

BRIDGE WC MONITORING & EVALUATION COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: 17 November 2022

## Networking & Peer to Peer Networks

### WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & ICE BREAKERS

Maurisa Moloto welcomed everyone and explained her role as the WC M&E COP Coordinator for [Bridge](#). Anniza De Wet introduced her role as the WC M&E COP Facilitator, as well as her role at [Valcare](#) as their Social Impact Manager. Olivia Rusch formally introduced her role as Research Specialist & the Impact Assurance team to the COP.



The CoP was an in-person event held at [Allan Gray Orbis Foundation](#) in Oranjezicht, Cape Town. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Allan Gray Orbis Foundation for their hospitality and for hosting the event at their venue.

### BAR GRAPHS AND SMILEY FACES

Mark Abrahams, SAMEA's Network Coordinator for Western Cape, Asgar Bhikoo from E Squared (who is also a SAMEA Board Member), along with Herman Meyer from LEAP & Stellenbosch University and Bruce Probyn from Principals Academy Trust explained that they are all from NGOs and they know that funders want bar graphs...so the question is: 'How do we put a smiley face on a bar graph?' 😊 Nikiwe Xalanga from LEAP Science & Maths Schools in Langa also added value to the discussions. Marion Bakker stated: "I want to learn from each other and share challenges on how to overcome them."

🤔 A thought-provoking [video](#) was played regarding networks and how they are all around us. Instead of scaling up we need to seek to scale out. As Martin Luther King Jr quoted: "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

### ☁ REFLECTIONS ON THE VIDEO:

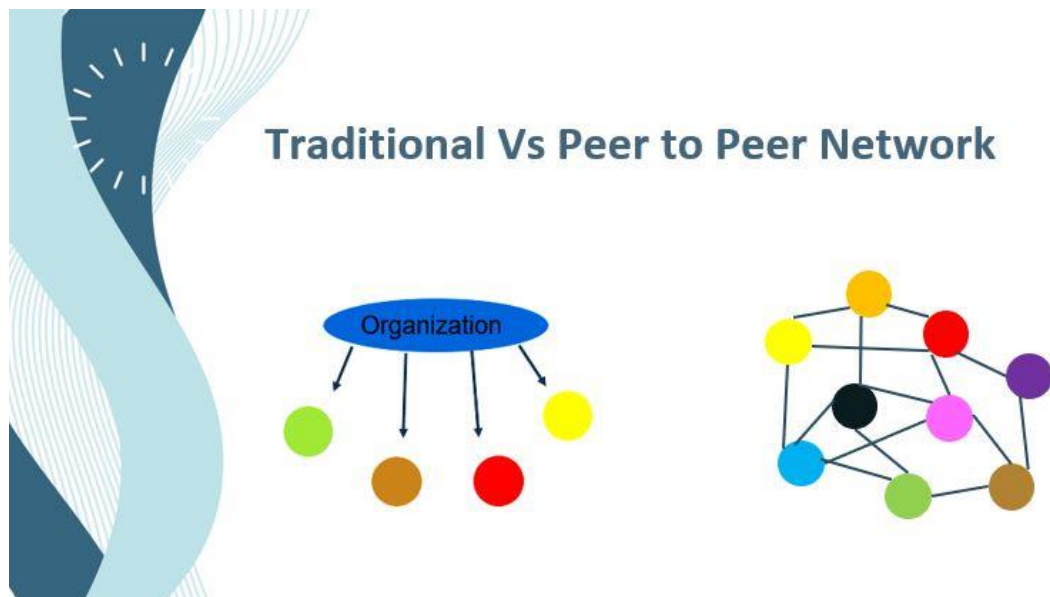
- It is important to bring the unheard voices into the network. We are missing voices from stakeholders.
- Networking often brings out results which you did not expect.
- NGOs are not keen to collaborate as they are often funded and they don't want to share their funding which one can understand. Funders can also say "either you collaborate or we won't fund you."
- It makes sense to build partnerships.

- How do we equal out power dynamics to create a shared community? Equal opportunity to make inputs and outputs. If collaboration is forced it says a lot about the system that is in power and how it is working. In a healthy more functional system, the networking should be more casual to cluster around a common cause vs being pushed around a common cause.
- Something happens that would not have happened if we did not connect and get together.

The idea of a COP vs Network was explored and how we can come together in a constructive way, to create shared value.

## “WHAT IS A NETWORK” PRESENTATION

We could say a Network is similar to a root system. Below the ground there is a root system to draw on to help nourish and support you to become a big tree. There is commitment to come together, commitment in intention to help create value. Mark Abrahams shared some valuable insights, mentioning that we come to *get* but we forget we also have something to *offer* to the COP space. For example, in the Inservice Providers Coalition what brought us together was that collaboration works.



Asgar Bhikoo mentioned that we need to look at the broken systems and challenge them. We need to look at the origins of the BRIDGE / SAMEA Partnership history: lots of education organisations and M&E consultants working together. The partnership was formed to demystify M&E, as well as its jargon. The role as SAMEA and practitioners is to create a shared understanding.

*“Compliance vs Community to help make mutual, shared benefit/value.”*

We had some deep reflections on our roles, as well as learning and development in the field.

💡 **THOUGHT:**

How do we learn from the practice? How can we avoid doing M&E for compliance only instead of for practising better decision making?

## NETWORKING ICEBREAKER: “GET TO KNOW YOU BINGO”



An informal networking icebreaker was enjoyed called “*Get to Know you Bingo*”. Each person received a bingo card and had to find interesting information about the other people in the room to get to know them better, outside of their role or organisation.

Some interesting insights included finding out who was in the Guinness World Book of Records, as well as who had run a marathon before.

Bruce Probyn won the Bingo as the 1st person to get a full line across and gifted the prize to Marion Bakker. She won a 6-week online self-study Theory of Change course from Valcare to the value of R1500.

Anniza mentioned that the Valcare courses are available to all. Go to [www.valcare.org.za](http://www.valcare.org.za) for further information.

## SAMEA CONFERENCE FEEDBACK:

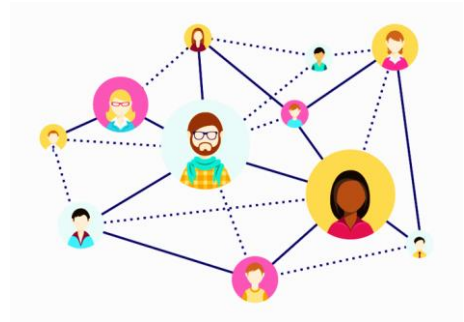
Eleanor Hazell mentioned her role at JET Education Services, as well as a SAMEA Board Member. She was joined by Anniza de Wet who helped provide updates on SAMEA in an interview style format, answering guests’ Q&As.

- SAMEA CONFERENCE: The SAMEA conference which takes place every 2 years was held in September this year. The theme was very important due to the changes in the world and what is currently unfolding in the state of play.  
M&E evidence can inform and is useful to effect change in crisis, such as climate change, social justice & equity, as well as Covid-19 or the KZN flooding. Eleanor mentioned that she was strand coordinator for evidence use & evidence management strand, and that there were 6 strands.  
The highlight for Eleanor was how M&E or rapid evaluations could be used for decision making, as some evaluation tools or reviews were also made in Africa. She also enjoyed seeing evaluative thinking being brought into every day practises.  
Mark Abrahams, as newsletter editor for the SAMEA Conference, said his highlight was meeting old M&E friends as well as meeting new ones after being online for some time. Celebrating African Authors: celebrating the relaunch of emerging M&E community of practice and program.
- HACKATHON on climate justice and equity decision making. Guidelines were drafted and are being piloted, so teams are celebrated. The 16th of November was National Evaluation Day: DPME guidelines were launched which showcased authors & NGO’s.
- LEARNINGS: act quickly and learn quickly to implement change – especially in the climate change field. Close working relationships with partner organisations including UNICEF.
- LOOKING AHEAD: Guidelines to be posted soon which will be available on SAMEA’s website, as well as DPME’s website. The Evaluation Hackathon will be on the same page.
- VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION of M&E which includes programs such as emerging practitioners. Spread news and jobs about the M&E community. There are many different COPs, including different provinces and chapters of interest. Look out for MERLTECH & Investing in Impact COPs. Run webinars from expert professionals and access to practitioner knowledge.

## NETWORKING TO BUILD CAPACITY AND STRENGTHEN OUR SYSTEMS

Anniza continued with her presentation, which went through the Benefits of Networking, as seen below. This was followed by a NETWORK MAPPING ACTIVITY. The CoP was split into two teams and had to map out connections as well as possible outside networks to work with in future.

“We are all working on similar things, challenges, lots in common that came out from this activity.”

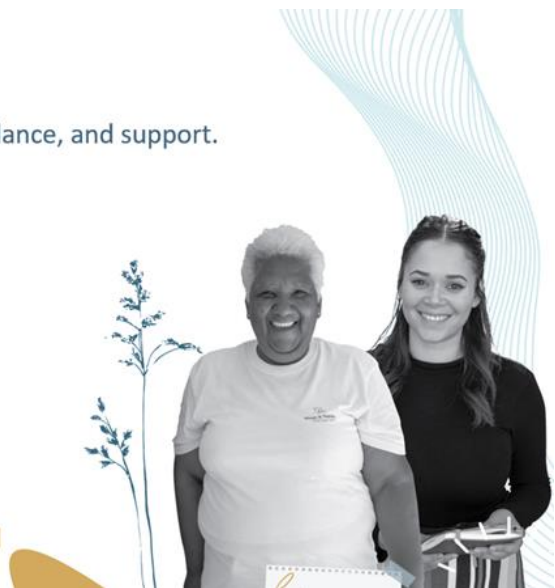


### The Benefits of Networking

In the safe space of connection, there is empathy, guidance, and support.

- A network connects you to like-minded people.
- It creates a space for you to feel heard.
- Gives you insight into how you can improve.
- Provides a support structure, resources, and opportunity.
- Allows you to support others.

These valuable connections open the door to powerful and impactful relationships.



### ☁ REFLECTIONS ON THE ACTIVITY:

We noticed we had no government connections in the room.

Mark mentioned the whole network of government and other officials who would like to connect with the COP.

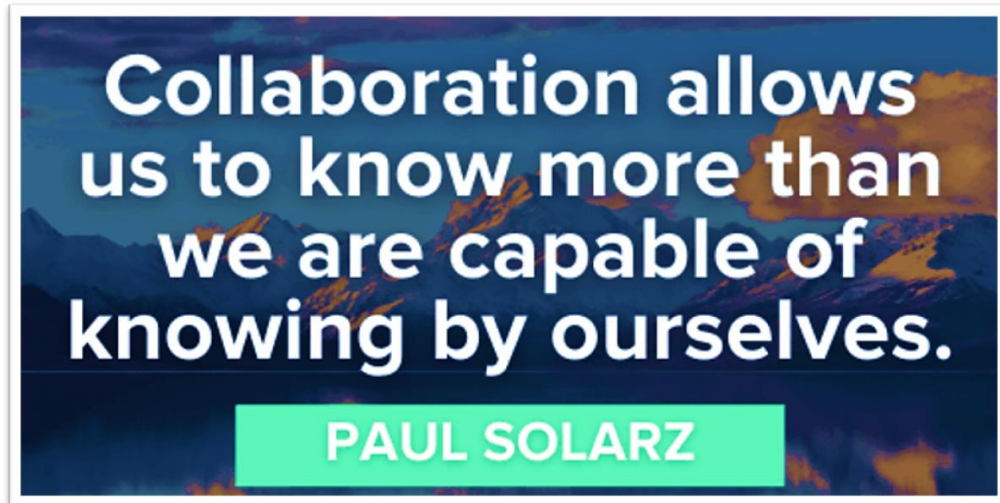
Herman spoke about the Office of the Premier who runs specific programs we could connect with.

Interest groups are a good place to start and be mindful on intentions in connecting to add value.

How can we create value in the room?

- Working around a common cause, common interest, and work around the agenda. Is there a registry with a list of offices, contacts, persons to connect with? Perhaps we need to set it up in the future.
- What problem or challenge are you bringing and what are you bringing to contribute? Value would be added if everyone spoke to the challenges and came together around a specific topic to work together to solve, share info or tools and connections. How do we keep connected? Perhaps it is just following up on conversations.
- Managing expectations & being realistic about sustaining or managing the network with multiple organisations, agendas, challenges.
- Identify possible gaps, challenges to solve, how we can grow the network.


 [Click here to access Anniza's full presentation](#)



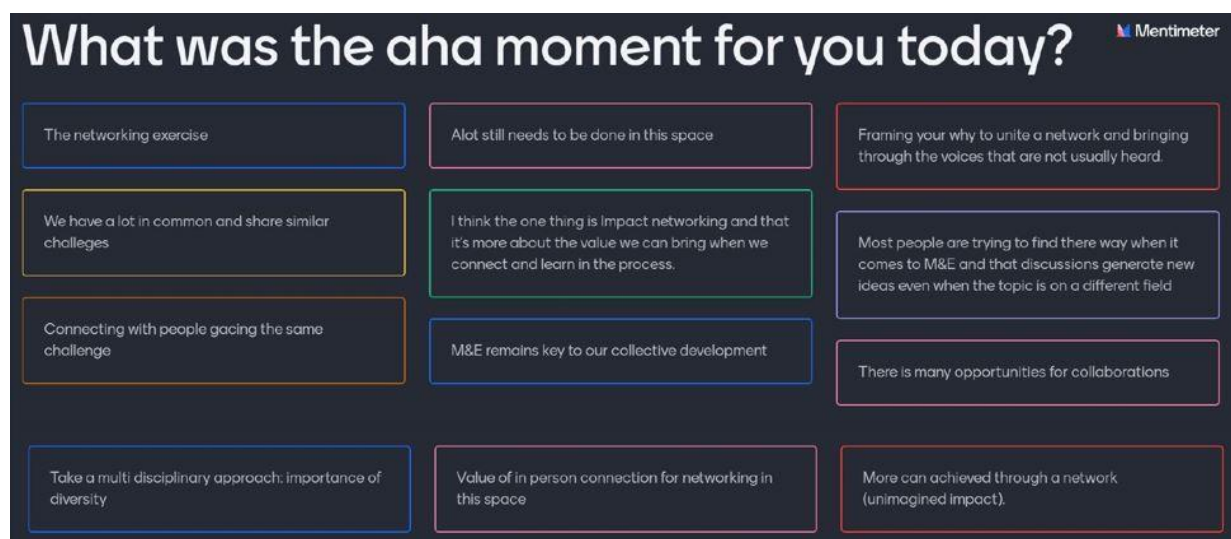
## CLOSING AND CHECKOUT:

We used the opportunity to ask via the Mentimeter:

“What was the ‘aha’ moment for you today and what would you like to explore more? “

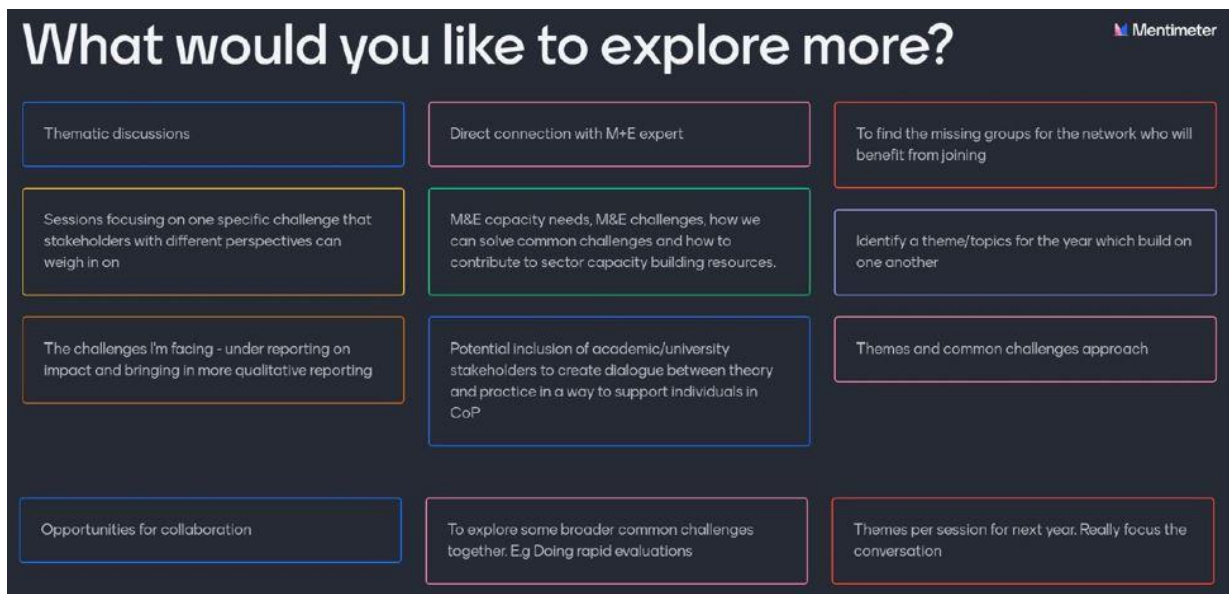
See hereunder for the comments: 

### ? WHAT WAS THE 'AHA' MOMENT FOR YOU TODAY?





## ? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPLORE MORE?



The COP ended off with a Networking Lunch that was enjoyed by all.

👉 To view a short video with the highlights of the day [CLICK HERE](#) 👈

### LIST OF ATTENDEES:

Anniza De Wet	Valcare
Maurisa Moloto	BRIDGE
Nikiwe Xalanga	LEAP
Bruce Probyn	Principals Academy Trust
Marion Bakker	Ikamva Youth
Herman Meyer	LEAP
Eleanor Hazell	JET Education Services
Faaiza Sirkhoth	AGOF
Asgar Bhikoo	E Squared
Mark Abrahams	Southern Hemisphere
Celeste Abrahams	AGOF
Olivia Rusch	AGOF
Charlene Jardine	AGOF

Gail Sotiya	AGOF
Them bani Dastile	AGOF
Riquel M	AGOF
Matt	AGOF
Mphumie Siling	AGOF
Ntuthu Tafane	LEAP