

EDITORS' NOTES

The theme for the 2001 annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) was mainstreaming evaluation. The primary question surrounding presentations on this theme was, How can—and should—evaluation be mainstreamed in organizations? There was never any debate about whether evaluation was widely mainstreamed in 2001. It was not.

Three chapters in this issue won the Presidential Prize for contributions to the conference theme (Wandersman and others, Grudens-Schuck, and Duignan). The other three chapters were commissioned to complement the prize-winning contributions (Sanders, Barnette and Wallis, and Williams and Hawkes).

The Sanders chapter provides a definition of the concept of mainstreaming evaluation, a case example, reasons given for not mainstreaming evaluation, and recommendations for the future. This chapter and Sanders's presidential address (Sanders, 2002) provide a foundation for the chapters that follow.

Duignan describes some approaches to mainstreaming evaluation that appear to be successful in New Zealand, particularly in human services programs that serve both European and Maori populations. Grudens-Schuck, an educational anthropologist, discusses her observations about the role of authors in mainstreaming in the context of an evaluation in Indonesia. She found that although the evaluation was described as participatory, in fact, it was not. She wrestles with the meaning of participatory evaluation and questions the usual assertion that a particular type of evaluation is appropriate in every context. Wandersman and colleagues offer a case history of their experience in helping implement a program accountability system within a state educational initiative. This chapter should be of particular interest to evaluators and policymakers who are looking for concrete approaches to integrating evaluative activities into a large program.

Barnette and Wallis propose ideas for broadening graduate training in evaluation research methods in order to infuse the practice with professionals who are equipped to promote mainstreaming. They focus on classroom and practical experiences for students and postgraduates to help them understand evaluation as a three-dimensional activity that, in the best of situations, is ingrained in program structure rather than an afterthought.

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Students should emerge from their graduate training prepared to practice evaluation in a participatory manner and with a good understanding about how evaluation research contributes to academic and public discourse about programmatic interventions and the communities served.

Williams and Hawkes were asked to attend Presidential Strand sessions at the 2001 conference. They have summarized and organized the content of these sessions into a single chapter that includes a wide range of viewpoints and ideas about mainstreaming.

In total, the chapters in this issue introduce an important concept: developing an evaluation culture at all levels of organizations across the fields of business, education, government, health and human services, and nonprofit agencies. The authors analyze the concept and provide a compilation of the many important issues that surround it.

We hope that this issue of *New Directions in Evaluation* will prove to be provocative and motivational to readers. It will be interesting to revisit the concept of mainstreaming evaluation a decade from now to see whether the same concerns about evaluation remain or whether new directions have indeed been taken.

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