

## INVITATION TO THE FIRST FUTURES LITERACY LABORATORY FOR EVALUATORS

The Social and Human Sciences (SHS) sector of UNESCO, NIRAS International Consulting, and the European Evaluation Society (EES) have the pleasure to invite you to participate in the **First Futures Literacy Laboratory for Evaluators**, on the Future of Evaluation in Society, which will take place during the virtual **Global High Level Summit on Futures Literacy**, from December 8 to December 12, 2020. This lab is a unique opportunity to think about evaluation in new ways and in the long term. It will bring together evaluation practitioners, commissioners, and thinkers from around the world to participate in action learning and knowledge creation based on our collective intelligence.

### What is futures literacy?

Futures literacy is the capability to imagine multiple futures for different purposes in different contexts; and to use the future for different reasons and in different ways. It is a more developed understanding of the nature and role of the future.

[This little video](#) provides a useful and quick introduction to futures literacy.

A futures literate person is aware of his or her anticipatory system and anticipatory assumptions and uses multiple futures to innovate the present and make better informed decisions and assessments, while being open to emerging novelty. They are able to determine why and how to imagine the future. As a result they gain a better understanding of the origins of their expectations, hopes, and fears to better inform today's decisions.



**When?**  
December 9-11



**Where?** At the virtual Global  
High Level Summit on Futures Literacy



Register [here](#)

# THE FIRST FUTURES LITERACY LABORATORY FOR EVALUATORS



## Is futures literacy relevant for evaluation?

“Looking back, moving forward”[1] sums up what we evaluators do – we study the past to understand what works well and what doesn’t, and we extract lessons to inform decisions for the future. We assess whether a project, programme or intervention is replicable or sustainable, which in essence is a judgement about the future. But how good are we really at using the future in our work?

Good evaluation requires wisdom – the capacity to use knowledge, experience, common sense, and the foreknowledge of consequences, both positive and negative, of all the available course of actions – to recommend the most advantageous option for the future. Wisdom is associated with attributes such as unbiased judgment, experiential self-knowledge, and ethical conduct, which are all important for evaluation. Can futures literacy increase our sagacity as evaluators?

In 2019, Michael Quinn Patton wrote an article entitled Expanding Futuring Foresight through Evaluative Thinking[2] in which he discusses the advantages that futurist inquiries and applications could bring to six different evaluation approaches (summative, formative, developmental, systems change, principled-focused, and blue marble). Can futures literacy skills augment our evaluation approaches further?

Over the last decades, evaluation has developed as a discipline, with principles, standards, ethics, Master’s programmes, societies, networks, platforms, approaches, methods, and digital tools. What will evaluation look like in the future? What role will evaluation have in society? The First Futures Literacy Lab for Evaluators will broach these questions and many more.

[1] Sida. Looking Back, Moving Forward Sida Evaluation Manual. Sida 2007.

[2] Michael Quinn Patton. “Expanding Futuring Foresight through Evaluative Thinking” in World Futures Review I-12, Sage Publishing, 2019.

# THE FIRST FUTURES LITERACY LABORATORY FOR EVALUATORS



## What is a Futures Literacy Lab?

In Futures Literacy Laboratories, participants learn to challenge the ways they construct images about the future and begin to invent new frames to imagine tomorrow. In this lab, participants will develop their understanding of why and how to 'use-the-future' and the opportunity to rethink the future of evaluation in society.

## When will the Lab take place?

The Futures Literacy Lab on the Future of Evaluation in Society will take place online, from **December 9th to December 10th**. A small co-design team has been working to customise the action-learning process, aimed at harnessing participants collective intelligence, and generate results that will be shared with participants from around the world at the Summit. If you decide to join us you will need to **dedicate 6 hours to the learning voyage**. This includes 3 hours of a learning-by-doing activity on Dec. 9th and 10th, between 14.00 and 17.00 central European time, both days. There will also be an optional 1 hour public session on the 11th –at which volunteers will present and discuss the Lab's findings.

Please let us know if you are interested in participating by filling out this registration form [here](#).

There are only 25-30 available places. The deadline for registration is **November 20th**.

# CONVENERS OF THE FIRST FUTURES LITERACY LABORATORY FOR EVALUATORS

## UNESCO

UNESCO's role as a global laboratory of ideas, has been pioneering the exploration of why and how humans integrate the future into their thinking. So far, more than 80 such labs have been run around the world, demonstrating the powerful role of different anticipatory systems and processes for what people see and do.

For further details see [Transforming the Future: Anticipation in the 21st Century](#) published by Routledge and UNESCO in 2018 and the interactive map [here](#).



## NIRAS

As one of the larger European multidisciplinary consulting companies working in international development cooperation, NIRAS has conducted over 400 evaluations in the last five years. These have occurred at multiple levels – global policy, programmatic, and field projects – making sense of complex ongoing processes to ensure that evaluative evidence can support learning to improve performance, impact, and more efficient use of aid resources.

NIRAS has over 30 highly experienced in-house Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning specialists and works with an extensive expert network. Our activities are facilitated by our European offices and our global network of 27 country offices in Africa, Asia, Australia, Latin America and in Eastern Europe. Owned by a foundation and the employees, the NIRAS Group is rooted in Scandinavian values. First established in 1956 in Denmark, our goal is to provide sustainable solutions to contribute to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



## The European Evaluation Society

The European Evaluation Society was initiated in 1992 with the mandate to stimulate, guide and promote the theory, practice and utilization of evaluation in Europe and beyond. Our vision is a world where evaluation contributes to human welfare through learning. Specifically, the EES seeks to advance evaluation knowledge and to encourage adoption of good practices by fostering evaluation excellence, independence and partnerships.

EES activities aim to support improved enabling environments for evaluation, stronger communities of practice, relevant evaluation research and enhanced evaluation methods.

