



Tłıchq drummers open day two of the NWT Evaluation Symposium at Aurora Village with a feeding the fire ceremony. (Photo: Angela Gzowski)

Overview

On May 31 and June 1, 2018, the Alberta/NWT Chapter of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and Dedats'eetsaa: the Tłıchq Research & Training Institute, co-hosted a two-day learning event in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (NWT) to explore and promote Indigenous approaches to evaluation. The Symposium was attended by more than 115 registered participants and was the first of its kind in the NWT.

There has never been a major evaluation conference hosted in the NWT. Although at one time there was an active NWT CES Chapter, since the mid-2000's NWT members have joined with Alberta to form the Alberta/NWT Chapter of the CES. The Alberta/NWT Chapter hosted the 2018 annual CES Conference, and in early discussions, the Conference Co-Chairs agreed that they wanted to find a way to "bring the conference north" and include a broader cross-section of NWT participants.

A small core group of Yellowknife CES members was brought together by C2018 Co-Chair Debbie DeLancey and Alberta/NWT CES Chapter Board member Jackie Siegel, along with other potential partners. After initial discussions, the group proposed a post-conference event to be



held in Yellowknife. This proposal was supported by the C2018 Conference Organizing Committee and the National Executive of the CES.

CES Annual conferences traditionally include both pre-conference and post-conference learning events, but this is the first time that CES has offered a post-conference event in a different geographical location. The CES National Executive was supportive of the proposal but it was determined that this event would not officially be considered part of the Annual Conference. Instead, it was organized as a post-conference event hosted by the Alberta/NWT Chapter.

Theme

The theme for the NWT Symposium built on the C2018 theme of “Co-Creation,” but with a specific focus on Indigenous evaluation, which was appropriate given that half the NWT’s population is Indigenous, and there are more than eight Indigenous groups who have completed, or are in the process of negotiating, Indigenous self-government agreements in the NWT. The promotional materials for the event described the theme as follows:

- “The NWT Evaluation Symposium will highlight methodologies and approaches for evaluation of land-based programming, which is an emerging area of focus in the NWT.”
- “This theme is meant to engage internal and external evaluators in exploring the practice and power of evaluation, and how we might address power imbalances through collaboration and co-creation. Together, we will reflect and learn from each other about how we honor and incorporate the knowledge, world views, values, cultures and lived experiences of evaluation partners and stakeholders.”



Tłı̨chǫ Elders and knowledge holders share about “De K’ee K’ehot s’edee,” a research inquiry focused on monitoring work with the caribou herds. (Photo: Angela Gzowski)



Organization and Partnerships

Early in the planning stages, CES Alberta/NWT approached Dedats'eetsaa, the Research and Training Institute of the Tłı̨chǫ Government, to explore the potential for engaging them as co-sponsor for the NWT Symposium. This proposal was approved and the Symposium became a joint project between CES Alberta/NWT and Dedats'eetsaa.

An organizing committee was established as a sub-committee of the CES 2018 Conference Organizing Committee to ensure coordination between the two events. Committee members included Debbie DeLancey (c2018 Co-Chair), Jackie Siegel (NWT Representative on the Alberta/NWT CES Chapter Board), and Jess Dunkin (NWT Recreation and Parks Association). Other NWT CES members provided volunteer support, including Jennifer Young, Katy Pollock, Kathy



Symposium Co-chairs: Jackie Siegel, Debbie DeLancey, Jess Dunkin, and John B. Zoe (Photo: Angela Gzowski)

Robrigado, and Cathleen Knotsch; and other interested employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories donated time, including Kimberly Stewart, Karen Blondin-Hall and Mahalia Yakeleya-Newmark. The Committee worked closely with Dr. John B. Zoe and Jim Martin at Dedats'eetsaa to finalize the program and logistics.

Other key partner organizations played a critical role in making the Symposium a success. The NWT Recreation and Parks Association contributed the time of Jess Dunkin, Director, of On the Land Programs, and covered costs for one NWT Indigenous government presenter to attend the event. Tides Canada provided travel support in the amount of \$10,000 to enable representatives from NWT Indigenous governments to attend the Symposium. Hotii ts'eeda, the NWT's SPOR SUPPORT Unit, generously offered to cover rental, catering and transportation costs to hold the second day of the event at Aurora Village, an on-the-land tourism and conference centre located near Yellowknife.

Program

The program was designed to highlight work that is being done by Indigenous governments and communities, or by non-Indigenous evaluators in partnership with Indigenous governments and communities, in the Northwest Territories and elsewhere; and to provide an opportunity for evaluators and program staff in all levels of government to network, share approaches and methodologies, and promote best practices. An early decision was made to organize one day of the Symposium in traditional conference format, and to hold one day outside of Yellowknife in



a land-based environment, with sessions organized and presented by the Tłı̨chǫ Government, to highlight Indigenous knowledge and methods.

A call for proposals was issued for presenters, and keynote speakers attending the C2018 Conference in Calgary were invited to participate. Four presentations were chosen, and an additional three were invited to submit posters. A list of posters is attached.



A small program committee was struck to review proposals, select presentations and finalize the Day 1 agenda. Tłı̨chǫ Government and Dedats'eadaa staff worked with Tłı̨chǫ elders to organize the agenda and presentation approach for Day 2.

A copy of the final program is attached.

Finances and Sponsorship
Revenues

CES National Executive supported the Alberta/NWT Chapter's proposal for a post-conference event in Yellowknife but directed that it be considered a separate event from the C2018 conference. There was no financial contribution from the CES National organization and finances were handled separately. The C2018 Conference treasurer also acted as the treasurer for the Symposium. The NWT organizing committee put together an initial budget based on an estimated 40-60 participants. It was estimated that a minimum of \$18,000 would be required to host a fairly basic and simple event.

Early in the fall of 2017, a meeting room was reserved at the Chateau Nova Hotel and a block of rooms was retained for the conference. With no CES contribution and no other funding source, organizers set out to raise money through offering sponsorship opportunities.

In January 2018, the organizing committee





approached a number of organizations to solicit financial or in-kind sponsorship for the Symposium. In discussions with the C2018 Sponsorship Committee Chair, it was decided that the Yellowknife organizing committee would not approach national consulting firms who generally provide sponsorship for the CES national conferences, or who had already been approached to do so. Instead, the sponsorship solicitation reached out to the Government of the Northwest Territories, federal government departments with regional offices in the NWT, local businesses, and consulting firms that were either located in the NWT, had offices in the NWT, or were known to conduct a substantial amount of evaluation consulting work in the NWT (but were not on the list of firms approached to sponsor the national event).

Sponsors were offered a flexible menu of sponsorship options, but in the end none of the sponsors chose to have their funds allocated to a specific event. Two sponsors, MNP and DPRA, took advantage of the opportunity to have an information table for participants. A list of conference sponsors appears in the attached program. Special mention should be made here of the generous support from the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Finance, who provided a grant of \$10,000.

As outlined below, registration for the conference exceeded initial expectations, and the greater than anticipated registration revenue allowed organizers more flexibility with conference organization.

Expenditures

A breakdown of revenues and expenditures is attached. The final cost of the conference was \$57,084.01; and revenues raised totalled \$58,735.00.

Sponsors were advised that any surplus funds would be retained by Alberta/NWT CES Chapter and used to sponsor future professional development opportunities in the NWT.



Indigenous Approaches to Evaluation Panel: Charleen Fisher, Hillory Tenute, Nan Wehipeihana, and Kyla Kakfwi-Scott (Chair) (Photo: Angela Gzowski)

Registration

As there was no precedent for the NWT Symposium, the organizers were unsure about what level of interest the event would generate. Initial estimates for planning purposes were for 40-60 participants. When the conference was advertised on the C2018 website, a note was included that space would be limited. When registration opened, based on the initial interest the organizing committee realized that the initial estimates were too low, and worked with the Chateau Nova to identify additional meeting space. Eventually, registration had to be closed in advance of the event, as the maximum room capacity of 115 participants was reached.

Participation in the Symposium included approximately a 50/50 split between residents of the NWT and people from elsewhere. Just over one third of those registered indicated that they work in the field of evaluation. About half the participants had also attended the C2018 conference in Calgary earlier in the week. Seven Indigenous governing organizations from the NWT were represented, and there were also participants from the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand.

Evaluation survey responses

38 responses were received, which represents a 33% response rate. All four events of the symposium were rated favorably (“satisfied/very satisfied”). All respondents were satisfied with the Evening Social Event, 84% with the Day 1 Break-out sessions, 81% with the Day 2 On-the-Land learning event, and 81% with the Day 1 Plenary.

Thirty-one respondents provided additional feedback when asked to identify strengths of the symposium. Most respondents indicated that a key strength of the symposium was the focus on Indigenous communities and Indigenous evaluations. Many reported that the on the land sessions on day 2 were of particular importance to them. Beyond that, respondents appreciated the small number and diversity of attendees at the symposium, as it “allowed for networking and engagement with others” from various places around the world.



Nellie Elanik (Inuvialuit Regional Corporation) presents “Project Jewel: Inuvialuit-Informed Evaluation” during one of the breakout sessions. (Photo: Angela Gzowski)

Learnings and Recommendations

When asked to provide suggestions for improvements, 28 respondents provided additional feedback. While the day on the land was a reported area of strength, some respondents felt that the second day was “deeply unstructured” and that there was “a bit too much free time spent waiting around.”

Further, there was some concern expressed with the panels and presentations, with some suggesting that not all of the topics were relevant to evaluation (i.e., Bowman’s keynote address). Additionally, one respondent suggested there should be “more emphasis on methods and tools.”

It should be noted, however, that part of the intent of the organization committee was to push participants beyond their comfort zones and expose them to new ways of learning.

Some recommendations were made for improvements to Symposium logistics, including:

- A more efficient registration process (registration for this event was part of the overall registration process for C2018);
- Allow members to register for the social event at the symposium; and
- Presentation logistics could be improved (i.e., sound quality, crowded meeting rooms).



Members of the Aotearoa/New Zealand delegation join Nan Wehipeihana to close her presentation with a Māori song. (Photo: Angela Gzowski)




NWT EVALUATION SYMPOSIUM

May 31-June 1, 2018 | Chief Drygeese Territory



CES-SCÉ
CO-CREATION
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Calgary Yellowknife



DAY 1:
CHATEAU
NOVA

PROGRAM

- 8:00am** Registration and Breakfast
- 9:00am** Opening Remarks and Prayer
- 9:15am** Welcoming Remarks from Jonas Sangris, Yellowknives Dene First Nation
- 9:45am** Icebreaker
- 10:00am** Dr. Nicole Bowman, "Culture, Community, and Sovereignty: Evaluation as Medicine"
- 10:45am** Nutrition Break/Posters
- 11:15am** Breakout Session #1
- 12:15pm** Lunch
- 1:30pm** Breakout Session #2
- 2:30pm** Nutrition Break/Posters
- 3:00pm** Indigenous Approaches to Evaluation Panel: Nan Wehipeihana, Charleen Fisher, Hillory Tenute, Kyla Kakfwi-Scott (Chair)
- 4:15pm** Wrap-Up: Andy Rowe
- 6:00pm** Social (Yellowknife Ski Club)

#NWTEVAL2018



DAY 2:
AURORA
VILLAGE

PROGRAM

- 8:15am** Buses Depart Chateau Nova
- 8:45am** Breakfast at Aurora Village
- 9:15am** Opening Prayer
- 9:30am** Dr. John B. Zoe,
"De K'ee K'ehots'edee"
- 10:00am** Nutrition Break
- 10:30am** Knowledge Sharing Session
- 12:30pm** Lunch
- 1:15pm** Knowledge Sharing Session
- 3:00pm** Nutrition Break
- 3:30pm** Reflection and Discussion
- 4:00pm** Closing Remarks,
Dr. John B. Zoe & Andy Rowe
- 4:30pm** Buses Depart Aurora Village

#NWTEVAL2018

SPONSORS

The NWT Evaluation Symposium is being co-hosted by:

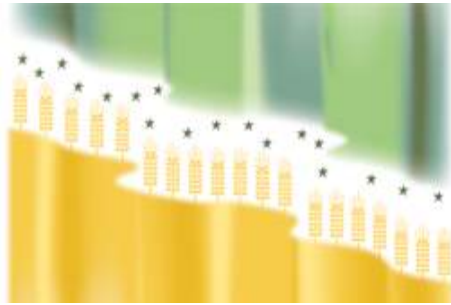


We would like to thank the following sponsors for their generosity:



The symposium would not be possible without the following partners:





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Calgary Yellowknife

	Expenses		
	Quantity	Cost	Subtotal
Program			
Speaker Honoraria	1	500	\$ 500.00
Panel Honoraria	4	200	\$ 800.00
Speaker Flights	2	850	\$ 1,700.00
Speaker Accomodation	1	1467.5	\$ 1,467.50
Presenter Gifts	20	75	\$ 1,500.00
Speaker Per Diems	2	300	\$ 600.00
Speaker Registrations	6	125	\$ 750.00
Co-host Registrations	3	125	\$ 375.00
Logistics			
Venue/Catering - Day 1	Nova	13,614.06	\$13,614.06
Audio/Visual - Day 1	Pido	2940	\$ 2,940.00
Venue/Catering - Day 2	TG/AV	13150	\$13,150.00
Transportation	TG/AV	2400	\$ 2,400.00
Social			
Dinner	70	60	\$ 4,200.00
Music	1	500	\$ 500.00
Venue	1	300	\$ 300.00
Special Occasion Permit	1	100	\$ 100.00
Other			
Printing		306.08	\$ 306.08
Misc. Supplies		122.62	\$ 122.62
Photography		1,758.75	\$ 1,758.75
Baggage			
In-Kind Support		\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
		Total	\$57,084.01
		Revenue	\$58,735.00
		Balance	\$1,650.99