

# ***Evaluation 2004***

# **International Attendees**

**Report Presented to the American Evaluation Association**

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**January 2005**

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# Acknowledgements

The success of this evaluation is due to the hard work, dedication, passion, and generosity of many individuals.

We thank the **American Evaluation Association** for providing this training opportunity to young evaluators. Their vision of contributing to the development of new evaluators provided us with the opportunity to further develop our evaluation skills and experiences while also allowing us to learn about the workings of a professional organization.

We express gratitude to the AEA Stakeholders, **Nancy Kingsbury, Susan Kistler, Sandra Mathison, Stephanie Shipman, and Nick Smith**, whose interest in ensuring that AEA members have an outstanding annual conference supplied us with material to shape a special focus for the evaluation. In particular, we thank **Susan Kistler** who continuously provided guidance and support to our team.

We deeply value the efforts of many other individuals affiliated with the AEA in helping our team to strengthen this evaluation. Specifically, we thank **Hallie Preskill** and **John Seeley** for serving as liaisons between our team and the AEA. We also thank **Jean King** and **Sharon Rallis** for adding additional insights that helped us shape the focus of our evaluation. We express gratitude to **Ross Conner, Lucia Fort, Muhammed Liman, Andy Rowe, and Lyudmila Vladiko** for their helpful feedback on our data collection instruments.

We greatly appreciate the help of the AEA staff members, **Nita Howland, Heidi McNeil, Heidi Nye, and Connie Pierce** in executing the logistics of the evaluation

We extend great appreciation to the twenty **international attendees** who shared their experiences and ideas with us while at *Evaluation 2004*. Their generosity of time and keen insights strengthened this evaluation enormously. We also thank **all attendees who completed the web-based conference survey**. The data they provided yielded important information that was key to the results of this evaluation.

We thank **Principia Products Division of Gravic, Inc.**, in particular **Nora Petchkofski** and **Steve Joslin**, for their generous support in developing and securing data from our web-based survey.

We thank our faculty advisors, **Kendon Conrad, Robin Miller, and Sharon Telleen**, whose invaluable mentoring contributed immensely to the development and final products of the evaluation.

We also appreciate the generous support of the **Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago** whose financial contribution to the evaluation was invaluable.

Finally, we are grateful for having had the opportunity to collaborate as a student team. In every way, this evaluation was a team effort; the consistent work of each team member was critical to the overall success of our endeavor.

# Executive Summary

## Evaluation Overview

The UIC conference evaluation team, with input from key AEA stakeholders, selected the conference experiences of International Attendees (IAs) as the special focus for the evaluation of *Evaluation 2004*. AEA stakeholders deemed IAs' conference experiences an information priority due to the increasing internationalization of the AEA and its annual conference. Specifically, perceptions that many IAs attend the AEA's conferences and the forthcoming 2005 international conference co-sponsored by the AEA and Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), lead the AEA leadership to desire greater understanding of the conference experiences of IAs.

## Methods

In this evaluation, we classified attendees as international if they endorsed a country outside of the U.S. as home. Data on the conference experiences of IAs were collected in two ways. First, we collected survey data from all conference participants and analyzed the data for differences between IAs and non-IAs. Second, we collected individual interview data with 20 IAs. Interviews queried IAs on aspects of attending *Evaluation 2004* including submitting a proposal, funding to attend the conference, and social and professional experiences while at the conference.

## Results

In general, our findings revealed that IAs' experiences with the conference are strikingly similar to experiences uncovered in previous evaluations with undifferentiated samples. A comparison between international and national attendees (NAs) who answered our web-based survey showed similar responses. Slightly more IAs reported self-sponsorship as the primary source of funding, government agencies as place of employment, and interest in social services than NAs. Additionally, IAs were more likely than NAs to be affiliated with

other evaluation associations in addition to the AEA. Finally, NAs provided slightly higher satisfaction ratings than IAs regarding opportunities for networking and experiences with the conference support staff. In contrast, IAs rated satisfaction with the AEA website slightly higher than NAs. Our interviews revealed that IAs' response to *Evaluation 2004* was notably positive. They appreciate the opportunity to attend, as well as the AEA's efforts to support and include them in the conference. Some of the key findings include:

- IAs were drawn to *Evaluation 2004* because of the opportunities to witness the latest developments in evaluation, network with talented and skilled attendees, and be in an intellectual environment.
- IAs experienced challenges in securing financing to attend the conference.
- Most IAs were satisfied with the conference themes and sessions offered, as well opportunities to exchange ideas. However, some IAs were overwhelmed by the number of sessions that are offered at the same time and disappointed by/dissatisfied with the emphasis on U.S. domestic issues.
- Many IAs thought the social interactions were the best part of the conference.

IAs noted some areas that might benefit from increased attention that were specific to attendees who call home a country outside of the U.S. Here, we focus on these IA-specific recommendations. In reviewing these recommendations, it is important to note that IAs compose only 10% of all conference participants. The benefit of each recommendation to a relatively small group of conference participants must be weighed against its cost.

## Recommendations

### Learning about AEA

- **Maintain success.** International attendees (IAs) are attracted to the AEA's conference because it is highly regarded as a place to obtain professional updates and interact with colleagues. The AEA should continue efforts to ensure these qualities of the conference.

### Travel and Funding

- **Expand current subsidization.** The AEA could explore how to expand current efforts to subsidize IAs attendance to the conference.
- **Affordable location.** The AEA should continue to select affordable conference cities. In doing so, the association must continue to balance costs with ease of traveling to the host city.
- **Alternative housing.** Although a challenge given the terms of most hotel contracts, the AEA might consider arranging for alternative accommodations such as in local university housing.

### Conference Sessions

- **Provide context for domestic issues covered in the Presidential Strand and Plenary Sessions.** The AEA should consider encouraging presenters in the Presidential Strand and Plenary sessions to provide more context when discussing current topics specific to U.S.-based evaluation.

### Social Interactions

- **Opportunities to network and exchange professional knowledge.** Opportunities to network with evaluators from other countries and be in a professional community are rated highly by international attendees. The AEA should continue its efforts to provide social events and identify opportunities to bring attendees from different countries together.
- **When feasible, provide cultural social experiences.** When circumstances with the hotel and the local arrangements chair are favorable, the AEA should make every effort to provide cultural outings and infuse receptions with local culture (e.g., music, food). This will

provide IAs with the cultural experience of the conference city that they desire.

### Conference Logistics

- **Minimize use of puns and acronyms.** The AEA should strive to avoid using puns and acronyms in its conference materials and should also encourage presenters to avoid their use.
- **Encourage presenters to provide visual materials.** Visual materials such as printed abstracts and overheads may help non-native English speakers follow presentations.

### Welcoming and Celebrating IAs

- **Encourage and showcase International work.** The AEA and International and Cross-Cultural (ICCE) TIG should continue to encourage submissions that discuss International evaluation, especially work that is not currently highlighted at AEA conferences. Additionally, the AEA should continue to explore opportunities to showcase International work at the conference.
- **Offer an International reception.** The AEA might create new formal mechanisms to encourage networking among IAs and to welcome them to the conference. For example, the AEA might institute an international reception hosted by the AEA President.

# Evaluation Overview

The UIC conference evaluation team selected the experiences of International attendees (IAs) as the special focus of the *Evaluation 2004* conference evaluation. We made this determination using a stakeholder-based approach that engaged key AEA stakeholders in determining the direction of the evaluation. For greater detail on this process, please refer to the UIC conference evaluation plan.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for evaluation on this topic, citing increasing internationalization of evaluation and of AEA as an organization. Additionally, stakeholders noted that information about IAs' conference experiences would be invaluable in planning the forthcoming 2005 international conference cosponsored by AEA and the Canadian Evaluation Society. In delineating this topic, AEA stakeholders specifically noted that they wanted to understand the perspectives and experiences of IAs. They stressed the need to understand IAs' experiences with individual aspects of the conference (e.g., proposal submission, travel, presentations, reception), as well as the need to have a holistic representation of IAs' experiences.

Informed by the requests of AEA stakeholders, our team developed the following set of evaluation questions to be answered within the special focus report on IAs:

1. How do demographic patterns among national attendees (NAs) and IAs compare?
2. What are the reasons that IAs attended *Evaluation 2004*?
3. How do the experiences of NAs and IAs compare with regard to key elements of the conference?
4. How do the reasons why NAs and IAs attend *Evaluation 2004* compare?

5. Are there elements of the conference experience that are salient to IAs?
6. What potential improvements can be made to enhance IAs' conference experiences?

In this evaluation, conference attendees were classified as IAs if they endorsed a country other than the U.S. as home.

Data for questions 1, 2, and 4 were drawn primarily from an online conference survey distributed to all conference attendees. For methodological details, please consult Appendix A.

Data for questions 3, 5, and 6 were drawn primarily from interviews with 20 IAs at *Evaluation 2004*. For methodological details, please consult Appendix B.

This report begins with an overview of results comparing IAs and national attendees drawn from the online conference survey. Next, the paper reviews results drawn from our interviews with IAs at the conference. Throughout the report, ovals are used to display accompanying recommendations. When considering these recommendations, it is important to remember that IAs comprise only 10% of the total population of conference attendees. All decisions to enact recommendations must weigh the benefits of the recommendations to a small number of attendees against their costs. Finally, the report ends with strengths, and limitations of the evaluation and with conclusions.

## **Results from the Online Survey:**

**How do Demographic Patterns Among National and International Attendees Compare?**

**How do the Reasons Why Nationals and Internationals Attend *Evaluation 2004* Compare?**

**How do the Experiences of National and International Attendees Compare With Regard to Key Elements of the Conference?**

## How do the Demographic Patterns Among Nationals and International Attendees Compare?

We used our web-based survey to compare international (n=125) and national attendees (n=765) regarding their membership status, primary source of travel funding, primary place of employment, and level of evaluation knowledge and skill level. We also compared whether IAs and NAs had similar rates of presenting at the conference and attending professional development workshops. As we show in the table below, IAs and national attendees (NAs) were similar on many characteristics, differing most on the source of travel funds, likelihood of government employment, and interest in social services.

We observed a dramatic and logical difference between IAs and NAs in the likelihood of affiliating with evaluation associations other than the AEA. Fifteen percent of NAs were members of other associations. In contrast, 44% of IAs were affiliated with other associations, such as the European Evaluation Society, The African Evaluation Association, and the Japan Evaluation Society.

Characteristic	Category	IA (%)	N	NA(%)	N
Current AEA Membership Status	Professional Member	71	84	80	610
	Student Member	16	18	10	77
	Non-member	13	15	10	78
Affiliation with evaluation association	No	56	63	85	643
	Yes	44	50	15	116
Level of Evaluation Knowledge and Skill	Expert	17	19	11	83
	Advanced	38	43	34	261
	Intermediate	35	40	43	331
	Novice	11	12	12	91
Primary Source of Funding	Employer	57	64	66	504
	Self	25	28	17	128
	Grant/Sponsorship	15	17	15	113
	Other	3	3	3	21
Primary Place of Employment	College/University	34	38	40	300
	Government Agency	25	28	18	134
	Independent Consulting Practice	10	12	15	117
	Community Agency/Non-Profit	6	7	15	110
	Foundation	7	8	3	25
	Schools	7	7	3	25
	Other	10	12	6	49
Primary Field of Interest	Education	37	39	42	313
	Social Services	26	27	17	128
	Health	15	16	19	140
	Environment/Agriculture	5	5	3	25
	Business and Industry	3	3	3	21
	Criminal Justice	1	1	2	12
	Other	13	14	15	110
Presented at <i>Evaluation 2004</i>	Yes	53	60	52	398
	No	47	54	48	366
Attended a PDW during <i>Evaluation 2004</i>	No	51	57	44	334
	Yes	49	55	56	429

## How do the Reasons Why Nationals and Internationals Attend *Evaluation 2004* Compare?

Based on our web-based survey responses, we compared international and national attendees' reasons for attending *Evaluation 2004*. As indicated in the table below, the majority of the IAs (n=125) and NAs (n=765) stated that they attended *Evaluation 2004* to network with evaluators in the field and to be a part of the professional community. IAs and NAs chose to attend the conference for similar reasons. However, more IAs came to network with evaluators from other countries than NAs. In contrast, a greater proportion of NAs came to the conference for employment opportunities and because of its location than IAs. Only a small number of IAs reported that they came to the conference to meet with evaluators from their home countries.

### Recommendations

#### Opportunities to network and exchange professional knowledge.

Opportunities to network with evaluators from other countries and be in a professional community are rated highly by international attendees. The AEA should continue its efforts to provide social events and identify opportunities to bring attendees from different countries together.

Reasons to attend	IA (%)	N	NA (%)	N
Improve my skills	73	83	82	629
Network with evaluators in the field	71	81	64	488
Be part of a professional community	70	80	62	475
Topics at workshops	25	29	27	206
Network with evaluators from other countries	20	26	3	23
Conference affordability	11	14	10	80
Conference location	4	5	15	114
Network with evaluators from home country	3	4	5	37
Employment opportunities	2	3	9	72

## How do the Experiences of National and International Attendees Compare With Regard to Key Elements Of the Conference?

We examined whether IAs and NAs differed in their satisfaction ratings of *Evaluation 2004*. Both IAs and NAs reported above average satisfaction with the conference. However, IAs and NAs differed slightly in their ratings of the following conference components:

- I had adequate opportunity for networking
- Conference support staff
- Information on the AEA website

As we display in the table below, IAs were less satisfied than NAs with the adequacy of opportunities for networking and conference support staff. IAs were more satisfied than NAs with the AEA website. In absolute terms, however, both groups reported high levels of satisfaction with these aspects of the conference. Overall, the results suggest that AEA is running the conference well.

Items asked	IA (%)			NA (%)		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
a. Conference support staff *	4.25	.88	103	4.43	.74	618
b. Conference information on website *	4.25	.75	112	4.02	.99	741
c. Quality of presentations	3.80	.82	110	3.80	.80	749
d. Moderation of sessions by chairs	3.76	.95	104	3.77	.83	707
e. Overall, I enjoyed the conference	4.37	.71	113	4.36	.76	760
f. I plan to attend an AEA conference in the future	4.34	.92	111	4.40	.85	760
g. I felt welcomed at the Evaluation 2004 conference	4.29	.80	114	4.33	.79	760
h. I found the program content relevant	4.26	.81	114	4.28	.76	763
j. The conference was worth the money	4.19	.87	113	4.17	.94	754
k. I learned things that will inform my practice	4.13	.82	113	4.27	.82	756
l. I had adequate opportunity for networking *	4.03	.86	109	4.22	.84	738

Note<sub>1</sub>. Asterisks in the first column show statements that were rated significantly different by international and national attendees. M=Mean SD= Standard deviation.

Note<sub>2</sub>. All items are on a 1-5 point scale. Items a through d range from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” and items e through l range from “needs improvement to “excellent”.

## **Results from the International Attendee Interviews:**

**What are the Reasons That International Attendees Attended *Evaluation 2004*?**

**Are There Elements of the Conference Experience that are Salient to International Attendees?**

**What Potential Improvements Can Be Made to Enhance International Attendees' Conference Experiences?**

# Learning About AEA & Attraction to Conference

## How did international attendees first learn about the AEA and its annual conference?

“My professor told that we could be member of AEA”

“Faculty encouraged our participation”

“In evaluation there is a community. We update each other on things”

**Professional contacts.** IAs discovered the AEA and its annual conference through several means. These include:

- Graduate School Professors from U.S. based (4) and international universities (2)
- Colleagues (4)
- Internet Searching (2)
- Other Evaluation Associations (2)
- AEA Journals & Evaluation Texts (1)
- Evaluation Seminars (1)
- Newsletters (1)

Many IAs noted that their professors and employers encouraged them to join the association and that membership was natural given their work. Others noted that the quality of the journals pushed them to join.

**Hard to recall.** A couple of IAs found it difficult to pinpoint precisely where they first learned about the AEA. These attendees were fairly certain that they first learned of AEA through reading evaluation texts and journals or from their colleagues or professional acquaintances.

**Successful promotion.** The AEA's recent efforts to market the association may in part be responsible for the successful introduction of the AEA to international evaluators. The AEA may want to consider continuing to be proactive in spreading the word among members to encourage them to introduce new evaluators to the AEA.

## What brings international attendees to the AEA's conference?

“State of the art in terms of where evaluation issues are today”

“Hear it from the horses' mouth”

“It's a quick way of getting to know a lot of things”

“Well-known presenters”

“Exposure to as much variety of evaluation methods as possible”

“This is the biggest in Evaluation”

“Can actually get a pretty good update on evaluation issues worldwide”

“America is the major player in International evaluation”

**Interactive hub.** IAs attend the AEA's conference for many reasons. They want to come to the “hub” of evaluation. At the AEA, attendees are exposed to the latest developments and debates in the field and can interact with (rather than simply read about) the originators of these advances. Sometimes this attraction is fueled by intellectual curiosities and at other times by the desire to acquire new knowledge to apply at work.

**Quality of attendees.** IAs are also attracted to the AEA's conference because of who else attends it. Because the conference includes international work and developments, it provides IAs with excellent opportunities to meet new colleagues and to network. A few IAs noted their appreciation of the mix of academicians, government employees, and independent consultants who attend the conference.

**Other reasons.** Several IAs noted additional attractions to the conference. These included that the conference is in English, may be near family or friends, or is held in a convenient location.

### Recommendations

**Maintain success.** IAs are attracted to the AEA's conference because it is highly regarded as a place to obtain professional updates and engage with colleagues. The AEA should continue to ensure these qualities of the conference.

## Proposing to present at *Evaluation 2004*

“Good compared to most”

“I didn’t have any difficulty with that it seemed clear to me”

“I liked the web-based submission form”

“I’m commercial ...I have absolutely no incentive to publish. None of my clients are going to notice whether I publish ... I won’t get any work through doing it.”

**Smooth process.** 12 (60%) interview participants submitted a proposal to *Evaluation 2004*. Although for some IAs it was difficult to recall in detail, submitting the proposals went without incident. Several IAs noted that they liked the convenience of the on-line submission and appreciated the detailed instructions on submission components. These clear directions helped IAs reflect on the key dimensions of their proposal.

**Small bumps.** One IA noted her unfamiliarity with presentation formats and another noted his confusion with the costs of presentation equipment as concerns with submitting proposals. Although explanations are already available, for some IAs they were not entirely clear. One participant noted that it would be nice to be able to print a copy of her submission; she was not sure whether this was already possible (it is).

**AEA assistance.** Several IAs contacted the AEA’s office for assistance in submitting a proposal. Each IA who had done so noted that the response was always timely, professional, and helpful, which they greatly appreciated.

**Not presenting.** Some IAs elected not to present at *Evaluation 2004*. These decisions made because presenting was not their primary purpose in attending the conference, not having anything to present this year, or presenting not being professionally important to them. One participant noted that the timing of proposals this year was personally inconvenient for him.

## What was it like presenting at *Evaluation 2004*

“We got really important feedback from the audience”

“Pushes you to read and get your thinking together, meet interesting colleagues, and engage in discussions.”

**Good opportunity.** Not all participants had given their presentation at the time of their interview. For those who had already presented, many sessions had gone well. Presenters appreciated the opportunity to advance their thinking, interact with and gain feedback from the audience, and meet new people.

**Attendance problems.** One presenter was disappointed by low attendance at her session. However, she was able to engage her audience in an interesting discussion and was pleased with the result. Another presenter was forced to cancel her presentation when no one attended it.

**Audiovisual and room setup.** A few presenters were frustrated by the high costs of presentation equipment and poor room configuration.

**President’s Prize.** One presenter lamented the absence of the President’s Prize paper competition at this year’s conference. In the past, he found the Prize pushed him to clarify his thinking, thus promoting his giving a higher quality presentation.

### Recommendations

**Maintain effective, timely help.** IAs, like other attendees, appreciate the quality, timely assistance of AEA staff. Its availability should be continued.

## Getting to *Evaluation 2004*

"It's an excellent website, information is there, answers are there for anything you could want, it's very useful"

"One of the reasons for coming to another country is ... to learn more about the world and take that back with you"

## Paying for *Evaluation 2004*

"I competed for the travel award, but I did not get it ... I decided to use my vacation savings."

"It is the price of the hotel. The price of the conference is not so high."

"Even though AEA is reasonably priced ... any penny would count in this situation."

"Get local restaurants to give people discounts if they bring in a group of more than 5"

**Relative ease.** IAs reported no significant difficulties traveling to *Evaluation 2004*. Not a single participant needed to secure a visa to travel to the conference; they either did not require a visa or had obtained one in the past.

**Room for assistance.** Several IAs noted that other IAs might find it challenging to obtain visas since it must be done several months in advance of attending the conference. Two IAs noted knowing presentation dates well in advance (perhaps by mid-June) and having a letter from the AEA (which is done) would be helpful. While noting it might strain resources, one IA thought it would be nice to have greeters at the airport.

**Fiscal support.** IAs were financially supported to attend *Evaluation 2004* through a combination of professional and personal monies. Many IAs received fiscal support from their employers/universities (N=10). Others received travel awards, grants, or scholarships. (N=2). Finally, several IAs paid at least a portion of their expenses out-of-pocket (N=9).

**Affordability.** Despite being able to secure financial support this year, several IAs noted that the costs associated with attending the conference, while reasonable, prohibit annual attendance. They noted the challenge of expensive accommodations and food in particular.

**Ideas.** IAs identified ways the AEA might make the conference more affordable. Some proposals are unreasonable. Others might increase support to IAs at the expense of students:

- Publicize and provide less expensive accommodations (billets, local area hosts, dormitories, hostels, other close by hotels/motels) (5)
- Secure airline discounts or sponsorship (e.g., offer empty seats to IAs) (4)
- Waive or reduce registration fees (3)
- Offer volunteer opportunities (1)
- Select locations with good public transit (1)
- Secure group restaurant discounts (1)
- Expand conference sponsors (1)

**Helpfulness of website and emails.** IAs used the website to register for the conference and find hotel and other local information. IAs appreciated the usefulness and clarity of the information available on the website and from emails sent by the AEA.

IAs had many suggestions for additional information that could be listed on the website:

- A map detailing the route from the airport to the conference hotel and
- Information on the availability, location & costs of public transportation
- Names of preregistrants to facilitate making travel arrangements with other attendees
- Local safety considerations
- Local cultural and social attractions
- Presentation slides & papers

## Recommendations

### Expand current subsidization.

The AEA could explore how to expand current efforts to subsidize IAs attendance to the conference.

**Affordable location.** The AEA should continue to select affordable conference cities. In doing so, the association must continue to balance costs with ease of traveling to the host city.

**Alternative housing.** Although a challenge given the terms of most hotel contracts, the AEA might consider arranging for alternative accommodations such as in local university housing.

**Information on the host city.** Although the AEA provides information on the host city, the information could be more detailed.

# General Impressions of the Conference

## International attendees' global experiences at the conference

"Enlightening, positive, and informative."

"[I've been] spoiled by choice."

"Several themes make you have a broader view of evaluation."

"This conference works better for people who are generalist evaluators than for content specialists."

"All the people I look up to are in American evaluation. Its just where my heart is in evaluation and I notice it being here. This is how I think evaluation should be done."

"[AEA] is the grandfather of all organizations."

"The pace of the conference was fine. I didn't feel like rushed like in AERA where you are running in all different directions."

"I've never seen a conference with this number of people and so many sessions."

**Positive impressions.** The majority of IAs communicated positive impressions and experiences of *Evaluation 2004*. Phrases used to describe *Evaluation 2004* included "exceedingly positive", "enlightening", "stimulating" and "massively higher quality [than other conferences]." A few IAs even noted that they hoped to return to the conference in future years. The positive experiences of IA are consistent with findings from previous evaluations focused on all attendees.

**Wide variety.** Several IAs noted that they appreciated the wide variety of sessions at the conference. They noted feeling both spoiled and overwhelmed by the choices.

**AEA leadership.** Several IAs described AEA as an international leader and major force in shaping evaluation worldwide. Many openly expressed their admiration for U.S.-based evaluation. Others described the AEA as playing a crucial role in shaping international associations.

**Conference themes.** Comments regarding conference themes focused on the content and number of themes. A few IAs noted that the content of major conference themes was domestic with little blending of international issues. One IA noted that the focus on domestic issues sometimes made sessions difficult to follow. Comments were mixed with regard to the number of conference themes. One IA appreciated the presence of multiple conference themes, while another thought there were too many foci.

**General conference content.** Several IAs praised the content of the conference. One noted that the content provided encouragement for thinking about his own work. Another described the content as "state of the art." However, one IA was dismayed at the general nature of conference content. He noted that the conference was better suited for generalists than content specialists such as him.

**Conference pace and size.** Several IAs were pleased with the pace of the conference. A few compared the conference to the American Educational Research Association conference (AERA) noting that *Evaluation 2004* had a better structure and seemed less rushed.

Comments regarding conference size were mixed. While some IAs described the conference as comfortable and manageable (e.g., one attendee even noted that she was surprised by how small the conference was), others described the conference as large and overwhelming. These impressions depended, in part, on prior experiences at other conferences. For example, IAs who had attended AERA's conference in the past tended to think that *Evaluation 2004* was a manageable conference. Some IAs noted that there were too many sessions at the conference. The large number of sessions presented conflicts in determining which sessions to attend. However, there was recognition that reducing the number of sessions would limit the inclusive atmosphere of the conference.

**Exchanging ideas and building skills.** IAs valued the opportunities to exchange ideas with others at the conference. One noted that attendees at *Evaluation 2004* were more willing to participate in debates than those at European conferences. A few IAs also cited the opportunities to build skills at *Evaluation 2004*.

**Session hopping.** While some IAs valued the accepted practice of skipping between sessions at *Evaluation 2004*, one IA noted that he found this practice rude and disturbing.

## Conference Highlights and Lowlights

### What were the best parts of *Evaluation 2004* for international attendees?

“Reconnecting with people I don’t see and the stimulation of having my thinking challenged.”

“I think the quality of most sessions has been consistently high.”

“I really enjoyed my presentation I had a lot of people come talk to me who could serve as resources in continuing this work.”

**Social interactions.** Nearly half of all IAs we interviewed identified social interactions as the best part of the conference. Among the social interactions mentioned were the following: reconnecting with old colleagues, meeting new people, and finding work opportunities.

**Conference sessions.** Three IAs identified the Presidential Strand as the best part of the conference. These individuals valued the opportunity that the Presidential Strand provided to catch up on the field. One cited the sessions in general as the best part of the conference. Two IAs, in particular, were excited to hear from the experts in evaluation. Finally, two IAs identified the professional development workshops as the best part of the conference.

**Exchanging ideas and perspectives.** Several IAs cited opportunities to exchange ideas and perspectives as the best part of the conference. They noted that attending the conference helped them gain new perspectives and challenged their own ideas about evaluation.

**Presenting.** Two IAs mentioned their presentations as a major perk of the evaluation. Specifically, they were impressed with the feedback they received from other conference attendees.

**Other perks.** One IA mentioned attending a book launching as the best part of his conference experience. Another two IAs cited the high attendance at the conference as a major perk.

### What were the biggest challenges of *Evaluation 2004* for international attendees?

“It demands a leave of absence at the worst time of year due to institutional responsibilities.”

“The biggest challenge has been other commitments. In particular, work that has to be put on hold”.

“To attend AEA annually would be financially impossible.”

“Trying to know what each talk is about”

**No major challenges.** Many IAs reported having a smooth experience at *Evaluation 2004*. In fact, six IAs noted that they did not experience any major challenges at the conference.

**Timing.** Three IAs mentioned issues of timing as a major challenge. Two noted that because the conference fell in the middle of an academic semester, it was hard to find time to prepare for the conference. Another IA mentioned that the timing of her presentation was problematic because it fell on the same day she had to leave for another conference.

**Other work commitments.** Two IAs noted that other work commitments were the biggest challenge to attending *Evaluation 2004*.

**Choosing sessions.** Two IAs noted that it was difficult to determine session topics and choose sessions that were relevant to their interests.

**Cost.** Two IAs mentioned the cost of attending the conference as the biggest challenge. One specifically noted that in order to attend, he had to invest a lot of time and energy into writing proposals for awards.

**Language.** One IA noted that although she speaks and reads English, it was taxing to carefully listen to presentations in English. Many of the presenters did not speak clearly and did not use microphones.

**Other obstacles.** One IA noted that there were problems processing her submission for a student travel award.

# Experiences at Conference Sessions

## How were international attendees' experiences in conference sessions?

[Attending sessions has been] "a serendipitous exposure that has been really cool and enjoyable."

"I've been to a couple of presentations that were slightly less content than I would have liked, but most of them have been exceptional".

"Perhaps it was a little difficult for me as a foreigner to understand the applications addressed to the American public."

"People didn't plan their presentations correctly. Too much information on the slides."

"Sessions are one and a half hours so you feel like you get a better feel of the content than if they were one hour sessions."

[Choosing between sessions is] "a bit like picking a needle out of a haystack."

"It would be interesting if presenters could classify sessions as beginner, intermediate, or advanced"

"People talk fast, looking away, without a microphone, too low."

**High levels of satisfaction.** Of the 20 interview participants, 9 (45%) indicated that they were "highly satisfied", 10 (50%) indicated that they were "satisfied", and 1 (5%) indicated that he/she was "somewhat satisfied" with the conference sessions at Evaluation 2004. Three IAs cited the Presidential Strand sessions while another cited the consistently high quality of all conference sessions as the **best part** of *Evaluation 2004*.

**Session information.** Several IAs spoke about the challenges of picking sessions that were relevant to their interests and work. A few commented that it was often difficult to determine the content and skill level of the sessions from the titles listed in the program book. Many IAs recognized that session abstracts were available for download online and purchase at the conference. However, they indicated a desire to have more readily available information about the sessions at and after the conference

**U.S. themes in conference sessions.** Several IAs noted that the Presidential Strand and Plenary sessions focused heavily on U.S. issues. While they did not mind this focus, they found it hard to understand and follow the sessions because they were unfamiliar with the U.S. issues discussed. They noted that it would be helpful if presenters provided more context in their presentation of these topics.

**Session content.** Most IAs praised the content of the sessions for its relevance to their interests and work as evaluators. However, there were some concerns raised about session content. One IA noted that he would like to see sessions on more advanced topics in evaluation while another noted that he would like to see more discussion of axiology at the conference. One IA was disturbed by low quality of work done by some of the presenters in his area. Finally, one IA noted that some of the presentations were too content-specific and did not link to a general evaluation framework.

**Session pace.** Some IAs were overwhelmed by the amount of information covered in a session period. They noted that presenters often had too many slides for the time period allotted. One IA noted that the time allotment for sessions sometimes only allowed a brief outline of the topic. However, other IAs noted that the session pace was good, and that the 90-minute length allowed for more content than 60-minute presentations.

**Presenter skills.** Some IAs noted that presentation skills could be improved. A few suggested that the AEA include information about how to write titles, appropriately time presentations, and speak effectively in their guidelines for presenters.

### Recommendations

**Provide context for domestic issues covered in the Presidential Strand and Plenary Sessions.** The AEA should consider encouraging presenters in the Presidential Strand and Plenary sessions to provide more context when discussing current topics specific to U.S.-based evaluation.

**Continue to improve the availability of session information at the conference.** There are many ways to increase the availability of detailed conference session information, from reinstating the computer room to providing abstracts on CD to all registrants to selling abstract books. The AEA could explore a wide range of options for providing attendees with more detailed information about session offerings.

**Explore ways to market session information after the conference.** AEA could allow opportunities to purchase hard copies or download electronic copies of session papers, Powerpoint slides, or references.

# Topical Interest Groups

## General reactions to Topical Interest Groups (TIGS)

"In general, TIGs are good. They give people a home in the larger group. They push decentralization."

"...if the interests are similar or closer, they should not really go into the multiplication of TIGs"

**A home within the conference.** IAs spoke fondly of the role of TIGs in providing conference attendees with a place to align themselves and forums to discuss their interests. One attendee noted that topical interest groups were a unique feature of *Evaluation 2004* that she had not experienced at other conferences. Additionally a first time attendee noted that interaction with a single TIG defined his experience at the conference.

**Too many similar TIGs.** Some IAs noted that there were a very large number of TIGs at *Evaluation 2004*. They noted that many of the TIGs represented overlapping interests. The large number of similar, overlapping TIGs often resulted in tensions regarding where to align oneself and what TIG meetings to attend. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that all TIG business meetings were offered at the same time.

## Participation in TIG business meetings

"People's experiences are very much related to which TIG they spend time with."

"Defining the business for the next year made me feel somewhat more involved."

"Time is the problem. We had one hour to do elections, talk about the future and the past."

"...they haven't really set anything for the students or other TIG members as a task or something that they can feel like they are a part of the TIG too and make a contribution"

**Attendance.** Eleven (55%) IAs indicated that they participated in a TIG business meeting at *Evaluation 2004*. Although the International and Cross-Cultural TIG business meeting was the most popular choice (N=4), IAs also attended meetings for the Empowerment Evaluation (N=1), Theory (N=2), Feminist (N=1), Graduate Student (N=1), Arts and Culture (N=1), and RTD (N=1) TIGs.

**Time.** Some IAs noted that there was not enough time to conduct all of the necessary business and hold discussions. Because an increase in the amount of time donated to each TIG business meeting would cut into the number of program sessions offered by each TIG, lack of time remains a tension.

**No business conducted.** In two TIG meetings (Theory and Empowerment Evaluation), IAs reported that no business was discussed.

**Active participation.** Although several IAs described the TIGs as welcoming, some IAs expressed a desire for more opportunities for active participation within TIG business meetings. One IA noted that the TIG meeting was structured in a way that was more exclusive than inclusive.

### Recommendations

**Reassess and merge overlapping TIGs.** With AEA's recent growth, many TIGs have emerged. AEA should check for redundancy among TIGs and merge those with overlapping interests.

**Review guidelines to TIG leaders.** AEA should consider review guidelines to TIG leaders and ensure that they stress the priorities of discussing business and actively involving attendees at TIG business meetings.

## How did international attendees perceive the quality of social interactions at Evaluation 2004?

“Everyone is very friendly...this is a very friendly country and everyone seems willing to share their stuff. [There is] no sense of snootiness.”

“I was able to meet people that I would have never met otherwise.”

“I met some people and have come up with at least two different work opportunities.”

“The networking ribbons really help and people identify you and it give you an idea of who people are.”

“The opportunity to network is there, but I have not been able to because I've been doing my work in my free time”

“I think that AEA should formalize networking. I overheard people saying they don't know anyone here.”

“Relax a little bit! In the receptions we could have some more live music or some additional social opportunities offered.”

### **A friendly, welcoming environment.**

The majority of IAs described social interactions at the conference as friendly, and noted that it was easy to approach and talk to people. Several noted that people were willing to share their work and resources.

**Best part of the conference.** Almost half of the IAs indicated a form of social interaction as the **best part** of *Evaluation 2004*. Among the interactions listed were the opportunity to reconnect with old friends, meeting new people, and finding opportunities for work and collaboration.

### **Diversity of conference participants.**

IAs reported being surprised and impressed by the number of international attendees at the conference. Some valued the opportunity to meet others from all over the world. However, one IA noted that diversity among conference participants could still be improved.

**Aids to social interactions.** Several IAs commended the nametag ribbons as a valuable contribution to networking. A few even suggested expanding network ribbons to include U.S. states and/or languages spoken. Others mentioned various receptions including the Author's fair, poster session, and graduate student reception as a chance to reconnect with old colleagues and meet new people. One IA mentioned that she often met new people by attending sessions. However, others noted that there could be more opportunities for networking in sessions. Finally, two students mentioned that volunteering provided opportunities to network.

**Obstacles to social interactions.** Six IAs noted that they did not engage in much networking at the conference. They cited the following obstacles:

- Lack of time (N=3)
- Uncertainty about speaking English with others (N=1)
- Not staying at the conference hotel. (N=1)
- Brought family to the conference. (N=1)

One IA mentioned that it was hard to meet new people because she did not know anyone.

### **Informal vs. formal opportunities.**

While some IAs were pleasantly surprised by the informal nature of networking opportunities, others called for slightly more formal, structured opportunities.

### **Lack of cultural social experiences.**

IAs called for more opportunities to experience the local culture of the conference city. Several suggested that the AEA organize cultural social outings in the evenings, while one suggested that the AEA provide live, local music at receptions.

## Recommendations

### **Continue to expand formal networking opportunities.**

Although IAs value the informal atmosphere of the conference, some expressed the need for more formal networking opportunities.

### **When feasible, provide cultural social experiences.**

When circumstances with the hotel and the local arrangements chair are favorable, the AEA should make every effort to provide cultural outings and infuse receptions with local culture (e.g., music, food). This will provide IAs with the cultural experience of the conference city that they desire.

## What were international attendees' thoughts about conference logistics?

[The conference program could be] "more clear to read."

"I think its useful that they have the [program] summary."

"Even though I speak English and read almost everything in English, it is difficult when you have to talk and listen very carefully in English."

[The conference is on one site] "which is perfect; saves time."

"I was a little surprised by the hotel. There is a long line for lunch. The Hilton should be better".

"The first morning, there were people in the hallway directing people and that was really nice."

**Conference Program.** Some IAs noted that the conference program was confusing and could be designed to make it more usable. While one IA noted that she liked the summaries of sessions by day, two noted that they would prefer to see sessions organized by theme. They seemed unaware that the program already contained an index of sessions grouped by TIG. One IA noted that summary sheets could be color coded by date in the program so that they would be easier to locate. Another noted that the program should include local information about Atlanta (e.g., information about food, public transportation, and city safety)

**Language.** A few IAs noted that they did not recognize some of the terms and acronyms used throughout the conference. In addition, one IA who was a non-native English speaker noted that language presented a major challenge to her at the conference. She noted that it was difficult because many of the presenters did not provide written abstracts and did not speak clearly during their presentations.

**Conference site.** Several IAs commented on the conference site. On a positive note, one IA noted that he appreciated the fact that the conference was held at a single site. Another IA described the hotel and city as terrific. However, there were several concerns about the site. Two IAs mentioned concerns about the lack of food at the hotel. One noted that the lines for lunch were very long while another noted that he would have appreciated a continental breakfast. One IA noted concerns about the hotel contract. He noted that it was difficult to receive reduced room rates because attendees had to pay up front and could not be reimbursed if they later found that they could not attend the conference. Finally, at least one attendee noted that he did not care for the conference city because of its lack of nightlife.

**Computer facilities.** One IA noted that he missed the computer facilities that were offered at past conferences.

**Family accommodations.** Two IAs noted that they had brought family members to the conference. One noted that it would be helpful if the AEA offered accommodations for families such as a partners program or limited child care services. However, this may be difficult to accomplish given all of the other conference tasks that the AEA has to accomplish.

**Staff help at the conference.** One IA mentioned that she appreciated the presence of the AEA staff in red shirts on the first morning of the conference. She noted that they were helpful in directing people to sessions.

### Recommendations

**Minimize use of puns and acronyms.** The AEA should strive to avoid using puns and acronyms in its conference materials and should also encourage presenters to avoid their use.

**Encourage presenters to provide visual materials.** Visual materials such as printed abstracts and overheads may help non-native English speakers follow presentations.

**Conduct a usability analysis of the program.** The AEA has made several internal attempts to increase the usability of the program. However, IAs still reported struggling with the navigation of the program, and seemed unaware of some of its features. Future evaluations could potentially examine the ease of use of the conference program to determine problem areas.

# Welcoming and Celebrating International Attendees

## How can AEA welcome and celebrate the contributions of international attendees?

“The fact that there are international attendees heightens the quality of the conference because it is not only the perspectives of US but also a broader world.”

“I like the idea of the map and the ribbons, because that gives you an identity.”

“It would be wonderful to have an award for commendable work in a non-US country.”

“We need to reach out to people and encourage international work that is not highlighted here.”

“Have an international night-a dinner or something because international attendees are all alone.”

“Work that the TIG might need to do is spread the word in a more structured and effective way so that more people overseas can actually learn about AEA and see all the excellent things that they can learn from here.”

### **AEA as an international conference.**

During the interviews, several IAs spoke of the contributions of international participants to *Evaluation 2004*. Some IAs noted that the conference provided attendees with an international focus and a world perspective. One IA noted that she was surprised by the large number of IAs and described meeting people from all over the world as the best part of the conference.

**Welcoming tools.** Most IAs described *Evaluation 2004* as a welcoming, inclusive conference. IAs appreciated the world map and the country ribbons. One IA suggested that it also might be nice to have a formal welcoming of international people as part of the opening sessions or presidential address.

### **Recognizing International work.**

Several IAs provided suggestions for ways that the AEA could recognize the work of IAs. Specifically, some IAs mentioned that the AEA should be open and encourage international work that is currently not highlighted at the conference. One IA suggested having a specific award for International work. Another IA noted that the Presidential Strand could offer a showcase of International work. Finally, one IA mentioned that the AEA should encourage Internationals to post their work on the association website.

**Offer International receptions.** Some IAs expressed the desire to have more opportunities to interact with other internationals at the conference. These individuals suggested holding an informal reception such as a luncheon or dinner for international attendees.

**International outreach.** The IAs that we interviewed believed that it was important for the AEA to continue efforts to reach out to IAs in other countries. They had

several suggestions for continued outreach including using the International and Cross-Cultural TIG to publicize the AEA overseas, targeting developing countries, and changing the name of the association to American International Evaluation Association.

## Recommendations

### **Encourage and showcase International work.**

The AEA and International and Cross-Cultural (ICCE) TIG should continue to encourage submissions that discuss international evaluation, especially work that is not currently highlighted at AEA conferences. Additionally, the AEA should continue to explore opportunities to showcase international work at the conference.

### **Offer an International reception.**

An international reception could provide additional opportunities for internationals to interact with one another.

## Strengths and Limitations of the Evaluation

All evaluations have strengths and limitations.

**Strengths.** The use of a stakeholder-based approach represents one strength of this evaluation. Our approach allowed key members of the AEA to determine the focus of the evaluation. Another strength of this evaluation is the use of multiple methods. Specifically, the quantitative survey allowed us to compare IAs and NAs on their demographic characteristics, reasons for attending *Evaluation 2004*, and conference satisfaction. In contrast, the qualitative interviews allowed international participants to voice their perspectives.

**Limitations.** Our evaluation also has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, both samples of IAs used in this evaluation were drawn from an entirely volunteer sample of conference attendees recruited via electronic mail. Survey data was based on all IAs willing to participate in the evaluation while interview data was based on participants who were randomly drawn from those who expressed interest. Due to these sampling techniques, it is likely that IAs who were less comfortable with expressing themselves in English and who experienced more difficulty in attending the conference did not nominate themselves into the samples. This may have limited the generalizability of our findings.

Comparisons were made to determine how closely survey and interview sample proportions of IAs from different regions of the world matched those of all IAs attending *Evaluation 2004*. Out of 175 IAs attending the conference, 114 (65.1%) responded to our conference survey. Proportions of IAs from each region of the world called home in our survey sample closely mirrored the total population of IAs at *Evaluation 2004* (see Appendix A for details).

In our interview sample, Canadians, Australians/New Zealanders, and Africans were over-represented while Europeans and Asians were under-represented. Proportions of attendees from South America/Central America/Caribbean mirrored those of all IAs (see Appendix B for further details). The differences between our interview sample and the total population of IAs attending *Evaluation 2004* are not surprising. Our stratified sampling procedure was based on proportions of internationals living outside of the U.S. who attended the previous year's conference in Reno, Nevada. Differences in conference location and the inclusion of IAs living within the U.S. led to sample proportions that differed from those of IAs attending *Evaluation 2004*. The AEA must be very careful in interpreting interview results as the views of certain countries may be over or under-represented.

The sample in this evaluation was drawn exclusively from evaluators who succeeded in attending the conference. There are likely many more evaluators from countries outside of the United States who, while interested, nonetheless experience too many obstacles to actually attend the conference. If the AEA is interested in outreach to this group, it will be necessary to solicit information from international evaluators not present at the conference in order to understand and identify means to support their presence at the conference.

We allowed attendees to endorse a country that they considered to be "home". This meant that IAs who were currently based in the U.S. were eligible to be included in the evaluation as IAs. Only 5 of our interviewees were currently in the US, but identified home as another country. Nonetheless, these IAs may be more acculturated to the US and may therefore not be representative of IAs who attend the conference.

## Conclusions of the Evaluation

**Conclusions.** The AEA continues to host an annual conference that is well regarded and appreciated by its members. The results of this evaluation suggest that international attendees identify few experiences that are unique to their position as attendees coming from home countries outside of the U.S. In large part, their notably positive experiences with the conference mirror the experiences of attendees who endorse the U.S. as their home country. There are a few conference experiences unique to IAs that the AEA should

continue to mind in the future. These experiences include:

- The high cost and more challenging logistics of attending AEA conferences for IAs.
- Difficulty following sessions that emphasize domestic issues that are not relevant to IAs home countries or use U.S.-based jargon, acronyms and puns.
- IAs' greater emphasis on finding opportunities to engage in conversations with other evaluators.

# Appendix A: Survey Methods

## Appeals to Conference Registrants

We used a web-based survey to gather all conference attendees' feedback on their experiences with *Evaluation 2004*.

At the conference we advertised the web-based survey through stickers with necessary information, reminder notes for attendees that were placed in popular gathering areas, and an announcement made at plenary sessions.

After the conference we made three formal attempts to encourage *Evaluation 2004* attendees to complete the survey.

**Initial Contact.** Nick Smith, the 2004-05 AEA President, supported our efforts by writing our first letter. This letter was sent by electronic mail (email) to all persons listed on the register at the end of the conference on Wednesday, November 10, 2004. The list included people who did not attend the conference.

**Reminders.** We sent reminder emails to all attendees on the two subsequent

Wednesdays after the initial letter was sent out.

**AEA Website.** Susan Kistler, AEA manager, made the survey website address available on the AEA website from the middle of November.

**Availability of Survey.** The survey was available for completion up to December 3, 2004.

**Setbacks:** We had some problems sending out the emails. On our first attempt, there was a technical problem and the survey's web address was not included with the letter. This was remedied within a few hours. The letters were sent via a mass e-mail program, and some letters did not reach attendees' mailboxes as our letter was assumed to be spam. Also, some registered attendees did not provide their most current email address. In total forty-one contact attempts were problematic. A team member made additional attempts to reach these persons.

## Data Preparation

Principia© Products created the on-line survey free of charge using their product Remark Web Survey©, and prepared the SPSS database containing the responses. This was sent to the evaluation team approximately one week after the survey was no longer available

to attendees. The data was then checked for inaccuracies, and any necessary corrections were made. One case had to be removed as the respondent reported they had not actually attended the conference.

## Data Analysis

**Quantitative.** Frequencies, percentages and other summarizing data were calculated for the quantitative conference survey questions. Analysis of Variance techniques were performed in a few instances. SPSS was the statistical package used in all quantitative analyses.

**Qualitative.** A thematic analysis was used on the four qualitative questions.

First, two team members each coded two questions individually. Then the other team member assessed the accuracy of the first coder's selected themes, and suggested needed changes. In this way, both team members looked at all four qualitative questions either as first or second coder. Final themes were agreed upon by both team members.

## Final IA Survey Sample Demographics

Region of the World Called Home	N (%) of IAs responding to the survey	N(%) of IAs Attending the Conference
Europe	26 (22.8%)	37 (21.2%)
Asia	25 (21.9%)	41 (23.6%)
Canada	23 (20.2%)	37 (21.2%)
South America/Central America/Caribbean	20 (17.5%)	28 (16.1%)
Africa	12 (10.5%)	18 (10.3%)
Australia/New Zealand	6 (5.3%)	13 (7.5%)
<i>Missing</i>	2 (1.8%)	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>175</b>

\*Percentage of the total is provided in parentheses

# Appendix B: International Attendee Interview Methods

## Recruitment of Interview Participants

We aimed to interview 21 conference attendees who identified a country outside of the U.S. as a response to the question: *Where do you call home?* In establishing our sample, we wanted to recruit participants who represented a variety of regions of the world. We also aimed to recruit 18 participants who had registered in advance for the conference and 3 participants who registered during the month of October or on-site. To achieve these goals, we recruited participants in three waves:

**Advanced registrants.** We used the AEA's pre-registration database to contact individuals who registered prior to October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 and indicated a country other than the U.S. as the answer to the question, *Where do you call home?* Specifically, these individuals were contacted via electronic and asked if they would be interested in participating in an interview at the conference.

Of the 109 eligible participants, 54 (49.5%) were willing to participate, 16 (14.7%) were not willing to participate, and 39 (35.8%) never responded. Of the 16 individuals who indicated that they were not willing to participate, 5 (25%) indicated that they would be too busy at the conference to engage in an interview, 1 (6.3%) indicated that she would not be attending the conference due to a scheduling conflict, 2 (12.5%) believed that they could not be considered international attendees, and 8 (50%) did not provide a reason. Of the 54 individuals who were willing to participate in the evaluation, 3 responded too late to be included in the sampling.

From the 51 remaining participants, we drew a stratified random sample of 14 participants based on the region of the

world that attendees called home. Specifically, based on attendance patterns from the 2003 and 2002 conferences, we determined that a sample of 18 interviewees would include 3 interviewees from Australia/New Zealand, 2 from Africa, 2 from Asia, 5 from Canada, 3 from Europe, and 3 from South/Central American and the Caribbean. However, one participant from Asia did not show up for the interview at the scheduled time, reducing our final random sample of advanced registrants to 17.

**October registrants.** 33 individuals who registered between October 1<sup>st</sup> and October 30<sup>th</sup> indicated a country other than the U.S. as the answer to the question, *Where do you call home?* Of the 34, 7 were Canadians. Given concerns from stakeholders of over-sampling Canadian participants, we did not include them in this recruitment wave. We sent a recruitment email to the remaining 26 individuals instructing them to email us or visit us at our desk during the conference to schedule an interview. One interviewee from the Australia/New Zealand region was recruited in this manner.

**On-site registrants.** We recruited onsite registrants with the help of AEA staff stationed at the registration desk. All international attendees who registered on-site were provided with flyers and instructed to visit our team at our conference table. Two onsite registrants (1 Africa and 1 Asia) were recruited.

## Final Sample Demographics

Recruitment Method	# of Sampled Participants
Advanced Registrants	17
October Registrants	1
On-site Registrants	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

Region of the World Called Home	Lives in the U.S.*		Total		
	No	Yes	Sample*	All IAs**	IAs not living in the U.S.**
Canada	5 (25%)	0 (0%)	5 (25%)	37 (21.2%)	34 (19.4%)
Australia/New Zealand	4 (20%)	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	13 (7.5%)	13 (7.5%)
Europe	3 (15%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)	37 (21.2%)	27 (15.4%)
Africa	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	18 (10.3%)	10 (5.7%)
South America/Central America/Caribbean	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	28 (16.1%)	17 (9.7%)
Asia	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	41 (23.6%)	19 (10.9%)

\*Percentage of the total sample is provided in parentheses.

\*\* Percentage of the total number of IAs attending *Evaluation 2004* is provided in parentheses.

Sample Characteristics	Total
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	10 (50%)
Female	10 (50%)
<b>AEA Conference Attendance</b>	
First time attendee	12 (60%)
2-4 conferences	5 (25%)
5-7 conferences	1 (5%)
8-10 conferences	1 (5%)
More than 10 conferences	1 (5%)
<b>AEA Membership Status</b>	
Professional Member	13 (65%)
Student Member	6 (30%)
Non-Member	1 (5%)
<b>Employer</b>	
College/University	7 (35%)
Government Agency	6 (30%)
Independent Consulting Practice	4 (20%)
Community Agency/Nonprofit/NGO	1 (5%)
Teaching Hospital	1 (5%)
Independent Consulting Practice and University	1 (5%)

\*Percentage of total sample is provided in parentheses

## Interview Procedure

Each member of the evaluation team conducted between two and three interviews. All interviews were conducted between Thursday afternoon (11/04/04) and Saturday afternoon (11/07/04) at the conference hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, and generally lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

All interviewees completed a pre-interview survey that contained demographic questions and questions used to guide the interview process. Interviewers followed a semi-structured interview protocol developed in with input from several AEA stakeholders. All interviews were tape-recorded and interviewers took notes during the interview.

### Major Thematic Areas of the IA Interview

Learning About AEA and Attraction to the Conference

Submitting Presentation Proposal and Presenting

Experiences with Roles at Conference (e.g., volunteering, TIG meetings)

Funding, Registration, Website Use and Travel (including visas)

General Impressions of the Conference

Experiences at Conference Sessions

Networking and Social Interactions

Highlights and Lowlights of the Conference

Conference Logistics and Help-Seeking

Suggestions for promoting positive IA experiences

## Data Preparation

Interviewers completed comprehensive reports of each interview including key quotes drawn from the audiotapes and their notes. All interview notes were imported into NVIVO, a qualitative software program. Quantitative data from the pre-interview survey were coded and

entered into an SPSS database. Additional demographic statistics from the pre-registration database (i.e., gender, region of the world called home, and whether or not the participant currently resides in the U.S.) were also coded and entered into the SPSS database.

## Data Analysis

**Quantitative.** Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the quantitative pre-interview survey data using SPSS. A cross-tabulation was also calculated using the following variables: region of the world called home and residence in the U.S.

**Qualitative.** To first familiarize themselves with the landscape of data, two team members created a summary table that visually displayed responses to key interview questions.

The two team members then engaged in a co-coding process. In this process, each coder first read all interview notes and labeled key categories. The two coders then met to discuss the independently identified themes.

Using these independently identified themes, they came up with a set of ten major thematic areas to be included in the evaluation report. Coded text from the interview surveys was used to inform results in each area.