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| Title of the abstract |  |
| Conference session | □ Stream A. Responsive National Evaluation Systems  □ Stream B. Inclusive National Evaluation Systems  □ Stream C. Future Driven Systems and Approaches |
| Name(s), title(s) and institutional affiliation(s) of all other authors/contributors (if applicable) | **Developments in Artificial Intelligence: what are the challenges for the African Evaluators?** |
| Preferred format: | □ Formal presentation (maximum 10 minutes)  □ Participation in a panel discussion where the experience can be shared  □ Participation in an interactive session where the example can be shared, without a formal presentation  □ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| I will need to apply for bursary support, if selected. | □ Yes  □ No |
| Language to be used for presentation | □ English □ French □ Spanish □ Chinese |

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| **Abstract Text**  Evaluation is defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program, or policy, focusing on its design, implementation, and results. The goal is to determine the relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the evaluated entity. Evaluation aims to provide credible and useful information that helps incorporate lessons learned into decision-making processes for beneficiaries and donors. Evaluation also refers to a systematic process to determine the value and scope of a development action, and it has historically relied on various sciences such as sociology, anthropology, and statistics, which have significantly influenced its development.  In the 21st century, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made remarkable advancements. AI, a branch of science established in the 1950s, involves developing intelligent machines and studying the phenomenon of "intelligence" through computer simulations. The increasing use of AI is driving societal and economic shifts towards greater automation, data-driven decision-making, and integration of AI systems into various sectors, including job markets, healthcare, government, industry, and education. This article aims to explore how AI contributes to evaluation and the challenges African evaluators face in integrating AI.  AI presents significant opportunities for Africa, offering the potential to enhance productivity and drive development in key sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, financial services, and public services. AI can address pressing issues such as poverty reduction, education improvement, healthcare provision, sustainable development, food security, and social inclusion. However, evidence suggests that countries in the Global North are better prepared to leverage AI compared to Africa. To benefit from AI, African countries need to address governance issues and build institutional capacity, adopting a problem-driven approach tailored to local needs rather than copying practices from other regions.  The integration of AI into evaluation processes can automate and optimize various tasks, including desk reviews, data collection, analysis, synthesis, and reporting. AI can assist in designing surveys, coding qualitative data, identifying patterns, generating insights, and creating visualizations. This can save time, reduce errors, and enhance data quality. In Canada, AI has been applied effectively in three stages of evaluation: delineating the scope, selecting documents for review, and coding and analysis. However, the use of AI also raises ethical and social concerns, such as ensuring transparency, accountability, fairness, and protecting privacy and rights. Challenges include technical barriers, data quality and availability, and the need for skills and knowledge in AI.  For African evaluators, challenges include acquiring relevant skills, overcoming uncertainty about AI benefits, dealing with a lack of structured data ecosystems, and addressing the need for relevant government policies. The development of AI requires programming skills and dealing with complex algorithms. Additionally, the lack of high-quality data, underdeveloped data ecosystems, and insufficient AI policies pose significant hurdles. Ethical considerations also play a crucial role, as AI's potential for bias and socio-economic impact must be addressed. User attitudes towards AI can affect adoption, and insufficient infrastructure and network connectivity further complicate the situation.  In conclusion, while AI has the potential to play a vital role in program evaluation in Africa by analyzing large datasets and providing targeted recommendations, addressing challenges related to data quality, technical capacity, ethics, and infrastructure is crucial for effective integration. |