



National Capital Chapter
Canadian Evaluation Society

2026 ANNUAL LEARNING EVENT EVALUATION EXCHANGE: IDEAS, IMPACT, AND INNOVATION



2026

PROGRAM

CURRENT AS OF DECEMBER 16, 2025

JOIN US IN OUR NATIONS CAPITAL!

The 2026 CES-NCC Annual Learning Event (ALE) is our flagship gathering, bringing together practitioners, scholars, and leaders in our professional community for a dynamic exchange of knowledge and ideas. If you're looking to make an impact on your career, this is the event for you!



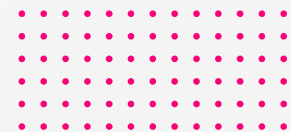
IN SHORT...

FEBRUARY 26, 2026

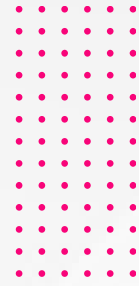
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ABOUT THE ANNUAL LEARNING EVENT



Each year, the ALE, hosted by the Canadian Evaluation Society National Capital Chapter, provides an opportunity to learn from one another, share innovations, and deepen our collective practices.

In 2026, under the theme “**Evaluation Exchange: Ideas, Impact, and Innovation**,” we will explore how evaluation connects with other professions to evolve, adapt, and inspire action across diverse contexts and under challenging conditions; and how evidence can act as a shared currency to bridge sectors and build understanding.

Ideas → Smarter Decisions, Stronger Projects

Fresh or upcycled approaches that help organizations make better choices with limited resources.

Impact → Accountability, Equity, and Resilience

In tough financial times, there is pressure to demonstrate resilience and prove value while keeping investments, research and evaluation equitable and inclusive.

Innovation → Technology, Trends, and the Future of Value

Future-facing tools and partnerships that foster collaboration between evaluators, policy makers and decision-makers.

We are committed to fostering a welcoming, inclusive environment that reflects the richness of our field and the multidisciplinary nature of our work. This conference is more than just a series of presentations—it’s a gathering of minds and hearts committed to the growth and vibrancy of our field. By participating, you will contribute to a collective space where we can learn from each other’s experiences, challenge conventional practices, and build lasting professional connections.

We look forward to connecting with you on February 26!

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL-LEVEL EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT CAPACITY: REFLECTIONS ON A TOOLKIT APPROACH

Organizational evaluation and performance measurement strategies can help clarify, standardize, and strengthen how organizations assess their progress and performance. By adopting such strategies, organizations can establish a shared vision, common language, and cohesive work plan for improvement. To support this goal, a toolkit was developed for evaluators.

This presentation highlights findings from the most recent pilot assessing the toolkit's usefulness and impact. It also dedicates space to reflecting on the future of organizational-level capacity building in evaluation and performance measurement.



Karolina Kaminska, PhD Candidate, University of Waterloo

Karolina Kaminska is a PhD candidate in Public Health Sciences, Health Evaluation at the University of Waterloo. She obtained her Bachelor of Health Sciences and MSc in Health Systems at the University of Ottawa.

Karolina has worked at various national and international non-profit and governmental organizations, including the World Health Organization, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, specializing in qualitative and quantitative research, analysis, and evaluation design, approaches, and methods. Her current doctoral research focuses on improving identification of adolescents with mental health and substance use issues by leveraging system-level evaluation, analysis, and machine learning.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

1A2 IDEAS

FROM SILOS TO LEARNING: REIMAGINING EVALUATION USE IN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE

Federal evaluation functions are designed to strengthen accountability, learning, and evidence-informed decision-making, yet evaluation findings continue to be underutilized by program managers and executives (Bourgeois & Whynot, 2018). This presentation draws on an analytical framework developed in the presenter's recent academic work, which applies Gareth Morgan's mechanistic and political metaphors, Edgar Schein's cultural model, Michael Quinn Patton's Utilization-Focused Evaluation, and John Mayne's concept of evaluative culture to explain the persistent underuse of evaluation findings in the Canadian federal government.

By exploring how bureaucratic structure, cultural assumptions, and political dynamics shape evaluation behaviour, the presentation highlights why evaluation often becomes a compliance exercise rather than a tool for continuous improvement. The session will offer a compact, high-level synthesis of three key insights:

- **Structure:** How mechanistic bureaucracies create silos and unintentionally misalign evaluator and manager roles.
- **Culture:** How underlying assumptions—not just espoused values—drive resistance to evaluation and limit learning.
- **Politics:** How power dynamics and competing interests can be reframed as opportunities for negotiation, co-determination, and increased evaluation use.

The presentation proposes a path forward rooted in courageous leadership, evaluative thinking, and intentional relationship-building between program and evaluation teams. It emphasizes how organizations can shift from a culture of compliance to a culture of learning—one where evaluation is embraced as a strategic asset rather than an oversight requirement.



Mahmoud Rahim, Graduate Student, University of Ottawa

Mahmoud Rahim is a graduate student in evaluation at the University of Ottawa and an evaluator in the Federal Public Service. His academic work focuses on evaluation use, organizational learning, and evidence-informed decision-making within government settings. Drawing on research in evaluation theory, organizational culture, and public administration, Mahmoud analyzes why evaluation findings are often underutilized and what organizational conditions promote meaningful uptake. He has contributed to evaluation projects across federal programs.

His work emphasizes strengthening collaboration between evaluators and program teams and cultivating cultures of learning across the public service.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

1A3 IDEAS

COLLABORATIVE SENSE-MAKING: WHAT DATA PARTIES BRING TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EVALUATIONS

Evaluations can produce solid data, but engagement from stakeholders can be weak or limited. Recommendations are made, but stakeholders lack the context in which the findings arise from. Data parties offer a solution. They are semi-structured sessions where both evaluators and stakeholders review the emerging evidence and findings to collectively analyze the data.

This presentation will explain what data parties are, why they work and how to run them effectively (with real world examples). Instead of evaluators interpreting results in isolation, data parties bring program staff, managers, and subject-matter experts into the interpretation process. This reduces misinterpretation, surfaces context the evaluation team may have missed, and builds early buy-in for results and recommendations.

Well-run data parties can sharpen findings, identify gaps early, and increase the likelihood that recommendations are actually implemented. Attendees will leave with a simple, repeatable approach they can apply in their own evaluations.



Brett Matsushita, Evaluator, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada

Brett Matsushita is an emerging evaluator at Agriculture and Agri-food Canada.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

2A1 IDEAS

EMBRACE YOUR INNER VILLAIN FOR PROFESSIONAL COURAGE – AUDITORS AND EVALUATORS

An interactive and transformational workshop for professional auditors and evaluators on “Embracing Your Inner Villain” to empower them to address the unique challenges of their roles, such as delivering uncomfortable truths and facing skepticism. By reframing negative traits as strengths, the workshop can enhance their professional judgment, courage, and effectiveness.



**Dylan Michael Jenkins, Empowerment Coach,
Motivational Speaker and Storyteller**

Dylan Jenkins is a globally recognized Indigenous leader and Two-Spirit Knowledge Keeper who transforms organizations and inspires audiences through a powerful blend of traditional wisdom and executive expertise.

With over two decades in the federal public service and academic credentials from Harvard and other leading institutions, Dylan delivers authentic, purpose-driven insights that ignite change and foster inclusive leadership.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

3A1 FRENCH

IMAGINATE: THE BRAINSTORM THINK TANK

To make choices within a world of constraints, we need smarts, but we also need the other thing: imagination. This session invites participants to take a momentary break from gloomy headlines, tight budgets and timeline pressures to unleash their creativity and generate a little storm of ideas. If you had the resources, what one thing would you do to make evaluation work (even) more strategic and influential? Let's go big blue sky, moonshot, throw some proverbial spaghetti at the wall. Weird takes and wild ideas welcome, whether low or high-tech, from nifty tweaks to game-changing shake-ups. Through this playful, zero-pressure, participatory think thank session, let's gather our most colorful dreams as evaluators. Using a 1-2-4-All structure, we'll start solo, pair up, team up, share and upvote ideas as a group – this session is also an opportunity to talk facilitation and brainstorming techniques. Expect lively and cheerful conversations. The goal is to leave inspired. And who knows, maybe some of our wildest aspirations are not that unrealistic after all...



Marie-Philippe Lemoine, Evaluator, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada

Marie-Philippe Lemoine is a credentialed evaluator at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. She lives in Montreal and previously worked at La Maison de l'innovation sociale (la MIS) and with the private consulting firm Goss Gilroy Inc.

Marie-Philippe is partial to cookies, speculative fiction and unaided stargazing.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

4A1 IDEAS

WALK IN THEIR SHOES: AN EMPATHY MAP SPRINT TO OPERATIONALIZE A SURVIVOR-CENTERED APPROACH

The principle of being “survivor-centered” is an important part of PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment) and equitable evaluation. Yet, many struggle to move this principle from a policy statement to daily practice. How do we truly understand a survivor's perspective to design safer programs and more ethical evaluation frameworks? This interactive session addresses this question.

We will conduct a 45-minute “sprint” using an empathy map. An empathy map is a collaborative visualization tool that outlines a person's experiences, thoughts, and needs. This is an adaptable facilitation method that has successfully been implemented in NGO workshops to make abstract principles actionable.

Participants in this session will:

- Understand what is empathy map as a facilitation tool.
- Apply the empathy map by collaborating in groups to map a realistic PSEAH-related scenario.
- Discuss how this tool could improve people's understanding and application of survivor-centered approach in program mechanisms, evaluation questions, and safeguarding protocols.



Olga Shevchenko, Independent Consultant

Olga Shevchenko is an Independent Consultant, Monitoring and Evaluation & Localization. Olga has extensive experience facilitating participatory workshops and evaluations for NGOs.

Her passion is creating and adapting participatory facilitation tools, like the empathy map, to help teams operationalize complex principles. Olga holds a MSc in Applied International Development from University of Reading, and is currently studying psychology.

MAKING ACCOUNTABILITY COUNT: MEASURING TRUST AND PROTECTING COMMUNITIES

In development practice, accountability should not only flow upward to donors but also outward and downward to communities and participants whose lives are directly affected. Too often, if funding ends abruptly, organizations scale down or exit without proper closure, leaving communities vulnerable and trust eroded. Making accountability count means integrating equity, resilience, and sustainability from the start.

This presentation proposes adding cross-cutting accountability elements to evaluation frameworks so that ethical, financial, downward, and adaptive dimensions are systematically assessed. Organizations should be evaluated not only on technical capacity but also on credibility, transparency, ethics, and their history of responsible implementation. From the outset, projects should include a close-out reserve, a protected fund dedicated to responsible project closure. This ensures that communication, transition, and community engagement continue if funding is interrupted. Donors should also be assessed for ethical responsibility and their record of responsible disengagement.

Evaluations must measure community perception and participation, determining whether people feel informed, respected, and able to influence decisions. This multidirectional approach, where donors, implementers, and communities share responsibility, shifts evaluation from compliance toward genuine protection and resilience.



Rhode Charles

Rhode Charles is a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning specialist with nineteen years of experience leading evaluations and research across Haiti, Africa, Latin America, and Canada. She has managed multi-million-dollar programs funded by USAID, USDA, Global Affairs Canada, the European Union, the World Bank, and the Mastercard Foundation.

A certified Project Management for Development Professional (PMD Pro) and active member of the Canadian Evaluation Society, she promotes ethical, equity-focused, and resilient evaluation systems that strengthen accountability and trust between donors, organizations, and communities.

A CASE STUDY OF EVALUATION AND INTERNAL AUDIT PARTNERSHIP ON A HIGH-PROFILE, HIGH- STAKES PROJECT

In large-scale, high-risk infrastructure projects, timely and credible insights are critical for informed decision-making. This presentation explores an innovative collaboration between Transport Canada's Evaluation and Internal Audit (IA) functions to deliver real-time assurance and advice for Canada's High-Speed Rail (HSR) initiative. Through early and ongoing collaboration, IA and Evaluation worked together to enable timely corrective actions and continuous improvement throughout the engagement.

Evaluation played a pivotal role in addressing the control objective of Benefits Realization, one of the eight control objectives assessed by the IA team. The Benefits Realization objectives specifically focused on ensuring that intended results were clearly articulated and achievable. To support this, Evaluation facilitated the development of a comprehensive logic model for the HSR initiative, providing a structured framework to define expected outcomes and performance measures. This work was integrated with IA's recommendations on this control objective and led to a more robust risk management framework with an emphasis on results. Both functions provided real-time advice to the HSR initiative. Evaluation played a specialized role during the development of the logic model, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives and strengthening the initiative's ability to demonstrate its impact, while IA focused on the development of an integrated HSR risk management framework.

This case study demonstrates that when Evaluation and IA collaborate, organizations can move beyond compliance checks towards smarter, evidence-informed decisions and insights, with the goal of delivering stronger projects, and better value to Canadians.



Kyle Simpson, Evaluation Manager, Transport Canada

Kyle Simpson is an Evaluation Manager at Transport Canada with over 15 years of experience in evaluation within the federal government. He holds a Master's degree in Experimental Psychology from Carleton University and brings extensive expertise in research and evaluation design. Kyle has applied a wide range of research methods, statistical procedures, and evaluation approaches, including horizontal evaluations of complex initiatives. His work focuses on integrating evaluation into decision-making processes to enhance accountability, and project performance.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

2B1 FRENCH

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: HOW TRISEG'S GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE FRAMEWORK STRENGTHENS INCLUSIVE EVALUATION IN FRAGILE ECONOMIES

The TRISEG (Trade for Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth) project, implemented by TFO Canada in 16 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, aims to facilitate SMEs' access to international markets while promoting gender equality. It supports more than 2,133 SMEs run or owned by women and under-represented groups, strengthening the capacity of institutions to better serve them and support them in exporting.

TRISEG's Gender Transformative Framework (GTF) makes an innovative contribution to the field of evaluation by introducing an integrated and contextualised approach to measuring gender-related transformative change in fragile economies. For the first time, it links structural fragility analysis, GESI risk management and transformative impact assessment within a coherent framework.

Designed for fragile and emerging economies, the CTG relies on three complementary tools that link analysis, action and evaluation:

- The Gender Fragility Framework (GFF): analyses how structural fragilities (economic, political, environmental, societal, security and human) interact with gender inequalities to hinder women's participation in trade.
- Risk Mitigation Coverage Analysis (RMCA): assesses the extent to which project strategies address identified GESI barriers and reduce vulnerabilities.
- The Transformative Change Framework (TCF): measures the project's impact across five dimensions—relevance, inclusive governance, depth, scale, and sustainability—to determine whether interventions are generating systemic and sustainable change.

The interactive session will include case studies (Ethiopia, Philippines, Peru), mini-application exercises and group discussions on how to adapt these tools to other fragile contexts. Participants will discover practical and accessible tools for designing more inclusive, accountable and transformative evaluations.

Nahomie JB Millien, GESI Programme Manager, TFO Canada

Nahomie Jn Baptiste Millien is an international development consultant with over 15 years of experience in gender equality, women's leadership and social inclusion. Founder of Centre Kaizen, the first consulting firm dedicated to gender equity and women's empowerment in Haiti, and NM Conseil, a Canadian firm specialising in social impact strategy, she supports public and private organisations in implementing inclusive practices and transformative evaluations. She has collaborated with institutions such as UN agencies, USAID and Expertise France to evaluate initiatives promoting economic empowerment and institutional strengthening. Currently a doctoral student in Labour and Employment Sciences at Laval University, Nahomie is a member of several professional networks such as BPW Montreal and the Canadian Evaluation Society.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

3B1 IMPACT

MAKING RESULTS MATTER: CONNECTING EVALUATION, RESEARCH, AND POLICY IN THE FEDERAL LANDSCAPE

Our world is changing rapidly. The complex societal challenges that we are facing require agile responses from government organizations, based on the best scientific evidence available. However, federal policymakers and managers continue to struggle in finding, interpreting, and using such evidence. This interactive fireside chat will focus on how to build sustainable practices across the federal government that will help to bridge research, evaluation, and policymaking.

Our panel of experts, along with audience participants, will address the following questions:

1. What structures currently exist in the federal government to facilitate knowledge transfer between researchers, evaluators, and policymakers? What barriers continue to limit the use of evidence in policymaking?
2. What other functions should be included or created in the results conversation to foster evidence-informed policymaking?
3. What mechanisms should be developed or strengthened to facilitate evidence-informed policymaking?

The conversation will support both the Impacts and Innovation conference streams by leveraging research and practice knowledge related to evidence for policy influence and innovative collaboration between evaluators and policymakers.



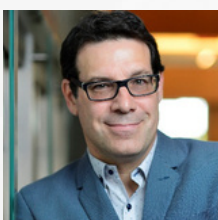
Isabelle Bourgeois, Full Professor, Faculty of Education, and Co-Director, Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services, University of Ottawa

Isabelle Bourgeois' ongoing research work focuses on measuring and building organizational evaluation capacity in the public and community sectors, as well as evidence and research use by policymakers.



Robert Shepherd, Full Professor and Supervisor, Graduate Diploma in Program Evaluation, School of Public Policy and Administration, Carleton University

Robert Shepherd's ongoing research focuses on public sector management reform in comparative perspective, Indigenous public policy and evaluation, and improving ethical practice in public services.



Eric Champagne, Full Professor, School of Political Studies, and Director of the Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa

Eric Champagne's current research focuses on infrastructure financing and asset management within the context of multilevel governance, as well as public sector reforms in Canada and in developing countries.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

4B1 IMPACT

SEEING THE WHOLE JOURNEY: JOURNEY MAPPING AS AN INNOVATIVE TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

Journey mapping is an emerging and innovative data collection method that offers evaluators a powerful way to understand participants' lived experiences over time. This approach helps uncover challenges, needs, thoughts, and opportunities for improvement at key transition points, making it especially valuable in evaluations that aim to centre human experience and equity. By visually mapping these journeys, evaluators can identify systemic barriers and service gaps and generate insights that inform more responsive and inclusive program design.

This workshop invites participants to engage in a hands-on journey mapping exercise, designed to illustrate how this method can be applied in evaluation contexts. Drawing from two recent projects—one exploring international students' pathways to permanent residency, and another examining newcomer mothers' access to mental health supports—we will demonstrate how journey maps were used to capture complex, culturally nuanced experiences. These examples will highlight how journey mapping can inform service delivery and policy development.



Julie Rodier, Principal Research Associate, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation

Julie Rodier is a Principal Research Associate at the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation where she has worked for nearly 15 years. She leads research and evaluation projects in the areas of immigration, employment, and the development of Francophone minority communities.

She has notably led innovative initiatives aimed at improving integration services for newly arrived women and strengthening the capacity of Francophone organizations. Holding a graduate degree in public policy and program evaluation, she is also an accredited evaluator.



Sol Park, Research Associate, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation

Sol Park is a Research Associate at the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. Her research interests include newcomer and refugee mental health, newcomer integration, and child and youth wellbeing. She specializes in qualitative research and seeks to include innovative ways of gathering experiences.

Sol has contributed to research and evaluation projects in areas of immigration, employment, workplace diversity and inclusion, and racism and discrimination. She holds a Master of Science in Transcultural Psychiatry from McGill University.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

1C1 INNOVATION

AI-INDUCED ANXIETY: HOPE DRIVEN VIS-À-VIS FEAR DRIVEN

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming how we work, learn, and make decisions. While the first few years of AI use have brought tremendous hope (e.g., promise of innovation, work efficiency, and transformation), it has also sparked widespread anxiety at individual, professional and/or social levels, stimulated by algorithmic opacity, job displacement, lack of clarity in ethical boundaries, and the future of human agency. This panel discussion brings together experts from diverse fields, including academia, consultancy and federal program evaluation to explore the emotional and practical dimensions of AI-induced anxiety.

Panellists will share personal and professional experiences from the hope-driven or fear-driven perspectives on AI integration, highlighting both the disruptions and the hopeful possibilities it presents. The conversation will examine how different professional sectors are coping with or responding to AI's challenges, from managing workforce transitions to ensuring ethical implementation and maintaining public trust.

MODERATOR: Ajoy Bista, Evaluation Manager, Natural Resources Canada

Marie-Philippe Lemoine, Evaluation Manager, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Marie-Philippe Lemoine is a co-host of the Generative AI for evaluation Share and Learn community and perpetually oscillates between curious enthusiasm and deep scepticism on AI.

Bhanu Bhakta Acharya, Professor of Journalism, Communication and Mass Media, University of Ottawa

Bhanu Bhakta Acharya, PhD, is a part-time professor at the University of Ottawa specializing in media ethics, journalism, and digital technologies. His recent academic work explores the intersection of Generative AI and journalism, focusing on ethical implications, professional standards, and newsroom transformations.

Brian Case, Research Associate, PRA Inc.

The ethical and transparent use of AI is a top priority for Brian Case when approaching research and evaluation projects. To date, he has used AI in various contexts, such as gaining an understanding of the background and history of programs and policies, developing lists of key texts for literature reviews, exploring applied research approaches for evaluation and economic analyses, etc.

Marc Goldfinger, Senior Advisor, Office of the Chief Information Officer of Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

With a focus on AI policy, Marc Goldfinger is dedicated to advancing the adoption of artificial intelligence in the public service to enhance service delivery for Canadians. His background in privacy policy fuels his keen interest in the intersection of AI and personal data, ensuring ethical and responsible AI integration. Passionate about leveraging technology for public good, Marc is committed to driving innovation while safeguarding privacy and trust.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

2C1 BILINGUAL

MANAGING TENSIONS AND TRADE-OFFS IN ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING: WUSC'S JOURNEY

In this presentation, we will share lessons from more than six years of implementing a series of new management processes and tools to improve program monitoring and evaluation, and organizational learning at WUSC, a Canadian NGO supporting global youth development.

Our story highlights the processes that we undertook to develop more coherent and systemic processes for monitoring and evaluation within the organization. Steps included but were not limited to: development of an internal database for storing project information and performance management data; establishment of a coherent project learning and reporting cycle; development of global indicators shared across programs; and, the establishment of a principles-based annual internal learning process leading to a global results reporting exercise. We point to a number of areas of creative tension. These include tensions between articulating and understanding program contributions in their context vs. articulating global organizational results; perceived trade-offs between encouraging upward accountability and information flows within the organization vs horizontal and context relevant learning within and between program teams; and tensions between responding to donor reporting requirements with an increased diversity of donors, and managing WUSC's own learning within the context of our own theory of change; and finally,, balancing the need for increasingly codified and comparable data with listening to the rich stories of systems change that underpin our organization's mission.

WUSC is now in the process of revising these processes and developing a new Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning strategy that leans into some of these tensions. Our presentation will focus on our lessons learned and engage the CES-NCC Community to craft our path forward.

Jim Delaney, Director Technical Services, WUSC

The first two decades of Jim Delaney's career were spent in Southeast and South Asia, which developed a strong sense of humility and a belief that outsiders who work in development need first and foremost to learn how to listen. At the time, he worked primarily in local economic development, participatory planning and environmental conservation. Jim has spent the last decade in Ottawa working for WUSC leading their technical services team, and recently started as a Visiting Professor with the School of International Development and Global Studies at the University of Ottawa

Marcella Randazzo, Global MERL Manager, WUSC

Marcella Randazzo has been working with WUSC since 2016, championing a culture of evidence-based decision-making and continuous learning across the organization, and leading the development and implementation of the new WUSC's MER strategy, shaping corporate processes to foster organizational performance measurement and project-focused MERL systems supporting team to assess and documenting systems change. She has over 20 years of experience in research and development project evaluation, within academic institutions, INGOs and the UN system.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

3C1 INNOVATION

EVALUATING ENHANCED HOMEWORK CLUBS PROGRAMS: A SERVICE PROVIDER'S PERSPECTIVE ON COMMUNITY-LED VERSUS COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

The Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses (OCCH) and United Way East Ontario (UWEO) collaboratively designed a program evaluation for the Enhanced Homework Club program, targeting middle school students in high priority neighbourhoods. The evaluation measured the program activities on child social and emotional wellbeing, their academic achievement and their potential for a brighter future. The program staff led the development of an evaluation plan with feasible measures that tells their data story. As a result, when lockdown measures in 2020 restricted in person programming, the OCCH was able to easily pivot their strategy into a hybrid, three prong approach that continued to serve vulnerable youth. This model was later replicated by community houses funded by the City of Ottawa.

OCCH and UWEO will facilitate an interactive demonstration that highlights good practices for participatory approaches. They will discuss the benefits and challenges of conducting an evaluation driven by the community. They will review techniques to build trust and consensus, the process to develop an evaluation framework, and methods to align measures that satisfy the program's need and funder's expectations. They will have a live Q&A throughout the presentation, ending with a survey for feedback on the participatory approach. Finally, there will be a 15 minute breakout exercise for participants to demo their own journey of applying participatory approaches that can be scaled.

This session will present a different perspective on participatory evaluation, highlighting its advantages. Participants will have a chance to engage in bottom-up thinking. These types of techniques apply an inclusive lens to evaluation which aligns with the 'Impact' Stream of the annual learning event.

Erin Montague, Senior Manager of Research and Evaluation, United Way East Ontario

Erin Montague is an evaluation specialist with over 10 years of experience advancing equity-focused research and evaluation in health and social systems. She leads the design and implementation of evaluation strategies that drive measurable improvements for priority populations across East Ontario.

Beth Tooley, Coalition Coordinator and Ottawa Child Youth Initiative Manager, Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses

Beth Tooley has over 20 years in community development, specializing in child and youth programming. Beth sits on the Steering Committee for United for All, a collective impact initiative to address hate and violence in Ottawa. Beth was instrumental in the development and promotion of the Critical Hours Evaluation Framework in all Ottawa-based community houses and resource centres.

Jade Odiase, Child & Youth Network Facilitator, Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses

Jade Odiase's work involves collaborating with community members, local organizations, and stakeholders to build bridges, promote understanding, and amplify the voices of those who need it the most.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

4C1 INNOVATION

TOWARDS SYNERGIES: LEVERAGING AI FOR DEVELOPING JOINT AUDIT AND EVALUATION PRACTICES

This interactive session will explore how organizations can strengthen accountability, learning, and evidence-based decision-making by finding synergies between internal audit and evaluation practices, supported by emerging AI-driven tools and methodologies. Traditionally conducted as separate exercises, internal audits and evaluations often duplicate data collection, overlook shared questions, and can lead to repetitive reporting. A joint approach—rooted in aligned criteria, indicators, and governance—can generate deeper insights, reduce organizational burden, and foster cross-functional collaboration.

This session highlights how AI and digital tools can be leveraged to build integrated assessment frameworks that serve evaluators, internal auditors, policy makers, and program teams alike. Using live demonstrations, participants will see how AI can co-create joint audit-evaluation matrices, draft interview guides and survey tools, and even support real-time analysis using integrated lines of evidence.

A core component of the session will focus on ethical and responsible AI use, reinforcing the conference's emphasis on fair, inclusive, and accountable practices. Facilitators will introduce practical approaches to privacy-preserving data workflows, model risk mitigation, and safeguards for handling sensitive organizational information.

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

1. Understand the value and mechanics of joint internal audit and evaluation projects.
2. Explore practical AI tools that streamline planning, data collection, and analysis.
3. Apply methods through hands-on exercises and live Q&A.
4. Leave with templates, AI bots, and examples to pilot in their own settings.

This session embodies innovation through methodology and technology, offering participants an experiential path toward future-ready, integrated internal audit and evaluation practices.

Eugénie Mandon, Manager, Risk Advisory Services, BDO Canada LLP

With nearly a decade of public sector experience, Eugénie Mandon brings a deep and nuanced understanding of public administration, program management, and performance improvement. Known for her methodological rigour, Eugénie specializes in program evaluation, leading a variety of assessments, from summative and formative to developmental evaluations, as well as cost-benefit analyses.

Anna Vanderveen, Manager, Risk Advisory Services, BDO Canada LLP

Anna Vanderveen is a Certified Internal Auditor with the Institute of Internal Auditors. Through the conduct of internal audit assurance and advisory engagements, Anna has experience examining entity level, financial, and process controls. Anna's contributions to engagements have included leading all phases of engagements, such as risk-based sampling using data analytics, developing findings and recommendations, writing audit reports, performing quality assurance of engagements, etc.

PANEL DISCUSSION

FEB.
26

LET'S TALK VALUE FOR MONEY: SPILLING THE TEA

The Government of Canada committed to focus on value-for-money to invest in high-growth areas like housing, infrastructure, defence and productivity, aiming to reduce operational costs and increase program efficiency. Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), departments and agencies and evaluation communities, along with the community counterparts, play an important role in providing evidence-based information to support decision-makers.

This will be a mixed panel, engagement approach with a policy, practitioner, and community focus. First the TBS Results Division will present on why assessing value for money (VFM) in evaluation is important. Next, we will have a panel of experienced evaluation Executives who will share their VFM experiences. Then and more importantly, we will be seeking audience feedback and participation to help us understand what evaluators need to help them use VFM methods and approaches. The discussion will help us create a common understanding of what supports the evaluation community's needs to assess VFM in the future.

Following the on-stage discussion, at their tables, participants will be asked to Spill the Tea about:

- What would you need to help you apply VFM in your practice?
- Where do you think VFM is useful and not useful?

MODERATOR: Elena Petrus, Director General, Internal Audit and Evaluation, Treasury Board Secretariat

As one of Canada's first Credentialed Evaluators, Elena Petrus' background is largely in Evaluation, though she is working on her Audit Practitioner Certification and is enjoying learning more about audit's many intersections with evaluation.

PANEL DISCUSSION

FEB.
26

LET'S TALK VALUE FOR MONEY: SPILLING THE TEA

Andres Velez Guerra, Executive Director, Treasury Board Secretariat

Andres Velez Guerra brings extensive experience in socio-economic policy, international development, and government-wide results issues. Passionate about measuring the impact of federal programs, Andres has evaluated diverse initiatives across departments.

Anna Engman, Manager, Results Division, Treasury Board Secretariat

Anna Engman has worked in in program evaluation, audit and applied research for almost twenty years.

Cedric Menard, Director of Evaluation, Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities

Cedric Menard is a government-wide leader in evaluation, audit, and performance measurement with more than 15 years of experience, driving results-based management, value for money, and efficiency across the federal public service.

Donna Smith, Director, Employment and Social Development Canada

Donna Smith has over 20 years of experience in research and evaluation, with substantive expertise in criminology-related evaluations developed during her roles at Correctional Service Canada and Public Safety Canada.

Jérôme Mercier, Head of Evaluation, Employment and Social Development Canada

Prior to joining ESDC's evaluation area in 2019, Jérôme Mercier worked at the Treasury Board Secretariat on expenditure and compensation analysis in the areas of pay equity.

Jeanette Steffler, Director General, Evaluation Branch, Indigenous Services Canada

Jeanette Steffler has over twenty-five years' experience working with Indigenous, federal, and academic partners in the data, research, governance and evaluation spaces. Throughout her career, Jeanette has been passionate about working with Indigenous partners and organizations to support and advance Indigenous-centered ways of knowing and understanding.

David Kurfurst, Director of Evaluation and Head of Evaluation, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

David Kurfurst leads a dedicated team responsible for assessing the outcomes federal immigration programs, pilots, and policies. With over 25 years in this field, he has worked on and overseen countless evaluations and performance measurement projects across a vast array of topic areas, sectors and client groups, and continually strives to build results practices and culture.

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