



Conference Report

Emperors Palace
21 to 25 October 2019

February 2020

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From 21 to 25 October 2019,
582 delegates from 22 countries,
gathered in South Africa
to take stock of M&E
as evolving profession,
discipline
and practice



Introduction

About SAMEA

Conference
objectives

Conference format

Conference
participation

About SAMEA

The South African Monitoring & Evaluation Association (SAMEA) strives to cultivate a vibrant community that will support, guide and strengthen the development of M&E as an important discipline, profession and instrument for empowerment and accountability in South Africa.

SAMEA aims to:

- Provide a platform for interaction and information sharing among all those interested in Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)
- Promote high quality intellectual, ethical and professional standards in M&E
- Increase the use of M&E theory and practice
- Promote the development and adoption of M&E approaches and methods suitable to a South African and development context
- Promote post-graduate education and continuing professional development in the field of M&E
- Increase the profile of South African M&E at national and international level
- Help build understanding of international developments and trends in M&E
- Be a resource on M&E in South Africa



SAMEA was founded in November 2005 as a non-profit (section 21) association

About SAMEA

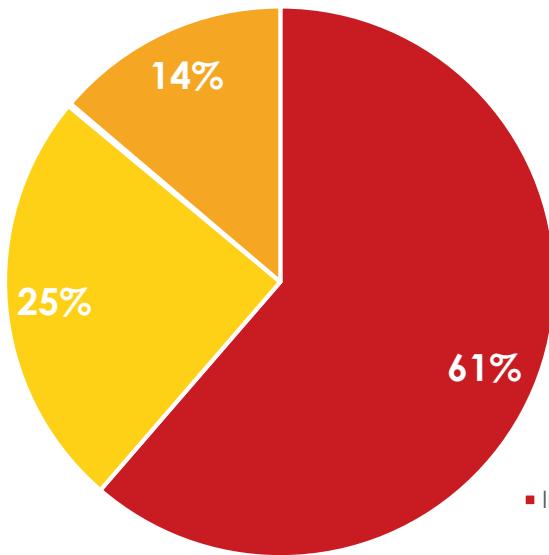
In August 2019, SAMEA conducted a country-wide membership survey to obtain a better understanding of the membership categories and regional presentation of the organisation. Below are some of the findings:

551

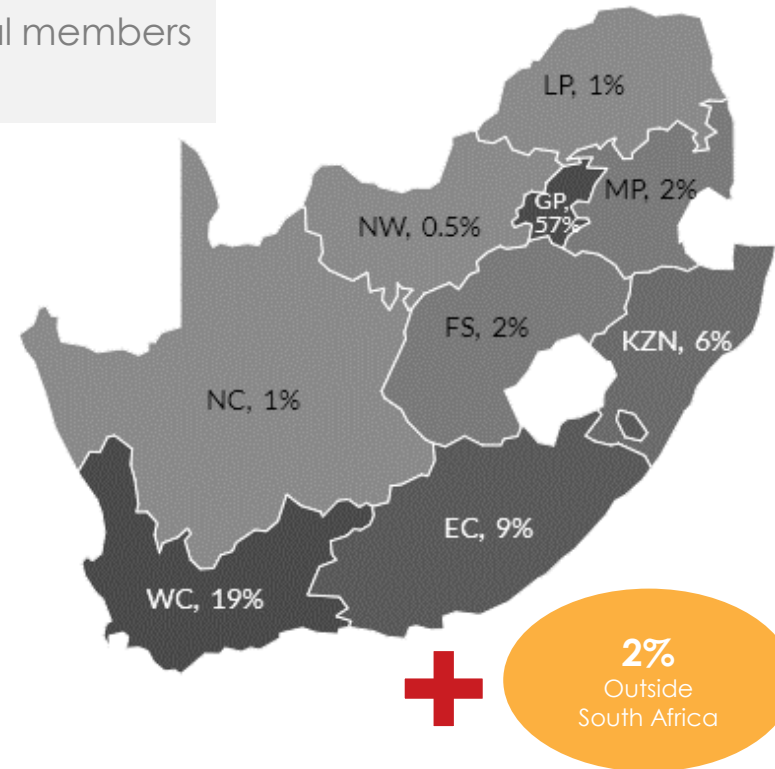
Individual members

16

Institutional members



- Individual membership plan
- Institutional membership plan
- Student membership plan



Conference theme & objectives

The 2019 SAMEA Conference was centred on the relevance and purpose of M&E in a dynamic and ever-evolving development context, speaking to the sustainability not only of development programmes, but also of M&E in itself.

Rapid changes in the political, economic, social and environmental conditions affect the lives of millions of people on an unprecedented scale. In this fast-changing world, governments, civil society, the private sector and citizens face great uncertainty.

M&E provides reliable evidence about the effectiveness of developmental programmes to help decision-makers navigate uncertainty and make better decisions.

If M&E is to contribute to better development outcomes, then it must adapt and evolve.

The 2019 conference provided an opportunity for all those who are interested in M&E to reflect on, discuss and decide on how to use M&E theories, methods and tools to deliver sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Shaping M&E for a Sustainable Future



Conference format



Similar to previous years, the Conference ran over five days, comprising two days of professional development workshops and two-and-a-half days of conference sessions (a combination of three plenaries and six parallel sessions).

Poster presentations were held on Wednesday 23 October, followed by an Author's Night. The SAMEA awards took place on Thursday evening and Friday was dedicated to more parallel sessions within the six conference strands and the closing plenary. The programme also made provision for innovative World Café and Lightning sessions.



STRAND 1: Better Evidence for Public Policy & Implementation



STRAND 2: MERL Tech



STRAND 3: Investing for Impact



STRAND 4: Climate Change and Building Resilience



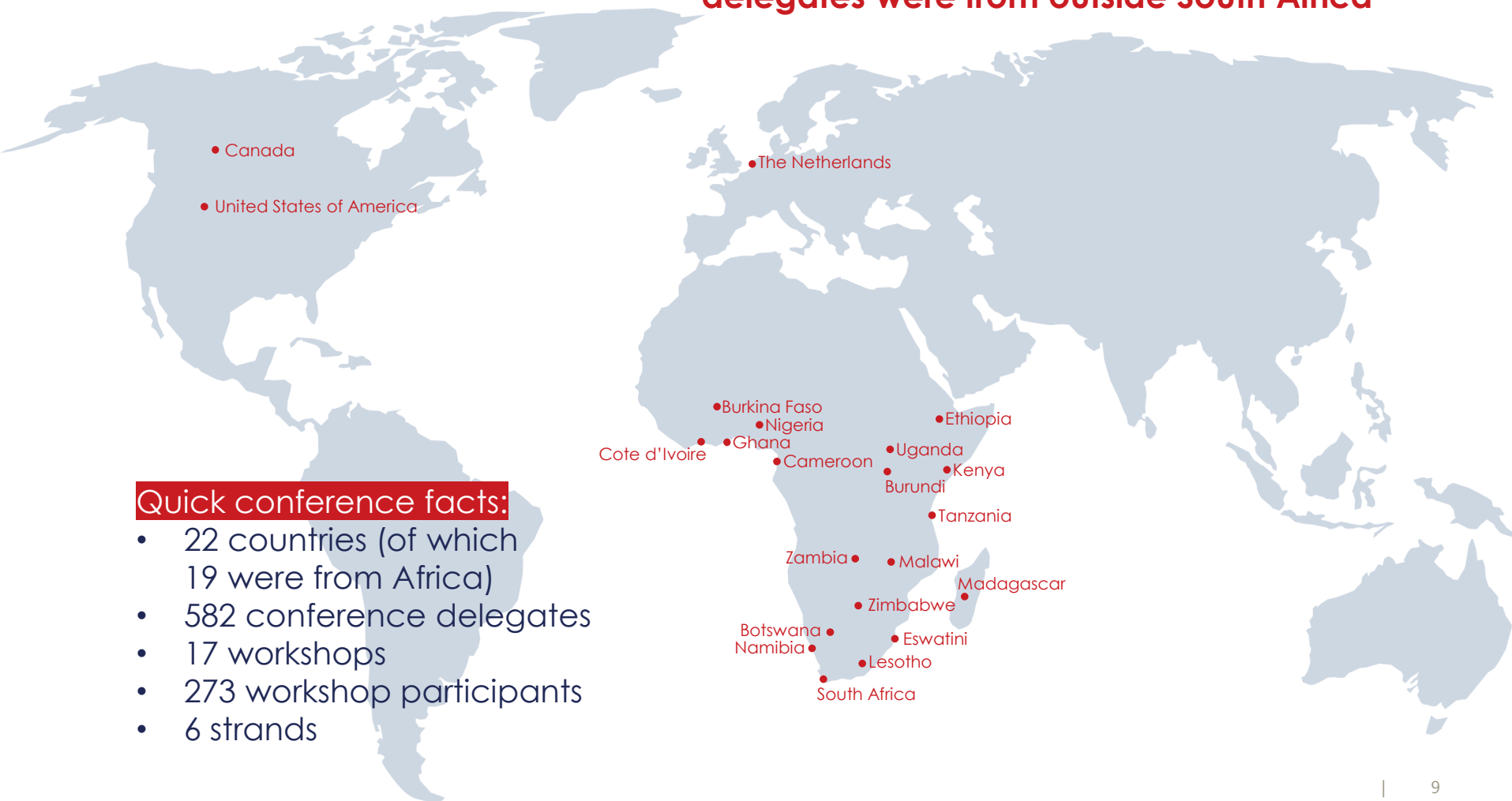
STRAND 5: M&E and Non-profits



STRAND 6: M&E Skills in a Changing World

Conference participation

22 countries represented - 50% of all delegates were from outside South Africa



Quick conference facts:

- 22 countries (of which 19 were from Africa)
- 582 conference delegates
- 17 workshops
- 273 workshop participants
- 6 strands

The 2019 event saw one of the highest representations from African countries ever recorded at a SAMEA Conference



Planning

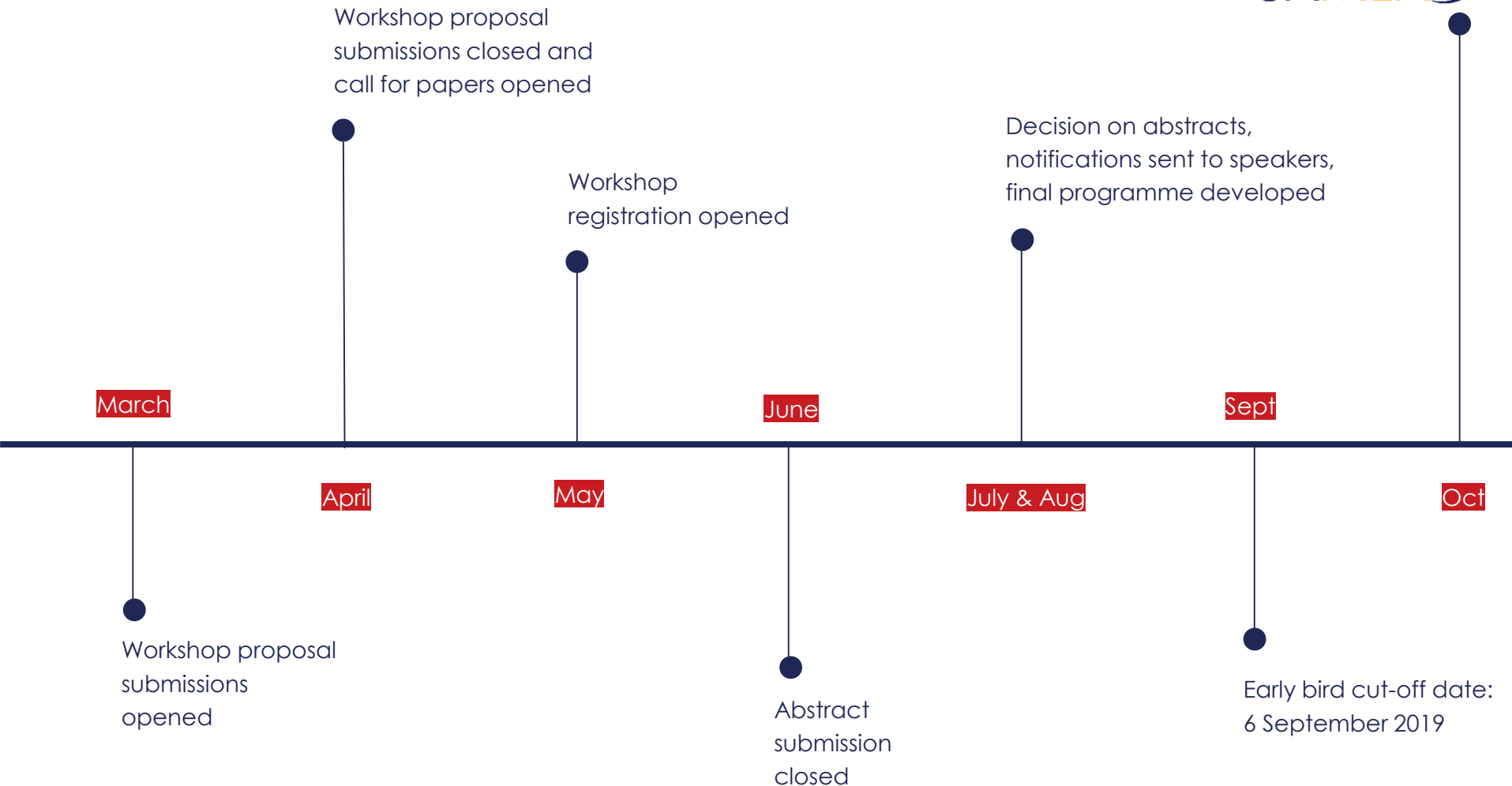
Timeline

Organising team

Sponsorship

Abstracts

Conference timeline



Organising team

A heartfelt thanks to the 26 strand coordinators who dedicated their time and effort to review abstracts and help the event organisers to finalise the programme.

For a fifth year, the SAMEA Board contracted Ilios Conferences to organise the logistics and event management component.



PRESTIGE CONFERENCES
—exceeding expectations—

Thabisile Zuma

Ben Murphy

Rita Soko

Mokgophana Ramasobana

Jennifer Sakwiya

Sarah Chapman

Grace Igweta

Ignatius Odongo

Nyaradzo Mutanha

Alyna Wyatt

Linda Raftree

Tebogo Fish

Victor Naidu

Lesego Ndala

Caitlin Blaser-Mapitsa

Victoria Tully

Rachel Mataboge

Ashleigh Fynn

Biggie Chidzvondo

Fatima Adam

Shungu Kanyemba

Terrie Takavarasha

Ian Goldman

Susan De Witt

Hlalani Gumpo

Conference sponsors

Various types of sponsorship opportunities were available during the conference.

SAMEA expresses its gratitude to the conference co-host, the South African Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (DPME) as well as the four financial sponsors UNICEF, the Institute for Development Assistance Management (IDAM), the Zenex Foundation and CLEAR.



planning, monitoring
& evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Conference sponsors

The funding structure also allowed for in-kind sponsorships through workshops and strand coordination. Thanks to the following organisations for their efforts.

Workshop support



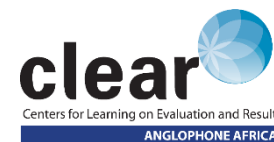
basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**planning, monitoring
and evaluation**
Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

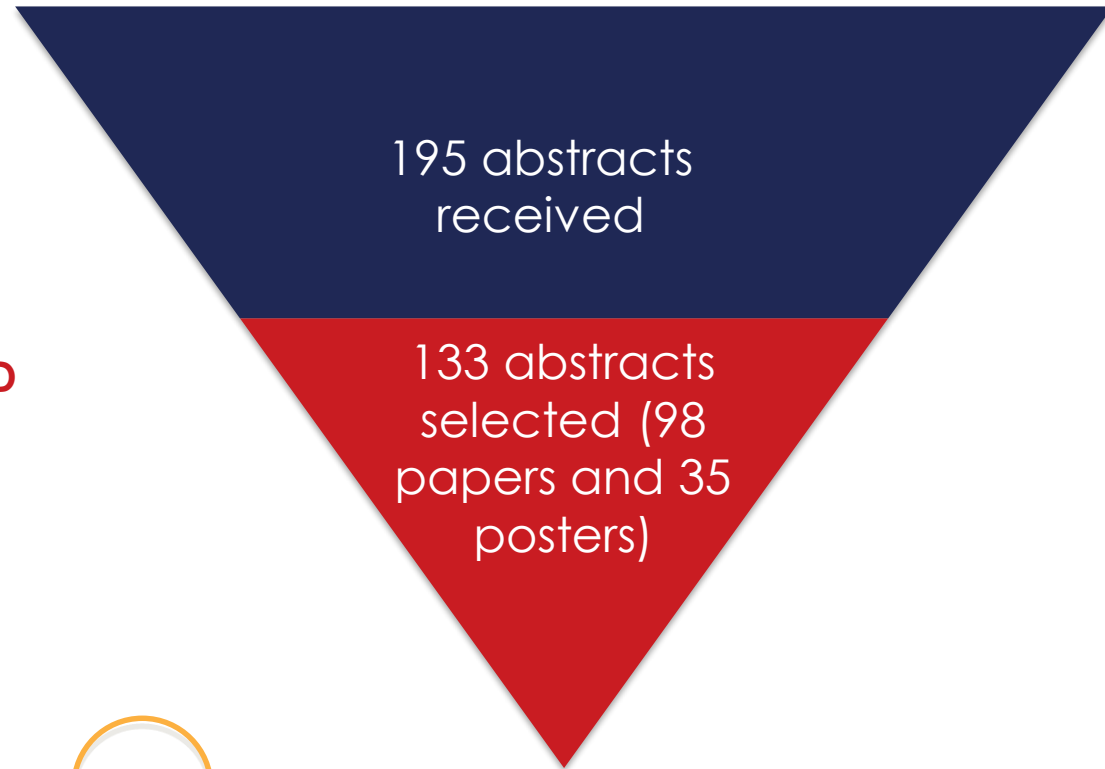


Strand coordinating



Abstracts

Strand managers reviewed, and scored 195 anonymous abstracts via an online electronic review platform, selecting 98 papers and 35 posters for the programme.



ACCEPTED ABSTRACTS PER STRAND

STRAND 1: Better Evidence for Public Policy & Implementation

45

STRAND 2: MERL Tech

14

STRAND 3: Investing for Impact

10

STRAND 4: Climate Change and Building Resilience

17

STRAND 5: M&E and Non-profits

18

STRAND 6: M&E Skills in a Changing World

29

The SAMEA Conference
sponsored 13 emerging
evaluators who shared
their stories during a
powerful plenary
on the second day
of the conference



Conference programme

Workshops, posters &
exhibitions

Parallel sessions &
plenaries

Awards

Events

Technology

Workshops, posters & exhibitions



High quality professional development workshops and posters set the scene for several learning opportunities and knowledge exchange, and 12 conference exhibitors allowed for meaningful engagement with fellow evaluators.

- 17 workshops were presented (See Annex B for list of workshops presented)
- 35 posters were presented
- The conference also secured the participation of 12 conference exhibitors, including the DPME, IDAM, UNICEF, Allan Gray, Southern Hemisphere, the University of Johannesburg, Habitat For Humanity International, Ask Afrika, Mobenzi, the World Food Programme, Trialogue and Nema Consulting

Parallel sessions & plenaries

Opening plenary

- **Welcome and opening:** Matodzi Amisi (SAMEA Chairperson)
- **Amanda Jitsing:** (Conference Chairperson)
- **Keynote address:** Lumko Mtimde (Special Advisor to the Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation)
- **In conversation:** *Looking towards the future: how does M&E adapt, change and evolve?*

Panellists:

Prof Patricia Rogers (Better Evaluation) - Virtual presentation
Prof Benon Basheka (Kabale University - Uganda)
Christina Nomdo (Commissioner at National Planning Commission)
Muriel Mafico (Deputy Representative - UNICEF South Africa)

Facilitator: Candice Morkel (Deputy Director – CLEAR-AA)

Plenary 2: Evaluation in a rapidly changing world

- **Welcome:** Jerusha Govender
- **Thematic address:** *Why does evaluative thinking matter in a rapidly changing world? Dr Thomas Archibald (Virginia Tech) and Colonization in evaluation in the times of innovation and the SDGs. Silvia Salinas Mulder (Independent Consultant)*
- **In conversation:** *Evaluation that meets the needs of diverse stakeholders in an increasingly complex world.*

Panellists:

Mokutule Kgobokoe (Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries)
Dr Thomas Archibald (Virginia Tech)
Silvia Salinas Mulder (Independent Consultant) Prof Ian Goldman
Doctor Phuti

Facilitator: Dr Dirk Troskie



Parallel sessions & plenaries

Closing plenary

- **Closing keynote:** What skills does the M&E community need to meet the needs of a changing world? Dr Bastiaan De Laat - President European Evaluation Society and Head (acting) of In-depth Evaluation, OECD
- **In conversation:** *The role of VOPEs in shaping the future of evaluation*

Panellists:

Dr Bastiaan De Laat - President European Evaluation Society and Head (acting) of In-depth Evaluation, OECD

Dr Shylock Muyengwa (Chair, Zimbabwe Evaluation Association)

Jennifer Bisgard (Director, Khulisa Management Services, former SAMEA Chair)

Matodzi Amisi (SAMEA Chair)

Facilitator: Mike Leslie (Evaluator and M&E Practice Area Leader, PDG)

Overview: Where do we go from here? A distillation of key issues and actions emerging from the SAMEA Conference 2019: Fatima Mathivha (SAMEA Board Member)

Closure and thanks: Amanda Jitsing (SAMEA Conference Chair)



Events



The Conference included two evening events: an Authors Night on Wednesday, 23 October, and the SAMEA Awards and Networking Event that took place on Thursday, 24 October.

The SAMEA Authors Night provided an opportunity for informal conversations about recently published evaluation books, and a chance to win one of 20 free copies at the popular lucky draw.

Many of the authors were present at the event to engage in conversations and mentor YEEs in journal publishing, book chapter writing, editing or publishing their own books.

See Annex C for the books and authors that should be on every evaluator's reading list!

A special thanks to Dr Donna Podems and Dr Lauren Wildschut, both legacy SAMEA board members, for a wonderful author's night.

Awards



Every year, SAMEA recognises excellence in the M&E profession by giving awards to individual evaluators or organisations who have contributed to advancing M&E, or excelled in a specific field.

SAMEA would like to recognise our long-term technical partners: Genesis, the DPME, Zenex and IDAM

The 2019 winners were:

Mentorship Award:

Mr Dena Lomosfsky: Southern Hemisphere
Mr Jabu Mathe: DPME

Emerging Evaluators Award:

Gift Mpyana: DPME
Amkelwa Mapatwana: JET

Thought Leadership Award:

New Leaders Foundation

Contribution to growing the sector:

Prof Victor Naidu: DPME

Technology & communications



#SAMEAConf2019

The SAMEA organising team invested a substantial effort in communications and real-time delegate feedback via twitter polls and active hash-tagging.

Some communication initiatives included:

- Video communications and interactive website
- Active social media participation with conference hashtag and twitter polls
- The adoption and engagement with the HelloCrowd conference app allowed organisers to visualise conference participation and provided real-time feedback to delegates. According to the conference survey, all delegates were able to download the app, and 92% of delegates used it



Strand outcomes

Better Evidence for
Public Policy and
Implementation

MERL Tech

Investing for Impact

Climate Change &
Building Resilience

M&E and Non-profits

M&E Skills in a
Changing World

Strand outcomes



Better Evidence for Public Policy & Implementation

Focus: How public sector institutions use evidence in policy and decision-making to deliver better outcomes for society.

Strand summary: Using evidence is important for improving development outcomes. We need to strengthen evidence across all sectors and stakeholders to be able to make better choices, influence policy and implement more effectively. Evidence must be disaggregated to reflect the realities of different stakeholders, particularly those marginalised.



MERL Tech

Focus: Providing a platform for delegates to discuss the influence of technology on how practitioners design M&E studies, collect data, analyse information, report on and visualise data.

Strand summary: The complementary role of monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) and Technology is growing. However, with many options, it is important that evaluators grow their understanding of technology, like learning basic coding and reviewing and being critical of tech solutions offered.

Strand outcomes



Investing for Impact

Focus: Exploring the role of M&E in impact investing and corporate social investment programmes.

Strand summary: We will not solve social problems unless everyone comes to the party. As data and knowledge agents, the M&E community may be what is needed to bridge and facilitate collaborative development. However, M&E needs to be responsive to the evolving needs in order to measure impact and share knowledge widely for adaptive management. We introduced 150 people to the practice of impact management and measurement and we encourage people to build capacity in this market.



Climate Change and Building Resilience

Focus: Providing an opportunity to discuss how M&E helps us to assess implications of climate change on individuals, communities and organisations and through strong evidence contributes to building resilience.

Strand summary: Climate change can be intimidating because it is intangible and complex. Climate change links to all areas of activity – which is a good thing because it means we can work on climate change wherever we are. Seeing links in your own areas of practice makes climate change more tangible and do-able but we need systemic approaches and complexity-friendly M&E.

Strand outcomes



M&E for Non-profits

Focus: Drawing lessons from how M&E is carried out in the non-profit sector and how it enables learning, how it shapes current practice and how it is adapting to changes brought about by technology, donor demands and communities' needs.

Strand summary: M&E shapes and is shaped by power dynamics between funders, NGOs, communities and M&E experts. This needs to be recognised. We must respect different ways of knowledge and different types of knowledge from different stakeholders.



M&E skills in a Changing World

Focus: Examining the changing skills requirements for the M&E profession in the 21st century and discusses the evolving roles of practitioners.

Strand summary: Creative approaches used in teaching and training must foster experiential learning and simulate evaluation situations that unfold on the ground. We must keep up and integrate emerging technologies in our practice. We are mapping a path towards professionalization of the M&E sector and on route to mitigating the M&E skills needed in a changing world.

“Now more than ever, our country needs credible evidence and courageous M&E professionals to guide development interventions to address development challenges”

- Matodzi Amisi, SAMEA Chair



Lessons learnt

Conference feedback

For the future

Conference survey

The SAMEA Conference promised to deliver the following six outcomes. A **conference survey was undertaken** to measure delegates' satisfaction with the event.



LEARN

how to apply M&E approaches, methods & tools



NETWORK

with 600+ delegates involved in monitoring & evaluation



ENGAGE

in discussions & debates about the future of M&E



LISTEN

to world-renowned speakers about their experiences



DISCUSS

new developments in the field of M&E



INTERACT

with thought leaders & speakers on topical issues

Conference feedback

Overall, the feedback was very positive. The below Word Cloud shows the words used to describe the conference, giving prominence to the most frequently used words:



Conference feedback

And when delegates were asked about their overall feeling about the conference, this is how they felt:

51%
Happy as a clam



44.2%

Ready to change the world

11.6%
Let's talk about this later



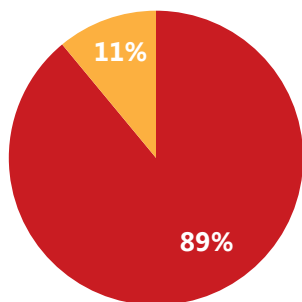
16.7%

Where's the after party?

Conference feedback

Other results are captured in the charts below:

Did the conference meet delegates' expectations?



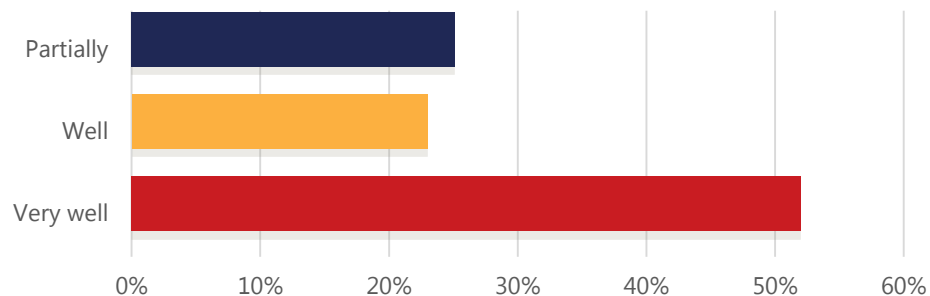
■ Yes ■ No

82% Of respondents thought the conference brought together new voices and a diverse group of speakers

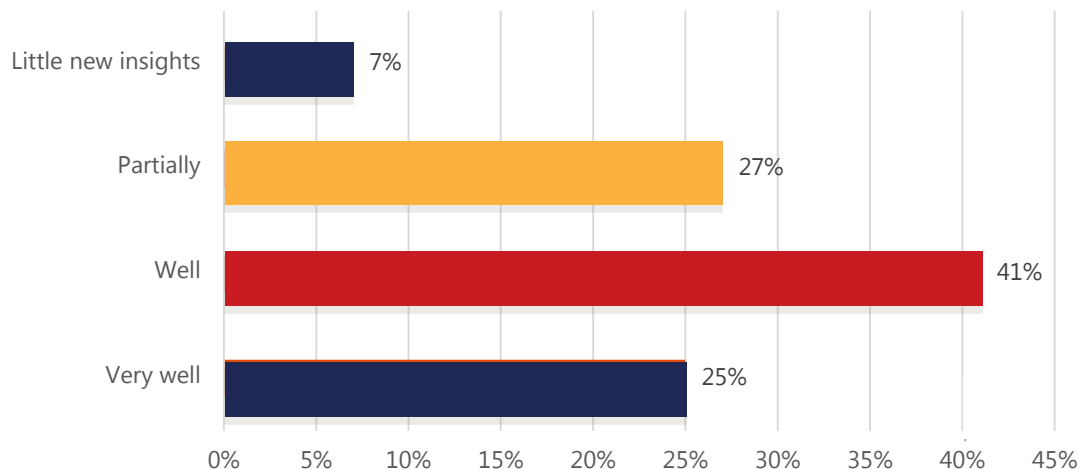
20% Of respondents felt that more time could be made available for network

98% Of respondents thought registration was easy

To what extent did the conference respond to the theme?



To what extent did the conference lead to new insights?



For the future

In line with our vision to make each SAMEA Conference better, we identified three actions points to focus on at the next conference:

better use of
technology,
including mobile
streaming



membership
discussions



1. Make better use of technology including considering live-streaming parts of the conference
2. Find mechanisms to continue discussions with our membership
3. Broaden participation in our conference to reach funders, commissioner, software developers and investors

broaden
participation









To all conference delegates,
thank you for making the
7th SAMEA Conference a
memorable learning
experience. We look
forward to seeing
you in 2021 at the
8th SAMEA
Conference



Annexes

Annex A: Strand leaders

-  **Strand 1:** Dr Victor Naidu & Prof Ian Goldman
-  **Strand 2:** Hlalani Gumpo
-  **Strand 3:** Susan de Wit
-  **Strand 4:** Grace Igweta, Ben Murphy & whole WFP M&E team
-  **Strand 5:** Rita Sonko, Fatima Adams & Thabi Zuma
-  **Strand 6:** Mokgophana Ramasobana and Sarah Chapman

**A special word of thanks to
Amanda Jitsing, Conference Chair.**

Annex B: List of workshops

Evaluative Thinking: Principles and Practices to Enhance Evaluation Capacity and Quality	Dr Thomas Archibald
Realizing the promise of M&E: Practical steps to fuse evidence with action	Mr Paul Wang
Use of Qualitative Analysis Software for Evaluations (Qualitative Data Management, Analysis & Visualization Using NVIVO)	Ms Cara Hartley
Conducting Monitoring and Evaluation in the Basic Education sector	Dr S Taylor Ms N Mohohlwane Dr J Kotze, Ms J Kika, Ms T Thulare Ms R Mogomotsi
Systematic Use of Evidence: A practical introduction to Evidence Maps and Rapid Response Services.	Ms H Dayal, Dr L Langer, Dr C Van Rooyen, Mr P Nduku, Ms M Magwaza, Ms C van Zyl
Assessment as Intervention: Demystifying M&E for outcome evaluation	Ms Aveleigh Gateman, Ms Kerry Petrie
Conducting Highly Effective Activity-based Focus Groups Discussions with Children and Other Vulnerable Groups	Dr Rita Sonko Dr Glynis Clacherty
Networking and the use of ICT and social media for effective monitoring and evaluation	Ms Susan D. Tamondong, Mr Hur Hassnain
Evaluation in a Time of Climate Change	Ms Jamie Robertsen, Ms Caitlin Blaser Mapitsa, and Mr Sibusiso Nkosi

Annex B: List of workshops

A New Gender Lens: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Gender Mainstreaming Component in Policies, Programmes and Projects.	Dr Hrachia Kazhoyan
From Inputs to Insights: Using Technology to Monitor Outcomes and Amplify Impact	Ms Izelle Du Pisanie, Ms Andi Norton
Fundamentals of data collection – What I wish I had known at the start!	Ms Margaret Roper Ms Katharine Tjasink
Building quick and easy live dashboards in Google sheets	Ms Ashleigh Fynn Ms Tawney Lott
Creating a learning framework from a Theory of Change	Ms Dena Lomofsky
Monitoring & Evaluation of Development Assistance Management: Regional and Global Contextual Factors	Prof EOC Ijeoma Dr B Peter Ms MG Mangwanya
The M&E Essentials –Your Guide to M&E	Dr Donna Podems
Institutionalising the use of Evaluation evidence to support development objectives: Case for building and sustaining evaluation systems	Dr Takunda Chirau Ms Matodzi Amisi
An orientation to and practice in outcome harvesting	Dr Barbara Klugman
Introducing systems thinking into evaluation practice	Dr Kevin Kelly Dr Myles Oelofse
An introduction to public sector evaluation in South Africa	Mr Mike Leslie

Annex C: Authors Night book list

Donna Podems

Being an Evaluator: Your Guide to Evaluation (2019)

Donna Podems, editor, with key chapter contributors: Dugan Fraser, Ian Goldman, Mishka Jakioet, Alyna Wyatt, MarK Abrahams, and Benita Williams

Democratic Evaluation: Exploring the Reality (2017)

Mark Abrahams (Editor)

African Evaluation Journal

Edited by Kylie Hutchison, with chapter contributors: Jennifer Bisgard and Mary Pat Selvaggio

Evaluation Failures: 22 Tales of Mistakes Made and
Lessons Learned

Edwin Ijeoma

Introduction to South Africa's Monitoring and Evaluation
in Government

Edwin Ijeoma & Ogachukwi Nzewi

Culture, Philosophies and Reforms in Public
Administration for the Globalising World

Edwin Ijeoma, Ogachukwi Nzewi & Modeni Sibanda

South Africa's Public Administration for Community Service

Edwin Ijeoma

South Africa's Public Administration in context

Edwin Ijeoma & Dr Nnamdi Nwaodu

Third World Development Strategies: Decades of
Fascination and Frustrations

Nic Spaull & Jonathan D. Jansen (Editors)

South African Schooling: The Enigma of Inequality

Backson Sibanda

Evaluation: The Forbidden Truth

Fanie Cloete, Babette Rabie & Christo De Coning

Evaluation Management in South Africa and Africa

Ian Goldman

Use of Evidence in Evaluation

Caitlin Blaser-Mapitsa, Precious Tirivanhu and Nedson Popiwa (CLEAR-AA)

Evaluation landscape in Africa: context, methods and
capacity

Conference presentations

All presentations from the 7th SAMEA Conference is available on the conference website at:

<http://sameaconference.co.za/presentations/>