

Fanie Cloete:

My feeling is that M&E remains somewhat of a specialist niche, with many organisations not realising the importance or benefits of ongoing monitoring and evaluation. I also think that in the context of SAMEA promoting M&E in SA we mean that this must be done on a very limited budget, or in other words using the time of board members. Marketing/promoting without budget requires some innovation. Here are some of the things concrete projects that can be implemented with minimal capital outlay, limited time of board members and the participation of SAMEA members:

- *Bi-monthly networking breakfast – Invite keynote speaker/s, charge a nominal entrance fee, publicise/invite individuals from a variety of different organisations, market breakfasts using a variety of different electronic (low cost) media.*
- *M&E Blog – host this on the SAMEA website with different board members taking responsibility for posting each week. This will assist in developing greater two way conversation around topical M&E issues in SA.*
- *An M&E journal – Although I am not sure of the cost implications of publishing a regular journal, I know that this idea has been thrown about a bit by SAMEA in the past. I think that this requires some research in terms of marketability of such a journal. This would certainly be a good starting point for SAMEA.*

Benita van Wyk Williams:

1. My guess is that the amount of time required of a board member each week is variable. An average of 4 to 6 hours a week is my estimate in order to do the position justice. As a consultant my time is pretty much my own, so (on average) I do have this time to devote to SAMEA

2. My tolerance for non performance is pretty low. I'd suggest a '3 warning and removal from the board' process led by the chairman and supported by the balance of the board members. While it may not be strictly the 'done thing' to remove individuals from the board, in terms of the practical workload of other board members it makes very little difference if the individual being removed is not participating. I think we need to keep in mind that being on the board of SAMEA is a volunteer position (they were not coerced into taking the position) that brings the board members some recognition. Their payment for that is to perform in their role on the board.

Mark Abrahams:

I offer dedication and focus to the SAMEA board and membership. If elected I have time and energy to dedicate towards the achievement of SAMEA's intended objectives. I am particularly interested in working towards the establishment of M&E standards in South Africa providing clear guidelines for best practice, training and implementation. I believe that this is something desperately needed by M&E practitioners and those who make use of our services, and that SAMEA is the logical point of departure for this process. I'd like to bring a greater focus on longitudinal programme monitoring, which is essential as a programme management tool and invaluable as a prerequisite to programme evaluation. Additionally, I'd like to see the SAMEA website function as a more effective communication tool with the South African and wider M&E community, and would be prepared to drive this process.

In terms of limitations...

As will be patently obvious from my CV my evaluation experience is minimal, so my focus will certainly be more on the longitudinal monitoring, systems development aspect of M&E. I am not an academic, but I am good at getting things done. I tend to impatience with people who do not perform as expected at their level. As a consultant I recognise that there will be times when work commitments will not allow for physical participation in board activities, however, as an individual with a strong technical (IT) background, there are always ways of circumventing physical presence to ensure participation.

Victor Madziakapita:

Thanks for asking this important question.

I feel that M&E practitioners occasionally need to pay something for the services they receive through SAMEA in order to feel that there is real value in their membership. I think that membership fees for SAMEA are well below regular accepted professional association fees. This is not saying that SAMEA should not raise funds to subsidise members that need assistance for certain activities (i.e. conferences), but rather that members should be willing to pay for activities from which they receive benefits, particularly when the amounts charged are nominal.

The ideal is for any fundraising activities to be sustainable rather than once off activities. As such there are several methods of handling this:

Approach the government/donor organisations who will benefit from a strong M&E association in SA for ongoing core funding. Perhaps we can provide TA to these organisations in return for this type of funding.

- Bi-monthly networking breakfasts suggested as an activity to further promote M&E in SA can be used as fundraising events.
- I see that Benita's call for assistance for the AGM has been very effective in raising funds from members. There are ways that the website/listserv and the social networking sites set up and maintained by Anzel can also be used to raise funds.
- Implement an organisation membership for SAMEA that carries some verification of the level of service provided by that organisation. This would be a value added service from SAMEA that would require some work, but would have income generation potential.

Short quick list. Some innovation and brainstorming would expand this list substantially.

Candice Morkel:

1. In short, my opinion is that the public sector are making a start, and this is a very positive development for SA in general and will serve to assist in developing M&E practices in SA in the long run. SAMEA's role is certainly that of promoting good M&E practice, disseminating best practice, creating awareness regarding the benefits of M&E in terms of management, building capacity etc.

2. I know that SAMEA has started engaging in the development of M&E Standards, these can perhaps be further developed to provide a SAMEA certification of organisations and individuals, perhaps at different levels. This process can be developed into something that will allow SAMEA to generate additional funding, while providing some guidelines to organisations seeking M&E assistance regarding the quality of the assistance that will be received from organisations and individuals. (from a previous response)

Nomsa Dube:

1. It is evidently clear that there is a need for M&E to be recognised as a distinct profession. Is it possible for SAMEA to initiate a certification system similar to the one in the project management field where there are PMPs and the Six Sigma belt system? If so what strategies would you employ to put such systems in place?

1. *I know that SAMEA has started engaging in the development of M&E Standards, these can perhaps be further developed to provide a SAMEA certification of organisations and individuals, perhaps at different levels. This process can be developed into something that will allow SAMEA to generate additional funding, while providing some guidelines to organisations seeking M&E assistance regarding the quality of the assistance that will be received from organisations and individuals.*

2. Any plans or suggestions to expand SAMEA our geographical coverage and also include professionals from other African countries outside South Africa?

I think that expansion into other African countries is the province of AfrEA, but am aware of the development of provincial and regional chapters of SAMEA. However in terms of the actual work of these chapters I do not have any information. Perhaps this is an area where the website and forums can be used more effectively.

Ray Basson:

How do you envisage evaluation field building may happen to expand evaluation as field in SA?

1. *My feeling is that the only way to build the field of M&E in SA to enhance the appreciation of the value of M&E. As such this falls into the sphere of promoting M&E in SA and is answered by the response to Fanie's earlier question.*

Do you think evaluators in SA should be encouraged to reflect on their practice to formulate an indigenous conception of evaluation best suited to this country and thereby add to evaluation thinking internationally?

2. *In my experience of evaluation the context within which the project/programme/impact etc being evaluated takes place is an integral part of the evaluation thus requiring an indigenous conception of evaluation. Any evaluation study that meets international standards and takes place in an African environment should therefore add an indigenous conception of evaluation*

to evaluation thinking internationally. SAMEA can/and does assist in development of this process by providing a platform for dissemination of these type of concepts at conferences. This can be expanded through a variety of means already discussed.

If an evaluation journal is established, what would be the most appropriate theme for the first editions?

I'd be very happy to leave a decision on the theme to a participative process, but I'd love to be the driving force behind arranging the publication.

JENNIFER ROBINSON