

Conference Venue:

Conference Venue: Emperos Palance, Gauteng, South Africa

Dates: 31/10/2019

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Introduction

Let me take this opportunity to thank the former SAMEA Chairperson, Mrs Matodzi Amisi and the entire SAMEA team for giving me this opportunity to attend the 2019 SAMEA Conference. I must say I was delighted to be among the few selected emerging evaluators! The key lesson I carried home was that as an evaluator I need to reshape my skills and develop them towards a more sustainable future.

Due to the short nature of this report, only important points will be discuss. The report will focus on lessons learnt, challenges, networking and the next steps. This is based on conference proper as I was not available to attend workshops.

Lessons learnt:

As an emerging evaluator, I was keen to attend at least 90% of the plenary sessions, which I did. The plenary sessions were very educational and full of innovative ideas. The key lesson I carried home was that as an evaluator I need to reshape my skills and develop them toward a more sustainable future. This entails moving from a traditional mindset of M&E skills to a modern one such as being

political, transformational, translational, ethical, contextual, visual, cross-cutting, inspirational, empirical and intergenerational. Our theme for the conference was "shaping M&E for a sustainable

future." This to me entailed that for M&E to be sustainable we need new skills, we must be able to

work as a team, we must be able to apply international standards and professionalism in our work and be adaptive . The entire work of a successful evaluator is centered around these key areas.

Therefore, if one is able to practice and develop these skills, then, we can be sure of sustainability in our profession. These are lessons I have learnt and I intend to empower young emerging evaluators with the knowledge and hope to apply it at my workplace.

Challenges:

Locating stands venue: this was mainly due to the large nature of the conference venue thus it was difficult in locating some of the stands although they were directed. Moving from one stand to another was time consuming as some stands were far apart.

Speakers: I noticed that some of the speakers were swapped and as such, speakers content were not very clear. I believe such speakers were not prepared or it was a last minute thing. Also, some speakers could not speak loud even with a microphone. I struggled to hear them.

Projector disruption: In the M&E skills stand, the projector kept going off and on and this disrupted

speaker engagement with the audience.

Networking:

I must admit that I made some significant networks. I was able to speak to some of the key speakers and my co-emerging evaluators were open and interactive. I met great people at the conference and we exchanged ideas. The results may not be so immediate but at least it's ground zero for finding some great talent.

Next steps:

The next step is to continue engagement with fellow colleagues and looking for better ways to advance the profession. The journey of learning continued and there's always something new to learn in any industry. More workshops should be organised so that we can come together again. I am more than determined now to fully engage in the profession. My next wish is that by the next conference, I should attend as a speaker.

All in all, the conference was great, I learnt a lot which cannot all be mentioned here.