



EMERGING EVALUATORS PROGRAMME

CONCEPT NOTE

The EEs programme is a SAMEA initiative for Emerging Evaluators (EEs) in South Africa. The network operates and is facilitated as one of SAMEA's portfolios, and acts as a platform with activities and communication where Emerging Evaluators (EEs) voluntarily participate, share information, gain exposure and access evaluation platforms. It is a requirement that EEs who wish to participate and benefit in the core activities or future leadership of the programme must be members of SAMEA.

WHY SAMEA EE?

In meeting evaluation standards in South Africa there is a gap in evaluation capacity whereby the demand for evaluation is increasing yet the supply for skilled evaluators is extremely low both in the public and private sectors (Phillip, 2018). A recent study for the Twende Mbele initiative between the governments of South Africa, Uganda and Benin and the Zenex Foundation 2018 study on Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity landscape provided insight into the evaluation demand and supply dynamics in South Africa (Zenex, 2019; Phillip, 2018). **One of the core recommendations on the feedback of both studies was the need for a strategy which would include and cater for Emerging Evaluators in South Africa** (SAMEA, 2018; Zenex, 2018). The findings of the two studies together with the SAMEA EE Technical Interest Group (TIG), SAMEA Yahoo listserv discussions on EEs and a survey conducted by SAMEA in 2017 and 2019 determined the need to develop a concept note with strategies specific to EEs.

Notwithstanding the establishment of the National Evaluation System by Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in 2011, the increased number of M and E higher education trainings, the membership growth of SAMEA, and the impressive inclusion of EEs in the SAMEA board since 2013, emerging evaluators still remain on the periphery of mainstream evaluation activities in the country.

Further evidence shows:

- ▲ From the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, it has been recommended that the implementation of the goals should develop youth and adults skills in evaluation.
- ▲ The South African National Development Plan 2030 - Chapter 11 Social protection includes skills development to address the mismatch between skills and work available.
- ▲ The pool of skilled evaluators is shallow and demand far exceeds supply.
- ▲ Emerging evaluators are under represented in many organisations and institutions.
- ▲ Youth and young people are historically and frequently absent from evaluations of policies and programs that impact them, except as a potential source for data collection. Hence, they are not necessarily playing a developmental and meaningful role in an evaluation where they can learn and grow themselves.
- ▲ No proper institutional structure and formal programme exists to support emerging evaluators in South Africa.

WHO ARE THE EE?

Consideration of the political and socio-economic background of South Africa was made in defining the EEs. The definition of EEs has been adopted from Eval Youth's definitions and additions have been made and centred on disadvantaged individuals.

The EEs are evaluators with 5 years and lower of working experience in Evaluation, and they include one or more of the following;

- ▲ New in the evaluation field with no evaluation training (interested in developing evaluation skills)
- ▲ New with training and no practical experience
- ▲ Chose evaluation as a career but have no evaluation experience
- ▲ Starting in the field (entry)
- ▲ Researchers using their skills to undertake evaluations
- ▲ Started in fieldwork and data capturing but interested in furthering career in evaluation
- ▲ Private and Public sector practitioners with monitoring experience and no or limited evaluation experience.

The definition above has been adapted for the South African context from the international EvalPartners definition shown below.



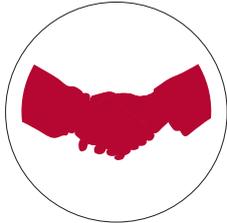
Source: EvalPartners, EvalYouth Concept Note: July 2016

¹Does not exclude emerging evaluators over 35 years of age

WHAT DOES THE EEs PROGRAMME WANT TO ACHIEVE?



To support Emerging Evaluators (EE), to become competent, experienced & well-networked professionals who contribute to evaluation capacity at national, regional & international levels.



To promote the inclusion of EEs in evaluations conducted at the national, regional & international levels



To enable and facilitate active and meaningful participation of, and influence by EEs in policy and evaluation discourse in the country

HOW WILL SAMEA ACHIEVE THESE GOALS?

The EE Programme will include the following components;



Component 1: Identify institutions interested in hosting M&E Interns & maintain an online database of these companies.

Background of component: Most evaluators who have been trained on evaluation have no access to practical experience in evaluation (SAMEA, 2018).

SAMEA aims to identify M&E companies/institutions that are interested in building evaluation capacity within the country by hosting M&E interns. This database will enable SAMEA to proactively direct students in M&E to companies that have internship opportunities. SAMEA will also maintain a list of EEs through its membership. Currently SAMEA is doing this on an ad hoc basis but sees the need for a link between young and emerging evaluators and evaluation companies that provide opportunities for internships and scholarships.

Component 2: Maintain and communicate an updated list of available M&E Trainings and Courses on the SAMEA website.

Background of component: The path to becoming an evaluator is not linear and unlike the career paths of professionals in disciplines with longer histories such as accounting, law and engineering. A large number of EEs do not have more than an introductory exposure to evaluation training (Zenex, 2018).

SAMEA currently shares information on M&E trainings and courses. The association will continue to actively collect and share information on available M&E trainings and courses through SAMEA platforms so as to encourage interested and emerging evaluators to build their capacity in evaluation. In addition to the Zenex Foundation research findings of Higher education institutions offering evaluation trainings, SAMEA would need to periodically and systematically confirm the M & E trainings with listed higher education institutions and service providers before posting a consolidated list of opportunities on their website.

Component 3: Increase membership and participation in EE platforms

Background of component: A large number of EEs are not aware of the existence of evaluation networks and platforms (Zenex, 2018).

Once a year SAMEA currently presents their services to two higher education institutions offering evaluation trainings. Based on the growing number of academic trainings in higher education institutions and private providers in the country, it would be ideal for SAMEA to sensitise EEs on current EE platforms and networks to all higher education institutions offering evaluation trainings.

Component 4: Mentorship / Internship Programme

Background of component: The landscape study conducted by ERA and PDG revealed that some academic institutions had a gap on how to link EEs to platforms that provide them with practical M&E experience (Zenex, 2018). Based on this gap, it would be ideal to replicate the EvalYouth two year mentoring pilot programme in order to build individual capacities and support the growth of EEs.

SAMEA plans to develop a long-term programme to support emerging evaluators. In addition to the once-off occurrence of supporting emerging evaluators to attend SAMEA conferences and workshops, this component will also include:

- 1.** Sending out a call to emerging evaluators / M&E students for mentorship /internship opportunities. Relevant information will be obtained to assist with provisionally pairing mentor and mentee. A joint interview with the mentor and mentee will be set up to confirm suitability followed by the development of a mentorship plan.
- 2.** Liaising with potential mentors (after developing mentor criteria, which will be informed by the draft evaluator competencies) within M&E sectors (education, health etc.) who are interested in assisting new evaluators (mentees) that are studying M&E but are not based in an M&E institution with practical hands on experience in all aspects of the M&E field. Mentors will also be identified to mentor EEs that in the beginner and intermediate pathway.
- 3.** Matching the area of interest of the M&E student with the mentor for example, evaluation in education with an M&E expert in education. Efforts will also be made to assign mentor and mentee within the same geographical location to minimise costs.

4. New evaluators (mentees) will also be supported to attend SAMEA Capacity Building Workshops that takes place on an annual basis as well as attend the SAMEA Conference that takes place biennially. Mentees with the support of their mentors will be given the opportunity to motivate to attend SAMEA workshops / Conference as part of the mentorship programme. This will assist new evaluators in building their networks and be exposed to and learn from other evaluators in the country.
5. As part of the mentorship / internship programme SAMEA can use its platforms and networks to advertise prominent monitoring and evaluation academic qualifications at a graduate and post-graduate level for which scholarships can be awarded.

Component 5: Facilitate EE networks.

Background of component: SAMEA currently facilitates EE platforms that allow EEs to share successes, challenges, experiences and events.

SAMEA will continue to facilitate EE platforms which include the EE TIG, EE sessions at the SAMEA conferences, EE webinars and EE EvalCafes which facilitate discussions between EEs on emerging trends in Monitoring and Evaluation.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

For more information on the programme or to offer partnership or to make suggestions please contact: info@samea.org.za