

BRIDGE MONITORING & EVALUATION COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: 20 July 2022

Letting data speak through data visualisation



Background and context

In 2022 the national M&E CoP has focused on different aspects of data and its management. The previous CoP ‘Doing Data Better’ (11 May, see meeting highlights [here](#)) laid the groundwork for a focus on data visualisation, the theme of this CoP. The master class approach combined with interactive group discussion and input continues. Over 70 participants were on the call.

The National M&E CoP is led by BRIDGE together with its partners who bring M&E expertise to the team: Khulisa (Margie Roper: CoP facilitator), SAMEA as the association for M&E professionals, and Tshikululu as a funding body with a focus on M&E.



Two Master Classes

You will find the video of the presentations given on BRIDGE’s You Tube channel on <https://youtu.be/ofucxJmlsbc>. A brief overview of the topics and links to the actual presentations are given below.



Master Class: Data Visualisation: *Jerusha Govender & Mmapela Seloadi (Data Innovators)*

Data Innovators Group came about as a match between New Leader’s Foundation and Data Innovation. Their overarching goal is to help organisations use data to make informed and verified decisions and conclusions. The presentation focused on the different ways of communicating data, the benefits of data visualisation, and tips and strategies to improve practice. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Speaking through Data: Evaluator Reflections on Data Visualisation: *Leticia Taimo (Khulisa Management Services)*

Khulisa is an evaluation and research agency. Finding, analysing and using data plays a central role in their own work and in the services they provide to clients. Leticia’s presentation focused on reshaping data in relation to audience needs; that is, how to extract the main messages and then consider with whom you want to communicate and how best to do this effectively. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Discussion highlights

Data management comments

- The need for improved data management in many non-profits was highlighted; while organisations know how to collect data from projects, they struggle with analysing it and using it for data-driven decision making.
- Many implementers are so focused on delivery and implementation that they neglect monitoring and structured data gathering and analysis.
- The ‘culture’ of data-based decision making needs to be developed at all levels in an organisation.

Reflections on local case studies

- Cases based on the use of Data Driven Districts dashboards: <https://dbedashboard.co.za/Home/impact/>
- Blog about how Khulisa internally started using more metrics: <https://www.khulisa.com/a-dose-of-our-own-medicine-using-metrics-for-internal-evaluation/>
- The Learning Trust also established a great Data Collective as a collaborative way to review attendance data and support decision making : <https://thelearningtrust.org/>
- Further resources from Khulisa:
 - <https://www.khulisa.com/datavisualisationpt1/>
 - <https://www.khulisa.com/data-visualisation-how-to-make-data-attractive-part-2/>

Terminology clarifications

- Note that a key difference between data visualisation and an infographic is that data viz allows exploration: that is, it does not give you all the answers but is packaged so that it can be interrogated (e.g. why is one column in a graph higher than another). Data visualisations can go along with a narrative analysis in a technical report. The infographic is more purposeful: its aim is to direct the reader to a key point/question we want to focus on. These types of visualisations have different purposes but all use the same principles of making data accessible through visualisation.
- A dashboard allows for interactivity and the navigation of different analytical views of the same data.



Group work: Sharing Data Viz Experiences

Group discussions were loosely framed as follows:

1. Sharing from participants
2. What has worked well in your own data viz experiences?
3. What has not worked well in your own data viz experiences?

Below are some of the highlights from the feedback given.

Shared examples of what has worked well

- Interactive maps on google where people can click to go down to the next level for more detail.
- Infographics in learning institutions for faculty members/ staff which are easily accessible and can be used as a checklist for how to apply certain policies.
- Colour coding with explanatory keys rather than too much text.
- Scribbling and drawing up representations by hand are acceptable as first steps in the process.
- Excel is useful in presentations to clients because you can respond with agility to audience requests and 'slice' the data to meet their needs.
- The use of a heat map to monitor the pace at which the CAPs Mathematics curriculum is delivered was shared.
- The ECD 'Thrive by Five' report was cited as an example of a report which includes excellent data visualisation.

Shared examples of challenges encountered

- The tension between the need for proper technical reports which give required detail, with the need for easily digestible reports which will get actioned.
- The notion of 'evidence-driven' decisions is taking centre stage at present; but sometimes available data will not necessarily be the right data for informed decision making.
- Lack of time to develop the skills needed for data visualisation.
- Sometimes only one person in an organisation is tasked with transferring data into visual formats. This requires a complicated skills set which is not only dependent on graphic design skills, but also analytical skills. You need a team and discussion of alternative perspectives to do data viz properly.
- Free tools and dashboards have limitations, but sometimes this is all that NGOs can afford.
- Researchers bring in the data; evaluators make value judgements against formulated criteria. These are two different activities and can lead to miscommunications between researchers, evaluators and clients.
- How can more academic documents such as literature reviews incorporate more data visualisation? As literature reviews are about consolidating data, there could be some quantitative visuals included. The methodology and the review scope landscape could also be visualised in a mapping format.

Examples of helpful tools

- Power BI is part of the Microsoft Suite and is easier to use than PowerPoint. There is a free version for non-profits. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/nonprofits/power-bi>
- Google Data Studio is interactive and free, and has helped programme managers in one

organisation to see the data they are collecting.

- Tableau is expensive to begin with but has good functionality. There is also Tableau Public, which allows you to use it for free. They also offer a lot of training. <https://public.tableau.com/en-us/s/>



TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Lebohang Letsela (Tshikululu Social Investments) noted that the sharing of Tools and Resources is a standard item in the M&E CoP, with the aim of providing practical benefits to participants which they can take back to their organisations. Click [here](#) to go to the presentation, which provides a number of links to further data visualisation resources.



SAMEA UPDATE

The South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) fulfils a number of roles for the M&E Community of both emerging and professional evaluations. It hosts training events, topic-specific seminars and international conferences, as well as advertising assignments to consultants. An important benefit for members is the building of their own networks, linking M&E professionals in spheres such as health as well as education, and promoting ongoing learning in the field of M&E. See below for the upcoming conference themes.

Save the date

| SAMEA's 8th Biennial Conference |
| Join us online or in-person |
| 21 – 23 September 2022 |

SAMEA
8th BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2022
21 – 23 September 2022
Hilton Hotel, Sandton, Johannesburg
South Africa
Hybrid

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Transforming monitoring and evaluation
for an inclusive and sustainable world

Strand 1: M&E for Just Transition
Strand 2: Made in Africa Evaluation
Strand 3a: M&E evidence for adaptive management
Strand 3b: Monitoring and Data Management
Strand 4: Tech-enabled M&E
Strand 5: M&E capacity building and Emerging Evaluation

Website: www.samea.org.za

The CoP closed with a mentimeter on participants' key takeaways: most comments reflected a new commitment to experimenting with the tools and resources shared, and improving data visualisation skills.

CoP Participants

First Name	Last Name	Organisation
Aaron	Horswell	Gerards E C D
Akani	Mkansi	Bridge
Amanda	Ncube	Data Innovators
Anesh	Sukhai	Independent Consultant
Anya	Morris	Africa A+ Schools
Baatseba	Mamaro	Olico
Barbara	Valentine	ITEC
Batandwa	Sonamzi	WCED
Benjamin	Akinmoyeje	Namibia University of Science and Technology
Boipelo	Kgomo	The Foschini Group
Bonita	Daniels	The early education centre
Bridget	Rosser	Lefika / Bridge
Bridget-ann	Mullins	Go for Gold Tuition
Brilliant	Bhebe	Southern Hemisphere
Candy	Goodlad	Candy Goodlad
Charles	Zulu	St Nicholas Diocesan School
Charmaine	Smith	Infundo Consulting
Chirwa	Douglas	Morojaneng primary school
Daniel	Maeko	Silindokuhle primary school
Deizdaria	Magwiro	JET Education Services
Diana	Straw	Natal Early Learning Resource Unit (NELRU)
Edward	Macharia	Data Innovators
elekeana	nyirenda	The Trevor Noah Foundation
Franc	Sobreira	Holy Family College
Freda	Qanya	Training and Resources in Early Education
Gilbert	Makgopa	Private
Grant	Titus	Inclusive Education South Africa
Gugulethu	Mann	Gauteng Provincial Legislature
Hailey	Chisholm	Assitej
Heather	Ngulube	Play Africa Group NPC
Heaven	Nen	ecl South Africa
Herman	Meyer	LEAP
Holly	Leventhorpe	Class Act
Innocentia	Mushwana	GDE
Jacklyn	Armah-Hammon	Solace
Jade	Trueman	Department of Education
Jade	Pieterse	CSDA
Jason	Bygate	Capacitate
Jennifer	Bisgard	Khulisa
Jerome	Maggerman	Teachink
Jerusha	Govender	Data Innovators
Jessica	Williams	Dialogue

Linda	Ntsiful	Women in RMEL
Lisa	Willson	OUP
Lucy	Mjojo	FCI
Luisa	Roscani	NECT
Madoda	Hadebe	Ekukhanyeni Primary school
Mafemani	Chauke	Rainbow Thunders Primary School
Mandla	Nkosi	Greater Soweto Association for Early Childhood Development
Margie	Roper	Khulisa
Maria	Jita	Kgothlang primary
Marion	Bakker	IkamvaYouth
Mark	Homer	Siyavula Education
Melissa	King	BRIDGE
Mercy	Nyaga	Afrikaans Tikkun services
Milisa	Janda	JET Education Services
Mkhize	Nomonde	TREE
Mmabatho	Mokiti	Mathemaniacs
Mmapela	Seloadi	Data Innovators
Muhammad	Umar	FHI360
nafeesa	rahbeeni	FCW
Naomi	Thomas	Witwatersrand
Nare	Mahwai	CSIR
Nargis	Motala	Triologue
Nicky	Vigeland	Go for Gold
Nthabiseng	Seane	Tomorrow Trust
Nyaradzo	Mutanha	Data Innovators
Olebogeng	Mpuleleng-Khum	GAUTENG PROVINCIAL TREASURY
Pale	Ramadimetja	Gauteng Education
Patience	Voller	BRIDGE Innovation in Learning
Patience Tsitsi	chinyanga	Hand in Hand SA
Patsy	Pillay	New Beginnings Training & Development Org
Pieter	Mostert	Axium Education
Precious	Msimango	ForAfrika
Rebecca	Wakeford	Midlands Community College
Rememberance	Chimeri	Triologue
Rex	Molefe	Motheo Training Institute Trust
Riedewhaan	Allie	Foundation for Community Work
Romamy	Roberts	Sunbeam Pre-Primary & Educare
Rosemary	Wildsmith-Crom	NWU
Ryan	Dittmann	Assitej Sa
Samantha	Henderson	Field Band Foundation
Silent	Ruzvidzo	PILO
Sinovuyo	Tanci	Axium Education
Sue	Jobson	Teach Ink

Sue	Philpott	Disability Action Research Team (DART)
Takalani	Muloiwa	Wit's University
Tanya	Nel	ECD Upliftment Projects and Consulting
Taryn	Rae	Tomorrow Trust
Teressa	Ngobese	Training and Resources in Early Education (TREE)
Thabile	Manqele	DBE
Thami	Mfundisi	Individual
Thandeka	Rantsi	Bridge
Thandi	Sokujika	Tomorrow Trust
THAPELO	MQEHE	Afrika Tikkun Services
Thato	Mzimba	University of Pretoria
Theresa Vivian	Moila	VMC Business Solutions
Thoko	Goniwe	IkamvaYouth
Tinashe	Tombe-Nyahuma	Miteserve
Tumi	Erasmus	BRIDGE
Viwe	Kutu	Data Innovators

Yenziwe	Nkosi	TREE
Yonke	Maholwana	Trevor Noah Foundation
Yvette	Hardie	ASSITEJ SA
Zamabongo	Mojalefa	Heartlines NPC
Zolisa	Marawu	Bophelo Impilo Development Centre
Zorina	Dharsey	Western Cape Primary Science Programme (PSP)