



**planning, monitoring
& evaluation**

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



The State of Emerging Evaluators in South Africa

Final Draft Survey Report

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Glossary

DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluations
EE	Emerging Evaluators
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PHD	Doctor of Philosophy
SAMEA	South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association
VOPE	Voluntary Organisations for Professional Evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) are collaborating to develop a database for Emerging Evaluators in South Africa. The Emerging Evaluators database collaboration falls within the capacity building portfolio as it seeks to strengthen Emerging Evaluators (EEs) in Monitoring and Evaluation skills and opportunities. Furthermore, both the SAMEA Emerging Evaluators Concept Note (2019) and the DPME draft Evaluation Capacity Development Strategy (2020-2024) stipulate potential mechanisms for strengthening EEs. Considering that both these strategies seem to complement each other, an opportunity for both parties to work together to achieve some of their objectives has been realised.

The SAMEA Emerging Evaluators Concept Note (2019) has been unpacked into an implementation plan, comprising of five strategy components. Four of these components can be easily facilitated with an existing and up to date emerging evaluators' database. Similarly, the DPME as part of its broader Evaluation Capacity Development Strategy (2020-2024), seeks to provide opportunities to young unemployed graduates. For this to be done, the partners need to tap into existing lists from different sources of youth or graduates who are interested in furthering a career in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). DPME and SAMEA reached a consensus that the SAMEA membership list is the only existing list, and that it would require updating. This process could be achieved through the conduct of a survey, enabling existing members to update their information and the identification of EEs.

A survey was developed in response to SAMEA and DPME's objectives to create an updated database of Emerging Evaluators that can be used to initiate, develop, and implement opportunities for Emerging Evaluators. The survey also assessed the extent to which various experienced evaluators and companies' probable responsiveness and willingness to support the emerging evaluators and other companies. Moreover, the survey elicited important reflections on the opportunities and constraints that enable or inhibit the professional growth of evaluators. The main objective of the survey was to develop a database of:

- Emerging Evaluators;
- Experienced Evaluators interested in mentoring Emerging Evaluators; and
- Emerging Evaluator Consultancy companies and potential M&E Consultancy Companies that could be potential hosts of Emerging Evaluators.

The online survey was launched on the 13th of August 2020 and closed on the 7th of September 2020 with a total of 117 respondents. A data analysis plan was developed outlining a roadmap on how the survey data will be organized and analysed. This current report details the process and findings of the survey. The report is aimed at achieving three objectives that relate to the goal of building a database of emerging evaluators, consultancy companies and potential mentors. These objectives are as follows:

1. Answer the key survey questions;
2. Generate key survey findings; and
3. Provide recommendations and a way forward.

2. METHODOLOGY

A mixed method approach was adopted in this exercise. Microsoft Excel and ATLAS.ti were used to generate findings and analyse the survey data. The survey was shared via electronic mail (e-mail) with the SAMEA Listserv participants, registered SAMEA members, Government officials and current M&E students and M&E graduates from two higher education institutions (Witwatersrand and Stellenbosch). A total of 117 participants responded to the survey. The data collected was analysed against the following questions/areas:

1. Geographic location of participants
2. Experience in Evaluation
3. Who are EEs?
4. How many participants are paid SAMEA members and non-members?
5. How many EEs are working/not working and in which sector?
6. Will participants be willing to volunteer to mentor an emerging evaluator?
7. What motivated participants to pursue M&E as a career path?
8. What are the enabling/inhibiting factors affecting new entrants to the evaluation field?

2.1 Limitations

The limitations of the analysis are as follows;

- The nature of the survey is highly vulnerable to selection bias and influences which are beyond the control of the researchers.

- Due to the nature of the selection, it is more strenuous to identify differences between subgroups and correlating some of the variables.
- Not all respondents answered all the survey questions, leading to gaps in data. It should also be noted that this is not a scientific sample survey and therefore, the results presented here are not conclusive but indicative of people’s experiences, perspectives and concerns around the support rendered to emerging evaluators.
- The respondents who chose to respond to this survey are not representative of the entire evaluation population and the results cannot be generalised.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Geographic location of participants

Figure 1 below illustrates the total number of respondents across South Africa and abroad.

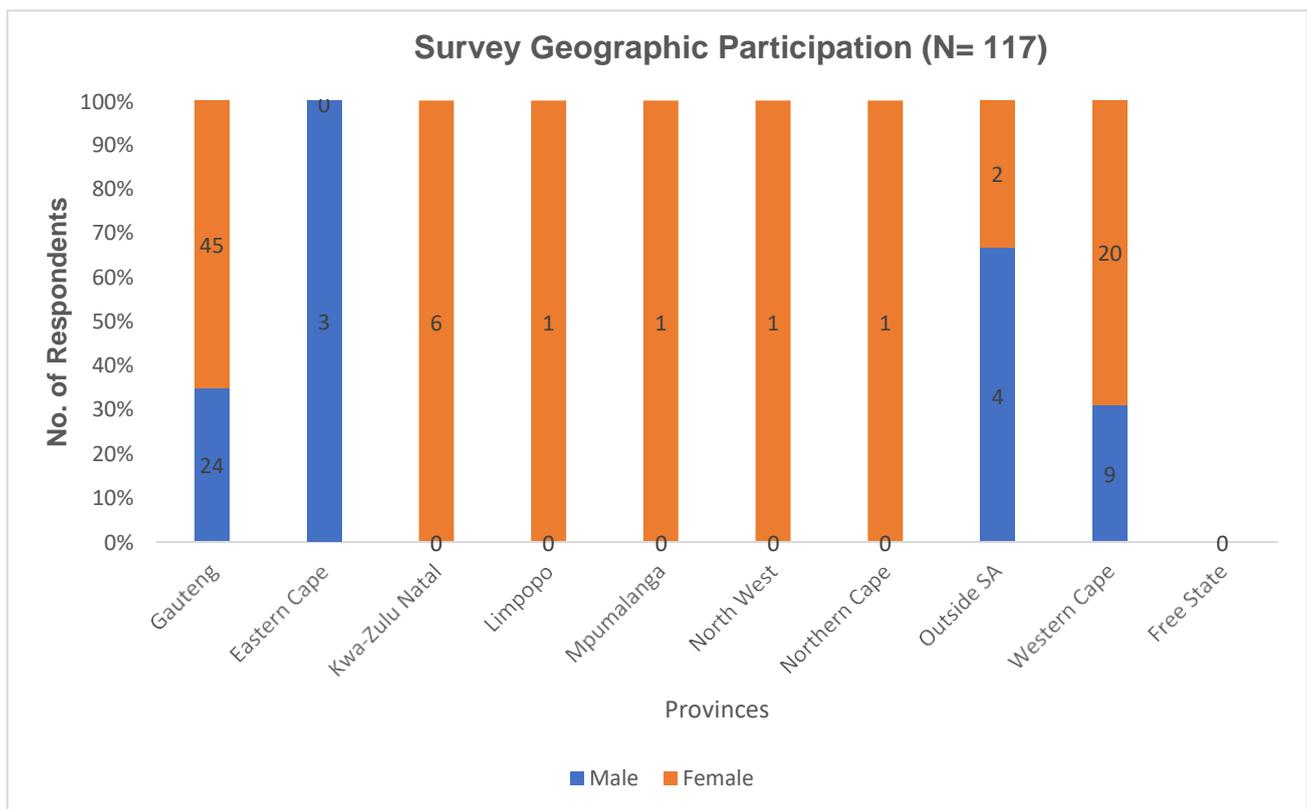


Figure 1: Number of Respondents per Geographic Location

The demographics indicate that most participants surveyed dwell within South Africa and were from Gauteng (69) followed by Western Cape (29) and Kwa-Zulu Natal (6). Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, and Northern Cape recorded the same results (1 participant each)

while no participation was recorded from Free State. Moreover, a total of 6 participants were from outside of South Africa. These participants were from Lesotho, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, USA, Australia, and Germany.

3.2 Experience in Evaluation

Figure 2 represents the categories of evaluations undertaken by the respondents.

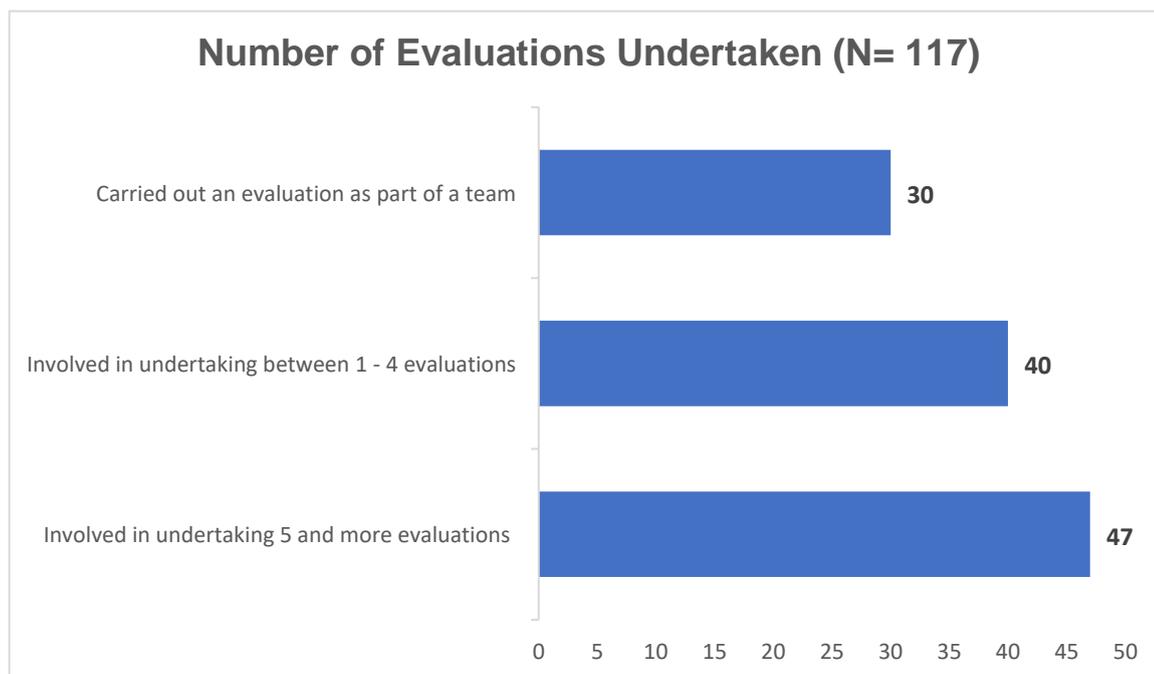


Figure 2: Number of Evaluations Undertaken by the Respondents

As shown in Figure 2, a total of 47 respondents have been involved in undertaking 5 or more evaluations. This is followed by a total of 40 respondents who have been involved in undertaking between 1 - 4 evaluations. Lastly, a total of 30 respondents have only been involved in carrying out evaluations as part of a team. Based on the results in Figure 2 above, 70 of the respondents can thus be classified as emerging evaluators as per the definition that is given in the following section.

3.3 Who are the Emerging Evaluators?

The DPME and SAMEA have devised a working definition and criteria for identifying EEs based on their respective concept notes. EEs are individuals who meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Individuals who have less than five years' experience and/or undertaken less than 5 evaluations;

2. Possession of a university qualification, and/or a M&E qualification;
3. Mid-career professionals with experience in research (including data collection, capturing and analysis) but would like to divert to evaluation.

3.3.1 Provincial Composition of Emerging Evaluators

Figure 3 below, depicts emerging evaluators according to their current province of residence and citizenship.

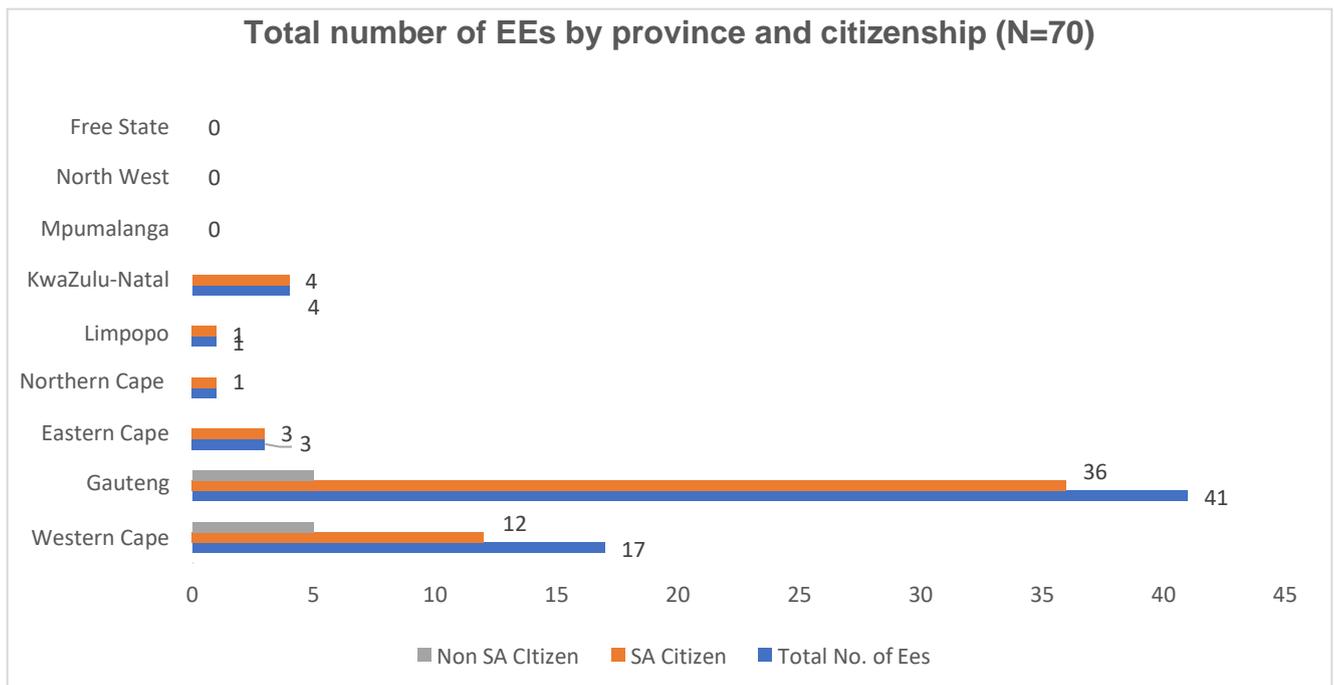


Figure 3: Number EEs by Province and Citizenship

The highest number of the respondents were based in Gauteng (n=41), followed by Western Cape (n=17). The remaining seven provinces had a limited number of responses. These results begin to support the narrative that argues that Gauteng and Western Cape have a large number of evaluation personnel because they house majority of government departments and development institutions who utilises the bulk of the evaluation evidence in the country.

3.3.2 Gender Composition of the Emerging Evaluators

The Figure below demonstrates the number of female and male EEs per province.

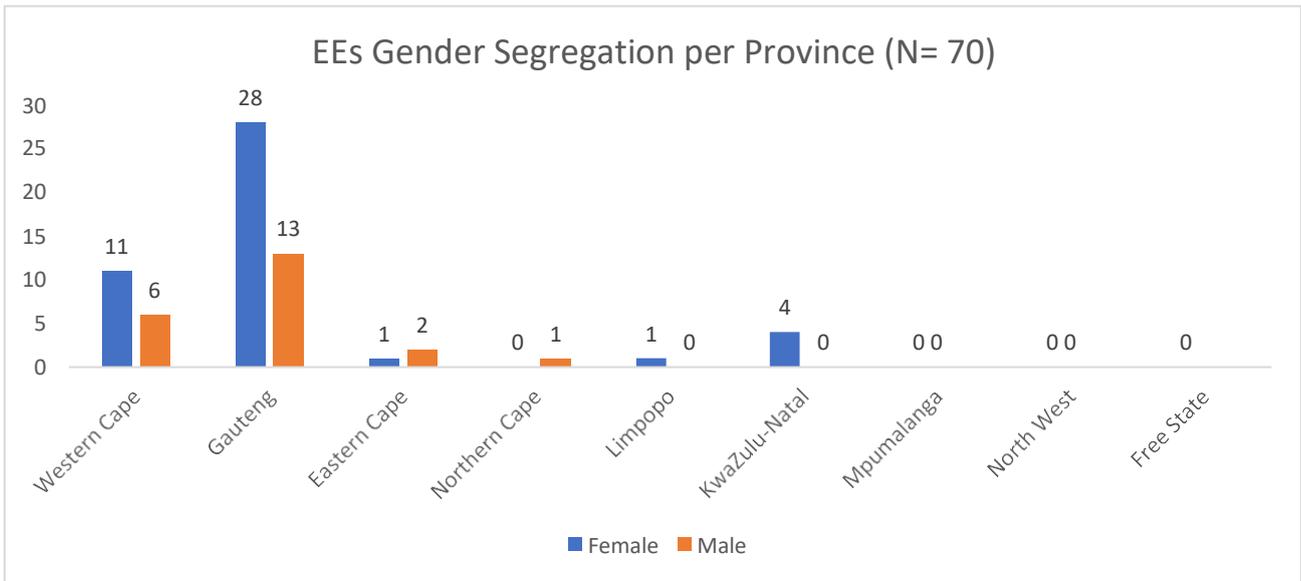


Figure 4: Respondents by Gender per Province

More females responded to the survey, with most residing in Gauteng (28) and Western Cape (11), and only four females from KwaZulu-Natal.

3.3.3 Emerging Evaluators by Race

Figure 5 below shows the race composition of emerging evaluators who responded to the survey.

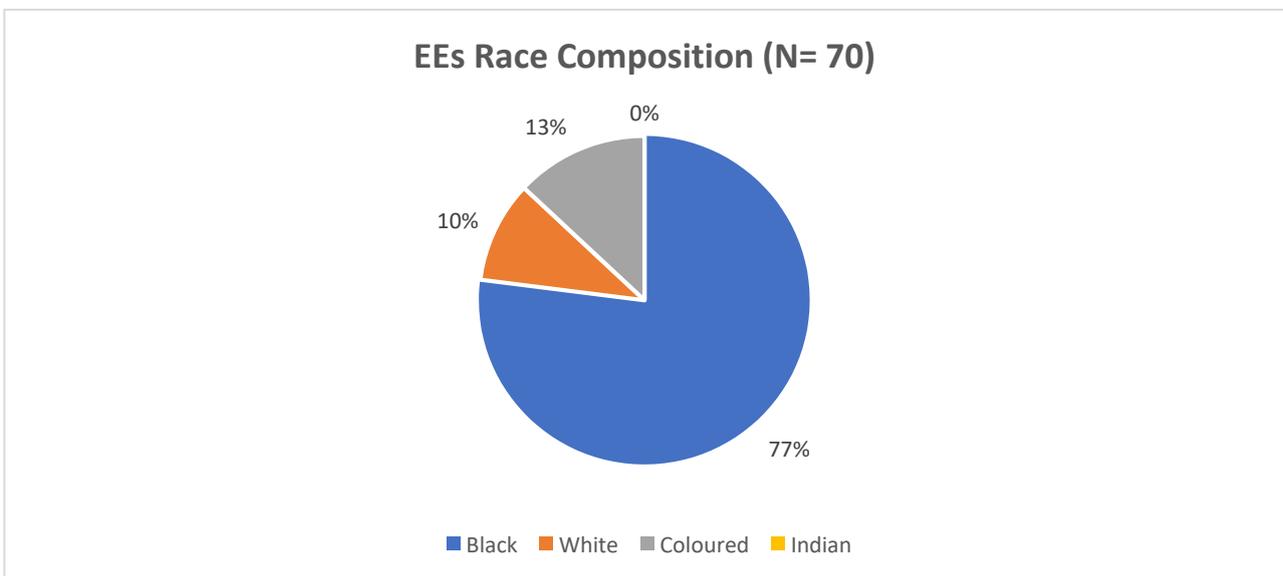


Figure 5: Respondents Race Composition

As illustrated in Figure 5, most of the respondents are African (77%), followed by Coloureds (13%) and Whites (10%). No Indian respondents participated in the survey.

3.3.4 Emerging Evaluators by Age

Figure 6 below shows the age composition of EEs who responded to the survey.

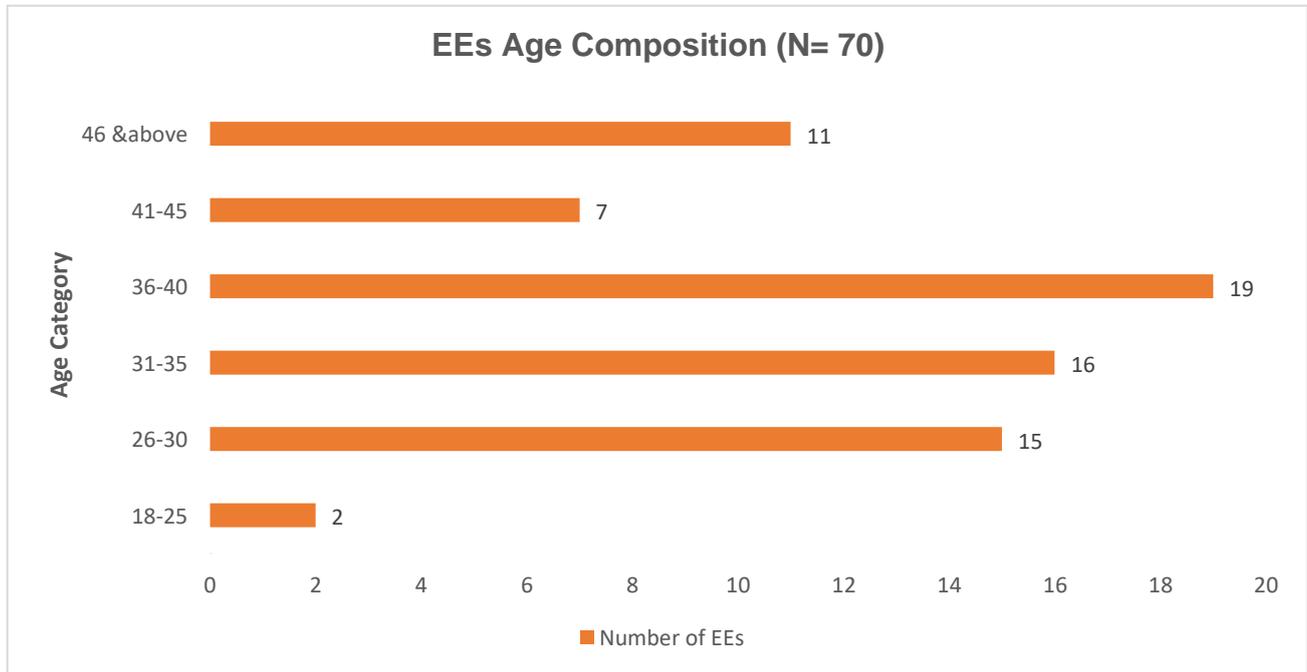


Figure 6: Age Composition

According to Figure 6, Most respondents (19) came from the age group 36-40 years, followed by 16 from age group 31-35 years and 15 from age group 26-30 years. None of the respondents were below age 18.

3.3.5 Emerging Evaluators Education Levels

The figure below indicates the EEs education levels.

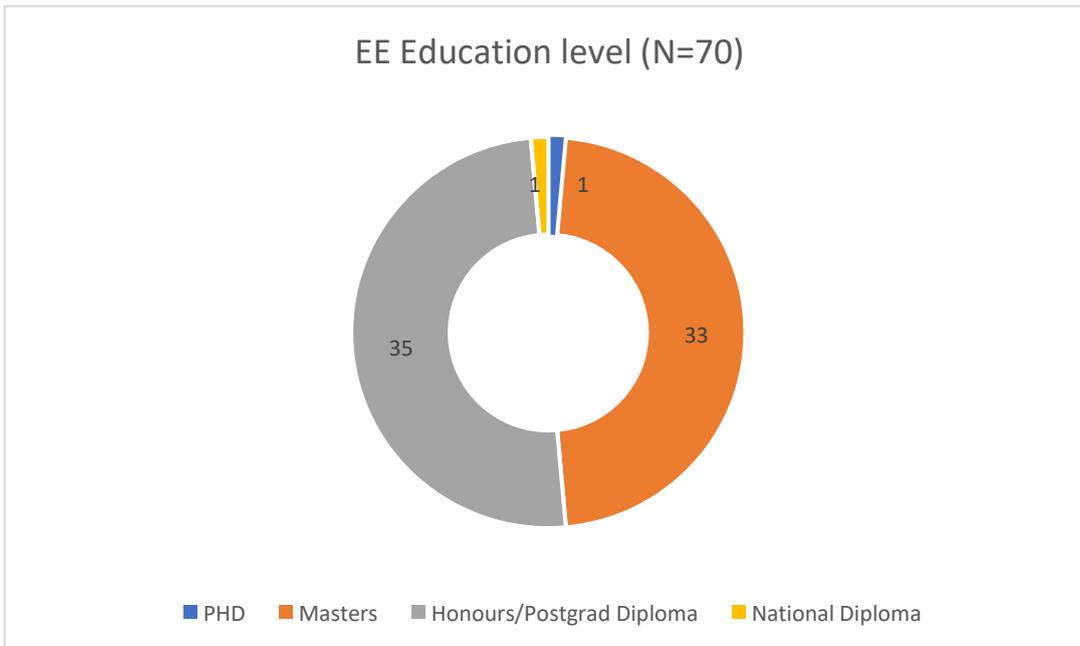


Figure 7: Education Level

According to the survey responses, majority of the EEs are found to be in possession of postgraduate qualifications. More specifically, 35 respondents hold Honours/ Postgraduate Diploma, 33 respondents hold Masters Degrees, one respondent holds a PHD and one has a National Diploma.

3.3.6 Emerging Evaluators Employment Status

Figure 8 below shows the employment status reported by EE’s who responded to the survey.

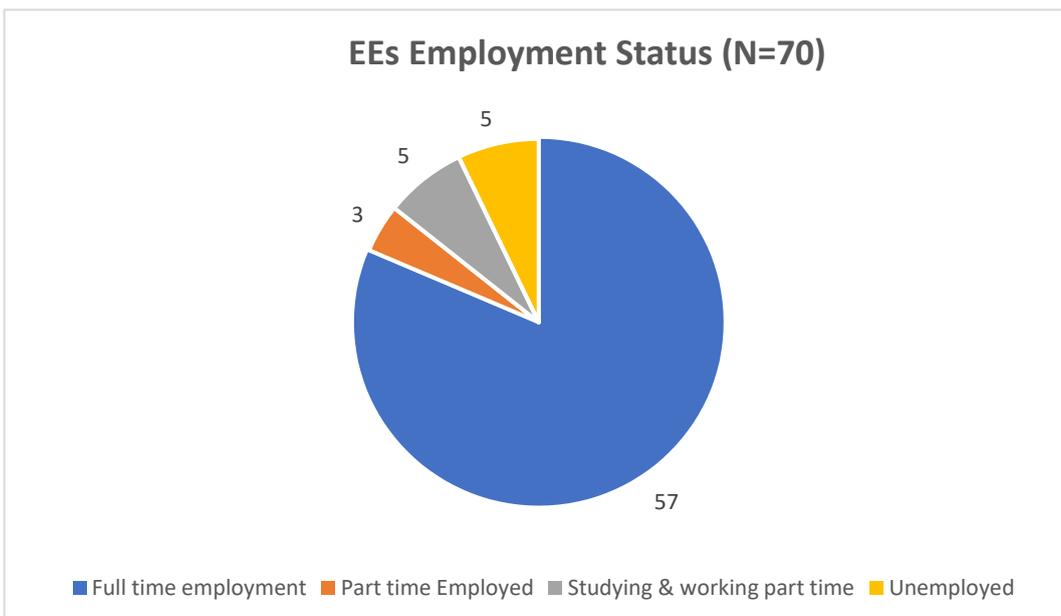


Figure 8: EE Employment Status

According to Figure 8 out of the 70 emerging evaluators, fifty-seven (57) work full time, (5) are studying and working part time, (3) work part time, whilst (5) are unemployed.

3.4 SAMEA Membership

The importance of being affiliated to a Voluntary Organisations for Professional Evaluation (VOPE) is that they avail a platform of fostering cross fertilisation of ideas, professional standards, building capacity and enabling partnerships in the evaluation sector. Figure 9 below illustrates the membership status of the survey respondents.

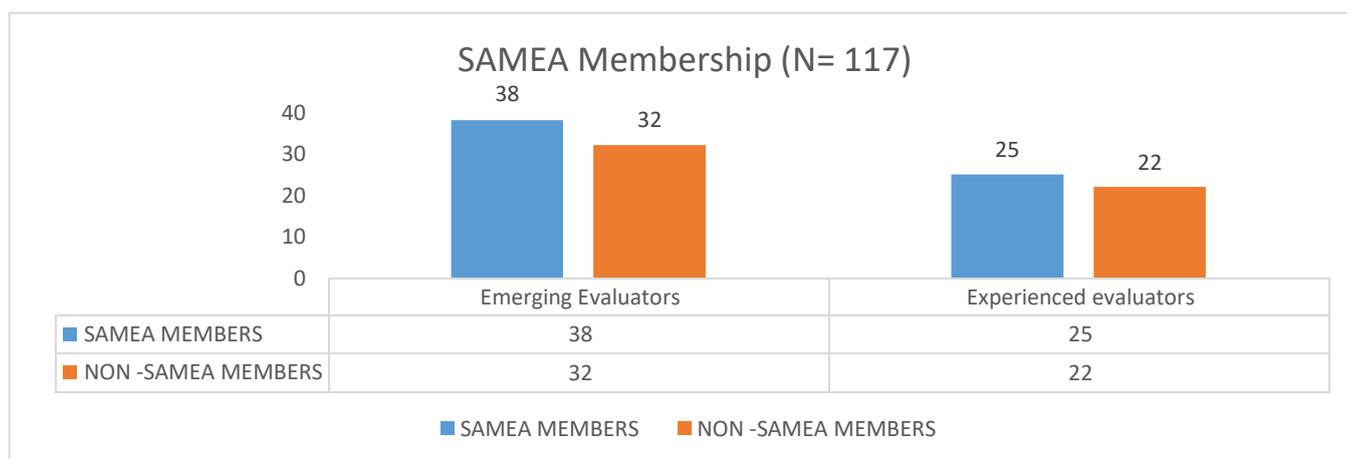


Figure 9: SAMEA Membership

According to Figure 9, a total of 38 of the 70 respondents who are emerging evaluators are SAMEA members, and the other 32 emerging evaluators are **not** SAMEA members. Furthermore 25 of the 47 respondents who are experienced evaluators, are SAMEA paid members, whilst 22 are not registered with SAMEA. It is also pertinent to note that some of the respondents are affiliated to other VOPEs other than SAMEA. Based on the responses depicted in the table, a total of 54 respondents are not members of SAMEA. The reasons for non-membership of these 54 respondents are outlined in Table 1 below.

Reasons for not being a SAMEA Member	Number of Respondents (N= 54)
No reason / have not considered	4
Do not know how to become a member	7
Not of benefit to be a member	10
Monetary constraints	8
Still in the process of registering	15
Have not renewed	6
Belong to another VOPE	1
Did not respond accordingly	4

Table 1: Reasons for not being a SAMEA Member

The results demonstrate that out of the 54 non-SAMEA members, fifteen (15) are in the process of registering, ten (10) do not see the benefits of being SAMEA members, eight (8) do not have the required registration fees). Moreover, seven (7) are oblivious to the process of becoming a SAMEA member, and four (4) do not have a reason or they have not considered becoming a member of SAMEA.

3.5 How many Emerging Evaluators are working/not working per sector?

Figure 10 below provides an overview of the employment status of EE's as well as a breakdown of the sectors that both emerging and experienced evaluators who responded to this survey are employed in.

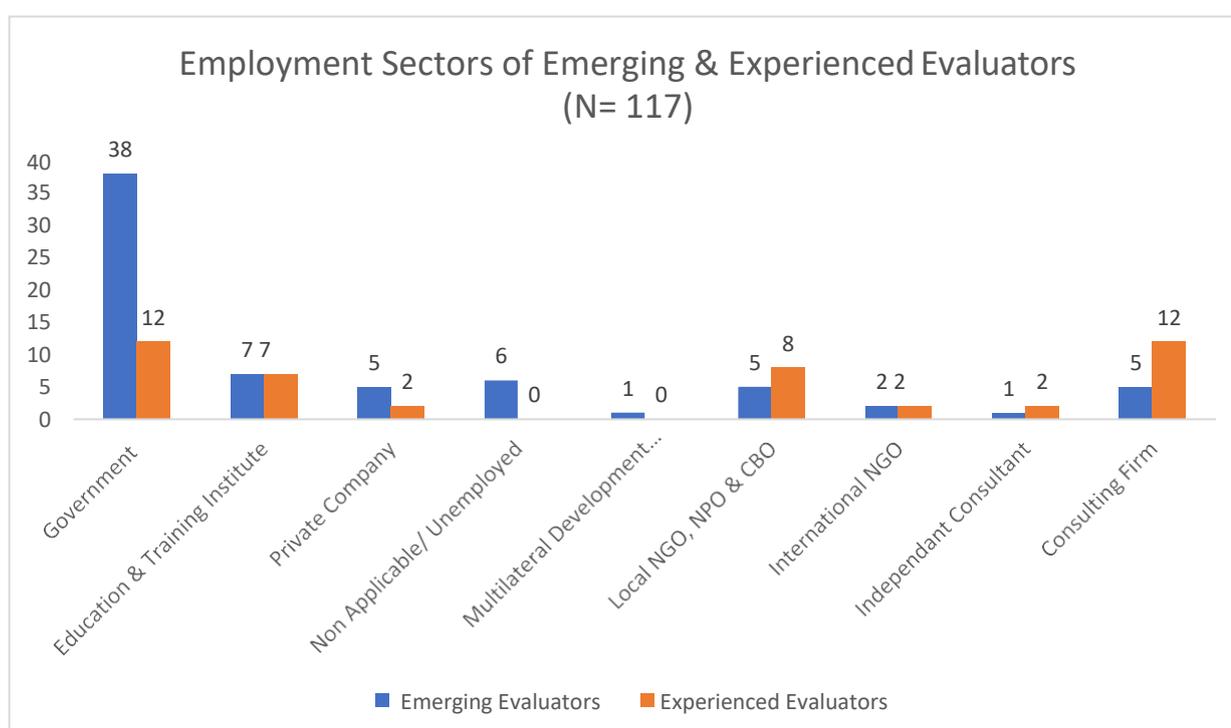


Figure 10: Employment Sectors

As shown in Figure 10, a total of six (6) of the respondents noted that they were still unemployed at the time of the survey. Notably, all six (6) of those who are unemployed are EE's. Out of the sixty-four (64) EE's who are employed, thirty-eight (38) are employed in the government sector, seven (7) in the education and training sector, five (5) in the consulting sector, and the remaining five (5) are employed in private companies.

A total of forty-five (45) experienced evaluators reported being employed. Most of the experienced evaluators are employed in the government (12) and consulting firms (12). Eight (8) of the experienced evaluators are employed in the local non-governmental organizations,

whilst seven (7) are employed in the education and training institutes. The rest are employed in Private companies (2), in International NGO's (2) and as Independent consultants (2). Notably, the results explicitly demonstrate that a few emerging and experienced respondents are independent evaluation consultants.

3.6 Are participants willing to voluntarily mentor an emerging evaluator?

Twenty-two (22) of the experienced evaluators mentioned that they are willing to mentor emerging evaluators whilst twenty-five (25) stated that they were not willing to mentor emerging evaluators. The reasons for the lack of willingness to mentor were not explored in this survey but should be considered for future research. On the other hand, from a total of seventeen (17) consulting companies, the majority (16 companies) stated that they are willing to partner with the emerging M & E consulting companies.

3.7 What motivated participants to pursue M&E as a career path?

Motivations behind pursuing an M&E career path were shared by the 117 survey respondents. Common reasons cited, were about respondents' desire to improve institutional and programme performance, as is illustrated in the following statement:

“To promote evidence-based interventions and provide information for informed decision making”

Other reasons given were centred around M&E allowing respondents to contribute to social change as quoted by 2 respondents below:

“I have a keen interest in social development and evaluation provides an opportunity to provide evidence to implementers of socio-economic development projects that can be used to improve performance and have an impact on the lives of project beneficiaries”

“provide evidence to implementers of socio-economic development projects that can be used to improve performance and have an impact on the lives of project beneficiaries”

In addition to the accounts above, some respondents indicated that they entered the field by chance as it was an organic process.

3.8 What are the enabling/inhibiting factors affecting new entrants to the evaluation field?

The survey also sought to comprehend the enabling and inhibiting factors affecting new entrants to the evaluation field. The notion that evaluators can come from a broad range of academic and professional backgrounds is one of the motivating factors for one to enter the evaluation field.

Emerging evaluators shared some of the challenges they are experiencing as they enter the evaluation profession and how context specific issues can be addressed. A lack of funding opportunities for one to study monitoring and evaluation was expressed as a challenge. In addition, there is limited information on how one can broaden their skills base in the field, exacerbated by few universities offering undergraduate degrees in M&E. The few that offer M&E courses, start at postgraduate level, which are costly and with stringent entry requirements. Additionally, the respondents cited a panoply of inhibiting factors such as:

“the unwillingness of the experienced evaluators to mentor or work with new entrants because most of the evaluation opportunities require many years of experience and this includes both evaluations positions and consultant opportunities”.

Although the minimal mentorship is an inhibiting factor, one of the respondents indicated that VOPE's and associations like SAMEA are great platforms for skills development and networking for new entrants in the field of evaluation, and they highly encourage emerging evaluators to engage in such platforms.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this survey indicate a demand for SAMEA and DPME to augment and be more intentional with on boarding emerging evaluators. This can be done through having an up to date database of emerging evaluators which will be used to match EEs with available opportunities (i.e. jobs, scholarships). The survey and accompanying processes are the first step toward populating an emerging evaluator database and ensuring a collaboration between SAMEA and DPME on the implementation of the SAMEA and DPME EE concept notes and strategies.

Informed by the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for SAMEA and DPME's consideration.

1. Identify internship/work experience/work placement opportunities for emerging evaluators
2. DPME should collaborate with SAMEA to commission smaller studies targeted at EEs and small black-owned consultancies to develop capacity and encourage the growth of small evaluation and research consultancies as does the EvalYouth.
3. Emerging evaluators often lack a portfolio of experience required of professionals. This demand strengthens the professional capacity and credibility of less experienced evaluators.
4. In the past, evaluation capacity development focused on strengthening the capacities of the knowledge and skills of individuals. However, it is clear that capacity development should be based on a systematic approach taking into account three levels (individual, institutional, and external enabling environment). The, DPME and SAMEA should identify strategies to promote more inclusive approaches that will ensure employment and nurturing of emerging evaluators and companies.
5. SAMEA should conduct a rigorous campaign through different platforms to ensure that people are aware of the benefits and reasons why one should become a member. Enabling participation therefore involves bridging the barriers by working with disconnected members to raise awareness, support, upskill and encourage members to participate in different VOPEs.

5. CONCLUSION

The report findings combined with a review of the existing gaps in the contemporary capacity building initiatives in the evaluation landscape necessitate a call to action for all champions and actors in the evaluation space. This call is to adopt a more contextually relevant, adaptive, equitable, inclusive, and democratic definition of what constitutes an emerging evaluator, and devise pragmatic strategies to ensure full support is rendered.

DPME and SAMEA, through the commitments outlined in DPME's Evaluation Capacity Development Strategy, and SAMEA's Emerging Evaluators Concept Note are well placed to facilitate strategies that support emerging evaluators. Hence, the collaboration, which has commenced with a survey with the main aim to develop a database of:

- Emerging Evaluators;
- Experienced Evaluators interested in mentoring Emerging Evaluators; and
- Emerging Evaluator Consultancy companies and potential M&E Consultancy Companies to be potential hosts of Emerging Evaluators.

There is ample evidence of the positive contribution of mentoring to the improvement in skills development, social and professional competence, and intellectual development as well the development of sundry vocational skills that are required for the professionalization of the evaluation discipline. As such, the database is intended to be used to identify suitable mentors who will transfer their skills to the emerging evaluators and represents DPME and SAMEA's response to finding strategies that extend support to emerging evaluators.

NKENSA, NDATA, ASANTE SANA, NGIYABONGA, NDIYABULELA ENKOSI, NDO
LIVHUWA RO, DANKIE