

SAMEA

Board of Directors

Annual Report 2012-2013

presented at the AGM on 18 September 2013

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1. Introduction

SAMEA strives to cultivate a vibrant community that will support, guide and strengthen the development of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as an important discipline, profession and instrument for empowerment and accountability in South Africa.

Through this it intends to promote the recognition of M&E as a profession and discipline essential to development, and practiced and used in a manner that adds significant value to effective, sustainable development in South Africa.

The day-to-day activities of SAMEA are undertaken under the leadership of the voluntary Board of Directors, with limited administrative support from a part-time administrator. The directors for 2012-2013 were:

- Dr Babette Rabie (Chairperson)
- Mr Terence Beney (Deputy Chair)
- Mr Rae Wolpe (Treasurer)
- Prof Christo de Coning
- Dr Stephen Rule
- Mr Jabu Mathe
- Ms Irene Mathenjwa
- Mr Stanley Ntakumba
- Mr Taurai Bwerinofa
- Mr Mike Leslie

This report presents an overview of the current financial, institutional and membership status of the association, followed by a summary of activities undertaken by the Board of Directors during the year 2012- 2013.

2. SAMEA Financial status

2.1. Statement of accounts (Rae)

SAMEA began the 2012 financial year with a balance of R977,806.00 and ended the financial year with a balance of R1,083,396.00. SAMEA's revenue in 2012/13 comprised a total of R458,088 which was made up of sponsorship of R323,309 and membership fees of R134,779.00. The main expenses were conference related (R123,646 conference costs, R51,515 for workshop presenter costs, board-related (R51,515 in travel costs for board meetings).

2.2. Cash flow projection (Rae)

SAMEA is aiming to maintain a healthy financial balance in the 2013/14 financial year of approximately R1 million, depending on income generated from the September 2013 Conference as well as membership revenue.

2.3. New policies in the pipeline

The Board has agreed to develop an Approval Framework to govern decision-making and a system of delegations for different categories of financial and other decisions to promote good governance as well as efficiency.

3. Institutional arrangements

Officers of professional associations conduct business on behalf of members on a voluntary basis. Their effectiveness is constantly challenged by the need to attend to multiple commitments and professional obligations. This situation frequently results in the professional association rapidly encountering a ceiling to growth and functionality.

SAMEA before 2013 relied on part-time administrative support contracted in, with Ms Refilwe Masikane providing valuable institutional capacity and support to the association. Ms Masikane were unable to further provide this support from April 2013, as she accepted a full-time appointment. SAMEA however thanks Ms Masikane for the invaluable contribution she has made to the association.

The lesson from associations worldwide is that the appointment of a permanent secretariat marks a significant surge in its growth trajectory. Recognizing this, in 2012, the board began exploring the feasibility of appointing a secretariat. A careful review of our financial capacity, modeling the financial implications of committing to appointing a secretariat, and the approval of a procedure to remunerate expenses for a temporary SAMEA Coordinator followed.

The results of these activities were presented to the membership at the 2012 AGM, and approval was obtained to proceed with recruitment and appointment for two positions - an Administrator and Coordinator (see minutes of 2012 AGM).

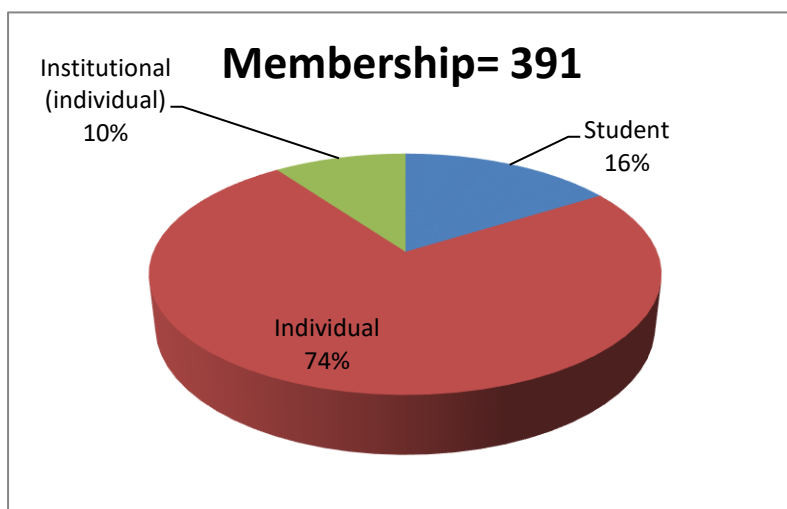
After a properly implemented recruiting process, SAMEA appointed in August 2013 a part-time Administrator to provide administrative support to the Association's permanent secretariat. In addition to providing support to conference preparations, Kate Mwaura, with technical support from one of our institutional members, has been developing administrative systems that will see a marked improvement in SAMEA's capacity to serve members.

The appointment of a Coordinator has been delayed. After a properly implemented recruitment procedure the Board felt that there was not a sufficiently large candidate pool for the appointment to be made without doubts being raised about procedural correctness. The recruitment and appointment of a SAMEA Coordinator will be re-initiated after the conference.

SAMEA will be one of the first Evaluation Association globally to have taken this bold step.

4. Membership

As of 17 August 2013, there were 391 members of SAMEA in good-standing activated on the membership database. Of the 391 members, 289 were individuals, 63 were students, and 39 fell under the category of institutional members (from 5 institutions). There was a net increase of 30 members when compared with February 2013 (6 months previous at the start of membership tracking). This increase may be due to increased awareness around the SAMEA Conference and recent communication efforts.



The 39 individuals who comprise the institutional membership are from the following five organisations: Zenex Foundation, University of Fort Hare, the Public Service Commission, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and the Department of Performance Monitoring & Evaluation.

The SAMEA database has captured 2298 former SAMEA members with at least one registered transaction (historically activated membership) who are not currently members. This is indicative of a substantial number of legacy members who are no longer active in SAMEA.

4.1. Membership profiles present on the website

After highlighting earlier in the year that less than a third of the members publically listed on the SAMEA website membership directory were actually active members, the matter was addressed with the website administrator and this has since been rectified for consistency with the members' database. There were 136 active members who appear on the SAMEA website membership directory at the time of writing. This was 34.8% of active members.

This analysis prompted a revision of registration and membership activation processes in an attempt to streamline and automate these processes as far as possible. As such, future SAMEA members will automatically receive an online profile upon registration, as appose to this being managed as a separate registration process, with an option to 'opt-out' of the online profile provided as part of the integrated registration process. Members will receive electronic correspondence on the e-mail address provided during registration, reminding them to reactivate their membership status upon it expiration date. Monthly bank statements are also provided to the SAMEA administrator to reconcile payments received and reactivate memberships accordingly.

4.2. Membership survey (September 2013)

The SAMEA Board would like to improve its services to SAMEA members by ensuring responsiveness and effectiveness in meeting such needs using all resources in its disposal. In this regard, the Board has decided to solicit members' views about various issues relating to work of the association. This is in line with the founding document of SAMEA, especially the need for the Board to, among other things, strive for the following principles:

- Be credible, transparent and ethical in their operations; and
- Provide opportunities for members to have a voice in the affairs of the Association, using a collaborative leadership approach to instil confidence among members that the governing body represents their interests.

A questionnaire was compiled and circulated to members during September 2013. Members could either respond on-line, or complete the survey and manually submit at the conference. Findings of this survey will go a long way to help the Board direct the activities of the association in a manner that is meaningful to the members.

5. Key activities for 2012-2013

5.1. 4th BIENNIAL SAMEA CONFERENCE: Meaningful Evaluation: Improving Use and Results, 2013

i. Co-hosts

SAMEA in partnership with the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) is hosting its 4th Biennial Conference on 16-20 September 2013 at the Hilton Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg. The conference seeks to build on and harness the momentum around M&E in the country by providing a high-profile event, which offers M&E practitioners, academics, consultants and users the opportunity to participate in training workshops, panel discussions, paper presentations, and networking to advance M&E. We anticipate and actively encourage the involvement of stakeholders from all sectors and at all levels, including politicians, administrators, policy-makers, civil society activists, the research and academic sector, consultancies, the private sector, and community representatives.

The conference will consist of two components, namely, pre-conference workshops and the conference as the main event. The training programme is of high calibre and gives preference to accredited trainings, thus offering participants applicable skills relevant to M&E practice. The conference will focus on the role played by M&E in advancing good governance and democracy, the use and impact of M&E on the country, a critical appraisal of the performance of the M&E institutions in the country and the reflection on methodologies used for M&E, with regards to the extent to which it supports context-specific solutions. Specifically, the objectives of the conference are:

- To produce a premier M&E event that galvanises M&E expertise, in order to deepen transparency and accountability in the country and region

- To build capacity for M&E at all levels and across sectors, by improving the understanding and use of M&E theories and tools, by providing M&E experts the platform to address and engaged with delegates
- To create a platform for sharing best practices and opportunities for synergies around M&E
- To increase focus on local and international trends that shape the M&E field
- To give recognition to emerging local M&E best practices and case studies

To 2013 Conference is co-hosted by SAMEA, the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). As such, it further promotes the long-standing relationship and the Memorandum of Understanding between SAMEA and the PSC, and also the newly established formalised relationship and Memorandum of Understanding between SAMEA and the DPME.

The Public Service Commission is mandated amongst others to execute a monitoring and evaluation function. Since its inception in 2000, the PSC has advanced M&E both in South Africa and abroad. The PSC's mandate as per the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, is to "investigate, monitor and evaluate" public administration, along a set of 9 values and principles, all of which direct practice towards the attainment of good governance. The PSC seeks to promote transparency and accountability within government departments by stimulating dialogue on what these values mean in public administration practice. As an independent and impartial body, reporting to and protected by parliament, it also has a related function of creating dialogue on performance at various levels. The PSC's work is regularly presented within state and public media and serves as a basis for healthy and democratic debate.

In giving effect to its mandate, the PSC has initiated and/or directly participated in; (1) building local capacity to develop evaluation frameworks; (2) developing and presenting evaluation findings; (3) testing innovative approaches to evaluation research. These results have been shared with many. The PSC has made presentations to evaluation associations on 5 continents, facilitated evaluation training courses (International programme for development Evaluation: IPDET, 2007-date), and published its work extensively. Its overall strategy has been to constructively engage civil society, academia and the legislature on its methodologies and results. The PSC has established a firm institutional reputation for evaluation excellence, and continues to be a node for evaluation events in the country and region.

The PSC, as part of executing its mandate in monitoring and evaluation, has taken a lead role in co-hosting international events, presenting papers in M&E, as well as teaching and publishing. These events have generally been designed to provide hands-on practitioner training, exposure to key developments in the discipline, and generally serving as a node for excellence.

A Ministry of Performance M&E and Administration was created in the Presidency in 2008 and a Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation was established in January 2010. The initial mandate focused on the 12 priorities of government, developing M&E targets for these plans to deliver them, and then working with relevant departments to unlock delivery

of these plans. DPME also assesses management performance of departments using the Management Performance Assessment Tool, MPAT and attends to citizens' complaints reported on the Presidential Hotline and during unannounced frontline service inspections. In 2011, the focus shifted to Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF), which was approved by Cabinet in November 2011, followed by two National Evaluation Plans focusing on 23 evaluations of priority government intervention.

ii. Preconference workshops

In an effort to extend the reach of the conference, the organisers attempted to organise workshops in Sandton, Cape Town, Kwazulu Natal and Eastern Cape to run simultaneously from 16 – 17 September 2013. While this initiative was met with initial enthusiasm by both the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape, the actual registrations did not render this initiative financial viable. At the end, only the Sandton based workshops were continued. Of the 13 workshops originally scheduled, only 11 proved viable one month prior to the conference. The final list of pre-conference workshops includes:

- Managing Evaluation for Use (by Dr Marlene Roefs)
- Quantitative Impact Evaluation Methodologies for Experienced Evaluators (originally by Dr Howard White, but replaced by Gareth Robers and Volker Schoer from Witwatersrand University)
- Developing a Strategic and Operational Performance Results Based Management System (Mr Sandiran Premakanthan)
- Rapid Impact Evaluation (Dr Andy Rowe)
- Working with data in M&E (Prof Gert van der Westhuizen / Prof Mark Abrahams)
- Introduction to the National Evaluation Framework (Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation)
- Realworld Evaluation (Dr Jim Rugh)
- Theory based Evaluation (originally by Prof Patricia Rogers, replaced by Dr Donna Podems)
- Research in Neuroscience: data management (Mr Manie Bosman and Ms Sonja Blignaut)
- Policy Research: Do findings make a difference (Ms Sarah Bliss)
- Introduction to M&E systems (Ms Dena Lomofsky / Ms Nana Davies)

Workshops that were cancelled due to inadequate initial response 30 days prior to the conference include:

- Human Rights and Gender Responsive Evaluation (Mr Casper Merkle)
- Culturally Responsive Evaluation 101 (Prof Rodney Hopson)
- Maximising evaluation utilisation: how to creatively report so that evaluation results are used (Ms Jerushah Rangasami)

iii. Conference programme & streams

Through the “Meaningful Evaluation: Improving Use and Results” theme, the conference will reflect on the use of evaluations in improving the end results of development interventions, as well as the importance of evaluation practices in addressing issues of empowerment, sustainability, knowledge management and accountability, all of which are pertinent to the development question.

The conference highlights includes keynote addresses by:

- Hon. Collins Chabane, Minister in the Presidency for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation;
- Prof Howard White (3ie)
- Dr Fred Carden (AusAID);
- Prof Patricia Rogers (BetterEvaluation) Dr Jim Rugh (EvalPartners), as well as Dr Gonzalo Hernandez (Mexico);
- Dr Sully Gariba (Presidential Advisor: Ghana);
- Dr Sean Phillips, (DPME);
- Dr Richard Levin (PSC) ;
- Dr Albert Byamugish (Office of Prime Minister, Uganda);
- Dr Amy Gottlieb (USAID/PEPFAR); and
- Dr David Allen (MD Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).

7 Contemporary themes were organised into parallel sessions:

- Meaningful Evaluation: Improving Use and Results of existing evaluations
- Government Evaluation Systems
- Evaluation in the non-government sector
- Evaluation in the private sector
- Made in Africa Evaluation for Development
- Evaluation Revisited, Emerging Evaluators
- Innovative ICT for improved evaluation

At Friday 13 September the registration numbers for the conference was on 403 pre-registrations , where after the conference secretariat moved to on-site registrations. Registrations for pre-conference workshops were also satisfactory, with some pre-conference workshops reaching maximum capacity.

5.2. Emerging evaluators

SAMEA has in the last number of years increasingly focused on support to Emerging Evaluators (EE) as the future of Monitoring and Evaluation as a discipline and performance management approach lies in the quality of our future practitioners and academics that are active in the field. This year SAMEA received a total 107 applications for Emerging Evaluator Scholarships (by the closing date) to the Conference and with the available funding from ZENEX, SAMEA was able to award 11 scholarships. The SAMEA Board wishes to congratulate those SAMEA Members that were awarded Scholarships and it is hoped that you will take full advantage of the opportunities offered by this initiative. The SAMEA Board also wishes to thank all applicants that have submitted applications and would like to encourage unsuccessful

applicants to continue to pursue opportunities like these to advance your careers, also by applying for the Scholarships again in 2014.

This year, our SAMEA Chairperson also proposed that the Programme includes, over and above the dedicated sessions for the presentation of papers by Emerging Evaluators, (see Session 6 on the SAMEA Conference Programme 2013), a dedicated Conference session where Mentors may be able to advise Emerging Evaluators on M&E career path opportunities and by discussing options for Emerging Evaluators to empower themselves. SAMEA also placed a BLOG posting where a particular effort was made to place a focus on the opportunities offered to Emerging Evaluators by the SAMEA 2013 Conference but also to provide some options for consideration by young professionals that want to advance their careers.

5.3. SAMEA Strategic planning session

On 2 May 2013 the SAMEA board of Directors reviewed the strategic priorities and status quo of the association. The board confirmed (with minor changes) that the vision and mission of the association was still appropriate given the purposes and aims of the association. The current strategic objectives were also reaffirmed, with two additions noted in italics below:

- Increase interaction and information sharing among all those interested in M&E.
- *Increase recognition of the need for M&E.*
- Improve the use of M&E theory and enhance practice.
- Promote the development and adoption of M&E approaches and methods appropriate to the South African and developmental context.
- Promote high quality intellectual, ethical and professional standards in M&E.
- Create awareness of innovative international and local trends in M&E.
- Promote quality research in the field of M&E that contributes to the national and international body of knowledge.
- Promote education, training and continuing professional development in the field of M&E.
- *Enhance leadership and management capacity and commitment to use evidence in decision making.*

Key strengths of the association were listed as:

- Strong financial position for the past 18 months (in relation to previous financial years)
- Successful conferences / capacity building events
- Strong partnerships and collaboration (DPME, PSC, Regional Networks, EvalPartners) and the important role of SAMEA
- Acknowledged international profile
- Regional representation in terms of the chapters, networks and associations (Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Kwazulu Natal)
- SAMEA talk has 750 e-mail addresses of persons interested in M&E issues
- Growing recognition of the need for M&E (especially in the public sector)
- Self-organising ourselves through voluntary contribution – fairly strong Board of Directors
- Ability to facilitate and represent the views of broader society

Weaknesses listed during the discussion includes:

- Relatively low membership numbers (given no competition)
 - Understanding the needs of our members
 - Awareness of our value proposition – benefits to our members?
 - Institutional membership benefits
- Poor understanding of what M&E looks like in civil society or non government sectors
- Communication and marketing to be improved, limited use of social media platforms
- Lack of dedicated capacity for SAMEA activities (secretariat and other capacity)
- Geography:
 - Need for greater geographical representation from various provinces
 - Logistical issues with national coordination
- ‘Cold provinces’: leaving a question about what happens at local level
- Cumbersome registration process
- Website to be redesigned to more intuitive (easy to use), allow for easy update content, and to be perceived as a useful platform for different sectors and users
- Limited income stream and a limited amount of sponsors.

This discussion, with responses from members to be attained through the September membership survey, may provide a basis for the formulation of specific strategies and action plans to guide the association in the medium term.

5.4. SAMEA DPME standing committee

SAMEA has made significant strides in the quest to create an enabling environment for Monitoring and Evaluation in South Africa. The most successful initiative has been the partnership with the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), which is located within the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa. This relationship was formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which sets out the roles of the two parties. In terms of the MOU, SAMEA and DPME agree, amongst others, to cooperate and collaborate around capacity development and promoting M&E in the country. On-going collaboration opportunities are discussed on the institutionalised SAMEA-DPME standing committee platform that meets every six to eight weeks. As part of this partnership, workshops have been organized by SAMEA and DPME to comment on Government Standards and Competencies for Evaluation. Furthermore, both parties have collaborated in establishing provincial SAMEA Chapters in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape provinces, which was coupled with well-attended M&E training workshops and they are currently collaborating in co-hosting the Biennial Conference in September 2013. SAMEA have also been invited to comment on draft DPME guidelines and policy frameworks, to incorporate the viewpoints of M&E professionals from various sectors and enhance the viability and successful implementation of these policies and guidelines.

5.5. Eastern Cape Chapter

Following the successful launch of the Kwa-zulu Natal MERA in August 2012, key role players in the Eastern Cape approached the SAMEA board with a proposal to support the establishment of a SAMEA chapter in the Eastern Cape.

From the 18-20 March 2013, SAMEA and the Department of Performance Monitoring & Evaluation in the Presidency hosted the Launch of the Eastern Cape Chapter of SAMEA and a series of skills development workshops in collaboration with the Eastern Cape Office of the Premier, the University

of Fort Hare, and the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature. The event was held at the Premier Hotel Regent, East London and saw approximately 200 people in attendance over the three days of presentations, election and workshops. Speakers included: Mbulelo Sogoni, the Director-General of the Eastern Cape Office of the Premier; Sean Phillips, the Director-General of the Department of Performance Monitoring & Evaluation; Dr Mvuyo Tom, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Fort Hare; and Terence Beney, Deputy-Chair of SAMEA.

The Launch of the Eastern Cape Chapter of SAMEA was widely acknowledged as a success. The combination of constructive debate, skills development and the establishment of a new M&E structure within the Eastern Cape proved a winning formula. The Eastern Cape Chapter of SAMEA Executive Committee elected at the event is:

- Prof. Edwin Ijeoma (UFH)
- Ronke Harbor (EC OTP)
- Antony Sambumbu (UFH)
- Ogo Nzewi (UFH)
- Herbert Batidzirai (EC DEDEAT)
- Sibongile Gobile (Siseko Consulting)
- Dr. O. Marwisi (Provincial Department of Education)
- Dr. A. Kwame (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University)

Under the leadership of the Executive Committee, the Eastern Cape Chapter followed a further M&E capacity-building event from 22 – 23 July 2013 on *Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation practice in Municipal and Local Government administration*.

The SAMEA board invited the Eastern Cape Executive Committee to host capacity building workshops in the province coinciding with the SAMEA conference in Sandton in September. The invitation was met with enthusiasm, but unfortunately was later not deemed feasible, given the two successful M&E events already completed in the province in the preceding 6 months. It is hoped that such an event would be possible in the future, to enable SAMEA to include more members in on-going events, through the extended capacity of the active provincial chapters (Eastern Cape) and networks (KZN MERA and Western Cape M&E Network).

5.6. Peer 2 Peer project

In February 2013 EvalPartners invited qualified Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs) to apply for small grants for implementation of peer-to-peer projects between VOPEs. Through the Peer-to-Peer (P2P) program small grant facility EvalPartners seeks to support bilateral and multilateral mutually beneficial partnership projects jointly developed by National or Regional VOPEs. The amount of support provided by the P2P program small grant facility is up to USD 5,000 per project. At minimum a project proposal should be developed by two National or Regional VOPEs and aim to transfer a successful experience of one VOPE to the second VOPE and to have a “recipient” VOPE put this experience into practice. Proposed P2P projects have to enhance at least one of the following aspects of VOPE work: institutional capacity, enabling environment for evaluation, individual members’ evaluation capacities, and/or capacity to promote equity-focused and

gender-sensitive evaluation. In response to this invitation, SAMEA prepared three proposals for collaboration between SAMEA and Evaluation Associations of Kenya, Morocco and Uganda respectively.

The SAMEA board is pleased to announce that all three proposals were successful, and leaders of the three associations will meet in South Africa from 16 – 20 September (coinciding with the conference) for further discussions to draft a plan of action for support and collaboration between the associations in the upcoming year. A brief overview of the P2P proposals and first phase implementation steps for the P2P proposal by SAMEA and the three partnering Evaluation Associations is provided below.

Introduction

The South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) and Evaluation Associations of Kenya, Uganda and Morocco, have agreed to collaborate in developing a strategy for strengthening governmental and other institutional evaluation policies and systems in their respective countries. The first phase of developing the strategy is a planned visit to South Africa by Presidents of the Evaluation Associations of Kenya, Uganda and Morocco in September to attend the SAMEA Conference and to participate in several events including a knowledge sharing meeting with a Standing Committee established by SAMEA and the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). It is envisaged that visits to Morocco, Uganda and Kenya will also follow later this year and next year. The four VOPES will use the lessons and best practices from knowledge sharing sessions to inform the development of a joint strategic plan, which will be aligned with the EvalPartners International Advocacy Strategy for Enabling Environment.

Implementation

The South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) and Evaluation Associations of Kenya, Uganda and Morocco, have agreed to collaborate in developing a strategy for strengthening governmental and other institutional evaluation policies and systems in their respective countries. The first phase of developing the strategy is a planned visit to South Africa by Presidents of the Evaluation Associations of Kenya and Uganda in September to attend the SAMEA Conference and to participate in several events including a knowledge sharing meeting with key players in M&E in South Africa. It is envisaged that visits by the President of the Moroccan Evaluation Association will follow in October. The four VOPES will use the lessons and best practices from knowledge sharing sessions to inform the development of a joint strategic plan, which will be aligned with the EvalPartners International Advocacy Strategy for Enabling Environment.

Conclusion

It is hoped that through the afore-mentioned initiatives, the Presidents will learn from one another and may use the lessons from the South African Experience as a starting point for similar initiatives or better models in their countries. The programme of action that will be developed within a month after the visit will provide details on areas of collaborations and implementation modalities.

5.7. SAMEA website

The SAMEA webpage serves as an online platform for sharing information between M&E practitioners and members of the association. All SAMEA members have the opportunity as registered users of the website to submit material (e.g. training or job opportunities), blog contributions (summaries of M&E developments) and other content through the website administrator or the SAMEA secretariat. However, content changes are still predominantly top-down driven through the efforts of the SAMEA Board of Directors.

Changes to the SAMEA Website effected in 2013 include:

- The election module has been adapted to cater for other purposes, such as board elections.
- The website now has functionality for checking for existing membership registrations based on name and email address trying to prevent multiple registrations of the same individual.
- There is also a new blog functionality which users are strongly encouraged to interact with and is now able to host embedded youtube videos. Users will already have observed there is now an added news (Highlights) carousel on the home page and an integrated RSS feed from SAMEA Talk listserv although this has recently been deactivated by yahoo.
- Most spam registrations have been deleted and there is now a captcha to membership registration form to curb spam registrations. The site now has an automated membership registration reminder when a registration is about to expire as well as when it expires. Apart from the ordinary and student membership, there is also institutional membership type implemented. Lastly, the African Evaluation Guidelines are now available on SAMEA site instead of linking to Afrea.

To demonstrate the importance and potential use of the SAMEA website, the following Website Traffic Analysis was undertaken during July 2013. It is hoped that this analysis will enable SAMEA members to use the website as a platform for sharing information, especially information that relates to the more visited parts of the website.

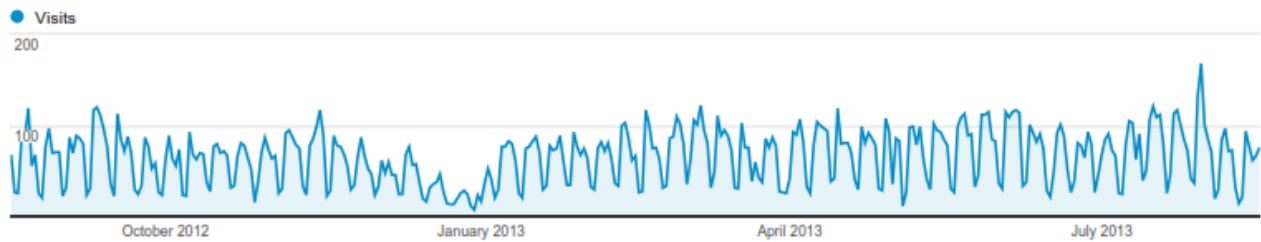
SAMEA Website Traffic Analysis (with thanks to Google Analytics)

Introduction

All SAMEA website activity is recorded and can be accessed via the Google Analytics web platform. The following information was obtained from Google Analytics and is presented here with the intention of informing SAMEA Board Members of the current state of website traffic and some initial trends over time. Any SAMEA Board Member with a Google account can be provided access on request. The following describes and analyses web traffic to the SAMEA website from 17 August 2012 until 16 August 2013 using the analytical reports for Audience, Traffic Sources and Content on the Google Analytics Platform.

Website visitation

Graph 1: SAMEA website visits from 17 August 2012- 16 August 2013



Over the past year there have been 23,940 visits to the SAMEA website, of which 16,046 have been unique visitors (ostensibly different people). Of those 23,940 visitors, 64.7% (15,487) of visits to the website were new visitors, while 35.3% (8,453) were return visitors. The highest number of website visits occurred on 30 July 2013, with 168 visits, while the previous day had 133 visits.

Although the new vs. old visitors to the site occur roughly at a ratio of 2:1, this is concerning when one considers the bounce rate of 55.3%; indicative of more than half of all visitors navigating away from the site after viewing only one page. Despite the high bounce rate, the average visitor to the site still viewed 4.14 pages per visit and the average duration of time per session on the website was 3 minutes and 44 seconds.

From the graph above it is clear that website traffic is relatively consistent throughout the year with early/mid-week peaks oscillating between weekend dips. A clear lull in visitation occurred around December and January holidays, while a slight increase and spike in traffic has occurred in the previous month, most likely due to the upcoming conference.

Content and pageviews

From all the visitors to the SAMEA website, there were 99,099 pageviews. From these different pageviews, 41.45% occurred on the top ten SAMEA pages presented in the table on the following page.

Table 1: SAMEA pageviews presented in order of most visited pages

Rank	Page	Page-views	% of Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page
1	SAMEA Homepage	15260	15.40%	11291	108.03
2	Opportunities/Job Alerts	7461	7.53%	4749	63.56
3	Membership Admin (Administrators)	4033	4.07%	497	80.77
4	PG Diploma M&E (US) Info (2006)	3517	3.55%	2958	263.52
5	SAMEA Membership Info	3041	3.07%	1988	73.08
6	Training Opportunities	2718	2.74%	1755	58.30
7	Internships	1936	1.95%	1122	36.22
8	Membership Application	1068	1.08%	779	330.78
9	Contact Us	1066	1.08%	823	123.06
10	Membership Directory	980	0.99%	739	28.57
	Total (incl other pageviews)	99099	41.45% (Top 10)	70599	71.21

The table above reveals a few important pieces of information about visitors to the SAMEA website and what they do on the website. Firstly, as could be expected, the SAMEA Homepage is the first port of call. Thereafter people move to the Opportunities/Job Alerts page. Worryingly, our administrators are the next most frequent visitors/utilisers of the website. Although this is indicative of regular administration being done on the membership database, it seems a little concerning that this falls within the top three pages that have been viewed on the website.

Surprisingly, the fourth most viewed page on the website is a brief on the Postgraduate Diploma in Programme Monitoring & Evaluation Methods course at Stellenbosch University posted on the website in 2006. This appears to be a testament to the popularity and regard for the course, as well as a desire to obtain information about it.

Thereafter, the fifth most frequently viewed page is the SAMEA Membership Information page, with the Training Opportunities and Internships pages falling behind it, before the Membership Application page. Notable of the Membership Application page is that it has the longest average duration of a view at 5 minutes and 31 seconds. While it is expected that the application would take longer to complete, it may be worthwhile considering revisions to the information captured to expedite the process.

The page with the second longest average duration of a view is the Postgraduate Diploma page (4 minutes 23 seconds), followed by the Contact Us page (2 minutes 3 seconds), and then the Homepage (1 minute 48 seconds).

Traffic sources and global locations

A brief review of the sources of traffic referring/leading visitors to the website shows that variations of the Google search engine are by far the most common means of directing visitors to the site, accounting for approximately 2/3 of all web traffic. About 1/6 of all traffic comes via direct access of the website (www.samea.org.za) while Bing and Yahoo are also less common means of being directed the website.

Figure 1: Domestic frequencies of visitors to the SAMEA website

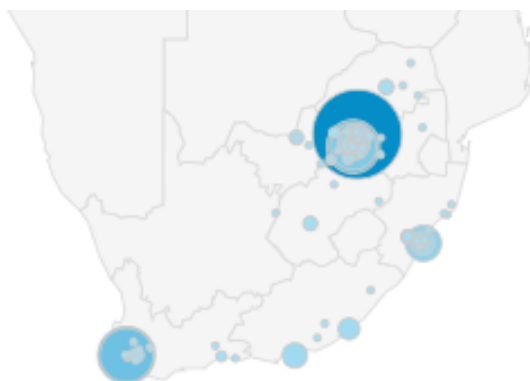
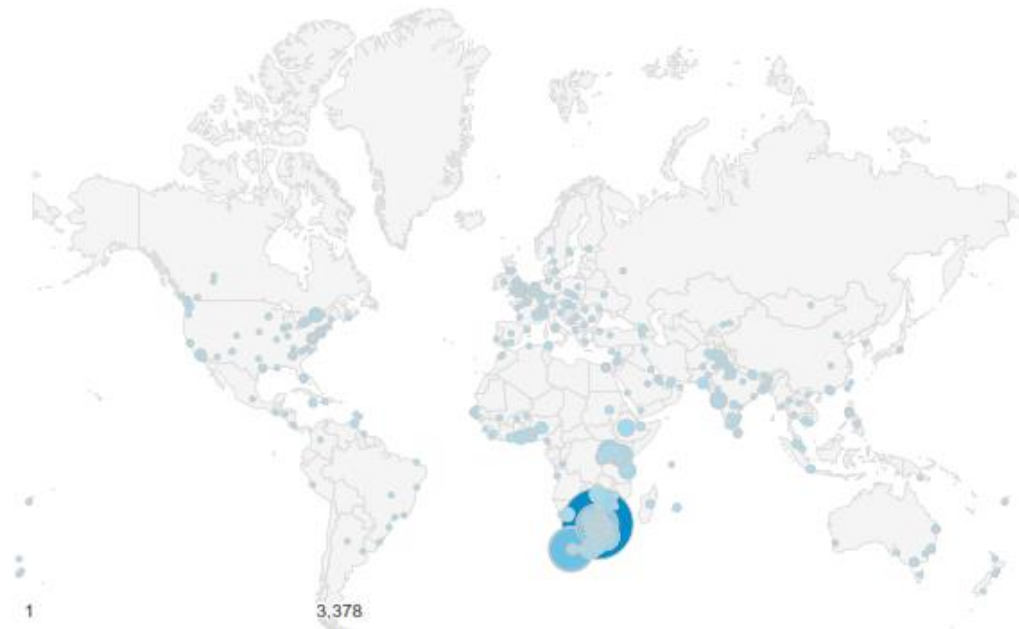


Figure 1 presents an approximate geographical representation of the frequency of visitors accessing the website, as denoted by the size and shade of the circles on the map. Of the 23,940 visitors in total, more than half were located within South Africa.

Within South Africa, Pretoria was the most common source with 3,378 visitors accessing from this locality, followed by Johannesburg/Sandton with 3,018 and then Cape Town with 2,575. The image below shows that the Western Cape and Gauteng account for most of the website visitors domestically, while the cities of Durban, East London and Port Elizabeth are other notable sources. There appears to be less activity in Bloemfontein and amongst secondary cities through the country.

When one considers the distribution of visitors to the website internationally in Figure 2, South Africa accounts for 52.5% (12,578) in total. The darker blue circles with the greater circumferences obscuring the borders of most of Southern Africa are indications of this.

Figure 2: International frequencies of visitors to the SAMEA website



Visits from Eastern Africa accounted for 10.5% (2,523) of all website traffic. Kenya was the most prominent source of regional visits. Visitors from other individual countries outside of Sub-Saharan Africa were led by the United States with 4.8% (1,145) of all visitors, followed by India with 2.7%(649) and the United Kingdom with 2.4%(590).

Conclusions

Visitation to the SAMEA website has remained mostly consistent over the past year with some increase in recent traffic in the lead up to the 4th Biennial SAMEA Conference. Despite the large number of visitors and their geographic spread, there was a significant portion that did not seem to get the information they were looking for based on the bounce rate of more than half of all visitors. It may be worthwhile incorporating a feedback option or mini-survey onto the website to obtain insights into this behaviour and help to retain visitors in the future.

When visitors accessed the website, the greatest areas of interests were Job Opportunities and Training or Internship related pages. Visitor interest in these areas presents an exciting opportunity for SAMEA to craft the form and manner in which it directs traffic through the site. Better integration of Job and Training Opportunities communication with platforms such as SAMEAtalk has the potential of generating more traffic to the website and greater interest in the activities and initiatives of the organisation. These pages may be gateways for other messaging to prospective SAMEA members and potential marketing opportunities.

International interest in the website accounted for nearly half of all visits, with considerable interest from the Southern and Eastern African Regions. Despite being a national organisation, it is telling that international interest was broad and well-distributed. This would seem to affirm the notion that

SAMEA is on the global radar as a Voluntary Organisation of Professional Evaluators (VOPE). Such international interest could present exciting opportunities for engagement and potential collaborations in the future, in a similar vein to the participation of other African VOPEs at the upcoming conference.

Within South Africa, it is not surprising that most traffic originated from the metropolitan areas. However, the domestic map clearly indicates that penetration in some provinces and areas has been slim to none. Identification of these areas and targeted marketing and communication to them may be a worthwhile endeavour for the incoming Coordinator and Administrator as SAMEA seeks to grow its membership base and further the practice and professionalization of M&E nationally and within the region.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the SAMEA board would like to give thanks to the following persons and institutions that enable the ongoing success of the association:

- The members of the SAMEA board of directors for their voluntary contribution to steer and govern the association
- Ms Refilwe Masikane, and Ms Kate Mwaura, for the on-going administration of the association's activities
- Feedback Research and Analytics for the institutional support to the SAMEA secretariat, with specific reference to Ms Daleen Botha and Ms Marlene Sinclair for the interim support provided after Ms Masikane's resignation and the appointment of Ms Mwaura
- Mr Bert Roefs for the support and dedication in maintaining and upgrading the SAMEA website
- The SAMEA legacy members, for the 'behind the scenes' support that is not always visible, but which ensures the legacy and institutional memory of the association.
- The Public Service Commission, for their continued commitment to strengthening monitoring and evaluation practices in the South Africa public sector
- The Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, for working with SAMEA through the Standing Committee to further M&E in the public sector.

The 2013 Board of Directors would like to encourage all current and prospective SAMEA members to keep on contributing to the debates and to the vibrancy of the South African M&E community.