develop and test a new model for living evidence partnerships that will contribute to transformation in the evidence ecosystem. Driving change has been a challenging task and is taking time. Despite this, momentum is growing with new partnerships, partners, and funders starting up in 2025.
- ★ Evidence is being produced, shared, updated, and applied within living evidence partnerships, with potential for a sharp increase in adoption of the partnership model in the coming year.
- ★ The potential for the Alliance to have a meaningful impact has reiterated the importance of learning from living evidence partnerships. This has driven a new emphasis on learning within and across partnerships.
- ★ Advocating for living evidence partnerships has not been without challenges. Some people have been uncertain about the approach and how it relates to existing solutions. Indeed there are many teams around the world that have been

doing similar work for some time. Engaging with this uncertainty has allowed us to review and refine the Alive model and move towards greater clarity of what the model adds to current solutions. As the model is applied to address more of the world's big problems, the Alliance becomes an increasingly important learning forum.

- ★ Supporting partnerships and facilitating an effective learning community requires trust, clarity, and transparency. At times this has been challenging within Alive. The Secretariat has taken on board feedback and goes into the new year with a commitment to do more in all three of these areas.
- ★ Funding for living evidence partnerships has been challenging to secure at least initially. As we come to the end of the year, it seems that funders are increasingly recognising the value of the living evidence partnership.
- ★ There is interest in cost-sharing approaches to building living evidence bases that can be shared and used many times, including a willingness to share the effort to produce and maintain these evidence bases, and a willingness to pay a subscription to access the evidence itself. Adoption of a cost-sharing approach has been slow, but it remains a potential pathway to sustainability.
- ★ The potential for Alliance members to attract resources has been demonstrated, particularly in low-resource settings and for partnerships that focus on some of the world's biggest problems.
- ★ The Alliance has been a strong and early advocate for building living evidence infrastructure, including close, ongoing partnerships with decision-makers and responsive, shared data and AI systems that better meet their needs. It has therefore been encouraging to witness the recent investment announcements from Wellcome and UKRI/ESRI in these areas.
- ★ In an environment in which the world needs solutions and in which the evidence community is seeking new approaches to deliver these solutions, the work of the Alliance is important. The impetus to move forwards, to learn together, and to deliver effective approaches increases all the time.

## Looking forwards to 2025

As the Alliance looks forwards to 2025 its priorities include:

1. More meaningfully putting equity front and centre in the problems addressed, with whom and for whom.
2. Effective delivery of living evidence partnerships across health, environment and social policy.

3. Implementation of a comprehensive learning agenda that enables us to learn both from the processes of delivering living evidence partnerships across diverse settings, and the outcomes for the people and places that these partnerships seek to improve.
  4. Greater investment in building an effective community across the Alliance amongst those delivering, supporting, and / or interested in getting involved in living evidence partnerships. This includes fostering trust, providing clarity and ensuring transparency.
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