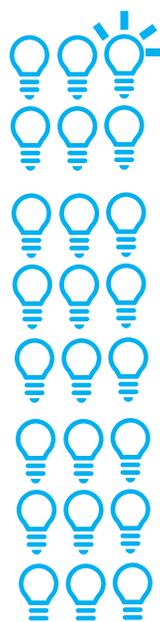# So, how was **MERLTech Jozi** 2018?

'Jozi' is the colloquial name for Johannesburg, South Africa. This year (2018) was the first year the this city hosted the MERLTech Conference. In fact, it was the first on the continent!

MERLTech Jozi brought together **100 participants** who were either MERL professionals, Techies, or this that fit in between the spectrum as *MERLTECH* professionals. The aim was to share lessons, tools, and even failures among a community of individuals who have an interest in improving and innovating how we do monitoring, evaluation, research and promote learning.

Here are a few of the takeaways from the conference:

What topics
were presented?

Below is are 5 themes and related topics covered in MERLTech Jozi 2018. Many experiences and approaches used on the African continent were shared, showing the growing cases of MERLTech. However, there are still challenges and opportunities to scale and learn from failures in implementation.

The Context

Digital ecosystem | Future Skills | Evaluator competencies

Responsible Data

Privacy| Safeguarding| Discrimination

Failures

Response rates | USSD | Tech tools

MERLTech Tools

Including: DHIS2| Mobenzi| Ushaihidi| DevResults| Salesforce| Gephi| Spatial measurement| MS Excel| WhatsApp

Experiences & Approaches

Such as: Video measurement| Agile methods | Biometrics| Big & small data| Data viz & infographics| Story-telling| Social Network Analysis| Data cleaning...and more

We need to share more lessons from failures to support implementation of MERLTech and scaling solutions/approaches

Google these to find out more and source the presentations on the MERLTech website

These experiences can be shared in other MERL communities. The future collaboration with SAMEA will support this

What did participants SHARE?

Tools

Data Innovator
@DataInnovator

Talking about Twitter in analyzing its role in Social Network Analysis #MERLTech #DataScience - the depth of the cascade of fake news and why @praekeltorg #MERLTech

Views

richard gevers
@richardgevers

The word cloud from the live poll at our session "datafication discrimination?" At #MERLTECH with @Kmoeti Sipho (OxFamSA) and @Billbobbird - great views from my fellow panelists and from the people in the session, thanks all for engaging!

Tweet your reply

Connections

praekeltorg

Add a comment...   Post

What did participants LEARN?

"Increasingly, evaluations require research, eval, tech & sector experience. Helping Evaluators to build networks with data scientists or survey- & other tech experts, is a better capacity dev strategy than trying to get know-it-all Evaluators #MERLtech" - Benita Williams, Benita Williams Consulting

My greatest takeaway was from the Social network analysis sessions and how it can be used for not only for program evaluation but for implementation as well. - Nokuthula Mabhena, Khulisa Management Services

We don't need to be afraid of data or of collecting lots of data - rather we need to understand that all of this data is managed and used by people and we need to ensure that those individuals take into account issues of privacy, discrimination, protection, advocacy, and respect...qualities we would expect that we all people who apply to their work every day. - Katie Reichert, Panagora group

"... I particularly took a lot of practical value from [the] session on developing infographics and communicated - where I discovered a number of errors I've been making for years!" - Kieran Sharpey-Schafer, Palindrome

"...tool I will be using is on data viz and how I will be presenting information going forward, the colours, charts as well as the difference between data viz and an infographic." – Saneli Mavundla, Data Innovator

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