



## EES 2018 – NEWSLETTER 3

EES 2018 is shaping up to be the biggest conference in the history of the society! The theme, **‘Evaluation for more resilient societies’** is clearly a huge draw, offering an unrivalled opportunity for evaluators to come together and shape the contribution of evaluation to better futures for our societies in troubled times. Abstract submissions, across all formats (paper presentations, panels, roundtables and posters) are up by well over a third since the Maastricht conference in 2016 and from past experience we estimate that conference attendance will be in the region of 800 – 900. It is clear from the peer review of abstracts now underway, that presenters are grappling very seriously with the issues of complexity, unpredictability and resilience across a wide array of evaluation themes and domains. There will be many new insights and approaches discussed and undoubtedly, important collaborations formed or reinforced.

On a more serious note, the economic and refugee crises so profoundly affecting Greece are an apposite reminder to all of us in the evaluation field, of the poignant significance of locating this conference in Thessaloniki and our responsibilities to use the conference to direct our attention on how to contribute positively in tackling current challenges.

The **pre-conference workshops** will provide an opportunity for evaluators and evaluation stakeholders, to access high quality, up to date and practically oriented professional development sessions on the ever increasing and rapidly evolving body of evaluation theories and practices. 24 workshops over 2 days – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> October - will be offered this year, on evaluation approaches, evaluation designs, evaluation methods, and other issues such as SDGs, Gender Equity, capacity building and resilience.

This EES 2018 conference will stage four **keynote speeches** instead of the usual three. We are delighted to welcome both well-known contributors to the diverse domains of evaluation as well as a relative ‘newcomer’ whose evaluation work over recent years has been widely acclaimed.

Briefly:

On **day 1**, **Dr Lyn Ellen Pleger** and **Frans Leeuw** will give a joint presentation.

(<https://www.zhaw.ch/en/about-us/person/pleg/>) (<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/frans.leeuw/research>)

On **day 2** there will be two keynotes. The first will be given by **Thomas Schwandt**. **Caroline Heider** will present the second keynote of day 2.

(<https://education.illinois.edu/faculty/tschwandt>). (<https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/expert/caroline-heider>)

**Elliot Stern** will round up the conference on **day 3**.

(<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/spais/people/person/elliott-d-stern/>)

The speakers are shaping their presentations as a response to the theme of the conference - more details soon!

For the first time this year, we are introducing **Flagship Symposia** – one on each day of the conference. Each will bring together distinguished panellists to discuss key evaluation issues of high relevance to the conference theme and to the evaluation field more generally.

The opening symposium is entitled: ‘Evaluation unusual: How is resilience challenging the evaluation field, and are we rising effectively to the challenge?’ and it comprises leading researchers in the international



Resilience Measurement, Evidence and Learning Community of Practice (CoP)<sup>1</sup>. The symposium will discuss key challenges of resilience measurement, common principles for resilience evaluation, the complex dynamics of resilience and associated issues. The discussion will elucidate how the art and science of evaluation is evolving – and needs to further evolve – to translate the concept of resilience into improved policy and practice.

The current debate on the prospects for revision of the OECD DAC Criteria is the focus of day two's Flagship Symposium. Most evaluators working in the field of development and beyond have been aware of – and indeed may have participated in – the recent debates about the need to update the Criteria in these complex times. The Symposium includes members of DAC and other stakeholders. It will discuss the findings from on-going consultations and debates, current challenges and will engage participants in identifying the best ways forward.

Day 3's Flagship Symposium takes us into the European Commission and the work of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB). The RSB plays a pivotal role in EU policy making and evaluation, through its oversight of the quality of evaluations, impact assessments and fitness checks. This symposium will discuss how the RSB functions to support institutional resilience and Better Regulation. It will be chaired by a member of the RSB and will include case presentations of quality review from diverse policy areas.

There will be an array of side events and additional opportunities for discussions. As well as last time's successful 'Fishbowl' sessions offering participants to take the floor on discussions around a specific theme, and coffee table chats, there will also be 'speed networking' sessions where participants meet each other in pairs during a short and set period of time. This is a fun way to get to know new contacts and identify common evaluation interests and possibilities for future collaboration. New too this year is 'Evalophobia' – an evaluation game developed by the French Ministry of Environment and CGDD. Participants (6 – 8) gather round a table to play the game for a period then share their thoughts on the different perspectives on evaluation approaches and use that have come up during play. It is great for old timers and novice evaluators alike! We're calling on other game developers to visit the conference too and show their work!

We are much hoping to make this as dynamic a conference as we can, with real time video and webinar recordings of the main sessions offering virtual access to those who cannot be present at the event itself. We intend also to conduct interviews with participants on their evaluative reflections of the conference, plus 'news' type reportage of sessions and broadcast on a large monitor in the main hall as the event unfolds.

Participants cannot fail to be impressed by **Thessaloniki**. It is a beautiful location. The conference halls are adjacent to the Archaeological and Byzantine Museums and close to the city centre with its shops, bars and Greek Tavernas. The ancient White Tower is nearby as is the lovely waterfront promenade, Nea Parelia, with its views over Thermis Bay and Mount Olympus. Numerous cultural and social events for conference delegates are also planned. More on this later!

Our thanks to the Hellenic Evaluation Society for their invaluable advice and support to the conference planning team.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information about *RMEL and conference 2018: A Resilient Future, Resilience Measurement, Evidence and Learning: What do we know, and what are the paths ahead?* November 13-14, 2018, New Orleans, please visit: [www.measuringresilience.org](http://www.measuringresilience.org)



Upcoming deadlines:

<b>31st May</b>	end of abstract peer review
<b>1st June</b>	publication of pre-conference workshops programme and registration opening for pre-conference workshops
<b>15th June</b>	authors notified of the result of their abstract/s peer review
<b>25th June</b>	draft programme publicised
<b>29th June</b>	early bird conference registration ends (registrations at standard rate will remain available thereafter)
<b>1st and 2nd October</b>	pre-conference workshops
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> -5th October</b>	main conference

We look forward to welcoming you to this un-missable conference.  
Registrations are open.

*Join us!*

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[www.ees2018.eu](http://www.ees2018.eu)