

EVALUATION CONNECTIONS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear colleagues and friends,

It gives me great pleasure to see this issue of Connections, the EES newsletter, disseminated after a lull in production due to the intense demands associated with organising our highly successful EES Conference in Prague last October. I'm sure you will enjoy the news from our communities of practise and I hope you will consider submitting to the EES Secretariat content for future issues. In this respect or any other having to do with our Society please do not hesitate to contact me or any of your Board members as needed.

Ian C Davies, EES President

EDITORIAL

Bastiaan de Laat,
EES Secretary General

Welcome to the fifth edition of "Connections", the Newsletter of the European Evaluation Society. This issue will look back at the 2010 biennial conference held in Prague by presenting summaries of the 6 award winning papers. The honoured papers show the great variety of issues that evaluators touch upon, methodologically, thematically and geographically. Award winning paper by Martinuzzi and Kopp (Austria) discusses a new evaluation tool, "actors constellation", whilst special mentions were given to Körner for her paper on participatory monitoring in Kyrgyzstan and to Rabie and Cloete for the paper on outcome indicators in South-Africa. The three winning PhD-student papers relate to gender (Espinosa), to peer review (García-Femenía) and to SME subsidies (Krupnik). Full papers can be obtained from the EES website.

The issue of professionalisation and evaluator capabilities is high on the agenda in the evaluation world. On the basis of a recent survey amongst the membership, the Board proposes a draft capabilities framework and solicits reactions from members on this. Please refer to the last page of this newsletter for an important call for contributions on this issue by EES' President, Ian C. Davies. More generally, we encourage members to become more actively involved in EES activities. A good opportunity to do so is to suggest a "Topical Interest Group" (TIG) in an area of your interest. Please contact the EES Board or the EES Secretariat in case you want to set up a TIG. More information is available on the EES website.

This edition of Evaluation Connections furthermore contains news items, a note on the various communication channels and announcements of events due to take place in 2011, showing that EES also exists outside the conference years!

EXPERIENCE WITH SYSTEMS CONSTELLATIONS IN THEORY-BASED EVALUATION – A NEW TOOL TO SUPPORT ACTOR-CENTRED EVALUATION

André Martinuzzi
Ursula Kopp

International discussion on evaluation methods is moving from 'mechanistically' theory-based evaluation (TBE) to systemic perspectives in evaluation. While logic frameworks

and logic models have been criticised for being too linear, systems-thinking approaches have been suggested as an alternative and have recently been influencing the work of many

Andre Martinuzzi (Dr.)

is director of the Research Institute for Managing Sustainability and associate professor at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. He has a doctoral degree in general management and a *venia docendi* in Environmental Management and Sustainable Development Policy. His main areas of research are evaluation research, sustainable development policies, corporate sustainability and knowledge brokerage. He has co-ordinated projects in the 5th, 6th and 7th EU Framework Programme, has conducted tendered research projects on behalf of six different EU DGs, Eurostat, the UN Development Programme and for several national ministries. He designed and implemented an internet-based monitoring system for the 7th EU Framework Programme, and leads a work package in the IMPACT project, dealing with impact measurement and performance analysis of CSR.



Ursula Kopp

has been working for the Research Institute for Managing Sustainability at the Vienna University of Economics and Business since 2000. Her main focus of research is evaluation, mainly systemic approaches and TBE, and multistakeholder processes, such as the Austrian National Sustainability Strategy or the Austrian Forest Dialogue. She has lead several projects in the FP6 and 7, such as the “EASY-ECO”, a series of conferences and training courses for young researchers on the Evaluation of Sustainable Development. Besides that she finished her Masters in Mediation and Conflict Resolution last year.



THE 9th EES BIENNIAL CONFERENCE IN NUMBERS

The 9th EES Biennial Conference “Evaluation in the Public Interest – Participation, Politics and Policy” was held in Prague, 4–8 October 2010:

- 653 delegates attended the main conference, of which nearly 500 from Europe, 66 from the USA, 44 from Asia and 26 from Africa, the remainder coming from Australia and Latin America
- 143 persons attended the 23 preconference workshops rolled out over the first 2 days
- the 133 time slots of the 3-day conference allowed for the presentation of 266 papers and 39 Panels, Roundtables or Symposia
- 42 bursaries – mainly students from developing countries – could attend the conference thanks to the donations of 6 multi- and bilateral agencies

evaluators. The paper discusses a systemic tool which helps to get a better view on a programmes’ actors and thus a more holistic view of the evaluated programme.

In theory driven evaluations programme theories, logic models and frameworks are used to analyse the outcomes and impacts of activities of a programme. Although programme theories are often developed in participatory processes, in many cases the actors involved into the program are not being considered extensively. Usually, a rather passive view is taken on the programme theory: Programs are being carried out while impacts and effects occur. But in fact it is not the program that changes something, but the people embedded in the programme create changes. Consequently, in order to explain the effects of a programme, not only the progress from intervention to the result needs to be understood, but also the thoughts and rationalities of the actors involved. In order to analyse the implicit and explicit programme theory and to get a holistic view of the programme, it is necessary to reconstruct their motivation and orientation. In a basic research project funded by the Austrian National Bank we looked for a tool to be used by the evaluator in a workshop setting together with those responsible for a programme. Methods such as social network analysis, soft systems methodology, rapid rural appraisals and systems constellation were compared.

Considered as the most suitable, we adopted **systems constellations** for the use in TBE. Based on family constellations, successfully transferred to organisational development and systemic consulting in the 1990ies, where it is used to consult enterprises, administration, policy makers etc. Systems constellations are done by visualising and externalising an internal picture the client has of the relationships, orders, hierarchies, dependencies and communication patterns of a system.

In order to use it in programme evaluation, we adopted the method, developed a toolbox and tested it in four evaluation case studies of four consulting programmes for corporate sustainability issues, which have been running for 5–12 years in different Austrian regions, offering different support such as workshops, individual consultancy, and financial funding for eco-investments. The programmes are the EcoBusinessPlan run by the Environmental Department of the City of Vienna, The Sustainable Business Initiative (Wirtschaftsinitiative Nachhaltigkeit, abbr. WIN) in Styria, the Ecoprofit Program in Vorarlberg, and Klima:aktiv an umbrella brand on Austrian federal level

With this new tool ‘**actors constellation**’ it is possible to take a close look at the actors in a learning oriented, theory-based evaluation, and thus consider the relevant inter linkages between the behaviour of the actors and the programme results. Thereby actors’ constellation does not focus on the single causal relationships but creates a view of the whole programme as a system. Actors’ constellations can be applied as a heuristic tool to rapidly give an insight into formal and informal relations between programme actors by providing an opportunity to reveal and to visualise the implicit knowledge of the persons responsible. The images and visual metaphors used can be comprehended easier and often show more details than official programme documents, which sometimes lack relevant information or are “sugarcoated”. Constellation work can serve as a heuristic instrument to receive information, which would be more time-consuming and difficult to achieve with other established methods such as qualitative interviews, content analyses or social network analysis. The insights gained during constellations work offer a basis for more actor-centred programme theories and evaluations.

PARTICIPATORY MONITORING FOR IMPROVED SUSTAINABILITY

SHARING EXPERIENCE FROM RURAL DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES PROJECT IN KYRGYZSTAN

Marie Körner

The road to rural drinking water supply projects is often lined with broken pumps and frequented by women and children tracking water from distant or polluted sources. Constructing more water supply schemes alone does not bring about sustainable supply of clean drinking water. The WB/DFID Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (RWSSP) implemented in three provinces of Kyrgyzstan during 2003–2008 recognised and addressed this issue by introducing a **participatory monitoring, reporting and planning mechanism**. This mechanism specifically designed for the RWSSP, combines project specific requirements with elements of conventional approaches and methods, requiring preparatory groundwork as well as continuity in follow up and capacity building.

The mechanism includes three components: (i) Sustainability matrix that can be used for assessment of likely sustainability before, during and after construction. (ii) Rolling action plans for community-developed measures; (iii) MIS providing information for monitoring and for designing targeted interventions.

The communities represented by the Community Drinking Water Users Unions (CDWUUs) and local partners were involved in designing and implementing the mechanism and some developed the competence to use it on their own. The process of monitoring and planning took on a form of ongoing dialogue between the communities, the project and key partners:

Lessons learned

Updating information on major threats to sustainability increased awareness within the communities and among partners to implement targeted mitigating measures. Results from the first assessment in May 2004 indicated that only 12 % of schemes were “likely to sustain” initiatives, but increased to 34 % in October 2008.

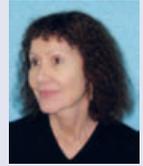
Transferring ownership of monitoring and planning to the communities lead to empowerment and ultimately to changing perceptions of roles: RWSSP has been increasingly seen as a partner who can assist with building capacity and solving critical issues. Communities demand transparency and accountability and have replaced suspect or not performing members of CDWUUs or pursued measures against defaulting contractors.

With payment of tariffs being the most serious threat to sustainability, some CDWUUs took the initiative to strengthen measures against defaulters, decentralised collection, generated additional income, involved local partners and implemented awareness raising activities; they may not have done this at the earlier stages.

Increasing awareness, capacity building and introduction of self-monitoring and planning equipped the communities with skills that they can continue to use for sustaining the water supply installations and implementing other developmental activities.

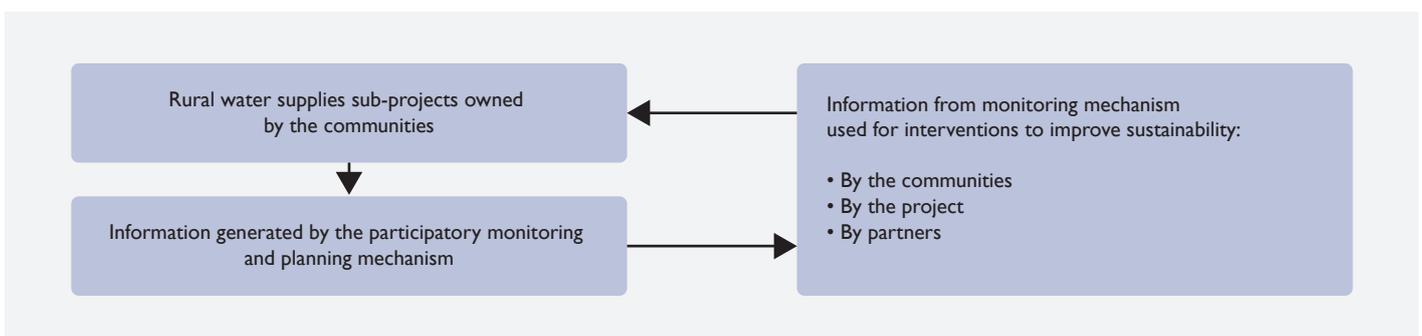
Marie Körner

is an independent consultant, working mainly as senior specialist for programs and projects funded by international and bilateral development agencies and NGO's covering numerous countries in Africa, Asia, and Middle East. The focus of her work is rural development including monitoring and evaluation of water supplies & sanitation as well as other public and private investments. She studied Foreign Trade in former Czechoslovakia, Business Administration in Germany and International Agriculture at the Cornell University, USA. She also completed course in Development Economics, Planning and Administration at the German Development Institute.



Looking at the improvements achieved in some communities in the course of five years, it is believed that the potential and the momentum gained could have been better utilised and the number of communities capable of managing and augmenting their resources increased if more funds and time had been available for community development activities.

In addition, government commitment, a solid legal basis, understanding of the need for cost recovery, access to technical support services and stable organisational structures are among the pre-requisites identified for sustainable water supply projects.



OUTCOME INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Babette Rabie and Fanie Cloete

Dr Babette Rabie (BA, Honsba, MA, PhD)

is a lecturer at the School of Public Leadership, Stellenbosch University specialising in public sector monitoring and evaluation. She is actively involved in designing and presenting training programmes in public sector evaluation and performance management, including the design of outcomes-based M&E systems and indicators. She has reviewed the M&E systems from various departments, programmes and units and has proposed changes and improvements to these systems. She part of the management Board of the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) for the period 2010–2013.



Professor Fanie Cloete (LLB, MA, DPhil)

teaches Policy Analysis and Management in the Department of Public Governance at the University of Johannesburg. He is also an extraordinary Professor in and former Director of the School of Public Management and Planning at the University of Stellenbosch. He is further inter alia an advocate of the Supreme Court of South Africa, a former member of the Presidential Review Commission on the Restructuring of the Public Service in South Africa, a policy management and institutional transformation consultant and former chair of the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA).



The main aim of government is to deliver the development results that it promised to its people. Development goals are often expressed as intangible, long-term outcomes of what the state wish to achieve or change in society. Goals are translated into actionable policies, programmes and projects with more tangible outputs, which constitute progress towards attainment of the outcome.

Systematic policy, programme and project evaluations have been an established tool for the improvement of policy outputs, outcomes and impacts for a number of decades now by governments in more developed societies. This implies an evidence-based approach to link explicit goals to be achieved to envisaged or real results through an assessment of empirical evidence compiled on the basis of concrete, measurable indicators. These evaluation tools are, however, relatively new tools in the arsenal of the public manager in developing or transitional countries. The paper develops an indicator framework to enable the systematic measurement and evaluation of local economic development strategies in South Africa.

The paper departs from the notion that evidence-based policy making enables public managers and decision makers to make well informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence at the heart of policy development and implementation. Though current practice is still dominated by opinion-influence policy making, the shift towards evidence-influenced and finally evidence-based policy making is dependent on the availability of credible evidence on the actual results of previous policies.

Within the notion of the developmental state, a key development objective of government at both national and local level is stimulating and steering economic development. In this regard, economic development includes both increasing economic growth and ensuring that the benefits accrued im-

proves the human and social development of all citizens, including those often excluded from the direct benefits of economic growth. Local economic development in the South African local government context is informed by the local economic development strategy (LED) strategy of each municipality. Despite the wide-spread adoption of LED strategies since 2001, few attempts have been made to measure the effectiveness of the alternative LED interventions adopted by municipalities that could provide for evidence-based policy decisions in developing future LED strategies.

The paper identifies fifteen alternative LED interventions commonly employed by municipalities within four categories, namely interventions aimed at market development, generic location development, community and social development and improving local governance and administration. Through a review of local and international case studies and the specific projects and programmes adopted, generic outcome statements are formulated for each of the fifteen alternative interventions. An analysis of the different indicators employed in measuring economic and social development at local and national level enables the development of outcome indicators that can be used as measures or indication of the progress towards the formulated generic outcome statements for each LED interventions. These outcome indicators could enhance the regular measurement of the actual outcomes of current and future LED strategies in the developing context and provide evidence for informed economic development policy decisions.

TOWARDS A GENDER-SENSITIVE EVALUATION. PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

Julia Espinosa

The introduction of gender equality to international development evaluation occurred very recently. The vast majority of evaluative practices related to gender equality are no older than twenty years. This is due to two main reasons: the advance towards a more multidimensional concept of development and, as a result, the integration of gender issues into the international development agenda.

Even though feminist movements, social organizations and development agencies have gradually increased the amount of evaluation exercises that focused on analysing gender issues in the past few years, this advance has been coupled with various setbacks due to both the loss of political weight suffered by gender equality within the current neoliberal framework and the various difficulties mainstreaming gender has encountered. Within this belligerent context, however, evaluation becomes a key tool for accountability, learn-

ing and improvement in relation to gender equality.

On the other hand, in spite of the higher demand for gender-sensitive exercises, the link between gender and evaluation has not been sufficiently developed. Both are relatively 'recent' topics and, often, of low priority to development practices. In this sense, the number of articles and academic references on this subject are limited. The main contributions, nevertheless, come from general evaluation methodologies, gender-sensitive planning frameworks and metaevaluative exercises.

Based on a review of gender and international development evaluation, the paper presented the various types of practices related to analysing gender issues, focusing specifically on the main features and current challenges of gender-sensitive evaluation.

Julia Espinosa

is a Sociologist and she is finishing her PhD research about gender and international development evaluation at the Complutense University (Madrid – Spain). Her research concerns the comparison of evaluation practices of the official cooperation departments/agencies of Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Its main goal is understand in depth the advances and challenges regarding gender and evaluation, so that evaluating practices and aid quality can both be improved.

Julia also worked as an evaluator and an expert on gender and development for the last nine years. She has focused her activity on assessing plans and programs in Latin America. In addition, she has been teaching International Development Studies and Gender Equality at a postgraduate level.



THE INFLUENCE OF INVESTMENT SUBSIDIES ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Seweryn Krupnik

Investment subsidies are among the most popular means of public support for enterprises. Only in Poland, within the current programming period more than € 2 bn is spent on support to small and medium sized enterprises. The support mechanism is rather unsophisticated: companies have part of their investments paid from public money. Allegedly, subsidies serve the public interest by enhancing competitiveness of national economy. However the paper shows empirical evidence that does not support this claim.

The research on which the paper is based aimed to analyse the influence of investment subsidies on regional development. It was analysed whether grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss) can be used to answer this question and to enrich public policy studies.

The grounded theory approach proved to be fruitful for the analysis of public policy. Methodological and data source triangulations were applied: both qualitative (eg. in-depth interviews) and quantitative (quasi - experimental, content analysis) methods were used; program theories of the different stakeholder groups (i.e. entrepreneurs, policy makers, journalists and experts) were reconstructed.

The study yielded strong evidence that the arguments for the implementation of investment subsidies are highly debatable. Effects on regional development are considered small and cost-effectiveness marginal. This notwithstanding, the subsidies are still being implemented which may be explained by the analysis of actions of actors involved in the policy process.

Seweryn Krupnik Ph.D.

sociologist, lecturer and researcher at the Center for Evaluation and Analysis of Public Policies (Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland). His current research interests focuses on theory-based evaluation, economic policy and institutional analysis.



The recommendations to enhance public policies are as follows. There are two possible interrelated ways of changing the situation presented. Firstly, the actors involved may become more aware of the real mechanism of the intervention. Secondly, involvement of other actors (experts, taxpayers, entrepreneurs not being beneficiaries) is needed.

LEARNING TO BE PEERS? PEER REVIEW OR EVALUATION AMONG GOVERNMENTS, INCREASING LEARNING AND APPROPRIATION IN PUBLIC POLICY MAKING

Ana María García-Femenía, Researcher and Evaluation Consultant, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

Ana María García-Femenía



Associated Researcher at the University Institute for Cooperation for Development, Universidad Complutense of Madrid, and Independent Evaluation Consultant. PhD in Political Sciences and Sociology, Magister in Evaluation of Programs and Public Policies, Magister in European Communities. For more than one decade she developed her professional career at the Spanish Economic and Social Council (ESC), -a consultative body of the government for economic and social policies-, as Cabinet Director and International Relations Director. In 2004 she moved to the International Labor Organization where she directed, during three years, the regional project "Strengthening institutional mechanisms for social dialogue" from the Latin American regional ILO Office in Lima (Peru). She has been fellow of the German Marshall Fund in the United States, and was invited by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation as visiting professor.

What do Peer Review mechanisms encourage in public policy making that could be of the interest of Latin American governments and the donors supporting social policies programs? That is the main question underlying the paper is about. It is based on a research carried out by the Institute of Cooperation for Development of the Complutense University of Madrid (IUDC). The objective of the research was to analyse the possibilities of establishing a mechanism of peer review among Latin American and European countries on social policies; particularly public policies for social cohesion. Three main international peer review mechanisms have been analysed: peer review in the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development, peer review in the European Open Methods of Coordination, and the African Peer Review Mechanism. The main conclusions from the comparative analysis is the existence of important political challenges and political incentives in the origin of the mechanisms, and the need for a certain institutionalization and a community of values.

The article focuses on the strengths of peer review among governments versus other traditional ways of public policy diffusion. It enhances the advantages of these mecha-

nisms for international development cooperation, among which the following: learning, rationality, appropriation, and participation. The paper takes in consideration the results of the evaluation of *EUROsociAL I*, a cooperation for development program by the European Commission, implemented in eighteen Latinamerican countries to promote public policies in social cohesion from 2005 to 2010. The final evaluation recommended to support and encourage the peer learning activities among civil servants and members of the Governments from the participating countries. The participants in the program pointed out the importance of the peer learning approach since they could learn not only from the best practices but also from the wrong ones.

Latin American countries, being Medium Income Countries but with the most extreme disparities in the world, could benefit from peer review processes where governments could share and review their experiences on social policy making among themselves and with European Governments. That possibility would have to face many challenges, but with the necessary political will, an option could be to implement them in some of the different regional integration projects on the Latin American continent.

EES COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Using the possibilities offered by the Information Society, the EES is reaching its membership through a variety of communication channels, of which direct mailings are important, though their relative importance has been reduced over time. For environmental reasons, paper mailings to the membership are reduced to a strict minimum and even though the Evaluation journal is still send in paper form all members have electronic

access. Also the more formal contacts with the members such as voting are now performed through electronic communication. A second major communication vehicle is the EES Website, which contains all relevant information about the EES, its activities, and includes a job and tenders portal as well as relevant news from the evaluation community. Last but not least, EES has started to become more active in social networking on

the web when the Board recently re-activated the EES "Linked-In" Group (<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=1808029>). So: become member and add EES to your list of favourite websites. Keep following EES wherever your evaluations take you!

EES Website:

www.europeanevaluation.org

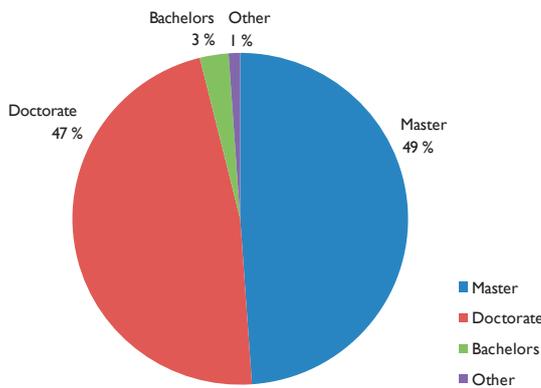
EES LinkedIn Group:

www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=1808029

EES MEMBERSHIP STATUS 2011

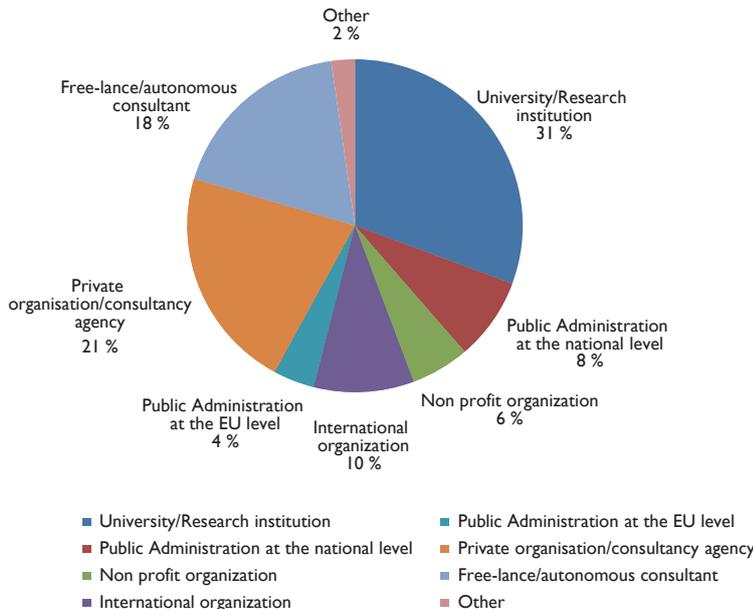
Individual members on 30 th May 2011		Institutional members on 30 th May 2011	
Total	436	Total	25

EES Members – Achieved Degree



* Results based on the internal questionnaire.

Work setting



* Results based on the internal questionnaire.

THE UPCOMING EVENTS ORGANISED BY EES

The life of the EES very much being determined by the pace of the biennial conference – and quantitative membership correspondingly taking a wave form – the EES Board found that also non-conference years should be attractive and reflects on special events, the first of which is a workshop at the DG REGIO Open Days 2011, a second event to be announced shortly.

EES at DG REGIO OPEN DAYS 2011

At DG REGIO OPEN DAYS 2011, EES will organise a workshop “How to capture the effects of EU funding? Bringing together qualitative and quantitative methods” which will debate the importance of triangulation of methods within the framework of Cohesion policy evaluation. The workshop will discuss the potential and the limits of experimental methods as well as the use of new technologies to assess results of cohesion policy interventions. Time and place: Tuesday 11 October 9:00–10:45 am in Borschette conference building, room 0A, Brussels.

2012 EES Biennial Conference: block your diaries!

The EES 2012 Biennial Conference will be held from 1 to 5 October 2012 at the Finlandia Hall in Helsinki, Finland. The conference title is “Evaluation in the Networked Society. New Concepts, New Challenges, New Solutions”. The conference will be organised in cooperation with the Finnish Evaluation Society. Given their great success in preceding years, preconference training workshops will be organised. So block the dates in your diaries for this important event.

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QUALITY OF PRACTICE – EVALUATION CAPABILITIES

A MESSAGE FROM THE EES PRESIDENT, IAN C. DAVIES

A rising demand for high quality evaluation has generated interest in the knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with evaluation excellence. Four fifths of respondents to a recent EES membership survey wished the Society to pursue work on this topic.

Accordingly the EES sponsored panel discussions at the 2010 Prague evaluation conference and held consultations with the Network of Evaluation Societies in Europe (NESE). We concluded that all professionalisation initiatives should be grounded within national and local contexts and that EES should limit its role to that of a catalyst. The EES board is opposed to setting absolutist, idealistic, narrow or rigid prescriptions that overemphasize particular techniques or fail to take account of cultural and administrative contexts. Nor are we interested in imposing standards or sponsoring certification schemes that could well have a chilling effect on innovation and creativity, or raise unjustified barriers to entry.

In this spirit, the EES Board prepared a draft framework under the aegis of its “quality of evaluation practice” activity stream. This framework is an awareness-raising, non-prescriptive instrument designed to assist in professional development and capability building. Revolving around the themes of “Evaluation Knowledge”, “Professional Practice” and “Dispositions and Attitudes”, it aims at encourage intercultural discussion about the role and content of evaluation. Being voluntary it is a potential tool for evaluators’ self-assessment and professional development. Being indicative rather than prescriptive it can be adapted to specific contexts.

This capabilities framework is published on the EES website with a call for comments to members using a questionnaire (see insert on this page). Based on your responses we will explore appropriate follow up actions in consultation with the Network of Evaluation Societies in Europe.

HOW SHOULD EVALUATION EXCELLENCE BE PROMOTED?

- Evaluation governance reforms (e.g. more independence)
- More education opportunities, e.g. MA and PhD programs in evaluation theory and practice
- More access to quality training
- Sharing good practices through connectivity among evaluators, mentoring programs, improved access to quality assurance advice etc.
- Harmonised guidelines
- Control over entry to the profession (certification, etc.)

If you are committed to excellence in evaluation please participate to the small survey and go to the EES Website to fill in the questionnaire:
<http://www.europeanevaluation.org/about-ees/activity-streams/questionnaire.htm>