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SAMEA Conference Experience report

The SAMEA conference was a great experience for me. The first two days consisted of pre-conference workshops which I took part. I took up the “A systems thinking approach to results based M &E for Social Development Projects’. This workshop provided me with an overview of using a systems thinking approach towards M &E. The second workshop that I attended was “An Introduction to M &E for Social Development and Education programmes.

This conference was of great value for my professional development. Through the workshops, I acquired a working knowledge of how to use a systems thinking approach to results based Monitoring and Evaluation while developing an understanding of how to predict and manage unintended consequences within an M &E framework. I was equipped with a working knowledge of M&E design for social development initiatives. I also took part in ‘Learning Circles for ongoing professional development’ which introduced me to a way of learning in groups toward ongoing professional development. The other workshops included; Professionalization of evaluation and Capacity building for emerging evaluators.

I am currently conducting an internship with Southern Hemisphere, which is a Social Development consulting that specializes on M&E and trainings among other services. With the knowledge acquired at the workshops, I will be able to make sense of the work that I conduct at Southern Hemisphere. The information acquired will enable me to take an evaluation tender and map a process to be followed such as utilization of the Logic Framework, data collection methods to be used depending on the project. I will be able collect the essential information and design an effective M &E plan and foresee or predict unintended consequences. The workshops created a great foundation and enhanced my interest in the field of M &E. I am convinced that I would like to take on an M &E career. This conference provided me with essential tools to use as an M&E professional. My understanding of the M& E field and the current state of the M &E profession in South Africa was enhanced.

This conference allowed me to connect and network with individuals and experts in the field of M & E and understand how they conduct evaluations. To further M &E, I plan to establish a learning circle as I was inspired by Benoit Gartier. This exposed me to a new way of learning in groups and finally read the hundreds of M & E journals sitting on my computer. To take M & E further, I am currently looking for employment in the field of M& E. The mentorship programme creates a great opportunity for me to develop further into the field of M &E.

I would like to thank SAMEA and the sponsors for providing me with this great opportunity to learn and network within this field I have found to be interesting.