

12th EES Biennial Conference

Evaluation Futures in Europe and beyond
Connectivity, Innovation and Use

26 - 30 September, 2016
MECC Maastricht, the Netherlands



The EES 12th biennial conference “Evaluation Futures in Europe and Beyond: Connectivity, Innovation and Use” promises to be the evaluation event of 2016. It will be held in Maastricht, The Netherlands, in the same country where the first EES conference was held over 20 years ago. It will take stock of the current state of affairs in evaluation politics, capacity, systems, research, methods, communication and use; as well as sketch future directions.

This conference marks two important “firsts” in the history of the EES: for the first time in an EES conference, **gender equality** is a cross-cutting theme. In addition to gender-specific sessions, papers and panels addressing gender-equality will be distributed throughout the programme according to the other themes they relate to. Secondly, along with paper presentations, panels, poster sessions and roundtables, the EES conference will explore for the first time the potential of **open space technologies**, also known as “un-conference” events, which facilitate self-organised and spontaneous conversations open to everyone’s active participation.

The overall programme is divided into 4 thematic strands, with two cross-cutting themes (Europe and Gender Equality).

Strand One “Evaluation Ethics, Governance, and Professionalism” addresses “the rules of the game”: high-level standards and normative frameworks for evaluators as well as commissioners and policy makers. **Strand Two “Evaluation Systems, Organisations and Partnerships”** relates to the institutional architecture of evaluations, for example the development of evaluation systems or multi-partner and complex network configurations. **Strand Three “Evaluation Methods and Research”** reflects on innovative ways to design and conduct evaluations, as well as evaluation theories and approaches based on academic, discipline-based traditions. **Strand Four “Evaluation Use, Communication, and Outreach”** highlights experiences showing that evaluations can have an impact, not just on policy making but also on community empowerment or other desirable (or undesirable) outcomes.

Our **keynote and plenary session** speakers will take us on a memorable journey of entertaining enlightenment (and enlightening entertainment).

Elliot Stern will represent “evaluation” in a plenary panel chaired by **Frans Leeuw**, joining two high-level representatives of other social sciences who will compete, or perhaps cooperate, between themselves and with “evaluation”, to provide the most appropriate and highest quality advice to a fictitious prime minister about to design a new policy. The distinctiveness of evaluation in relation to social sciences should brilliantly emerge in a **real-time simulation of evidence-based policy making**.

Veronica Gaffey will remind us what’s at stake for Europe: how evaluation needs to deliver evidence on what works for whom, in what context and why, if it is to contribute to better policies, now and in the future. Finally, **Claire Hutchings** will pull the threads of the conference together and draw on her experience as an NGO commissioner of evaluations, as a methodological innovator, and as an M&E community developer, to tell us what it takes for innovation in evaluation to spread, and for evaluations to be pervasive and persuasive, making a difference “on the ground”.

Everything on the menu is mouthwatering. We can’t wait to see you in Maastricht.

Barbara Befani