



**COACTIVE  
CHANGE**

**Aisha A. Rios, Ph.D.**

**Coactive Change  
Denver, CO**

**Founder  
Learning and Change Strategist**

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Dr. Aisha Rios is the Founder and Learning & Change Strategist at Coactive Change. In her role, she partners with change agents working to dismantle systems of oppression and create more just and liberatory futures. She brings substantive knowledge and experience in ethnographically grounded, culturally responsive evaluation practice with an intersectionality lens. She relies on approaches and methodologies that center collective knowledge and collaboration—rather than solely relying on her knowledge and experience—because she believes that learning does not happen in isolation but in partnership with those working in the field to advance social justice change.

What this looks like in practice is slower paced, reflective, and contextually grounded learning and evaluation projects where she provides thought partnership, creative facilitation, and strategic guidance. She loves collaborating on interdisciplinary and intergenerational teams in a way that harnesses everyone’s diverse expertise and lived experience. Her commitment to creating a more just world permeates her collaborative approach, which grounds her belief in the collective power of different ways of knowing and being—from evaluation and anthropology to coalition building and community organizing—to foster learning and achieve our collective liberation.

**Current partners include:** Brent’s Place, Colorado Health Foundation, Denver Streets Partnership, New York Community Trust - Mosaic Fund & Network, Rise Above Colorado, UCCS Aging Center, Youth on Record

## Evaluation and Applied Research Experience

Organizational change, movement building, and capacity building													
Public and behavioral health evaluation and research													
K-12 education evaluation													
Family and youth focused evaluation													
Private sector applied research													
	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21

## Current And Past Coactive Change Projects

ROLE/PROJECT	TIMELINE	PARTNER/CLIENT	CONTENT AREA
Co-Lead and Qualitative methodologist/Grantmaking and network building assessment	2021-2023	New York Community Trust - Mosaic Fund & Network	Racial equity; philanthropic change; movement building
Co-Lead and Anti-Oppression Specialist	2021	Denver Streets Partnership	Anti-oppression; organizational change and development
Co-Lead and Youth Participatory Evaluator	2021	Youth on Record	Youth leadership and arts programming
Lead Evaluator/Case study evaluation	2021	Colorado Health Foundation	Youth programming and leadership; behavioral health
Lead Evaluator/Process evaluation	2021	UCCS Aging Center	Older adult behavioral health; community building
Co-Lead and Anti-Oppression specialist	2020-2021	Rise Above Colorado	Anti-oppression; organizational change and development
Lead Evaluator/Theory of change refinement	2020-2021	Brent's Place	Family social and residential services
Lead Evaluator/Process evaluation	2020-2021	National Council on Aging	Older adult behavioral health; health promotion
Co-Lead Evaluator/Logic model development	2020	Buddy Program	Youth mentorship program
Qualitative and ethnographic methodologist	2020	Change Matrix staff	Training, capacity building



# Former Evaluation and Research Position Highlights

## Evaluator

Denver, CO

### Vantage Evaluation

- Served as the ethnographic and qualitative methodologist on the team.
- Managed an evaluation panel of over two hundred teachers and accompanying evaluation studies to inform programmatic decision making for the Teacher2Teacher program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Promoted staff growth and development leading the evaluator hiring committee and participating in sessions to advance staff practice of Equitable Evaluation.

ROLE/PROJECT	TIMELINE	PARTNER/CLIENT	CONTENT AREA
Lead Evaluator on teacher panel studies and non-panel studies, including community dialogues on the impact of COVID-19	8 projects 2018-2020	Gates Foundation, Teacher2Teacher	K-12 education; school leaders of color; distributed leadership; students with disabilities; social-emotional learning; student engagement; curriculum supplementation; evidence-based practices; COVID-19 response
Lead Evaluator/Process evaluation	2018-2019	National Council on Aging	Older adult behavioral health; health promotion
Lead Evaluator/Process evaluation	2018-2019	UCCS Aging Center	Older adult behavioral health; community building



## Senior Evaluation Specialist

Atlanta, GA

### Karna LLC

- Trained colleagues on qualitative methodologies and NVivo data analysis software.
- Led interdisciplinary teams of public health experts and public-private partnerships on national, systems evaluations for the CDC and collaborated on publications and presentations.
- Co-authored federal government contract proposals as a technical writer, and co-led strategic planning under the Health Science and Research Division at the firm.

ROLE/PROJECT	TIMELINE	PARTNER/CLIENT	CONTENT AREA
Lead Contract Evaluator, Grant evaluation	2016-2017	CDC, Division of STD Prevention	Public health; STD prevention; grant assessment
Lead Contract Evaluator, Public Health Assessment	2014-2016	CDC, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention	Public health; HIV/AIDS prevention



## Ethnographic Research Consultant Context-Based Research Group

Remote

- Conducted independent applied, ethnographic research on six market research projects for client industries including public health, pharmaceuticals, financial services, and consumer goods and services.
- Analyzed respondent behavior, experiences, and decision-making with attention to social and cultural context through in-depth interviews, observations, journaling, drawing, and other creative methods.

## Qualitative Methodologist Consultant Culture Agency

Atlanta, GA

- Supported three brand development and market research projects for private sector clients as both project coordinator and qualitative methods specialist.
- Co-led final presentations to executive clients, ranging from a large Atlanta-based non-profit organization to a major global beverage corporation.

ROLE/PROJECT	TIMELINE	PARTNER/CLIENT	CONTENT AREA
Qualitative and ethnographic specialist	2011- 2012, 2014	Context-Based Research Group and Culture Agency	Private Sector



## Lead Anthropologist Dissertation Fieldwork

U.S.-Based

- Designed and implemented an independent, multi-sited ethnographic research project that analyzed the diverse perceptions and practices of state and local gender-based violence advocates and other service sector professionals.
- Conducted participant observation during field visits at meetings, trainings, prevention, and outreach events and semi-structured interviews with fifty-three participants representing diverse social identities, lived experiences, and sectors.
- Developed and managed a qualitative database to analyze over a year and a half of qualitative data using a grounded theory approach that incorporated a historical analysis of relevant archival documents.

ROLE/PROJECT	TIMELINE	PARTNER/CLIENT	CONTENT AREA
Ethnographic dissertation research	2009-2013	Temple University	Gender-based violence; movement and coalition building



## Teaching/Instruction Experience

*Qualitative data analysis and Dedoose.* (Fall 2020). Change Matrix. Staff trainer.  
*Introduction to Anthropology.* (Spring 2014). Georgia Perimeter College. Instructor.  
*Cultures of the World.* (Spring 2007- Spring 2008). Temple University. Teaching Assistant.  
*Introduction to Anthropology.* (Fall 2006). Temple University. Teaching Assistant.

## Peer Reviewed and Invited Publications

- ◆ **Rios, A. (2021).** It Takes a Village: The Power of Collective Wisdom in Building Sustainable Networks. *National Council on Aging Blog.* <https://www.ncoa.org/article/it-takes-a-village-the-power-of-collective-wisdom-in-building-sustainable-networks>
- ◆ **Rios, A. (2020).** Why this Evaluator is for Abolition. *Freshspectrum Blog.* <https://freshspectrum.com/why-this-evaluator-is-for-abolition/>.
- ◆ **Rios, A. (2019).** What do AEA's Values Mean to Me? *Walking the Talk Blog,* American Evaluation Association. <https://www.eval.org/blog/aea-newsletter-september-2019>.
- ◆ Shapatava, E., **Rios, A.**, Shelley, G., Milan, Jr. J., Smith, S., Uhl, G. (2018). Local Barriers and Adaptations by Community Based Organizations in the Southern U.S. to Changes in the HIV Prevention Landscape. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 30(6): 516-527. doi: 10.1521/aeap.2018.30.6.516.
- ◆ **Rios, A. (2018).** Co-option and Organisational Survival: A Case Study of the Risks and Opportunities of State Attachment within the United States Feminist Antiviolence Movement. *Dutch Journal of Feminist Studies*, 2(1). doi: 10.20897/femenc.201804.
- ◆ 2017 Fisher, H.H., Essuon, A., Hoyte, T., Shapatava, E., Shelley, G., **Rios, A.**, Bean, S, Bourgeois, S, Dunbar, E. (2017). The Changing Landscape of HIV Prevention in the United States: Health Department Experiences and Local Adaptations in Response to the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and High-Impact Prevention Approach. *Journal of Public Health Management & Practice*, 24(3): 225-234. doi: 10.1097/PHH.0000000000000575.
- ◆ **Rios A. (2017).** "Crisis Gets Served Before Anything Else": Structural Constraints on Integrating LGBT Consciousness-Raising into Anti-Violence Work. *Annals of Anthropological Practice*, 41: 20-34. doi: 10.1111/napa.12107.
- ◆ **Rios, A. (2014).** Shelter Advocate "Appreciation Days": Transforming Discourses and Practices through Informal Dialogue. *Anthropology News.* Electronic document, <http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2014/05/02/transforming-discourses-and-practices-through-informal-dialogue/>, accessed May 11, 2014.

# Peer Reviewed and Invited Conference and Forum Participation

## Sessions Chaired and Papers Presented

- ◆ “How We Speak Truth Matters: Examining Power, Knowledge, and Evaluation Discourses Through an Anthropological Lens.” (October 28-November 3, 2018). Co-organized with Lavinia Nicolae. Session chaired at the annual meetings of the American Evaluation Association, Track: Qualitative Methods, Cleveland, Ohio.
- ◆ “Integrating Design and Anthropology: Why Empathy and Cultural Relativism Matter.” (October 24-29, 2016). Co-organized with Chithra Adams. Session chaired at the annual meetings of the American Evaluation Association, Track: Program Theory and Theory-Driven Evaluation, Atlanta, Georgia.
- ◆ “Navigating Representation: Producing Ethnographies of Gender-Based Violence Organizing.” (December 3-7, 2014). Co-organized with Laura Nussbaum-Barberena. Session chaired at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C.

## Peer Reviewed and Invited Presentations, Talks, and Speaker Engagements

- ◆ (forthcoming). Invited plenary speaker with Vidhya Shanker at the annual meetings of the American Evaluation Association. Virtual.
- ◆ Equity in Practice Panel with the Colorado Collaboratory on Equitable Evaluation. (July 28th, 2021). Invited panelist. Virtual.
- ◆ “Tales from a Practicing Abolitionist: Inspiration for Whole Scale Transformations of Your Practice.” (May 4, 2021). Invited Speaker at the Eastern Evaluation Research Society Annual Conference. Virtual.
- ◆ “Embodying the Change: How Culturally Responsive Evaluation, Anthropology, Abolition, and Emergent Strategy Guide my Practice Before and After Accepting Projects.” (April 8, 2021). NVivo Culturally Responsive Research Webinar Series. Virtual. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRE3QKH5Qus>
- ◆ Chinook Fund Giving Project Meet the Changemakers. (March 30, 2021). Invited moderator by the Chinook Fund Giving Project. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vq2rIPQ4hio>
- ◆ “Social Justice Evaluation with Dr. Aisha Rios.” (January 19, 2021). Invited guest on the EvaluLand Podcast. <https://evaluland.fireside.fm/16>. Virtual.
- ◆ Anti-Racism and Evaluation Panel. (October 22, 2020). Invited panelist by the Atlanta-area Evaluation Association. Virtual. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcC2JhLDH5o>
- ◆ “The Book Ends of Evaluation: Supporting Learning at the Beginning and End.” (November 14, 2019). Co-presented with Morgan Valley. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Evaluation Association, Track: Use and Influence of Evaluation, Minneapolis, MN.
- ◆ “Producing an Engaged Anthropologist: Lessons Learned Navigating the Space of Gender-Based Violence Organizing.” (December 3-7 2014). Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C.
- ◆ “Shelter Staff “Appreciation Days”: Intentional Conversations about Intersectionality and LGBTQI Intimate Partner Violence.” (March 18, 2014). Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Albuquerque, NM.
- ◆ “Queering Activist and Feminist Research on Violence Against Women.” (November 14, 2012). Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, San Francisco, CA.

- “Navigating Governance: Community Organizing and the State in the Violence Against Women Movement.” (April 14, 2011). Invited speaker at the Atlanta Forum of Anthropology Lecture Series at Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.
- “The Survivor/Perpetrator Conundrum: Navigating Mainstream and Alternative Discourses in the Domestic Violence Movement.” (November 18, 2010). Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, LA.

## Education

- 2014 Ph.D., Anthropology, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA  
Dissertation: *Feminism(s), Politics, and Domestic Violence: Tensions and Challenges in Shifting the Discourse and Institutional Relationships*
- 2009 M.A., Anthropology, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 2005
- 2005 B.A., Anthropology, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

## Community Leadership and Engagements

Local Affiliate Collaborative to the American Evaluation Association, Co-Facilitator  
 Multiethnic Issues in Evaluation Topical Interest Group, Member at Large  
 Colorado Black Liberation Collective, Founding Member  
 Atlanta-Area Evaluation Association, Past President  
 Chinook Fund Giving Project, Past Cohort Member  
 American Evaluation Association, Member  
 Funder and Evaluator Affinity Network, Member  
 Colorado Collaboratory on Equitable Evaluation, Member  
 Colorado Evaluation Network, Member

## Honors and Fellowships

- 2016 Annual on Target Award as the Karna Employee of the Year
- 2010 National Science Foundation Summer Research Opportunities Program Graduate Fellowship
- 2008 Temple University Graduate Student Travel and Research Award
- 2005 Temple University Future Faculty Fellowship
- 2005 – 2009 Graduated Summa Cum Laude from Georgia State University
- 2001 – 2005 State of Georgia HOPE Scholarship

# **Skills and Knowledge**

## **Critical Theories**

Feminist theory, intersectionality, critical race theory, queer theory, and abolition theory

## **Content Knowledge**

Social movements, community organizing, coalition building, gender-based violence, HIV and STD prevention, older adults, and K-12 education

## **Methodologies and Methods**

Ethnography, grounded theory, participatory and collaborative evaluation, culturally responsive practice, and emergent design—including qualitative and quantitative methods—with a specialization in innovative qualitative methods.

## **Facilitation, Dissemination, and Reporting**

Sense-making, member reflections, data placemats, peer-reviewed journal manuscripts, written reports, speaking engagements, webinars, and blogs

## **Software Capabilities**

Qualitative Data Analysis and Management: ATLAS.ti, NVivo, and Dedoose

Quantitative Data Analysis and Management: Excel, SPSS

Survey Administration: SurveyMonkey, SurveyGizmo

Virtual Meeting Facilitation: Zoom, Miro, Google Slides, Padlet

Administrative and Project Management: Calendly, MailChimp, Asana, Rev, Copper