

4TH BIENNIAL SAMEA CONFERENCE 2013

EMERGING EVALUATOR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT REPORT

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I want to first of all thank the SAMEA Board for granting me this wonderful opportunity to participate in this year's conference. This is a brief report on what I learned at the conference and how I will use the information and knowledge obtained.

I attended one of the half day workshops and attended several of the conference presentations. I also had the opportunity to present in two sessions of the conference. The workshop entitled 'Policy research: Do findings make a difference' on Wednesday morning was a very lively session where valuable lessons were shared. Many people shared their experiences on how they managed to put policy research outcomes or findings onto the agenda. I also gain valuable knowledge on how to present findings in order to catch the attention of those who matter the most. These are valuable lessons that would help me in my research work.

The conference sessions were very informative. The plenary sessions gave me an idea of how useful evaluations can be at national and international levels or on broader scope. The exposure to people involved in Monitoring and evaluation from different sectors was an amazing experience for me. The session on inspiring emerging evaluators was very inspirational for me as valuable career building skills were shared by people in the field. I was very much inspired by the talks from the various Professionals: Jennifer, Candice and Thabisile as they shared their experiences in their daily work from different perspectives and now I am more motivated to follow the M&E career path.

Having the opportunity to present at the conference was a very good learning process for me as that was the first time I presented a paper at a conference and in this case a conference of this magnitude. That was an amazing experience and exposure for me. The second presentation was also very helpful as I gathered very useful lessons from the comments and advice offered by the audience and the moderator Professor De Coning.

The breakaway sessions, tea times were very useful in meeting and networking with lots of relevant delegates. I was able to meet influential persons with whom I wish to be in contact beyond the conference for various reasons.

The general hospitality at the event was commendable. The breakfast at the Courtyard Hotel was amazing. The snacks and lunches at the Hilton and the general ambience at the event was breath-taking. Chatting around the lunch table with various dignitaries was marvellous. It was great networking session for me as well.

In short, the conference presented a broader perspective to me on the different dynamics of M&E practice. It enabled me to view M&E at a high level and gave me an idea of the opportunities that are available within the field. The knowledge and experience that I gained at the conference will go a long way in helping me in my studies and also help me to pursue working in the field. This has also inspired be to get involved more in events of this nature and to make any contributions that I can to the development agenda of the field.

The network of people that I have now from the event, ranging from experienced professionals and also other emerging evaluators, provides me a valuable support and network base from which I hope to benefit in my future endeavours. I am grateful for the opportunity and I than all the sponsors and the selection

committee. I hope to be part of future events and hope to contribute positively to the development of the field of monitoring and evaluation.