



My M&E Journey

An emerging evaluator



Hi, I'm Fatima

- M&E Officer at JET Education Services
- Social Sciences background
- 3 years of experience
- Keen interest in writing & data viz

Overview

- Discovering M&E
- Academic pursuits
- Joining the working world
- Finding my feet
- Challenges (and opportunities)

The Journey

2015

Confusion and struggling to find a place in professional world

Graduated with an MA Development Studies. Then I struggled to find a place in the professional world but knew I wanted to work in development. I then stumbled across an opportunity to study and MPhil in M&E at CREST, Stellenbosch University, whilst interning at a consultancy over 2 years.

2016-2017

Interning

A good environment to see the practical application of theoretical understanding.

Lessons learnt:

- There is a tension between the academic M&E world and the consulting space - a balance that I am still struggling to strike.
- Development of softer skills is critical.
- You have to learn to deal with failure because you won't be able to foresee blind spots. You need more experienced evaluators around you to avoid this.

2016-2017

Studying

The structure of the academic programme enabled cumulative learning supported by ongoing practical application.

Being in class with people from diverse backgrounds (including international students), from different sectors and with varied experience was extremely insightful and enabled: networking; developing and of the M&E landscape; and identification of mentors.

2017 -

Growing some roots as a professional evaluator

- Escaping the intern trap
- Participation in a VOPE
- Experience in different working environments

Challenges & Opportunities

Professional development

Finding time for professional development is challenging given the steep learning curve and the high-pressure environment of consulting.

Opportunity

SAMEA TIGs have been useful in providing convenient and bite-sized information

Benchmarking progress

It's challenging to self-assess. I am not quite sure where I need to dedicate more time and energy.

Opportunity

- Evaluator competencies being developed by SAMEA should enable more objective assessment
- Having a YEE network could be beneficial
- Access to experienced evaluators through SAMEA is something I have not explored