

Editorial

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

He mihi mahana ki a koutou me ō koutou whānau whanui

My warmest greetings to you

Welcome to the third year and the third volume of *Evaluation Matters—He Take Tō Te Aromatawai*. If I was to pick a theme that runs through the articles in this volume it would be tensions and challenges. All the articles tackle issues that confront us within our evaluation practice, including epistemological tensions (e.g., Māori vs. Western worldviews), the implications of our neoliberal economic environment and the terminology it conjures up (e.g., innovation), the need to include additional dimensions in our evaluation practice (e.g., an understanding of place), and striving to live up to our theoretical evaluation practice ideals. This is a provocative volume where evaluators contemplate if and how they are helping to make the world a better place, as well as what that better place might look like.

We begin this volume with articles authored by two of the keynote speakers at the 2016 ANZEA conference at Te Papa, Wellington. Kate Frykberg writes about the community sector ecosystem that evaluators are often part of. She reminds us that life is not always easy for this sector, as funders can have unrealistic expectations and evaluation can be an afterthought that does not inform decision-making. David Pritchard asks after the role of evaluation in making the world

a better place, and highlights the new roles being played by impact investors and corporates within a neoliberal market economy. Their contributions to the journal allow their keynote addresses to reach a wider audience, and enable us to (re)visit with them and consider the implications of their wisdom for our own evaluation practice.

Bridgette Masters-Awatere and Linda Waimarie Nikora in their article extend the discussion of the neoliberal market economy and its impact on Māori-oriented health services. Their focus is on the vulnerabilities of Indigenous provider organisations and those who undertake evaluations of their services. Their kaupapa Māori (by Māori, for Māori) framing highlights the risk of service contracts and evaluations overlooking the fundamentals on whanaungatanga (kinship relationships) and thereby missing the important role that Māori provider organisations have in facilitating social inclusion. The insight into kaupapa Māori evaluation is continued by Teah Carlson in her article with Helen Moewaka-Barnes and Tim McCreanor. Teah ponders the tensions between theory and practice in her evaluation study with a Māori Health provider, Ngāti Porou Hauora. Her conclusion is that decision-points in this evaluation often highlighted the tensions between Māori and Western worldviews.

Sarah Appleton-Dyer and Adrian Field explore the synergies between results-based accountability (RBA) and developmental evaluation, drawing upon their experiences of evaluating two short-term community projects. They call upon eight developmental evaluation principles (Patton, 2010) as the epistemological foundation of their evaluations, while also acknowledging the potential for epistemological conflicts with RBA. Similar tensions and conflicts are the subject of Jo MacDonald and Roseanna Bourke's article on how a utilisation-focused evaluation might have been different if an educative value-engaged evaluation approach had been adopted. This reflective piece reiterates that our evaluation theory should be open to as much

critique as our practice. As the authors say, such critique is essential to understanding whether we have done the best evaluation we could have.

In her article, Maxine Duignan asks us to contemplate the importance of place for our evaluation theory and practice. She brings her own personal experience of place and belonging to this discussion, and asks after the influence of place on others' experiences of services and programmes. The final article in this volume is Robert Picciotto's critique of 'innovation', which he describes as a single narrative and therefore a threat to society. If the discourse of 'innovation' seems firmly embedded within policy and practice, this article is determined to challenge its acceptance and Robert encourages evaluators to do the same.

I encourage you to read, enjoy, share, and contemplate the implications of these articles.

Mā te rongo, ka mōhio; Mā te mōhio, ka mārama; Mā te mārama, ka mātau; Mā te mātau, ka ora.

Through resonance comes cognisance; through cognisance comes understanding; through understanding comes knowledge; through knowledge comes life and well-being.

Fiona Cram, PhD, Editor-in-Chief
June 2017

References

Patton, M. Q. (2010). *Developmental evaluation. Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.