

Building Better Evaluation – Increasing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion

CES Ontario 2023 Virtual Conference

October 26, 2023 | Session Information

Keynote Speaker: What's (un)Ethical? Navigating Ethical Questions in Evaluation Practice

Speaker: Dr. Betty Onyura

Time: 9:30 – 10:30 AM

Dr. Betty Onyura is a dedicated scientist-practitioner and senior leader at the intersection of education, healthcare, and knowledge mobilization. Presently, she is the Director, Knowledge Mobilization associate scientist within the Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH) provincial system support program. She is also a scientist at the Wilson Centre at the University of Toronto. She is a committed educator who engages widely in capacity-building initiatives for evaluation alongside her research on evaluation. Her research interests are in the science of evaluation, where she is keen on examining questions about ethics, harm, and sustainability in relation to the evaluation of innovations. Dr. Onyura has been a recipient of SSHRC Insight and New Frontier Exploration grants and is also passionate about developing frameworks and methodological tools that can be readily applied to enrich the quality and utility of program evaluation work.

Panel Session: Building Better Evaluation - Increasing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion

Speakers: Dara Dillon and Christine Cassar

Time: 10:45 AM – 12:00 PM

The opening session addresses the state of evaluation today, exploring trends, concerns, and opportunities for change across the diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-oppression framework.

Dara Dillon: Data Democracy: Redefining Evaluation Inclusivity

In an evolving world shaped by technology and innovation, the field of evaluation holds the promise of transformation. This abstract introduces "Data Democracy: Redefining Evaluation Inclusivity," a paradigm-shifting concept that envisions innovative evaluation methodologies. The proposed presentation explores participatory, community-driven data collection and analysis as a catalyst for equity and inclusion in evaluation.

At its core, this presentation challenges traditional evaluation methods that can reinforce power imbalances and silence marginalized voices. "Data Democracy" advocates for integrating digital tools to democratize data processes. Leveraging technology bridges the divide between marginalized communities and evaluation, capturing their perspectives authentically.

The presentation navigates novel data collection approaches, spotlighting technology's role in involving marginalized communities actively in generating evaluative data. Additionally, it examines participatory data analysis, empowering community members to glean insights from collected data, fostering ownership and agency in the evaluation process.

Real-world case studies illustrate successful data democracy implementation. Organizations using digital platforms amplify marginalized voices, yielding more inclusive, actionable, community-aligned evaluation insights.

Embracing the digital era demands equitable, representative evaluation practices. "Data Democracy" prompts a reimagining of evaluation, equipping communities with data literacy and agency. The presentation embarks on shaping an evaluation future where data truly empowers, ensuring every voice resonates. Through this discourse, we embark on the journey to redefine inclusivity in evaluation, ensuring a democratic, impactful, and diverse evaluation landscape.

Christine Cassar: Reflecting on program evaluation: On participation and exclusion

This presentation will address a concern that is often raised by frontline stakeholders who are participants in (implementation) evaluations particularly in programs where participants are vulnerable or underrepresented: how do we engage individuals who have not at all been engaged in the program, to understand what the excluding factors are and how we can overcome them?

The presenter will first ask participants to think about a program they have evaluated in which the participants were established as individuals (and stakeholders) who had used a particular service or been recipients of a particular benefit.

The presentation will outline how reaching out to those who did NOT participate in a migrant integration program provided an entirely different perspective on the program itself – why did they not participate? Why were inclusivity measures insufficient? How were they excluded due to gender, age and language knowledge?

A key objective is to focus on the fact that underrepresented populations are often in a position where they are unable to make significant input into policy and process decision affecting their socio-economic outcome, and that therefore often an evaluation is a unique opportunity for otherwise unheard voices to be a part of the influencing process of such policies.

Communities of Practice Roundtables

Time: 1:00 – 2:00 PM

Facilitator-guided discussion and networking around key evaluation communities:

1. Health Evaluation

2. Community-based Participatory Evaluation
 3. Education Evaluation
 4. Community Development
 5. Connecting Students and New Practitioners with Established Evaluators
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Methods Seminars

Speakers: Jennica Nichols and Maya Lefkowich; Martha McGuire and Jennifer Fawcett

Time: 2:15 – 3:30 PM

Leading evaluation practitioners host interactive methods and approaches sessions.

Jennica Nichols and Maya Lefkowich ([AND implementation](#)): Intermediate Arts-Based Methods: Deep Dive into Poetry for Evaluation & Reflexive Practice

Data don't just live in someone's head waiting to be extracted. Data are connected to stories, places, memories, emotions, dreams, and history. Yet, common Western data collection techniques often fail to (a) engage diverse ways of knowing/ being, (b) mitigate extractive and onerous practices, and (c) promote meaningful participation. Evaluators need relevant tools that tap into diverse wisdom and invite complex meaning-making. This intermediate workshop builds on foundational concepts in arts-based data collection, evaluation planning, and evaluation ethics. Focusing on poetry, content delves deeper into arts-based theory and practical strategies for eliciting data and practicing reflexivity. Techniques covered include (a) mitigating extractive data collection (a symptom of white supremacy/capitalist culture), (b) working respectfully with (not against) emotional and embodied wisdom to answer evaluation questions. Hands-on activities, case studies, examples from real-world practice, and discussion of what works (and what doesn't) will bring content to life.

No artistic or poetic skill is required! Experience with previous arts-based methods content will be advantageous. Participants must be familiar with crafting evaluation questions, facilitating focus groups or convening evaluation planning meetings, and conducting qualitative interviews. At an intermediate level, learners must be open to participating in discussions, trying and sharing poetry, and letting things get a little weird. Those unfamiliar with arts-based methods who wish to attend may benefit from the following free resources:

- [CES arts-based methods for data collection webinar](#)
- [Mass Culture free webinar on arts-based methods for justice-oriented evaluation](#)
- [Mass Culture free webinar on arts-based methods in evaluation](#)
- [AND implementation blog posts](#)

By the end of the session, learners will be able to (a) identify unique opportunities and potential risks of using poetry in evaluation as data collection or reflexive practice with diverse groups and (b) assess the fit of poetry for a specific evaluation project relative to other arts-based techniques and evaluation context (i.e., why use poetry rather than a visual elicitation technique like drawing or photography). Learners will also develop confidence and familiarity with navigating the weird and whimsical ways people express themselves.

This workshop will use experiential learning techniques to promote skill building. Dynamic lecture content will include:

- An overview of key concepts and theory
- Strategies for effective facilitation & data elicitation
- Ethical considerations
- Examples from practice

Acting on the growing demand for creative evaluation methods, this session bolsters the practical and theoretical knowledge of arts-based methods for evaluators looking to add new tools to their evaluation toolboxes. This workshop aligns with the conference theme of increasing diversity and promoting inclusion by offering evaluators tools for elevating and engaging with diverse forms of wisdom often overlooked in Western evaluation practices. Concepts around reciprocity, centring joy, and moving away from extractive and production-focused evaluation align with anti-oppressive practices – especially for confronting white supremacy culture. As arts-based methods that are growing in popularity in evaluation, this session contributes important insights that support CES evaluation competencies for reflexive practice, technical practice, situational practice, and interpersonal practice (i.e., 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5)

Hands-on activities, case-study problem-solving, and group discussion will be used to build confidence and familiarity with techniques. Depending on workshop size, the format may closely resemble:

- Introductions & arts-based icebreaker (10 min)
- Arts-Based methods: theory, application & ethics (5 min)
- Deep dive into poetry & literary or word-based wisdom (10 min)
- Case study, hands-on activity, small group or partner discussion, share-back (25 min)
- Hands-on examples from practice (10 min)
 - Do's and Don'ts
- Q&A + Discussion (10 min)
- Last thoughts (5 min)

Martha McGuire and Jennifer Fawcett: Conducting Principles-focused Developmental Evaluation

The workshop will offer learning opportunities and application of the knowledge. The agenda will include:

- Introduction to principles-based developmental evaluation 15 min
- Small group work with a case study 15 min
- Introduction to Deena Hamza's eco-normalization framework 10 min
- Small group work in applying the eco-normalization framework 15 min
- Delving deeper into principle-based evaluation 10 min
- Applying the Roadmap tool using a case study 15 min
- Wrap-up/Q&A 10 min

This is a workshop that will explore principle-based evaluation, demonstrating how principles can be built into a developmental evaluation. By the end of this workshop, participants should be able to:

- Understand and be able to define development evaluation with a principle focus
- Integrate principles into their own developmental evaluations
- Utilize tools to conducting a principle-focused developmental evaluation

This workshop will address the following competency domains:

- Reflective Practice
 - Evaluation theory and practice
 - Ethics
 - Awareness of self
- Technical Practice
 - Methodology
- Situational Practice
 - Attending to the circumstances that make every evaluation unique

Peer to Peer Learning: Creating Innovative Evaluation - Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Facilitators: Geetha Van den Daele and Amanda Sunderdas

Time: 3:45 – 4:45 PM

This interactive closing session focuses on the interplay between innovation and evaluation and how novel approaches to evaluation – from a comparative perspective – can address key challenges faced by organizations and evaluators, and serve as enablers for fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion.