

# GWEN HEANER, PHD

Global Research & Evaluation  
Leader | Advocate for Ethical and  
Inclusive Research | Survey  
Specialist | Cross-Functional Team  
Builder

## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Seasoned research professional with 20+ years of global experience designing and managing customized research and evaluation studies across six continents, with extensive expertise in survey methodology and large-scale data collection. Proven track record of leading cross-functional and multi-cultural teams to achieve strategic objectives toward health equity, education, poverty reduction, and social protection outcomes. Committed to ethical, collaborative, equity-centered approaches that amplify diverse perspectives and translate complex findings for multiple audiences. Adept at balancing multiple complex projects while maintaining rigorous methodological standards.

## EXPERTISE

- **Survey Research Design, Management, and Analysis**
- **Project Impact Evaluation**
- **Strategic Data-Driven Project Design and Adaptation**
- **Participatory and Inclusive Research Design**
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration**
- **Accessible Learning Communication**

## EDUCATION

- **University of Massachusetts Amherst**, Post-doctoral Research Fellow (2014-2019)
- **SOAS University of London**, PhD (2006 - 2011)
- **Harvard University**, Graduate Fellow (2010)
- **SOAS University of London**, MA (2004 - 2005)
- **Smith College**, BA (2000 - 2004)

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Senior Research Associate

Education Development Center (2019 – 2025)

- Served as research, evidence, and learning lead on USAID projects, designing and managing multiple 5-year monitoring and evaluation strategies, learning agendas, and survey instruments to measure program outcomes and impact.
- Developing PowerBI data dashboards and other accessible research communications tools for team members to reflect on progress, resulting in the introduction of regular all-team 'pause and reflect' sessions on data-driven adaptations to programming.
- Designed and managed testing and implementation of large-scale pre and post surveys for workforce development and health initiatives across six participant cohorts in three years, enabling team to reflect on data and adapt programming and resulting in more equitable learning and health outcomes for lower-skilled youth.
- Led development of survey tools and methods ultimately adopted for EDC-wide initiatives, including for Youth Team, Gender Working Group, and Crisis, Conflict & Violence Team.
- Integrated inclusive development principles into all USAID projects, developing equity-focused indicators and evaluation methodologies specific to local needs.

### Managing Director and Chief Researcher

GK Consulting LLC Research and Evaluation (2012 – Present)

- Independently founded and operated research firm providing evaluation services to 20+ international clients, managing contracts up to \$200,000 and totaling \$1.5 million.
- Designed and conducted complex survey research across 25+ countries to evaluate health initiatives, education programs, and social protection interventions.

## COMMUNICATION

- **Writing:** Author of 20+ peer-reviewed publications on research methodology, evaluation approaches, and evidence-based programming.
- **Presenting:** Presented research findings at 15+ academic and professional conferences.
- **Facilitation:** Led dozens of research workshops on innovative survey methods for hard-to-reach populations.
- **Teaching:** Instructor of graduate-level statistics and research methods courses with emphasis on survey design and analysis.

## TECHNOLOGY

- **Survey Tools:** SurveyCTO, Qualtrics, KoboToolbox, Magpi, SurveyMonkey, Googleforms
- **Quantitative Data Analysis Tools:** SPSS, Excel
- **Qualitative Data Analysis Tools:** MaxQDA, NVivo, Dedoose
- **Data Visualization:** PowerBI, Tableau
- **UX Design:** Figma, Adobe

- Communicated findings to stakeholders to emphasize practical applications and actionable recommendations.
- Developed innovative research methodologies tailored to client needs, including mixed-method approaches combining large-scale surveys with qualitative insights.
- Managed teams of up to 50 researchers at a time across projects, ensuring methodological rigor and adherence to research ethics.
- Clients included USAID, CARE, Millennium Challenge Corporation, UNICEF, UNWomen and other foundations and NGOs focused on health equity and social change.

### **Research Manager**

University of Massachusetts Amherst / USAID (2014 – 2019)

- Led research team in establishing the USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network serving global education and social-emotional well-being practitioners, adding 3500 official members and 20,000 email subscribers in four years.
- Initiated and managed development of multiple USAID-recommended products that were top 10 in education site traffic over multiple years, including Safer Learning Environments evidence gap maps, standard indicators, and global toolkit with quantitative surveys and qualitative approaches to assessing learner safety.

### **Social Impact Researcher and Evaluator**

Freelance Consultant (2003 – 2015)

- Provided customized qualitative and quantitative research services for multinationals (World Bank, United Nations), corporations (Arcelor Mittal), foundations (Coca Cola), government agencies (USAID, SIDA), non-governmental organizations (Pew Forum, Interfaith Action for Global Poverty) to improve programs and mitigate negative impacts on community health and wellbeing.
- Designed and implemented customized multi-methods needs assessments and end-to-end evaluations for health and social determinants projects, combining ethnographic approaches with structured surveys to uncover deep insights.
- Applied user-centered research techniques to gather community and individual perspectives on programs affecting social determinants of health and well-being, translating findings into actionable recommendations for stakeholders.