MOVING WITH THE TIMES:
Evaluation Policy, Practice and Participation

2014 ANNUAL EVALUATION CONFERENCE
9-10 April 2014
Senate House, University of London
2014 Annual Evaluation Conference

For the Society's 20th Anniversary, we have chosen to reflect on the advance of evaluation in its short history and at the same time chart where it may be going.

It is perhaps extraordinary to acknowledge the way in which evaluation has become 'an essential' in so much of our discourse today, compared with 45 years ago when the contemporary field of evaluation started to evolve.

Arguably, the nature of evaluation is shaped by the times within which it occurs and influences the purpose, focus and choice of approach. In recent years the dull edge of austerity has been a clarion cry which speaks to the 2 Es of Economy and Efficiency. Effectiveness, programme/policy learning and understanding has less press regrettably as these are values that really distinguish our discipline from that of the auditor, who is less concerned with learning or a sense of justice and fairness.

These values are at the heart of democratic evaluation, conceived and developed by Barry MacDonald, one of the pioneers of evaluation in the UK, whose life and contribution to our discipline we intend to celebrate at the conference. Equally, so much more could be done around the optional extra Es – ethics, equity and environment - where the need to measure climate change is difficult but critical for those countries where citizens can least afford to defend themselves.

As well as charting the progress of evaluation, we must also acknowledge its path to recognition has not been easy. As one experienced evaluator put it, the discipline has not so much shaped the future as managed to ‘roll with the punches.’ Be that as it may, it has had success in several arenas well beyond its origins in the work of educational assessment in the US, where it grew out of the War on Poverty and Great Social Programmes of the 1960s. Today its contribution is acknowledged in many disciplines, including medicine, public policy, environment and international development.
THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference is the right time to ask if evaluators can play a greater role in shaping the way we think and problem solve.

- What are the promising threads and opportunities that are emerging to contribute to policymaking, leadership and participation?
- How can evaluators channel their insights and help develop exciting new paths of enquiry, knowledge and practice?
- Will the fields of complexity and systems theory offer a new paradigm?
- What must evaluators do to bring about change, to be seen as essential from the beginning and to be in the vanguard of change?

A range of speakers will stimulate the high standard of debate that UKES has come to expect.

The UK Evaluation Society recently joined the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), which aims to forge links between evaluation societies. Through these links this conference will offer a strong international flavour that will appeal to government, donors, business and civil society.

We will be inviting abstracts for papers, symposiums, discussion panels, posters and proposals for pre-conference workshops which cover:

- The continuing relevance of evaluation and the changing role of evaluators;
- The balancing political and methodological choices in evaluating public programmes;
- The methods available where new technologies offer opportunities, for example the use of mobile and internet to provide real-time evaluation;
- The value of qualitative techniques when they are used for purposes perceived to carry less weight with decision makers; and
- Public, as well as policymakers’, engagement, understanding and use of evaluation.

CONFERENCE FORMAT

The conference will comprise presentations from keynote speakers, panel discussions and interactive plenary sessions, together with parallel sessions for which participants from across the evaluation community will be invited to submit abstracts. There will also be an opportunity for participants to display posters.

A series of pre-conference training workshops will be held on the morning of 9 April, with the main conference commencing after lunch.

A conference reception will be held on the evening of 9 April.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

We will open the call for abstracts on 16 September. The closing date for formal presentations will be 8 November 2013 and for poster presentations 14 March 2014.

PROPOSALS FOR WORKSHOPS

We are interested in receiving proposals for pre-conference workshops or short within-conference training sessions. To enable effective marketing of the workshops we would need to secure agreement with potential providers by mid-November.

We therefore welcome enquiries via london@profbriefings.co.uk
THE CONFERENCE TEAM

The conference organisation team this year will comprise:

KELLY BEAVER
Ipsos MORI

GEORGE BRAMLEY
NIHR CLAHRC for Birmingham and Black Country

KARI HADJIVASSILIOU
Institute for Employment Studies

ULRIKE HOTOPP
DEFRA

COLIN JACOBS
British Council

ELIZABETH ROBIN
DfID

VENUE

The conference will be held at Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. Senate House is located in the heart of Bloomsbury next to the British Museum, within walking distance of Euston, King’s Cross and St Pancras railway stations. A range of hotels at a variety of price options are available nearby.

ADMINISTRATION

The conference administration is being undertaken by Professional Briefings. For further information on abstract submissions or any other aspect of the conference please contact:

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