

(Fanie Cloete)

What they would suggest SAMEA do more to fulfil its mission to promote M&E in SA? Ie what concrete projects or new or changed activities should SAMEA engage in to achieve its strategic goals better

*Surface South Africa's unique evaluation voice. Developmental, empowerment and transformational evaluation may be 'new' elsewhere in the World, however, as part of the demands of the transition in South Africa evaluation practitioners have had a duty to practice for change and in doing so implemented these types of evaluation before they were named. Concretely this means improving our teaching (in Universities and practitioner workshops) of evaluation to reflect this experience. In other words we need to learn from each other and impart this within our teaching strategies. A good example of this is the work done by CDRA in Cape Town who are defining the terrain of evaluating a sovereign organisation. A concrete mechanism through which sharing become possible is, for example, the Wits Virtual Conference on Methodology in Programme Evaluation. Excellent papers submitted through this will be incorporated within a range of evaluation courses offered within the University. This will help South Africa to own their evaluation experience and appreciate our endowments.*

*Focus upon holding tensions between supporting a dynamic, active civil society and emergent government M&E systems. Evaluation is an inherently political exercise. Embracing this during this period of the countries transition can help to use existing dynamics to promote greater interaction and, hopefully, the use of data. SAMEA members conduct evaluations and support evaluation capacity development in both of these arenas. Local discussion groups can be facilitated to bring together experiences of how one views the other and present different evaluation methods used within government and civil society. SAMEA can play a bridging role by bringing both sets of clients together for dialogue.*

*These two suggestions cut across SAMEA's objectives and have specific relevance to promotion of the development and adoption of M&E approaches and methods suitable to a South African and development context.*

(Benita Williams)

1. How much time per week you anticipate spending on board activities? Is your work context supportive of this if this should happen during work time?

*1. As a lecturer and practitioner focusing upon M&E essentially 80% of my activities relate to SAMEA and the board. It is really about having a SAMEA mindset. So in some ways yes – my work context is supportive. Also as a lecturer my time is to some extent flexible – especially if research and teaching opportunities emerge. However, in terms of actual time I would need to be guided by the demands of the projects at hand. If you are asking about minimum time I would expect this to take at least 2 hours per week.*

2. If a fellow board member consistently misses board meetings and does not deliver on commitments, what would you suggest to solve the problem?

**2. This is an issue that would need to be dealt with by the board in accordance with the articles of association and other relevant policies with leadership from the Chair.**

(Raymond Basson)

1. How do you envisage evaluation field building may happen to expand evaluation as field in SA?
2. 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?
3. If these are important, how may SAMEA best promote both processes?

***1. Learning from the IDRC experience in South Asia (Current -AJE & Hay in the Wits Virtual Programme evaluation conference) they have started to disaggregated evaluation field building in terms of individual, organisational and institutional support. Essentially, field building takes place through getting these to interact (a key role for SAMEA). What we need to be aware of is that just supplying lots of evaluators does not automatically lead to a demand for evaluative information. The supply could just be used simply for reporting rather than change. Fostering demand is a more complicated issue of how to get people (especially those in power) to think differently about why they want evaluation and what they will do with the information. This is the point of the World Bank CLEAR initiative (<http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/clear/index.html>) that is looking to support the development of an African centre of excellence in M&E. Wits P&DM (where I work) will be doing more research in this area as part of developing a full proposal for CLEAR. In summary, we need to 'watch this space' as more research and experience will start to appear on field building.***

***For 2 & 3 - Please see my response to Fanie above***

(Mark Abrahams)

What is it that you can bring to the Board, given all the desires, demands, and 'dreams' of a bigger, better and more 'effective and efficient' SAMEA.

***1. I am dedicated to surfacing South Africa's unique evaluation voice. To the board I feel that I bring the voice of a critical friend. Having worked in designing and implementing monitoring systems in community, international NGO and government settings as well as now working in an academic setting I have an idea of what is possible and the constraints on action. This perspective will be applied to the kinds of initiatives that we implement. This perspective will become more apparent in the answers to the below questions. In regards to limitations, I have not done much 'evaluation' that aims at the production of studies. So I would need to learn from other board members how to promote this. I also have an approach to M&E that emphasises getting whatever information is available just to get something useful out. In this regard I am often not so much concerned with the rigor (traditionally defined). However, taking this approach does help to surface useful information in time and budget constraints. In terms of time please refer to my answer to Benita.***

(Errol Goetsch)

What are the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing M&E practitioners in South Africa, and given each of these, how can or will SAMEA respond?

***Strength - A vibrant (and growing) body of practitioners - as demonstrated by SAMEA talk. M&E being the new 'shiny thing' of the government in one of the two major policy initiatives of the Zuma administration Weaknesses - Systematic practitioner lead training and recognition is not at the forefront. Practitioners need to own their discipline. Currently the field is rather donor and to a lesser extent government lead. Opportunities - M&E being a shiny thing leads to increased recognition and for greater innovation. There are potential opportunities to help in the development of an evaluating society building upon South Africa's activist civil society. Threats - M&E being the new shiny thing. This could just lead to gadgetory seduction where M&E is seen as answer to all ills...leading to eventual disappointments. The limits of M&E need to be clear in the SAMEA discourse.***

(Victor Madziakapita)

What strategies will they bring to the Board for fund raising so that the Board can be able to organize activities that benefit the members without charging anything to the members?

***The CLEAR initiative, wherever, it may be based offers a potential funding base for regional organisations if they contribute to the demand for evaluation. The new status of M&E in South Africa can be used to leverage new sources of funding, both government and business sector. However, whatever the source of funding the priority needs to be SAMEA's own sovereignty.***

(Candice Morkel)

What are your thoughts on the current direction being taken in public sector M&E (as driven primarily by the National Dept of PME), and how can/should SAMEA add value to this? What is your opinion around how to maintain the integrity and professionalism of the discipline amongst practitioners and service providers, without stifling its growth and expansion? What role should SAMEA play in this regard (if any?).

***1) In theory making clear the accountability and responsibilities of government ministers and senior civil servants should be a good thing. Mobilising this through the presidency certainly gives M&E a required weight. However, how this fits in with the current legislative mandates remains unclear. For example, the PSC and DPSA and their experience in building systems. The PSC in particular has a constitutional mandate for Monitoring and evaluation and their experience needs to be drawn upon. Another issue is the complicated reporting relations between spheres of government - especially Treasury legislated reporting. In summary, the energy and prominence given is positive, but working through the complexities in partnership with the people who need to implement is paramount.***

**2) Putting in place standards, recommending training and building a legitimate field and where possible guiding clients. Ultimately, however, responsibility for the hiring of evaluators rests with clients. We cannot become overbearing at this stage of the development of the profession.**

**3) SAMEA needs to set the standards and lead the field and work with clients on understanding what is appropriate.**

(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) This is a difficult course and one that the AEA has chosen not to taken. The PMP's and Six Sigma certification processes are also ways of making for big companies. Guidance seems preferable to closing down the space of innovation. Also competition is valuable between providers...in an open market an informed client should shop around for the course appropriate to them.**

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

**2) SAMEA already has some member in other Southern African countries – exchange is a sign of vibrancy. However, it is better for countries to develop their own organisation's to represent their own interests.**