



SOUTH AFRICAN MONITORING & EVALUATION ASSOCIATION

Concept Note for gLOCAL event 4 June 2021, hosted by JET

Panel discussion on evidence-based decision making: challenges and changes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic - a case of the Western Cape

Background

It is all very well to produce M&E evidence but is it used? The importance of using evidence to inform policy and practice has come to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic. Decisions have need to be made – what does the evidence say? How does that relate to the economic and social challenges facing the country and the province, particularly at this difficult time, and how can the evidence help us through the difficult transitions coming up arising from climate change, ecosystems breakdown, persistent inequality.

And how has the use of M&E evidence changed since the start of the pandemic – what have been the successes, challenges, new imperatives/strategies. This will be explored from a variety of perspectives (provincial government, sector specific, NGO, funder etc), in a province which is a pioneer in M&E and has responded dynamically to the pandemic, adjusting its M&E systems.

Purpose

This panel will explore why evidence use matters, how evidence has been used in the Western Cape during the pandemic, and how it can take us towards the future we need.

Format

A panel of local evidence use champions will present recent case studies (5 mins each) of using M&E evidence for policy/ planning/ implementation, to surface what works, doesn't work well, has changed etc since the start of the pandemic. Then there will be 10 minutes where each panellist can ask questions of each, or from the moderator. Then we will open up to audience questions.

Timing:

Time	Item	Responsible
11.30	Introduction	Moderator: Professor Ian Goldman
11.35	How the Western Cape province has modified its practice in using evidence since the pandemic	Zeenat Ishmael, WCG Office of the Premier

Time	Item	Responsible
11.40	How funders have had to use evidence differently	Kayin Scholtz, DG Murray Trust
11.45	How the Western Cape Department of Agriculture has used, and changed its use of evidence, during the pandemic	Dirk Troskie, Western Cape Department of Agriculture
11.50	Panel discussion	Moderator
12.00	Breakout session in 3s – what struck people, what resonates, what questions?	Producer
12.10	Feedback and questions from audience using chat function and response, facilitated by moderator	Eleanor Hazell
12.50	Closing from each panellist, with their reflections on the key issues for evidence use going forward	Panellists
12.55	Closing by the moderator, summarising key issues which emerged, gLocal implications and challenges for the future.	Ian Goldman

Moderator: Professor Ian Goldman, CLEAR-AA and SAMEA Board member

Producer: To manage people logging on and breakout groups – Lesedi Matlala

Brief: Be clear on questions we ask each panellist

In terms of the criteria:

- **Quality**—The proposal is to the point, which high quality people who have interesting messages to share. The content is relevant in Africa and more widely.
- **Relevance**— promoting the use of M&E evidence has taken second place to systems for generation of evidence. Recent work in Africa has brought this to the fore, which will be used as a golden thread.¹ Lessons of what is needed to promote M&E use will be drawn out, as well as how the lessons can be applied to the challenges facing us going forward
- **Engagement**— brief presentations with a panel discussion should be engaging and not boring. Breakout groups will then allow engagement by participants drawing out their wisdom, as well as their questions from today and from their own practice
- **Innovation**—the use of M&E evidence is a perspective which has been relatively little developed to date.
- **Expertise**—Presenters have outstanding experience in applying M&E. The Western Cape has been a pioneer in evaluations, with over 30 provincial evaluations completed, and innovating in the use of rapid evaluation. The Western Cape Dept of Agriculture has undertaken 17 evaluations across its whole portfolio of work, using an innovative model of evaluation support. The moderator is an international expert on evidence use, a co-principal investigator on an evidence use project researching African experience on using evidence, and has trained over 450 senior managers in the use of evidence.
- **Impact**—the experience shared can be linked to ongoing resources around evidence use, and work being conducted by SAMEA, CLEAR and other agencies around this. It also provides an opportunity for the panellists to reflect on their own experience, and what they need to learn.

Biographies

¹ Using Evidence in Policy and Practice – lessons from Africa

Professor Ian Goldman is an Advisor: Evaluation and Evidence Systems at CLEAR Anglophone Africa and has worked in 20 countries. He led the establishment of South Africa's National Evaluation System, and has just researched and published a book *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice – lessons from Africa*. He is a SAMEA Board member.

Zeenat Ishmael is the Chief Director: Strategic Management Information, Department of the premier in the Western Cape Government. She has been a data, monitoring and evaluation champion, with over 30 evaluations undertaken in the Western Cape, as well as pioneering different approaches in the pandemic. She is also doing her PhD on data governance.

Kayin Scholtz is an Early Childhood Development Resource Manager at the DG Murray Trust, an important foundation in South Africa. Kayin studied social work, and then policy and management. He joined the non-profit sector in 2012. Since then he has worked at educational non-profit organisations (SAEP, Nalibali and the DG Murray Trust), supporting interventions in literacy and early childhood development. Currently, he is seconded to work on the President's Economic Stimulus for Early Childhood Development.

Dirk Troskie is the Director: Business Planning and Strategy, Western Cape Department of Agriculture. He has led the evaluation work in the department since 2011, which is a pioneer in Africa in systematically using evaluation across the whole portfolio of their work. Dirk started his career as a farmer. At the Department he is responsible to provide advice and information on the strategic direction the sector and the Department should take whilst, at the same time, evaluating the outcome and impact of interventions. He has published widely on subjects ranging from macro-economic policy to farm level issues.