

Bridging Decolonizing Evaluation and Equity-Focused Evaluation

Presenters: Portia Ofosu-Addo, Minji Cho

Moderators: Stewart I. Donaldson, Jennifer P. Villalobos

Date: June 6, 2025

Welcome to Our Session!

We are grateful for your presence !

This session is a space for reflection, dialogue, and learning.

Together, we will explore how decolonizing evaluation principles can enrich equity-focused evaluation.

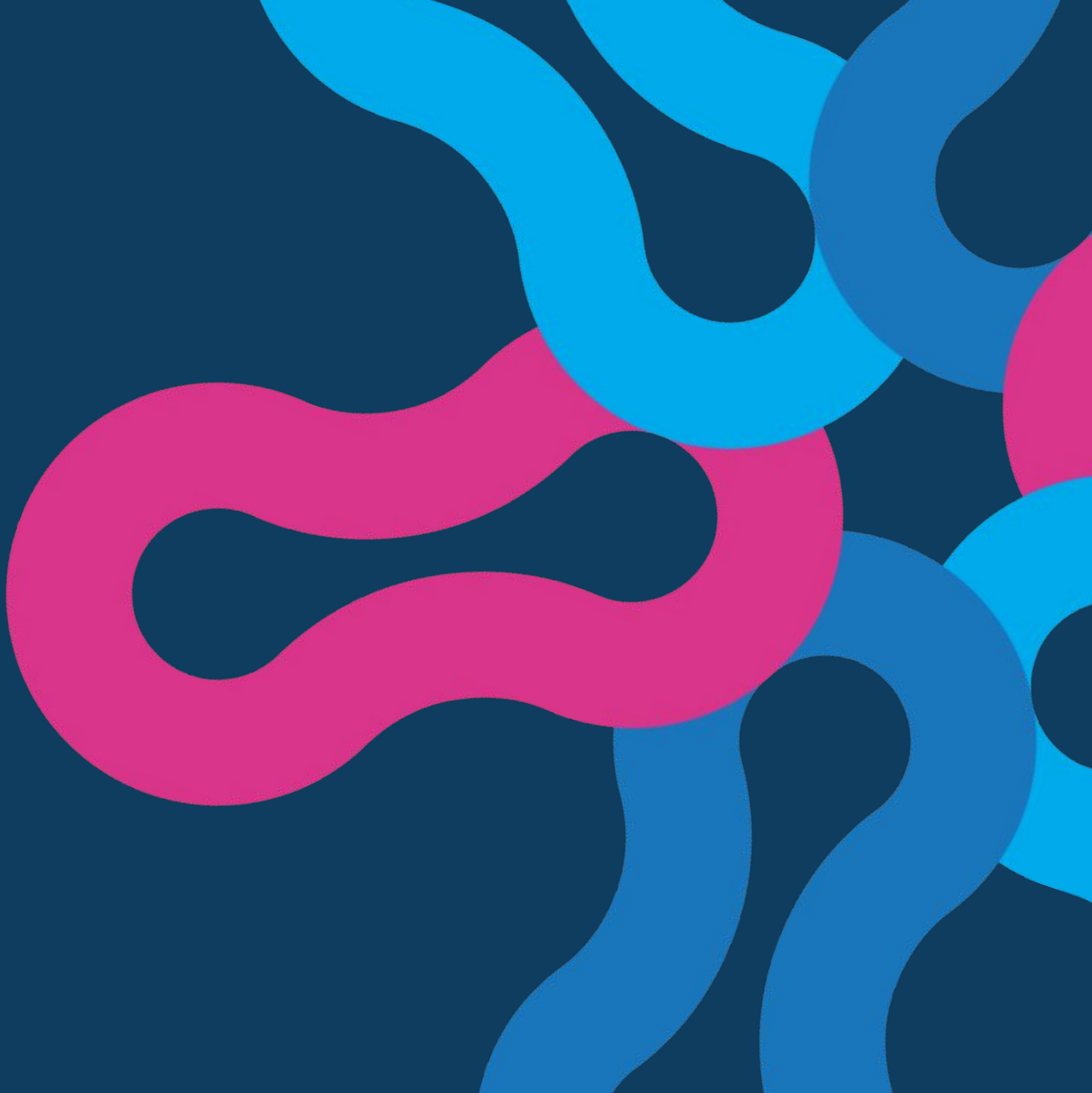
We want to create a safe and welcoming space for everyone, grounded in curiosity, humility, and respect for diverse ways of knowing.

Let us know where you are joining us from in the chat!!!



Agenda

- ❑ Introduction
- ❑ Background
- ❑ Methods
- ❑ Key Findings
- ❑ Reflective Discussion
- ❑ Moving Forward



Who We Are

The Claremont Evaluation Center (CEC) is an organized research and evaluation unit at the Claremont Colleges which provide services to improve the effectiveness of a wide range of projects, programs, policies and organizations. Using state of the art scientific knowledge and methodologies, CEC has served more than 150 different organizations in the past 15 years.



Stewart I. Donaldson, PhD
Executive Director,
Claremont Evaluation Center



Jennifer P. Villalobos, PhD
Director, D.Eval Program,
Claremont Graduate University



Minji Cho, PhD
Independent Eval Consultant
Claremont Graduate University



Portia Ofosu-Addo
PhD Student, Eval Associate
Claremont Graduate University

Study Background

The background features a dark blue field with several large, overlapping, wavy shapes in shades of light blue and pink. The shapes are organic and fluid, creating a modern, abstract aesthetic.

Share Your Thoughts!



Join menti.com and use code **2321 3259**

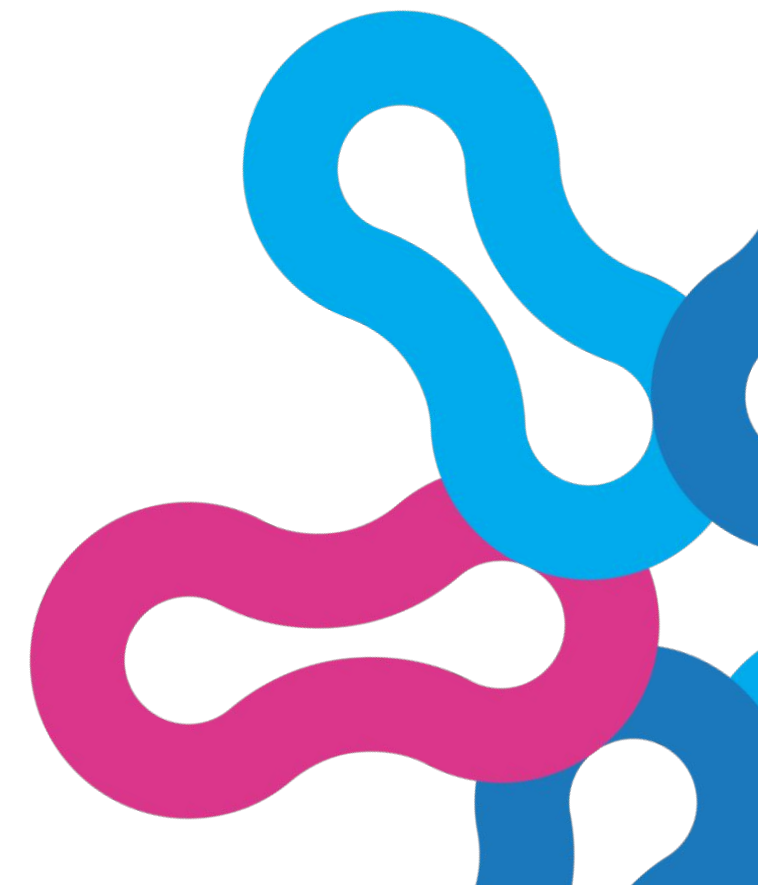
Or click the link in the chat for access

Scan
QR Code



- ❑ **What comes to mind when you hear the term *Decolonizing Evaluation*?**
- ❑ **What comes to mind when you hear the term *Equity-focused Evaluation*?**
- ❑ **In your view, what is one key difference between decolonizing evaluation and equity-focused evaluation?**

**There are no right or wrong answers!*



Background

Decolonizing Evaluation

- ❖ Persisting imperialism and colonialism in global evaluation systems
- ❖ Donor-driven, accountability, punishment-focused systems
- ❖ Newly developed *decolonizing evaluation principles*



Equity-Focused Evaluation

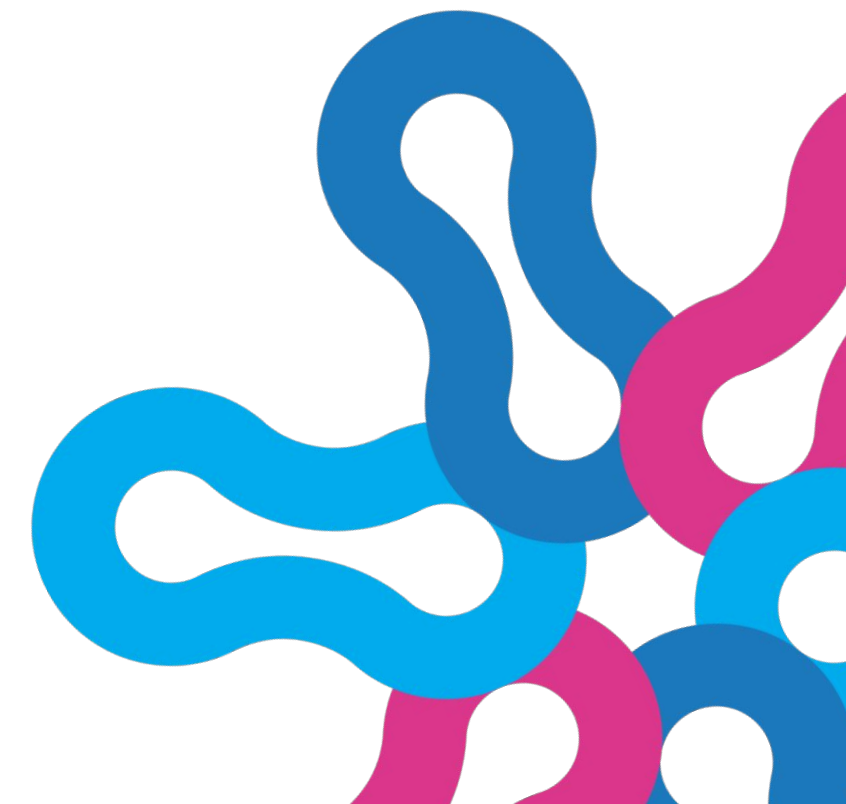
- ❖ Assesses equity dimensions of interventions/programs
- ❖ Assesses intended and unintended outcomes of “worst-off”/marginalized groups.
- ❖ Analyzes behavioral change, social processes, and attitudes



Evaluation centering the voices and needs of the colonized, oppressed, and marginalized



Any Gaps & Opportunities



Research Questions & Methods

01

How do *Decolonizing Evaluation Principles* **intersect** with *Equity-Focused Evaluation*?

02

What **opportunities** exist to integrate *Decolonizing Evaluation Principles* into *Equity-Focused Evaluation* to enhance its impact?

Why Concept Mapping

- Helps identify patterns, overlaps, and gaps
- Supports critical reflection on conceptual alignment and divergence

Procedures

- Sampled 3 key documents on EFE
- Deductive coding guided by DCE principles
- Two coders independently coded using Atlas.ti
- Merged and reconciled differences through discussion
- Insights from coding informed the conceptual map

Contextualizing Equity- Focused Approaches

International Development Context

-How to design and manage equity-focused evaluation – Bamberger and Segone (2011)

-Understanding and supporting equity – Patricia Rogers (2016)

- International development context – was developed for the UNICEF
- “An Equity-focused evaluation is a judgment made of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability – and, in humanitarian settings, coverage, connectedness and coherence – of policies, programmes and projects concerned with achieving equitable development results”.
- Explicitly considers the equity dimensions of interventions

US Philanthropy Context

Shifting the evaluation paradigm: the equitable evaluation framework - Equitable Evaluation Initiative (2021)

- The Equitable Evaluation Framework (EEF) is co-crafted and co-led by partners in philanthropy, evaluation and nonprofits in the US
- Evaluative work should be multiculturally valid and promote participant ownership.
- Evaluative work can and should consider and address underlying systemic drivers of inequity.

Decolonizing Evaluation Principles

Responsiveness

Placing community needs at the center of evaluation; Actively listening to their needs and voices; Adapting to local culture, beliefs, history, & context

Deconstruction

Paradigm shifts in ontology, axiology, and epistemology; Challenging conventional and imperialistic approaches; Centering local worldviews

Self-Determination

Community participation, rights & responsibilities, and authority from evaluation design to implementation, and dissemination; Respecting local methods

Relational, Holistic, Balance

Relationships within evaluation context and broader systems; Interconnectedness among living, non-living, and nature, Navigating complexities

Ethics & Cultural Protocols

Community acceptance; Tribal IRB; Community protocols; Balancing cultural practices with normative ethical standards

Reconciliation

Addressing historical and legal contexts; Respect, reciprocity, and healing through evaluation; Bridging Indigenous & Non-Indigenous worldviews

Reflexivity

Regular practice of reflecting on one's positionality, assumptions, and worldviews; Self-examination of own biases

Learning & Capacity Building

Reciprocal exchange of knowledge; Unlearning imperialistic approaches and learning Indigenous knowledge

Co-Creation

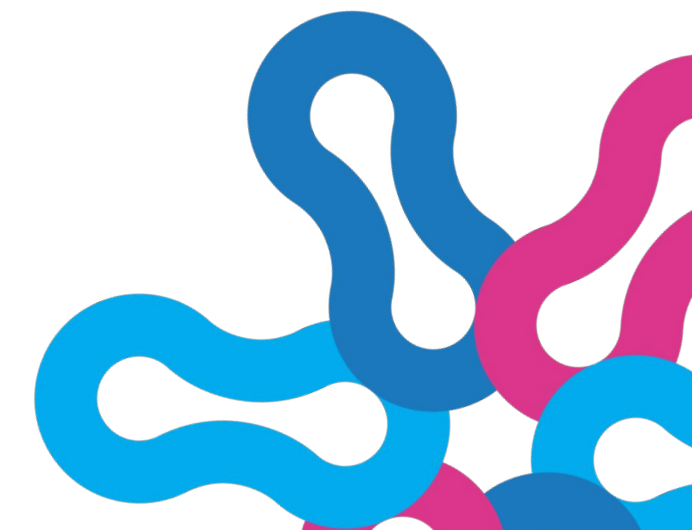
Recognizing community members as cultural knowledge experts; Fostering collaboration and partnership

No-One-Size-Fits-All

Tailoring evaluation to unique context; Recognizing the diversity and non-university approach; Embracing innovative approaches

Strength & Asset Focused

Recognizing and utilizing the inherent strengths of local communities; Respecting their capacity to address challenges



Decolonizing Evaluation Principles

Transformation

Evaluation systems reforms and improvements at multiple levels – community, national, international, and environmental; Grantmaking & Funding systems; Knowledge systems

Improved Evaluation Practice

Increased validity and credibility of evaluation findings; Increased evaluation use; Improved evaluation capacity

Shared Knowledge Generation

Incorporate Indigenous knowledge into mainstream discourse; Ownership of generated knowledge by community members; Power shift in knowledge production systems

Equity & Social Justice

Promoting equity and social justice for marginalized groups; Contributing to a more just and equitable society

Sovereignty

Self-governance in evaluation design, planning, and practices

Wellbeing

Healing and resilience building; Holistic wellbeing of individuals and communities

Program Success

Increased community ownership; Improvements in program design and components

Sustainability

Creating sustainable changes; Learning sustainable ways; Increasing sustainability of outcomes

Environmental Factors

Roles & capacity of evaluators, funders, program staff, governments; Attributes: humility, respect, & empathy; Resources: time, budget; Program design and purpose

Decolonizing Evaluation

Macro Decolonizing

Evaluation Knowledge Construction

Relationality Holism
Balance
Reconciliation

Meso Decolonizing

Grantmaking & Funding Systems

Evaluator Recruitment Systems

Micro Decolonizing

Evaluation Design & Methodologies based on Indigenous Knowledge

Sovereignty

Transformation

Sustainability

Wellbeing

Improved Eval. Practice

Equity & Social Justice

Knowledge Generation

Program Success

Responsiveness

Prioritizing community needs

Responsiveness

Adapting to culture and context

Unlearning

Learning

Self-Determination

Power, Rights & Participation

No One-Size-Fits All

Reflexivity

Ethics
Cultural Protocols

Strength-base

Co-creation

Resources

Requirement,
Invest & Capacity

Flexibility

Future
Generation

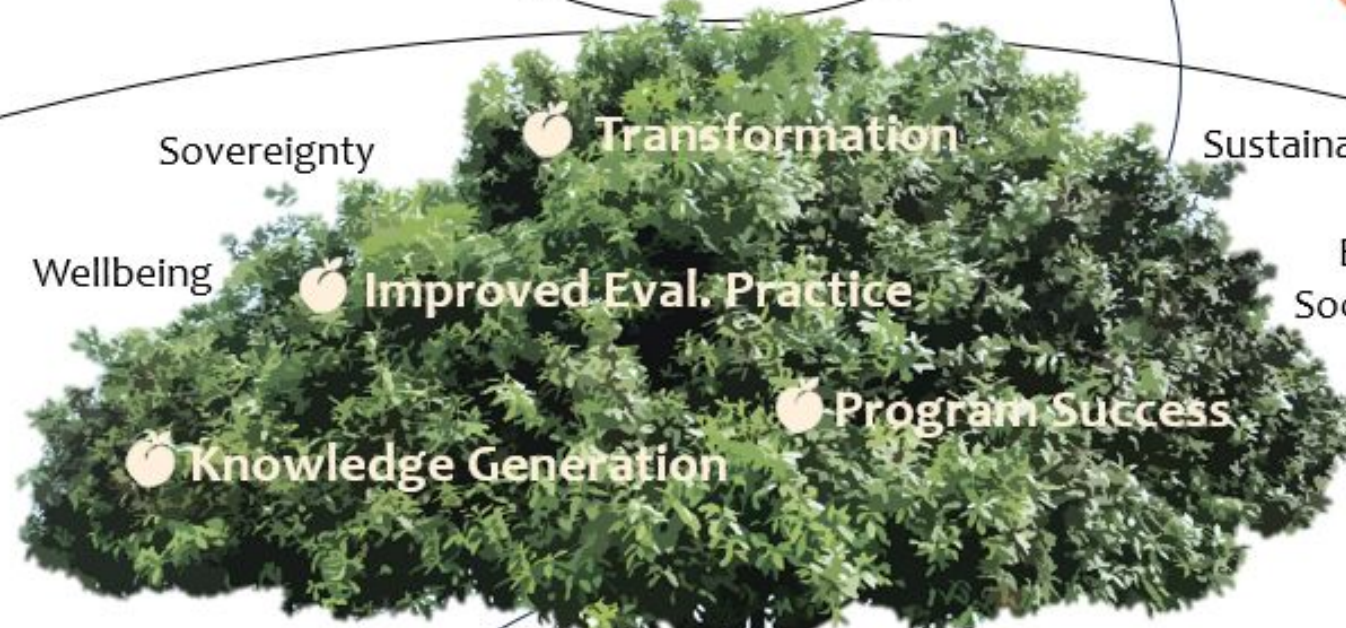
Capacity, Roles
& Identity

Challenging conventional
and imperialistic
knowledge & approaches

Centering Indigenous
worldviews and value

Paradigm Shifts in Ontology, Axiology, and Epistemology

Deconstruction Mindsets and Hearts



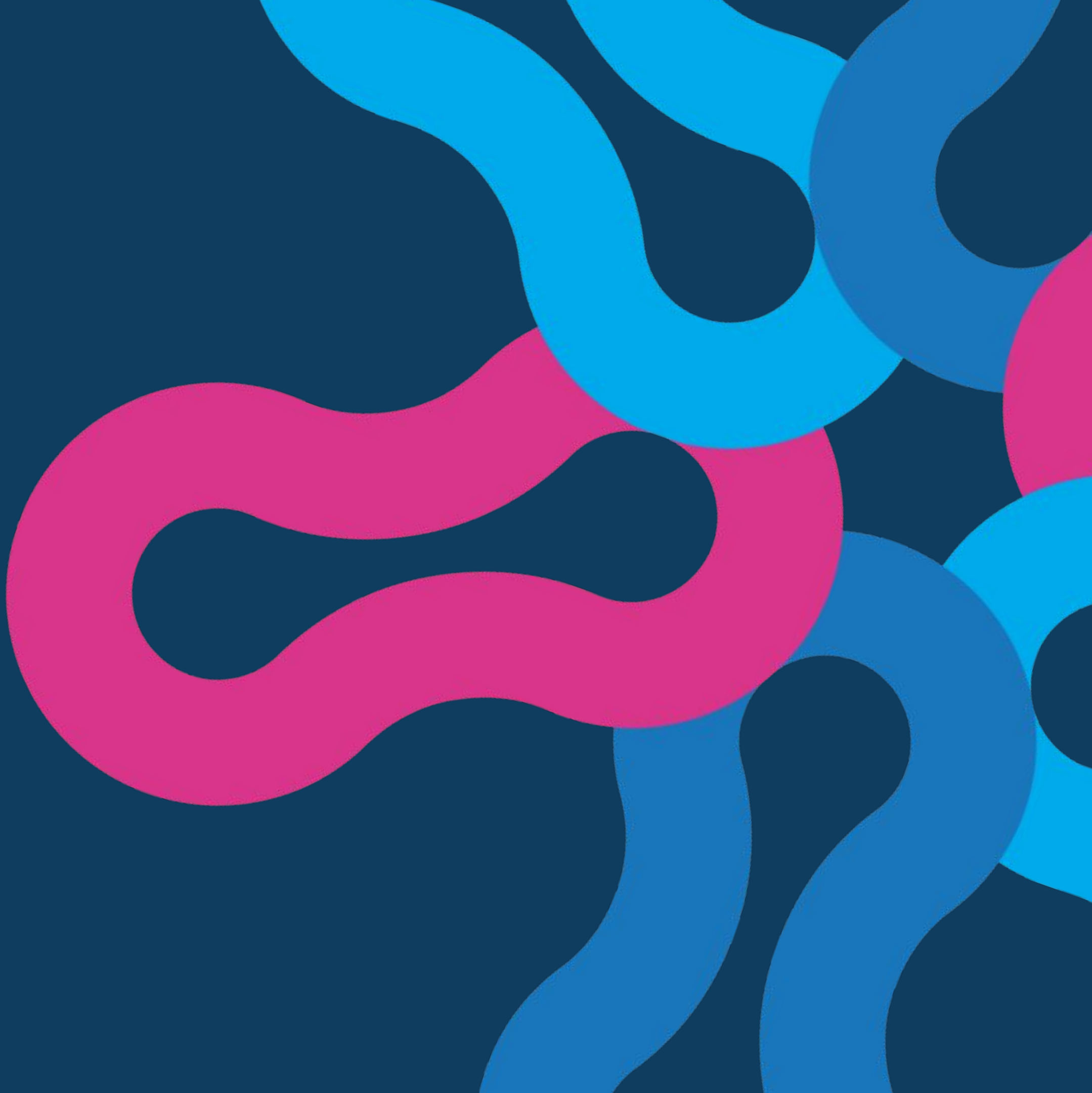
Downward
Accountability

Evaluation
Purpose

Resources

Future
Generation

Findings



Share Your Thoughts!



Join menti.com and use code **2321 3259**

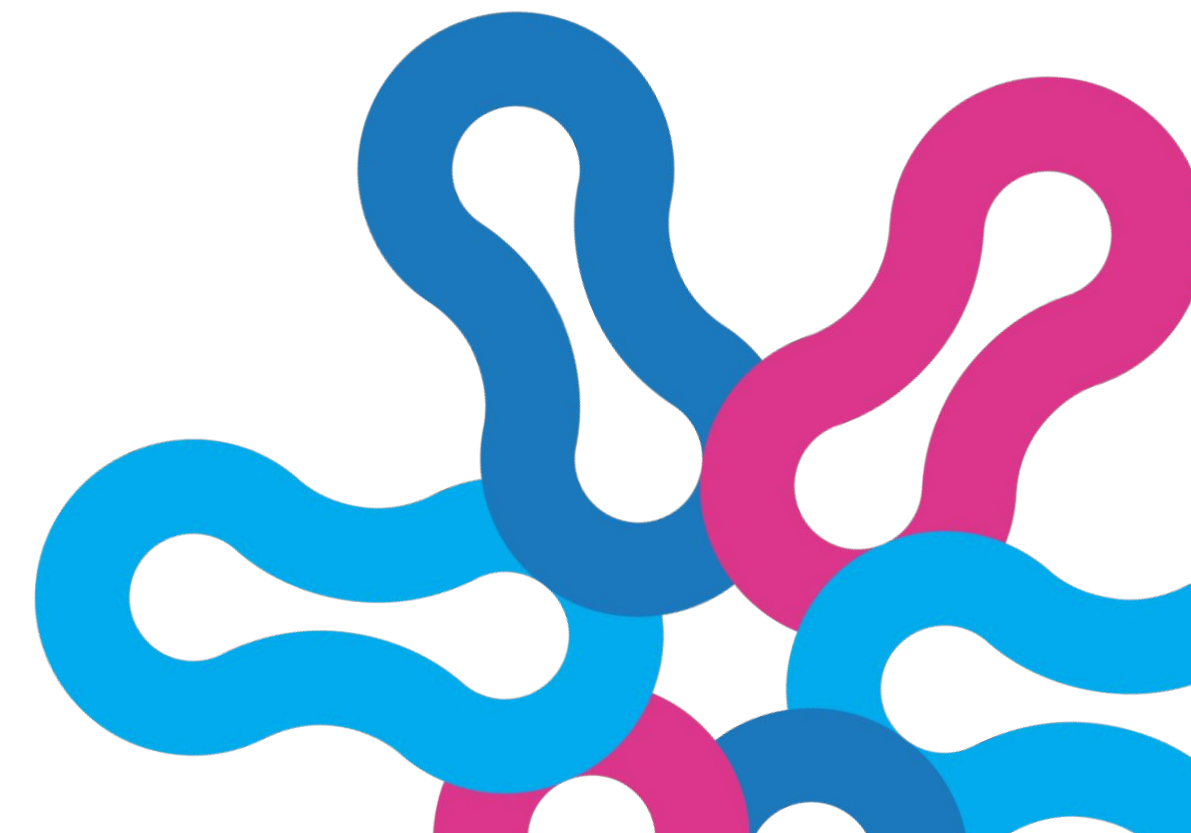
Or click the link in the chat for access

Scan
QR Code



❑ Which decolonising principles do you think will be aligned with equity-focused evaluation the most?

**Type as many as you think!*



Intersections Between Decolonizing Evaluation and Equity-Focused Evaluation

Decolonizing Evaluation	Equity-Focused Evaluation
Responsiveness	22%
Environmental Factors	13%
Self-Determination	10%
Deconstruction	8%
Relational, Holistic, Balance	8%
Co-Creation	8%
Improved Eval Practice	7%
Mutual Learning & Capacity Building	6%
Ethics & Cultural Protocols	4%
No-One-Size-Fits-All	2%
Shared Knowledge Generation	2%
Equity & Social Justice	2%
Sovereignty & Wellbeing	2%
Reconciliation	1%
Strength & Asset-Focused	1%
Reflexivity	1%
Sustainability	1%
Program Success	1%
Transformation	-

“Equity-focused evaluation processes should be used to empower worst-off groups to the maximum extent possible, as well as to ensure that evaluation questions are relevant to the situation of these groups.” - Bamberger & Segone (2011) p. 12

“It provides strategic lessons to guide decision-makers and to inform stakeholders. Equity-focused evaluations provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making process.” - Bamberger & Segone (2011) p.9

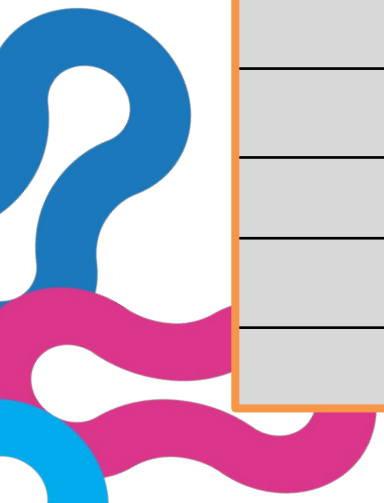
Countries (central and local authorities, governmental and civil society organizations) should own and lead their own national equity-focused M&E systems. International organizations should support national equity-focused monitoring and evaluation capacity development to ensure that it is sustainable and that the information and data produced are relevant to local contexts - Bamberger & Segone (2011) p. 28

Most Aligned Areas

- Centering the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups
- Great recognition of the role of evaluators, funders, local government, and program design

Areas of Improvement

- More attention to historical context and lived experiences
- Distinguish between superficial involvement and meaningful engagement that involves agency and power
- Need to foster intentional deconstruction of our mindsets
- Need for greater recognition of the inherent strength and power within vulnerable groups
- Emphasis needed on intentional reflection
- Need more dialogue on how EFE can support sustainability and transformative change



Intersections Between Decolonizing Evaluation and Equitable Evaluation Framework

Decolonizing Evaluation	Equitable Evaluation Framework
Deconstruction	22%
Reflexivity	17%
Relational, Holistic, Balance	14%
Environmental Factors	8%
Self-Determination	7%
Mutual Learning & Capacity Building	7%
Responsiveness	4%
Reconciliation	4%
Improved Eval Practice	4%
Equity & Social Justice	4%
Transformation	3%
Co-Creation	1%
No-One-Size-Fits-All	1%
Shared Knowledge Generation	1%
Sustainability	1%
Ethics & Cultural Protocols	-
Strength & Asset-Focused	-
Sovereignty & Wellbeing	-
Program Success	-

As the field explores what it means to be about and for equity, we must all consider how our assets and efforts align. Given the origins of evaluation practice, this includes examining and rethinking how knowledge and evidence are generated. We should also contemplate the ways in which we assign value and merit, and consider whether these practices might inadvertently be at odds with diverse perspectives and expertise, also reinforcing inequities. – The Equitable Evaluation Framework (2021) p. 15

Through reflection and inquiry, sitting in discomfort and allowing curiosity and further inquiry — these conversations support the naming and breaking down of white-dominant norms and invite other opportunities to be, to think and to do the practice of evaluation differently. – The Equitable Evaluation Framework, (2021) p. 22

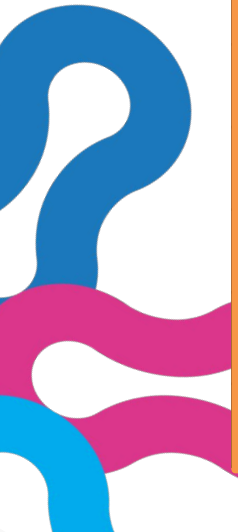
Creating a bridge between staff across the foundation and the work allows staff to engage during the design and planning phase of an engagement. The collaboration encourages staff to share their collective thinking and allows them to explicitly name assumptions and push back on them to gain clarity and transparency. – The Equitable Evaluation Framework, (2021) p. 27

Most Aligned Areas

- Strong emphasis on our mindset shifts and challenging dominant paradigms
- Intentional dialogues and reflective discussion among evaluators

Areas of Improvement

- Discuss how EEF can respect cultural protocols and uphold ethical standards
- Recognize the inherent strength and power within vulnerable groups
- Consider the positive impact of EEF on vulnerable groups



Intersections Between Decolonizing Evaluation and Equity-Focused Evaluation Approaches

Decolonizing Evaluation	Equity Evaluation
Responsiveness	15%
Deconstruction	14%
Environmental Factors	11%
Relational, Holistic, Balance	10%
Self-Determination	9%
Reflexivity	8%
Mutual Learning & Capacity Building	6%
Improved Eval Practice	6%
Co-Creation	5%
Reconciliation	3%
Equity & Social Justice	3%
Ethics & Cultural Protocols	2%
No-One-Size-Fits-All	2%
Shared Knowledge Generation	2%
Transformation	1%
Sovereignty & Wellbeing	1%
Sustainability	1%
Strength & Asset-Focused	0.63%
Program Success	0.63%

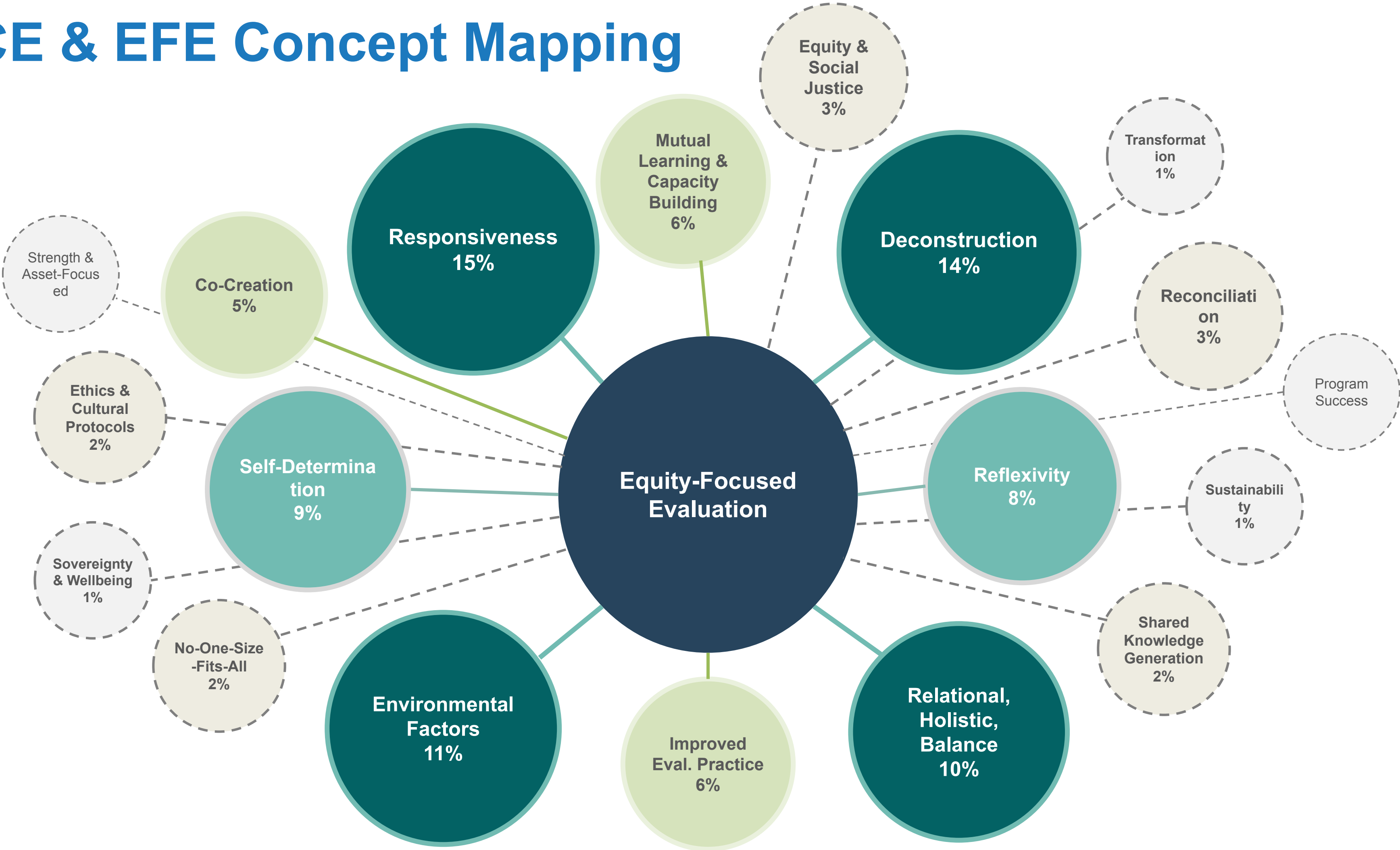
Most Aligned Areas

- Strong emphasis on context and responsiveness
- Great understanding of changes in our mindset and worldviews
- Recognition of key roles of all evaluation actors
- Acknowledgement of relational and systemic dimensions of evaluation

Areas of Improvement

- Need to be more explicit and intentional about the values and assumptions
- Emphasize shifting power to the most vulnerable groups, partners, and communities
- Promote mutual learning & reciprocity – go beyond traditional participant capacity building and recognize evaluators as both experts and learners
- Acknowledge knowledge ownership by community members and uplift local knowledge systems
- Encourage reflection on the positive outcomes and transformative change that equity-focused evaluation can generate

DCE & EFE Concept Mapping



Share Your Thoughts!



Join menti.com and use code **2321 3259**

Or click the link in the chat for access

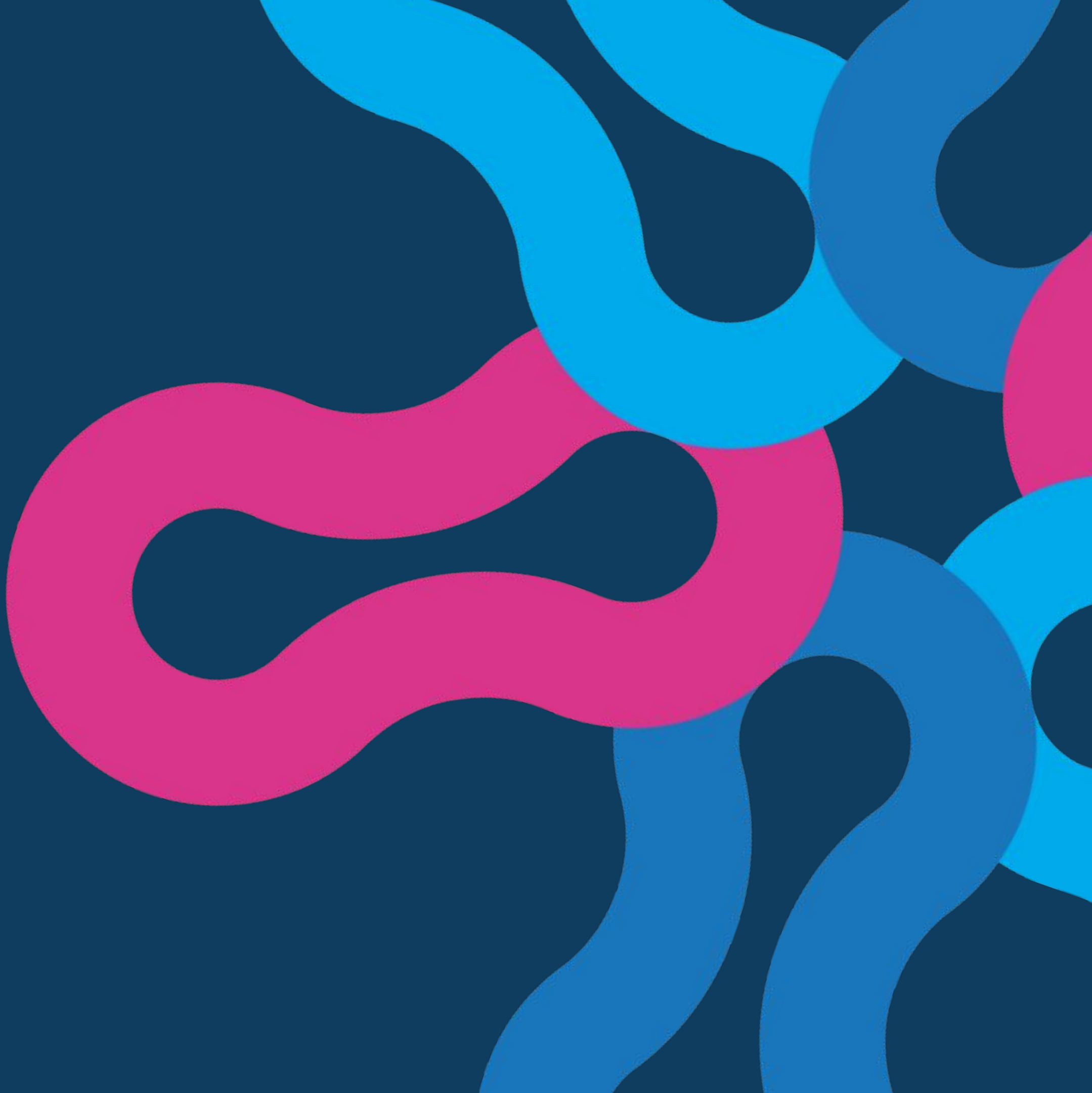
Scan
QR Code



- ❑ **How surprised are you by the findings?**
- ❑ **Which connection between Decolonizing evaluation principles and Equity-focused evaluation approaches stood out to you and why?**



Engaging with Findings



Reflection Questions

Take 15 minutes to reflect in small groups. Choose one or two questions below to discuss. Be ready to share one insight or takeaway.

Potential questions

- **Where do you see alignment or tension between DCE and EFE in your own eval practice?**
- **What would need to change in your context to meaningfully apply EFE in line with DCE?**
- **What other evaluation approaches (e.g., social justice approach, empowerment approach) can be used with DCE or EFE?**
- **What challenges do you face or anticipate will arise when applying DCE and EFE in practice?**

**Please use Google slides for your group discussion.*



Moving Forward

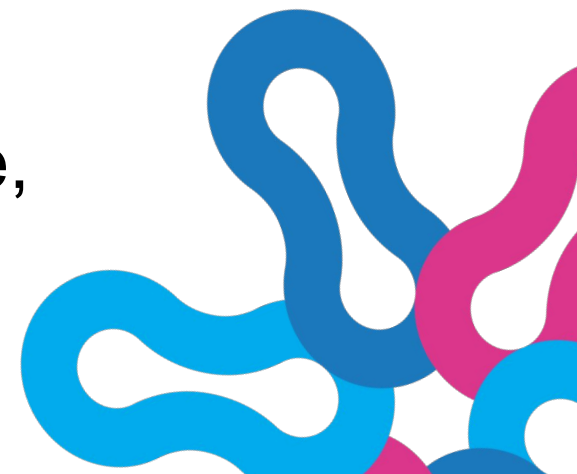
The background features a dark blue field with several large, overlapping, wavy shapes in shades of light blue and pink. The shapes are fluid and organic, creating a sense of movement and depth. The text 'Moving Forward' is positioned on the left side, partially overlapping the pink and light blue shapes.

Key Takeaways

What is one thing you will take with you from this session into your evaluation practice?

Our Takeaways

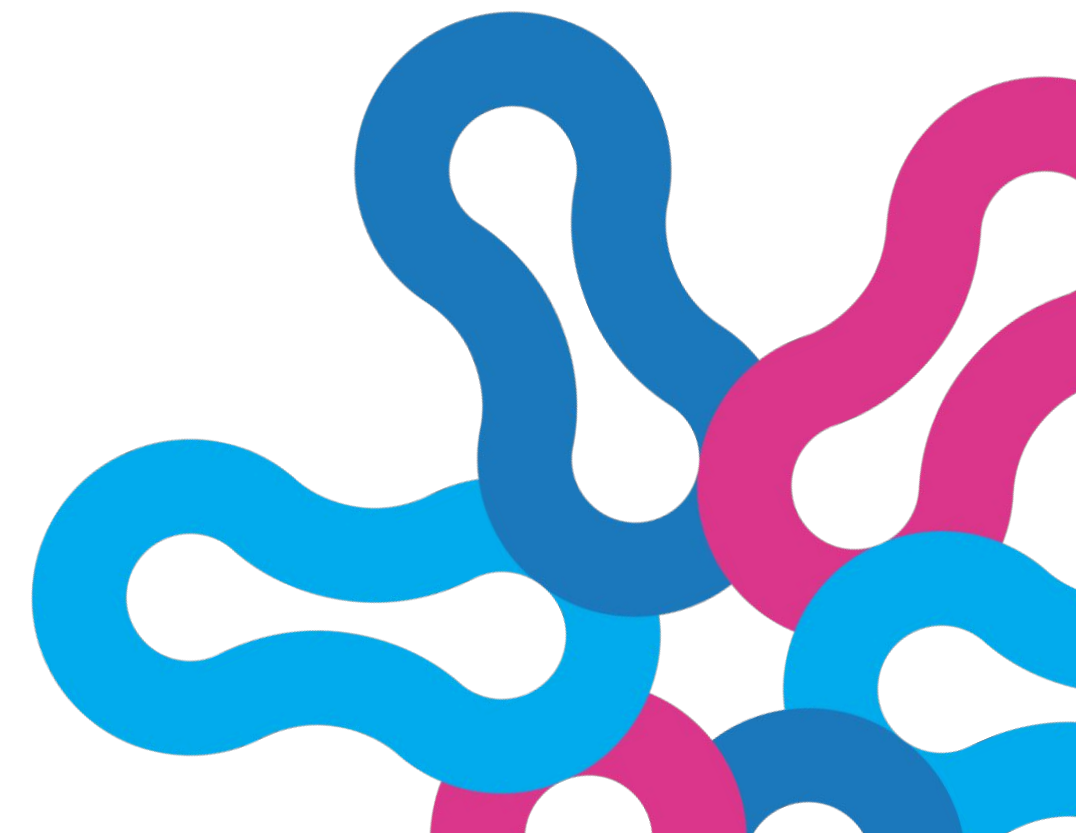
- ★ Equity centered approaches can be strengthened by making the values and assumptions that guide the evaluation approach explicit.
- ★ Clarifying these foundational values helps ensure that evaluation design and processes are aligned with its' principles of equity, justice, and inclusion.
- ★ Participation is not necessarily co-creation or opportunity for self-determination.
- ★ Be intentional about creating space for program partners, especially those historically marginalized, to exercise their agency and power.
- ★ Applying Decolonizing principles and Equity centered approaches requires a lot of courage, reflexivity, and mindset shifts.



Continuing the Journey - Ongoing Research

Exploring the practical reality of conducting equity- focused evaluations

- Identifying the gaps between theory and practice
- Identifying the challenges practitioners face when conducting equity-focused evaluations
- Identifying some strategies they employ to mitigate/address such challenges



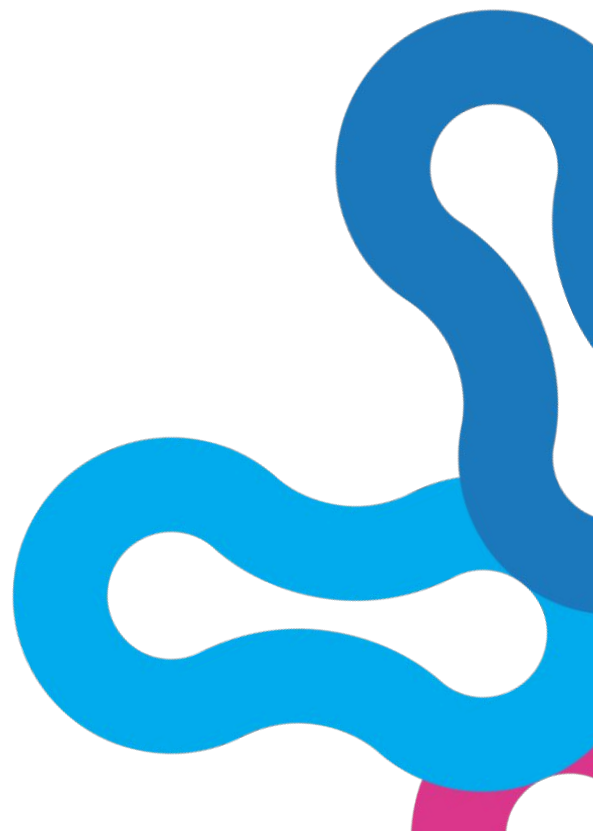
How to Participate in the Study...

Do you meet this criteria or know someone who does?

- An evaluation practitioner with 3 or more years of experience
- Works in the international development field/ evaluate development programs
- Have conducted at least one equity-focused evaluation in the last 5 years

Are you willing to contribute to this study by sharing your experience in an interview?

Kindly share your email in the chat or reach out to me at portia.ofosu-addo@cgu.edu



Questions





global
evaluation
initiative

Thank you!