



Evaluation for an Equitable Society

Independence, Partnership, Participation

In Europe as elsewhere the initiatives required to create a more equitable society have become harder to formulate – and to evaluate. Since 2008 income inequality has increased relentlessly. Forty percent of the world's wealth is owned by the richest one percent of the global population while the poorest half own only one percent. The lack of broad based consensus about the ends and means of achieving peace, prosperity and equity has led expert observers to announce a crisis in economic theory.

Paradoxically this is opening up a window of opportunity for the evaluation discipline: the demand for tailor made and formative evaluations focused on real life problems and grounded in democratic values is rising exponentially. Evaluation is being called upon to make a difference. How should the evaluation discipline respond? Is it equipped to take on the diverse, unprecedented and interconnected challenges of economic disparities, social unrest and governance dysfunctions?

How should the enabling environment for evaluation evolve to meet the challenges of social inclusion and environmental sustainability? Are contemporary evaluation models, practices and priorities fit for purpose? These are key agenda items for the Eleventh EES Biennial Conference that will take place in Dublin (Ireland) on October 1-3, 2014 (with preconference workshops on September 29-30, 2014) when evaluators from all over Europe and beyond will come together to engage in reflection and debate about the role of evaluation in a changing world.

Now more than ever *independence* matters to the validity and integrity of evaluative processes. As the evaluation discipline endeavours to contribute to an equitable society it should assert its independence, reach out to partners and empower disadvantaged groups through participation. Against this background, the Eleventh Biennial Evaluation Conference of EES will probe not only the technical aspects of evaluation methods and tools but also the potential and limitations of current evaluation approaches and models, the ways in which institutional structures can support social learning and the strategies to be adopted for evaluation to become a fully fledged profession operating in the public interest.

The Conference will also open space for sharing experience and identifying good practices in all major policy areas – economic, social, environmental and cultural. It will help Conference delegates forge links across borders and across disciplines. In a nutshell the EES Biennial Conference promises once again to be the evaluation event of the year by providing an effective and friendly platform for professional networking, principled debate and intellectual exchange.

Given Ireland's legendary hospitality, extraordinary cultural assets and the state of the art venue selected for the Conference we promise you an enjoyable stay and a uniquely rewarding professional experience. We very much look forward to welcoming you in Dublin.

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