



Building Better Evaluation – Increasing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion

CES Ontario 2023 Virtual Conference

October 26, 2023 | Speaker Information

Christine Cassar has been working in human rights for fifteen years, with seven years of experience in evaluation, working in some of the toughest places in the world – Nigeria, Palestine, Yemen, northern Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo amongst others. As a new immigrant to Canada, Christine has taken her feminist approach to research and has got involved in the British Columbia Chapter of the Canadian Evaluation Society, and is keen to explore how so much of the decolonization work that is otherwise implemented to “other” parts of the world in Europe, should actually affect our everyday practice as evaluators and stakeholders in the policy and program process.

Session: Panel Session: Reflecting on program evaluation: On participation and exclusion

Dara Dillon is a seasoned evaluator with over a decade of experience in crafting evaluation strategies centred around diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her academic roots in the social sciences have merged seamlessly with her practical involvement at IIBD, equipping her with a unique lens to reshape evaluation methodologies in ways that empower marginalized communities and amplify their voices. At IIBD, she has driven innovation by designing participatory data collection methods and culturally sensitive analysis frameworks. This approach transcends traditional confines, ensuring evaluation processes not only respect but actively involve diverse perspectives. Collaborating with communities across contexts, she has seen firsthand the profound impact of inclusive evaluation—where their insights shape outcomes.

Session: Panel Session: Data Democracy: Redefining Evaluation Inclusivity

Passionate about equity-centered and imaginative approaches, **Maya Lefkowich** is a methodologist, artist, and evaluator with 12 years of experience. Coming from Public Health and Non-Profit Management, Maya brings a community-led and strengths-based lens to her evaluation work. She has had the privilege of designing numerous creative approaches for: digital storytelling, narrative inquiry, imaginative interviewing, photo elicitation, poetry, drawing, collage and more. Maya has published peer-reviewed journal articles on research methods, power and positionality, and evaluation. Maya completed a BA (international development), MPH (health promotion), and PhD (anti-oppressive storytelling).

Session: Methods Seminar: Deep Dive into Poetry for Evaluation & Reflexive Practice

Passionate about increasing the reach, relevance, and use of evaluation, **Jennica Nichols** is a credentialed evaluator with 15+ years experience using mixed methods to solve complex problems. She has published peer-reviewed articles on arts-based methods and ethics and supported her own clients with creative techniques including photo elicitation, photovoice, poetry, collage, theatre and more. Jennica leads capacity-building initiatives for local, provincial, and federal government departments in Canada as well as private sector, NGOs, and universities. Jennica holds a BSc (biology) and MPH (epidemiology). She is moments from finishing her PhD.

Session: Methods Seminar: Deep Dive into Poetry for Evaluation & Reflexive Practice

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.

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

Nick Petten is a researcher, consultant and evaluator with over 10 years' experience working with culturally diverse populations in multiple roles and positions. He is primarily concerned with how to meaningfully and ethically involve children and youth in research and program design. Nick has extensive knowledge and demonstrated research ability developed through a masters-level education in early childhood studies with a focus on children's rights, program evaluation, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and early learning. He is currently conducting several program evaluations and research projects focusing on youth engagement, peacebuilding, children's rights, health equity, and other social justice issues.

Session: Communities of Practice Roundtables

Allison Prieur is an evaluation and organizational learning leader who has 20 years of experience working with non-profits and foundations. She is particularly interested in building evaluation capacity to support organizational development in human service non-profits, and the role of foundations in supporting doing and using evaluations among their grantees and for their own strategic decision making. Allison is a student in the Interdisciplinary PhD in Evaluation program at Western Michigan University. She also holds a Master's of Public Policy from Simon Fraser University, a Bachelor of Social Work, and Bachelor of Arts in Developmental Psychology with Thesis, both from the University of Windsor.

Session: Communities of Practice Roundtables

Nikhat Rasheed is an independent consultant and former Executive Director, with expertise in leading multi-institutional projects and program evaluations in the education and non-profit sectors. Projects are funded by the Government of Canada, Government of Ontario and regional/ local foundations. Her areas of expertise include immigrant integration, pathways to employment, labour market planning, diversity and inclusion, crime prevention and delivering training initiatives to achieve social change. Nikhat currently serves as the President of the Canadian Evaluation Society – Ontario.

Session: Closing Remarks

Amanda Sunderdas is a Queer South Asian woman, who has lived in Canada her whole life. She is a researcher at Openly and a recent graduate of York University with a BA in Global Health and a Specialized Honours in Health Policy, Management, and Systems. She finds that her intersectional background draws her towards issues of equity and access. Amanda's fields of passion include Mental Health and Addictions, Immigration, and Queer Representation. In her free time, she can be found listening to music, writing, or conversing with people – as she firmly believes we can learn something from everyone!

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

Geetha Van den Daele was born in India and grew up in the east coast – Prince Edward Island. She left the Island after high-school, and several cities/countries/years later landed in Guelph in 2011. As a passionate community builder and strong believer in that “alone we can do so little, together we can do so much,” Geetha combines her knack for collaboration, research, and evaluation in ways to capture and amplify learning. Geetha is also known for her sensitivity, and attention to, working with diverse populations and her ability to hold the space for conversations and insights to emerge. She has over 15 years' experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, with a special focus and passion for participatory, culturally-responsive, and community-based designs. While she does find herself referring to her self as an anti-researcher researcher, professionally speaking, she is a community-based researcher, a credentialed evaluator, and an Erickson professional coach. What do those things have in common? She designs and ask questions, in multiple ways, to foster 'fresh insights' and spark change. Questions, she believes, can and do change the world.

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