

## **A DEBATE ON THE ROLE OF POWER AND RANK IN THE M&E FIELD –**

### **From the voices of practitioners**

Hosted by SAMEA

Thursday, 22 October 2020, 14:00-16:00 (South African time)

#### **Introduction**

Evaluation can be a tool for social transformation. At the same time evaluation can be an instrument that maintains status quo, measuring effects of programmes but rarely asking questions about appropriateness of interventions or questioning power relations in society that reproduce poverty and inequality. The history of evaluation in developing countries and the African continent remains highly contested, that is its extractive and complicity in structural adjustment interventions that reproduced dependency and undermined indigenous institutional knowledge and expertise remains though in recent years evaluators have come to recognise and acknowledge that they can have a transformative role they can have in development.

Recent calls for equality, justice and decoloniality have shaken different disciplines. Questioning western hegemony in definition of professions, theories of development, and development practice. The evaluation sector was not spared. Pertinent questions have been asked about prejudice in the evaluation sector, about power, race and rank. Who defines what is evaluation, are all theories of evaluation applicable in all contexts, does it matter who is doing evaluation? These have been difficult and uncomfortable questions for the sector to grapple with, but questions we must grapple with for the profession to remain relevant and serve its purpose as a means for social justice.

COVID pandemic has also challenged or brought to question the notion of good evidence and the transferability of evidence produced in global north. As countries scrambled to respond to the pandemic what was evidence informed and considered effective in developed countries was visibly incompatible with local context. The need for evaluation practice that does not merely mimic global practice, but though learning from international trends and developments, remains rooted in producing evidence that is locally relevant and helps countries navigate complexity has been evident. Recent discussions on race and power, have also highlighted the importance of evaluation practice that is transformative, located in understanding and recognition of power asymmetries and being deliberate in addressing their material effect in society.

As part of delivering capacity building workshops, SAMEA intends to host a webinar to unpack some of these issues further and explore what it means for the discipline and practice of Evaluation in South Africa.

#### **Moderated by Mokgophana Ramasobana**

The moderator will introduce the topic under discussion. This will be followed by 10 minutes presentation from each of the panellist focusing on unpacking the topic under discussion. A question and answer session or inputs will be solicited from the participants. As part of concluding this session each of the panellist will be given 5 minutes to present their closing remarks.

## Panellists

Through a consultative and rigorous process, SAMEA managed to draw on a list of well renowned experts and practitioners from different fields and institutions. This is intended to ensure that variety of voices and comments are given space to influence the evaluation practice. Below follows the names of those who will constitute the panel:

- A South African Evaluation Expert - Dr Nombeko Mbava
- South African based Researcher – Dr Nedson Pophiwa
- Indigenous knowledge Expert – David Sul

This event is free, but registration is required. To register, visit:

<https://www.samea.org.za/virtual-conference>

For Workshop Registration queries, contact Marla Naidoo [info@samea.org.za](mailto:info@samea.org.za) or Asafika Mzinjana, [asafikamzinjana@gmail.com](mailto:asafikamzinjana@gmail.com).

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