

WESTERN CAPE MONITORING & EVALUATION COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Date: 01/07/2021

1. PRESENTATIONS

1	Title	Rapid M&E Appraisal Methods – Discussion with Dr. Mark Abrahams and Khotso Tsotsotso
	Presenter	Khotso Tsotsotso
	Organisation	Data Innovators
	Key Theme	Exploring Rapid Appraisal methods and their feasibility for organisations
2	Title	Unpacking the National Income Dynamics Study- Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey
	Presenters	Reza Daniels
	Organisation	University of Cape Town
	Key Theme	An overview of the NIDS-CRAM and it's utility as an M&E tool for understanding the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on South Africans

All presentations can be accessed through the links given in the Meeting Highlights.

2. MAIN DISCUSSION POINTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Number of participants: 24
Presentations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Rapid evaluation is meant to strike a balance between the high levels of investigative rigor in evaluations and the high cost and time of traditional evaluations. ▪ The National Income Dynamic Study- Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDS-CRAM) is broadly nationally representative survey of randomly selected South African individuals over the age of 18. ▪ One of the key objectives of NIDS-CRAM was to produce timely information on the impact of COVID-19 to support policy and decision-making, through the data collected in the sample group.
CoP Activities/ Reflections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rapid Appraisal Simulation using the SAMEA Draft Theory of Change
Useful Resources Shared:
Data and research reports on NIDS-CRAMS – www.cramsurvey.org SAMEA webinar series registration - https://www.samea.org.za/events

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS/ EVENTS

- SAMEA WEBINAR SERIES: 14 July 2021
- National M&E CoP: 15 July 2021



SETTING THE SCENE

CoP Facilitator, Maurisa Moloto, welcomed participants to the second Western Cape M&E CoP for the year, which took place virtually. Maurisa expressed that she was happy to be working together with the CoP coordinator and co-facilitator, Kauthar Conrad, in advancing the work of the M&E CoP. Building evaluation capacity and adapting M&E practices in the “new normal”, continues to be the broad thematic focus area for the CoP.



OVERVIEW OF TOPICS EXPLORED IN THE PREVIOUS CoP

Reflecting on the previous CoP and the overall theme for the second CoP, Kauthar Conrad shared the following:

- The first BRIDGE and SAMEA CoP was held on 23 March 2021, in line with the broad thematic focus area of the CoP in order to support organisations in implementing lessons learned.
- The M&E CoP aims to be as member-centric as possible. To this end, the following topics were suggested as potential areas of exploration for the year: Peer Learning in the CoP, Emerging Trends in M&E, Outcome Harvesting and Rapid Evaluations in Times of Crises.

To access Meeting Highlights for the previous CoP. Follow this [link](#)



DISCUSSION WITH DR MARK ABRAHAMS (SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE) AND KHOTSO TSOTSOTSO (DATA INNOVATORS)

Khotso Tsotsotso, Director of Monitoring Evaluation, Research and Learning at Data Innovators, linked a significant part of his journey with Rapid Appraisal Evaluation M&E with a study conducted to answer the question: Do Rapid Evaluations match the fundamental elements of a good quality evaluation in practice? In answering this question, the research sought to understand what makes a rapid evaluation; what the uses of rapid evaluations are and what the typical quality of rapid evaluations tends to be. The research methodology of this study leaned on a systematic search using the African Evaluation Databases (AfrED) and feeder AfrED databases; evaluation assessment quality tools using the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE); the analysis of metadata and the assessment of quality by seven experienced practitioners and experts.

What are Rapid Appraisal Evaluations?

Khotso shared the following definition of a Rapid Evaluation: “a Rapid Evaluation is a tested, reliable way to conduct a rigorous evaluation, within a short time-frame, without sacrificing quality”. A Rapid evaluation is meant to strike a balance between the high levels of investigative rigor in evaluations and the high cost and time of traditional evaluations. This method requires simultaneous data analysis and high stakeholder community participation, resulting in a very consultative approach.

Key Research Findings on Rapid Evaluations

The study yielded the following key findings on Rapid Evaluations:

- Omission of critical details of the evaluand and methodological process.
- Oversimplification of or inadequate theoretical description of concepts
- Rapid Evaluations tend to overreach in conclusions given design and scope
- Reliance on a single argument or explanatory framework to arrive at conclusions
- Weak or inappropriate study design for the respective evaluation questions



Figure 1: Word Cloud Image from a Presentation of Key Findings on Rapid Evaluations by Khotso Tsotsotso

Khotso noted that while Rapid Evaluations exemplify the abovementioned challenges, the same challenges can also be found in more traditional evaluation approaches. Rapid Evaluations are valuable and have their own place in the evaluation space, however, they are not easily distinguishable from more traditional forms of evaluations. While Rapid Evaluations are more situational and are designed to produce data in a faster turn-around time; in practice, the duration of Rapid Evaluations tends to overlap with the duration of more traditional forms of evaluation. Khotso concluded the presentation by sharing a key insight from evaluations literature: “Rapid Evaluations tend to be more effective and useful where there is a strong pre-existing data system in place, making it easier to rely on existing sources of data.”

A SELECTION OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What are the pros and cons of conducting a rapid evaluation while the programme is being implemented?

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quick Turnaround in terms of getting information ▪ Cost-effectiveness depending on how the evaluations is designed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rapid Evaluations cannot usually be used to legitimate claims, unless there is adequate skills internally. To mitigate this, the use of the evaluation should determine its design and structure

“There has never been a better time, given the challenges, to think of evidence creation, curation and use-not as a once off data collection function, but more as an invitation to focus a on building M&E systems that drive learning during the implementation of programmes.”
-Khotso Tsotsotso

Can Rapid Evaluations be defined according to their uses? What are Rapid Evaluations?

Theoretically, Rapid Evaluations are supposed to be cheaper and quicker, with a good balance of rigour. In practice, however, Rapid Evaluations can take almost as long as more traditional forms of evaluations. Most Rapid Evaluations tend to use a single data collection method – e.g. a survey. This surfaces some of the challenges that are also found in more traditional forms of Evaluation.

How does one conduct a Rapid Evaluation for particular aspects of one’s work? In other words, how might we tell a story about the kind support that an organisation provides?

- By being clear about what the evaluation is for and about whose interests the evaluation is in.
- By determining what could be seen as adequate evidence for the purpose that the evaluation is being designed.
- By Using different sources of data for triangulation. Rapid Evaluations should, ideally, not be used to “prove” a claim as this may not be as suitable as other kinds of evaluation.

To access Khotso’s presentation click [here](#)

NATIONAL INCOME DYNAMIC STUDY – CORONAVIRUS RAPID MOBILE SURVEY AS A M&E TOOL - PROF. REZA DANIELS (UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN)

The National Income Dynamic Study- Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDS-CRAM) is broadly nationally representative survey of randomly selected South African individuals over the age of 18. The NIDS-CRAM investigates the socio-economic impacts of national lockdown, introduced as a result of global pandemic COVID-19. To track the impact of this, NIDS-CRAM relied on telephonic interviews repeated over several months with the same people. One of the key objectives of NIDS-CRAM was to produce timely information on the impact of COVID-19 to support policy and decision-making, through the data collected in the sample group.

The process of undertaking NIDS-CRAM was initiated by education expert, Prof. Nic Spaull, together with a range of researchers from about six other universities. Building on this, various funders were sourced, and working groups were formed -including a reference group and a steering committee. Due to their historical role, conducting the National Income Dynamic Study (NIDS), the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) was commissioned to be the implementing agent for NIDS-CRAM. The questionnaire developed by the working groups of NIDS-CRAM received an ethics approval from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and reciprocal ethics approval from the University of Stellenbosch. NIDS-CRAM used the NIDS sampling frame and a responsive survey design to maximise data accuracy subject to the constraints of the project.

The following slide illustrates some of the key responsive survey design constraints faced in the NIDS-CRAM.

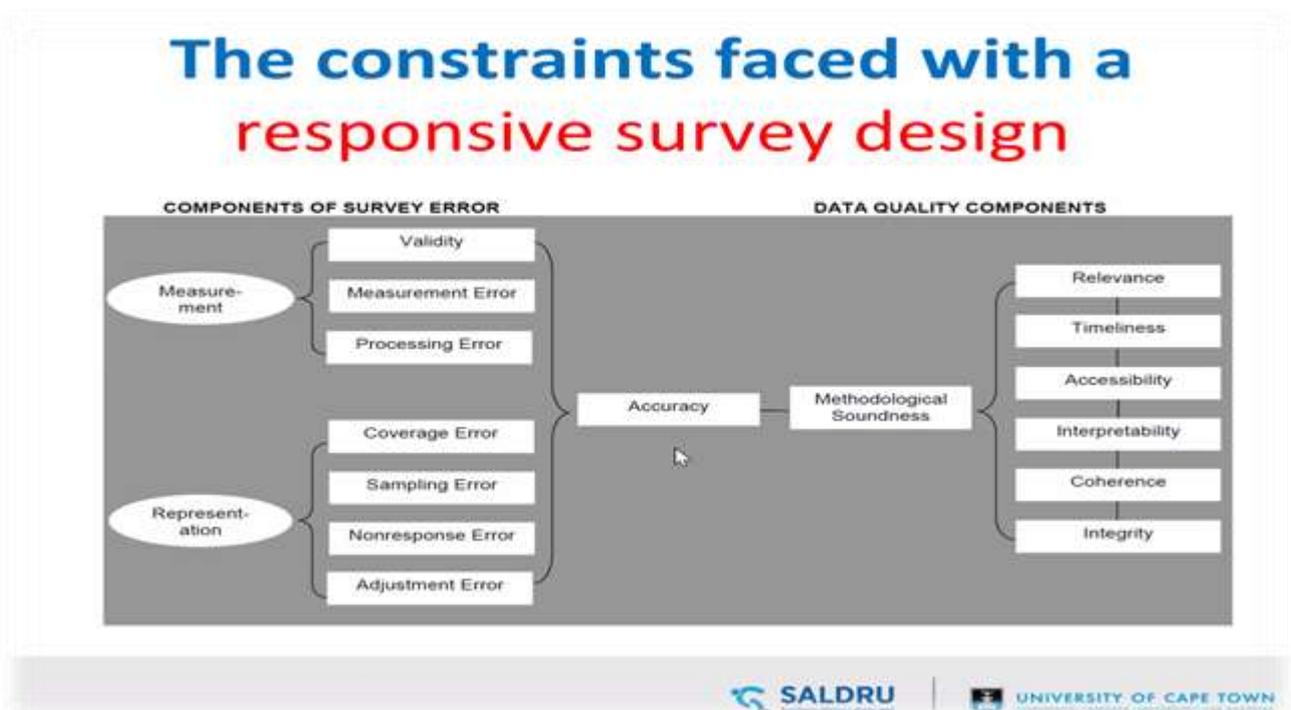


Figure 2: Responsive Survey Design Constraints from a Presentation on NIDS-CRAM as an M&E Tool by Prof. Reza Daniels

To mitigate these constraints in as far as their impact on the accuracy of the data, quality control measures were developed for all of the main sources of statistical errors forecasted. The range of research topics covered during the data collection process of NIDS-CRAM included employment status (Labour market); poverty; Grants, like the Social relief of Distress Grants and Temporary Employment Relief Scheme; Early Childhood Development (ECD); Education, in relation to school closures at primary and secondary schooling levels; Physical Health; Mental Health; Vaccination and Smoking, in relation to the ban on cigarettes. The order of these questions was strategically placed to align with data collection priorities. Ultimately, the NIDS-CRAM data ended up being part of a repository that aids decision making in the Ministerial Advisory Council on Health. The research is freely available to the public. To access data and research reports, see the links provided on first page.

The SALDRU implementing team

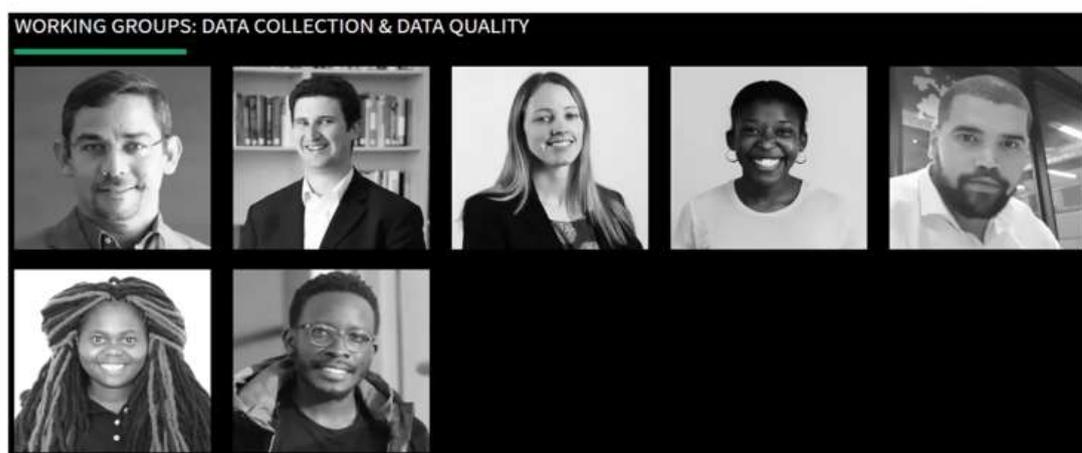


Figure 3: Image of the SALDRU Implementing Team From Presentation by Prof. Reza Daniels

A SELECTION OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How did you encourage people to stay on the line and answer honestly?

- The sample that was being interviewed had already been involved in a face-to-face survey, NIDS.
- Participants were already familiar with the implementing agents but the salience of the topic of NIDS-CRAM generated buy-in.
- A retention strategy designed with a behavioural economics firm to help frame the messaging of NIDS-CRAM.
- Various Incentive strategies were used to motivate participation.

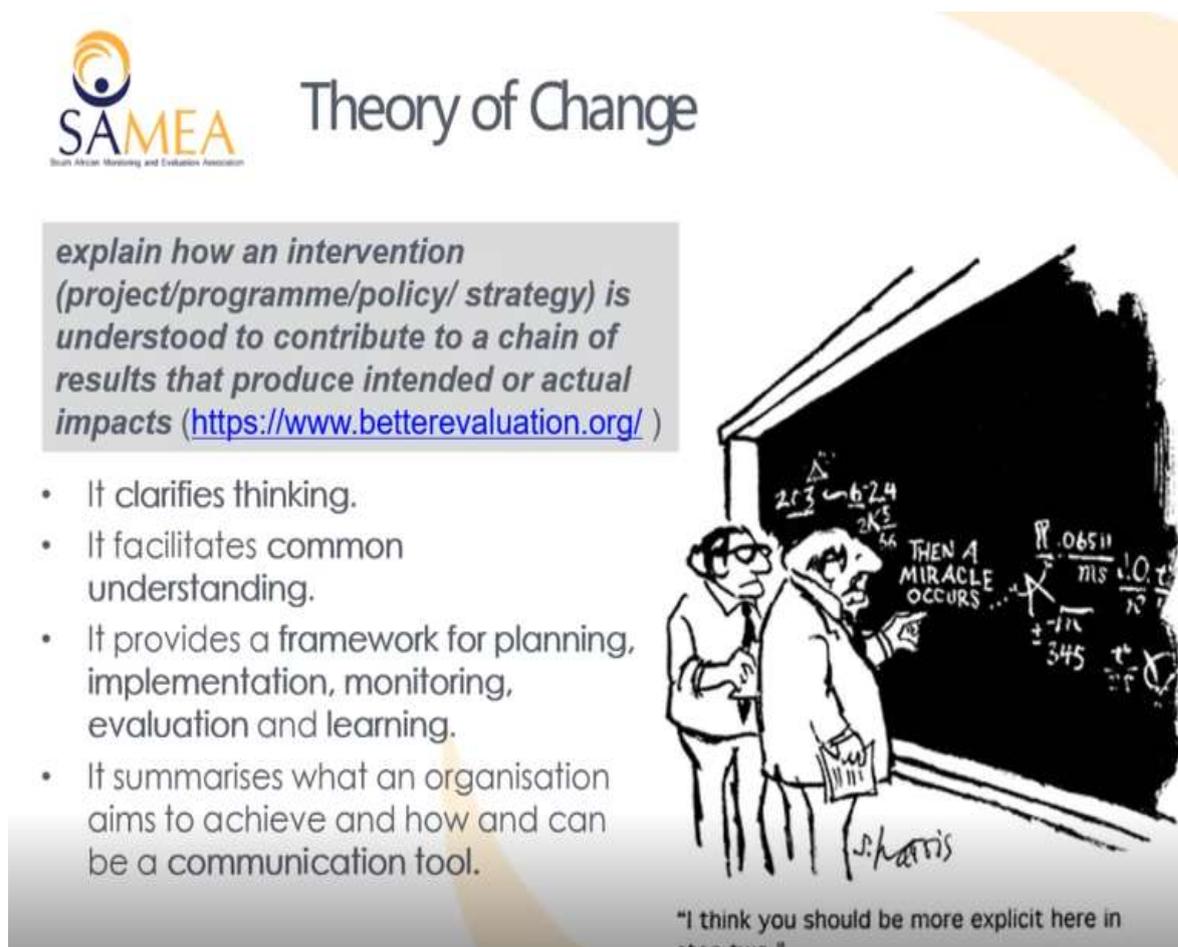
How rapid was the research and which parts of the research cycle took the longest?

Over 30 researchers volunteered their time in March, and by April the data collection had started. The research was quite rapid, however there were many learnings along the way. It took an immediate response from the academic community as well as from the funding and philanthropic partners to get the study going.



RAPID APPRAISAL OF THE SAMEA DRAFT THEORY OF CHANGE – ELEANOR HAZELL (SAMEA and JET EDUCATION SERVICES)

Eleanor Hazell led the CoP through a group activity that simulated a rapid appraisal, using the SAMEA Draft Theory of Change. As an introduction, Eleanor explained a theory of change as a way of explaining how any intervention is understood to contribute to a chain of results that produce intended or actual impacts. This is captured in greater detail in the Slide that follows.



SAMEA
South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association

Theory of Change

explain how an intervention (project/programme/policy/ strategy) is understood to contribute to a chain of results that produce intended or actual impacts (<https://www.betterevaluation.org/>)

- It clarifies thinking.
- It facilitates common understanding.
- It provides a framework for planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning.
- It summarises what an organisation aims to achieve and how and can be a communication tool.

"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

Figure 4: Theory of Change Definition From Presentation By Eleanor Hazell

ACTIVITY: RAPID APPRAISAL OF SAMEA’s DRAFT THEORY of CHANGE

As part of the strategic planning process which the SAMEA Board undertakes each year, a draft theory of change has been created for SAMEA. In small Zoom Breakout Rooms, BRIDGE CoP members deliberated on SAMEA’s Draft Theory of Change using the following questions as guidelines:

- What works well?
- What doesn’t work well?
- What’s missing?

Wrapping the activity up, Eleanor shared that consultations on and inputs to SAMEA’s DRAFT Theory of Change will be ongoing until September 2021. This will be followed by a process of formally adopting the Theory of change, publishing it and reviewing it annually thereafter.



COP UPDATES

Next, Eleanor shared the following SAMEA Updates:

- SAMEA will be hosting a free webinar series starting in July. The webinar series is scheduled as follows:

Date	Topic	Presenters
14 July	Rapid Evaluations/ Assessments Using Rapid Methods	Nompumelelo Mbele & Hlangwelani Hope Magadimisha
12 August	Adapting Evaluation Designs in terms of COVID-19	Megan Franklin & Liezel De Waal
9 September	Evaluation in a changing World – An African Perspective.	Dr. Kobena Hanson

NOTE: Details to be confirmed for October and November

- SAMEA has launched the Emerging Evaluators Programme to provide emerging evaluators with an opportunity to learn and contribute to the M&E space. Application details for the programme are available on the SAMEA website.

To access Eleanor’s presentation, click [here](#)



CLOSING

Kauthar thanked participants for their attendance and participation, and brought the CoP to a Close

The CoP is reminded of BRIDGE’s knowledge management role. All meetings, presentations and discussions are captured and shared on BRIDGE’s Knowledge Hub, as are any other specific knowledge products relevant to M&E. [Here](#) is the link to this.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name and Surname
Akani Mkansi
Ameen Benjamin
Anne Emmett
Eleanor Hazell
Garth Spencer-Smith
Khotso Tsotsotso
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Sarah
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Kauthar Conrad
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Benter Okelo
Moses Moyo
Mark Abrahams