

To: SAMEA

Reflection on SAMEA conference 2015

First and foremost I would like to convey my sincerest gratitude for the emerging evaluator scholarship awarded to me. This was indeed an opportunity of a life time, transformative experience, and I can reassure SAMEA board members that every effort to select me as a scholarship holder will not go in vain.

In an effort to spread my conference experience I delivered a presentation to my superiors and colleagues at the provincial government of Gauteng on the 20th of October 2015, and the overarching theme was based on having a common voice in evaluating impact, and engaging with private sector and academia affiliated to SAMEA in an effort to achieve this. The response was positive and I am certain that SAMEA community will grow in the coming months.

My passion lies in ensuring that people exercise their basic human rights, and the workshop titled “evaluations of democracy, human rights, and governance” provided great insight into *how* these aspects can be evaluated with limited biasness from the evaluator. I will be honest, to evaluate these aspects is not easy, but the workshop facilitators demonstrated that with adequate exposure and mentorship it is possible to measure genuine impact as opposed to interpretive impact.

My second interest is enabling organisations to invest in sustainable projects which yield generational impact, and the workshop titled “a crash course on corporate social investment measurement perceptions” enabled astute engagement on best practices to determine social detriments; and to influence corporates to invest in projects which have ripple effects i.e. socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Influencing corporates on social development programmes is challenging, but the workshop taught me that collaborative efforts with various stakeholders, subsequent commitment to applying best practice methodologies in spite of external pressures, and passion to pursue positive change are recipes to recommending projects that matter to its recipients.

The conference in its entirety was a privilege and an honour; I cannot express sufficiently on this document my level of gratitude to SAMEA. I have made contacts with colleagues from national and international organisations, and sincerely hope that my continuous engagement with them will enable me to become a thriving evaluator whom SAMEA will be proud of. I will keep SAMEA updated on my progress, and willing to offer any assistance required by SAMEA on request.

With utmost gratitude;

Portia Mmakgosi Chaane