

EUROPEAN  
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SOCIETY  
ONLINE EVENT

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## Alternative Futures: What role for evaluation in a just transition?

Focusing on:

- Changing how and what we value: Evaluation's responsibility in defining alternative measures of success
- Learning from others: Evaluation's role in the polity
- Changing how we work: Evaluation models that work



# Professional Development Workshops Outline

EES2023 ALTERNATIVE FUTURES: WHAT ROLE FOR  
EVALUATION IN A JUST TRANSITION?

EUROPEAN EVALUATION SOCIETY

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## Making sense of ‘justice’ and ‘transitions’ for evaluating ‘just transitions’

### Presenters

- **Thomas Delahais** is an evaluator and founding partner at Quadrant Conseil (Paris, France), where he works on evaluation projects for international, European and French institutions. He also advises and trains civil servants in evaluation and policy design. In his practice, he specialises in complex interventions and complexity-responsive approaches. This is how he was first confronted, ten years ago, with the puzzle of evaluating local transition initiatives in France; and has since been committed to helping them conceptualise their approaches through evaluation.
- **Keryn Hassall** has worked as a consultant in evaluation and policy implementation for years, in Australia. She combines evaluation theory with ideas from philosophy, public administration research and organisation theory to inform evaluation practice. She has led professional development workshops for the European, American and Australian evaluation societies. She presents unfamiliar ideas in accessible ways, using imagery, explanation, examples, activities and stories.

### Targeted audience

This workshop is designed for people who have been thinking about the challenge of evaluation for just transition, wondering about justice and the nature of transitions, and who want to think more deeply about these questions. This session is not for people seeking easy answers or techniques. Some familiarity with evaluation theory and practice is assumed but not essential.

### Learning objectives

This workshop is designed to help participants expand their thinking, to:

- recognise contemporary theories of justice which can be applied to just transitions
- consider the ways transitions can be understood and framed, and the implications for evaluation
- bring together ideas of justice and transitions with evaluation theory and practice to make more informed choices in their own evaluation work
- appreciate the political dimensions of evaluation and draw on the evaluation literature for support.

It will be a space for participants to explore new ideas, reflect on their own thinking about just transitions and discuss conceptual challenges together. After the workshop, participants will have new conceptual resources to apply in their work.

### Workshop outline

‘Just transitions’ combines two challenging concepts. This workshop will explore these concepts and the implications for evaluation and evaluators.

‘Transitions’ bring uncertainty. The destination is not clear and the path to the destination is debated. Conventional evaluation practice, focused on intended outcomes, is not suitable for evaluating ‘just transitions’.

Instead, evaluation can look at the aim of the transition and the ways of getting there. Evaluation can ask “are we heading towards justice?” or “are we creating conditions that may pave the way to a more just society?”. We can ask “what would justice look like?”, and use the

answers to create evaluation criteria. These questions bring our attention to ethical and political matters. To evaluate 'just transitions' in a meaningful way, we need to make sense of the concepts of 'justice' and 'transitions' and to bring these thick concepts together in evaluative inquiry and judgement.

This workshop will help participants make sense of these concepts and the implications for evaluation. We will cover:

- contemporary philosophical work on concepts in social sciences, the role of thick concepts, and ways to engage with concepts
- contemporary theories of justice, building on the conventional focus on distributive approaches to consider injustice, justification and multiple forms of justice
- transitions and transformations, the context and goals of these policies and programs and ways to conceptualise transitions and transformations as forms of change
- the politics of evaluation and the importance of understanding framing of 'just transitions'.

After looking at these topics separately, through discussions and activities, we will bring these ideas together to discuss evaluation and 'just transitions'. We will consider how evaluators can bring concepts of 'justice' and 'transitions' to the evaluation of transition initiatives and their evaluation work in general.

#### Teaching methods

The session will include some brief lecture-style segments to provide new information. Each set of new information will be followed by discussion and activities to help participants engage with these ideas and reflect on how they could use these ideas. We will use scenarios of just transition cases for participants to practice applying the ideas to an example. For some topics we will use breakout groups for small group discussion on ideas or reflection on how to apply these ideas in practice.

## Principles For Designing And Evaluating Transformation Initiatives

Workshop Organizer: International Evaluation Academy

Presenters:

- **Michael Quinn Patton**, Founder & Director, Utilization-Focused Evaluation; author of Principles-Focused Evaluation (2018) and articles on Transforming Evaluation to Evaluate Transformation. Regularly conducts workshops for The Evaluators Institute and the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET); preconference workshop on Blue Marble Evaluation at EES in Denmark, 2022.
- **Werornika Felcis**, Vice President, International Evaluation Academy

Other International Evaluation Academy members to be announced

Targeted Audience: Open to all

Learning objectives:

1. Understand the distinct niche, nature, purpose, and challenges of systems-change transformational initiatives (as opposed to traditional projects and programs).
2. Understand the niche, nature, and purpose of principles in designing transformational initiatives in the context of the polycrisis globally.
3. Understand the corresponding niche, nature, and purpose of principles-focused evaluation.
4. Know how to apply the GUIDE framework to principles and be able to use the GUIDE criteria for transformational change design and evaluation.
5. Apply and assess the utility and relevance of the draft Principles for Designing and Evaluating Transformation Initiatives.

Workshop outline:

### 1. Introduction and Context

TRANSFORMATION has become the clarion call on the global stage. Humans are exploiting the Earth's resources at levels, scales, and rates that are changing Earth's social-ecological systems and, in so doing, warming, polluting, and degrading the environment at a level that threatens the future survival of humanity. The world faces a global emergency from the combination of warming climate, virulent infectious diseases, pollution of land, air, and water, dying coral reefs, millions of displaced people, rising inequalities, cyber-terrorism, pandemic threats, increased nuclear dangers, ever more severe weather, species extinction, biodiversity loss, white supremacy and nationalist ideologies -- and related trends and challenges. Together these overlapping and mutually reinforcing trends constitute what is being called a POLYCRISIS.

Thus, the International Evaluation Academy is focused on transformations that integrate the deep paradigms of both human-to-human relationships and human- to-nature relationships (a living, organic, inclusive systems perspective). Transformation of social-ecological systems includes affirming human and nature's rights, decolonization of our perspectives to address the challenges we face with an open mind, recognition of the importance of indigenous

paradigms which recognize relationships to nature and people as well as the responsibility across multiple generations. We also need to use these paradigms to examine the relevance of evaluation and contextualize evaluation approaches and systems to the emerging future. The priority of transformation in the context of the global polycrisis (including the climate emergency and related threats to the future of humanity and a healthy ecology, especially differential impacts on the poor and most vulnerable) necessitates a strong sense of urgency and ongoing adaptability. A key question is how people perceive the future: a return to business as usual in development initiatives and evaluation, or no such return with the future characterized by increasingly critical overlapping crises.

### Teaching methods

The three-hour workshop will have a combination of formal presentation, case-based illustration, Q&A, and two break-out group exercises with debriefs.

Participants will receive resource materials:

- Copy of presentation slides
- International Evaluation Academy resource document on Principles for Designing and Evaluating Transformational Initiatives
- Principles-focused evaluation GUIDE Frame
- Small group activity: Share perceptions of the concepts of “polycrisis” and “transformation” for designing and evaluating systems change initiatives. Engage with the concepts of “polycrisis” and “systems transformation” – and their implications.

## Sustainability Assessment- from ESG Rating to Complex Theories of Change

### Presenters:

- **Mita Marra**, University of Naples, Italy
- **Veronica Olazabal**, BHP Foundation, NY
- **Jane Reisman**, Independent Advisor of Social Impact, Seattle
- **Juha Uitto**, Director of the Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environmental Facility

### Workshop description

In recent times, both public and private sector organizations have increasingly embraced SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) indicators and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) ratings to evaluate sustainability transitions. However, conventional green and social accounting metrics often fail to unveil the causal relationships between sustainability initiatives and investments and the tangible outcomes observed in real-world scenarios. A more comprehensive approach to sustainability assessment is needed, which can be broadly defined as a set of processes that guide the planning and decision-making process towards achieving sustainable development.

Alternatively, sustainability assessment can also be defined as processes that integrate natural and societal systems, addressing both local and global dimensions, and encompassing both short-term and long-term perspectives. It can be seen as a means to determine whether an initiative is sustainable or not, or to evaluate it against a set of sustainability principles.

Considering these definitions, this workshop aims to challenge the adequacy of current metrics and foster an understanding of:

- What sustainability issues public programs and investments aim to address.
- What theories of change underlie their design and implementation.
- What effects can be observed and verified through evaluation.

The workshop is designed to address these questions.

### Targeted Audience

This workshop is intended for a diverse audience interested in gaining insights into sustainability issues within program evaluation. Participants with some background in program evaluation designs and methods will explore key sustainability issues involving public and private organizations across various scales and contexts. While no prior knowledge of sustainability assessment is required, a basic understanding of environmental and social issues can be beneficial.

### Learning Objectives

Throughout the course, participants will be introduced to sustainability assessment approaches, with practical applications drawn from the realms of management, public policy, and everyday life. By critically examining decision-making processes amid uncertainty and ambiguous effects across micro, meso, and macro contexts, participants will gain insights into

their implications for socioeconomic and environmental sustainability. Specifically, participants will:

- Gain an understanding of major sustainability issues and their variations across different policy areas, while considering the diverse meanings, methods, forms, and objectives of sustainability transition initiatives.
- Develop skills in policy analysis and evaluation designs, enabling them to apply knowledge in various organizational and institutional contexts, with a focus on common policy missions, strategies, and target populations.
- Grasp the concept of policy learning and transfers in a comparative context.
  - Identify the intended users of evaluative knowledge.

Participants will assess the advantages and limitations associated with program evaluation designs related to complex sustainability transitions that intersect with the operations of companies, markets, and sustainability investment planning. They will also employ evaluation designs and methods to navigate the rapidly changing world, seeking and analyzing data to support sustainability-focused investment planning.

The workshop will address the following key issues:

Integration of human-environment systems, which evolve across cross-scale, cross-sector, and inter-institutional networks.

Exploration of contexts, transcending traditional spatial boundaries for a holistic understanding of the systemic impact of human activity.

Formulation of evaluation designs that are sensitive to complexity and systems thinking.

Extension of the time horizon to address the issue of intergenerational inequality.

Integration of environmental, socioeconomic, and governance dimensions, which involves questioning ESG ratings.

Modeling of participatory processes, encompassing multiple perspectives to understand undecidability and foster adaptive and innovative capacity.

Support for adaptive management efforts aimed at addressing real-world changes.

#### Workshop Outline:

- Introduction and Definition of Sustainability
- The Significance of Sustainability Assessment and the available metrics
- Principles of Sustainability Assessment
- Triple Bottom Line (People, Planet, Profit)
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Life Cycle Thinking
- Sustainability Assessment Frameworks
- Environmental Sustainability Assessment (Carbon and Water Footprinting, Biodiversity Assessment).
- Social Sustainability Assessment (Social Impact, Human Rights Assessment, Community Well-being Indicators).





## Explorations and Evaluations of the relevance of Artificial Intelligence

Presenters:

Dr **Rick Davies**, Evaluation Consultant, Cambridge, UK

Dr **Silva Ferretti**, Evaluation Consultant, Rome, Italy

Target audience

Those with a beginners and intermediate level of knowledge of the functioning of Large Language Models (LLMs) such as GPT4, Claude AI, etc. Both evaluators and commissioners / managers of evaluations.

Learning objectives:

1. Participants will see the grounds for both excitement and healthy scepticism about the potential uses of AI for evaluation purposes.
2. Participants will have knowledge and experience of a range of methods for developing AI “prompts” for different analytic and generative purposes.
3. Participants will understand a variety of methods for evaluating the outputs generated of LLM AI, and see their relevance in their own field of work.

Teaching methods

1. Participants will be asked to sign up to one or more free AI services, ideally before the workshop. Then to make some simple inquiries and requests of their own design, to gain some initial familiarity with the possible outputs.
2. They will also be asked to bring copies of one or more documents they might want to analyse, during the workshop. The organisers will also bring documents that can be the subject of the same analysis by different participants.
3. Rick and Silva will make two presentations, each of which will involve multiple breaks where participants will experiment with the methods described in these presentations. These will explore both the analytic and generative capacities of AI
4. The workshop will end with a final summative session that will seek views on opportunities and challenges, informed by the workshop process up to that point.

## Applying Foresight Thinking and Methods to Evaluation Practice

### Presenter information:

- **Annette L Gardner**, PhD, MPH. Principal, ALGardner Consulting. Dr. Gardner has 20+ years of futures studies and evaluation expertise, both as a practitioner and educator. Co-author of the definitive book, *Advocacy and Policy Change Evaluation: Theory and Practice*, Annette has conducted ½ day and 1-day workshops at AEA and EES on evaluating advocacy. A leader in advancing foresight evaluation, she served as the Chair of the Association of Professional Futurist's Foresight Evaluation Task Force, an 18-month initiative to explore the intersection of evaluation and foresight. Additionally, she has worked with workshop co-facilitators Kathleen Sullivan, Eric Barela, and Tom Kelly to conduct foresight methods workshops, including a futures wheel workshop at the AEA and EES annual conferences and working with alternative scenarios to think about the future of advocacy and policy change evaluation.
- **Eric Barela**, PhD; Co-Founder and Head of Evaluation at Altruous. Eric has over 20 years of experience working as an internal evaluator in the education, non-profit, and technology sectors. He is currently Co-Founder and Head of Evaluation at Altruous, a technology platform designed to connect donors to nonprofits that are conducting rigorous impact evaluation work. Eric has presented at AEA and EES conferences. Eric served on the AEA's Board of Directors from 2018 to 2020 and has been a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the *American Journal of Evaluation* since 2008.
- **Kathleen Sullivan** JD; principal Fine Gauge Strategy. Since 2010, Fine Gauge Strategy has provided learning, measurement, evaluation, and strategy services for legal and law-reform organizations, policy advocates, community organizers, and philanthropic foundations. Fine Gauge clients include leaders in the civil rights, human rights, migration, and social change sectors throughout the United States. Kathleen is a lawyer by training. Earlier in her career, Kathleen represented low-income people in immigration court, taught immigration law as an adjunct professor, advocated before the United States Congress and federal regulatory agencies, and served briefly as Counsel to the US Senate Subcommittee on Immigration.
- **Tom Kelly** MPH; principal KEL Advising. Tom has been helping philanthropy, government, and investors define and measure social impact for more than 30 years. He is a graduate of Harvard College and The George Washington University and former leader of evaluations at Hawai'i Community Foundation and Annie E. Casey Foundation. Tom's current work includes evaluation and strategy planning within community, private, and corporate foundations with a focus on evaluation utilization and systems-level strategy and results. He also has designed impact measurement approaches for social impact investment portfolios and integration with corporate ESG measurement. He has written on foundation evaluation and learning practices in *The Foundation Review* and *New Directions in Evaluation*. He was an elected board member of the American Evaluation Association (2020-2022) and former board member of Grantmakers for Effective Organizations.

### Targeted audience:

No experience in foresight required. Some evaluation knowledge required.

### Learning objectives:

- Learning Objective 1: Develop an understanding of ‘foresight’ and its application to evaluation theory and evaluation practice.
- Learning Objective 2: Expand participant evaluation methods ‘toolkit.’ Work with two foresight methods—the futures wheel and alternative scenarios—that can be applied immediately to evaluation practice; and
- Learning Objective 3: Broaden participant evaluation thinking and practice to be forward-thinking through increased awareness and use of current changes—drivers, trends, weak signals—and future possibilities.

### Workshop outline

The past few years have demonstrated that our economy, climate, politics, and social order can change much faster than in past decades. Our present, and certainly our future, will continue to be volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). For our evaluation clients, it is no longer enough to reflect on the past and the present in decision-making and program development. Evaluators must actively anticipate what may happen in the future and feed that information back into decision-making and evaluation planning. Foresight provides a rigorous and proven set of tools to perceive, make sense of, and act upon ideas about the future. In this 1/2-day workshop, the co-facilitators will use a 3-part format this is a combination of lecture and group exercises.

First, they will lay the foundation for using foresight methods, including an explanation of what foresight is, the case for strengthening evaluator foresight in the face of great change, and the fit of foresight with evaluation and how it supports strategy and transformational evaluation.

In Part 2, co-facilitators provide an overview of foresight methods and will demonstrate the use of the Futures Wheel to systematically explore the implications of factors that shape a program or policy. This exercise will deepen participant understanding of trends and their impacts, as well as provide a tool that evaluators can use with stakeholders in developing a theory of change and/or logic model.

In Part 3, Facilitators will teach participants how to use Alternative Scenarios of the year 2040 to develop a program theory of change and to stress test (Wind Tunneling) a theory of change and evaluation recommendations. Alternative Scenarios are stories about the future which help people to think creatively and explore ways a program, policy or strategy might evolve in the future. Wind Tunneling is a foresight method that shows how different contexts can affect a program or policy.

In sum, participants will learn a new way of thinking that will strengthen evaluation thinking and practice and help them anticipate and integrate future opportunities and challenges in their evaluation designs.

### Teaching methods

The PDW will be delivered through a mixture of teaching methods including short lectures, interactive exercises in small groups, pairing participants, immersive scenario activities, and using "what if" questions. The focus is on hands-on, interactive learning.

## Complexity: A Different Way to See How Programs Work and What They Accomplish

### Presenter information:

**Dr. Jonathan (Jonny) Morell** is known for his writing and research on connections between Evaluation and Complexity Science. Topics he has studied include: 1) complexity constructs that are applicable to evaluation, 2) agent-based modelling for evaluation, 3) detection of hidden assumptions, 4) unintended consequences, 5) use of project schedules as program models, 6) application of event-based networks to the simulation of social behavior, and 7) how evaluation can benefit by drawing from the domains of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Jonny believes that evaluation should draw from Complexity Science because interventions produce complex outcomes, but that evaluations should be as simple and straightforward as possible. Jonny is a recipient of the American Evaluation Association's Paul F. Lazarsfeld Evaluation Theory Award. He is Editor-in-Chief Emeritus of Evaluation and Program Planning, and owner of 4.669... Evaluation and Planning.

### Targeted audience:

The workshop will make heavy use of examples drawn from participants' work lives. Therefore, participants need experience with engaging evaluation. This can include doing evaluation, designing evaluation, funding evaluation, or consuming the results of evaluation.

### Learning objectives

expected knowledge that will be gained by participants and how it may be applied to their work.

### Knowledge gained:

- **Complexity Science:** The workshop will focus on three constructs from Complexity Science – emergence, sensitive dependence, and attractors. Participants will work in groups to apply these concepts to evaluation scenarios. Other constructs from Complexity Science will be added as appropriate as evaluation exercises evolve. Experience dictates that the likely candidates are: 1) self-organization, 2) stigmergy, 3) scaling, and 4) some aspects of evolutionary biology / ecology. XX
- **Evaluation lifecycle:** While it is desirable to think in terms of complexity early in an evaluation's lifecycle, the workshop will show how a great deal can be gained from applying complexity during data collection, and data analysis.
- **Stakeholders:** There will be a focus on how evaluators can work with stakeholders to understand the implications of complex behavior.

### Learning outcomes:

Upon conclusion of the workshop, participants will be able to answer the following questions.

1. How can reasoning in terms of "emergence", "sensitive dependence" and "attractors" affect beliefs about program design?
2. How can reasoning in terms of "emergence", "sensitive dependence" and "attractors" affect beliefs about models, methodology, and data interpretation?
3. How can evaluators have meaningful discussions with program stakeholders with respect to complexity?

4. How can our known and familiar methodologies be applied with respect to complexity?
5. What are the trade-offs between applying constructs from Complexity Science and relying on traditional evaluation approaches?
6. How can constructs from Complexity Science be applied to good advantage at different stages in the evaluation lifecycle?

#### Workshop outline:

This workshop will focus on specific concepts from Complexity Science that are applicable in evaluation. We need to appreciate those concepts in order to build models, devise methodologies, and interpret data in ways that capture the complex nature of how programs operate and what outcomes they produce. The focus will be on the applicability of specific concepts. As an example, there is a difference between claiming that complex systems exhibit unpredictable emergent behavior, and claiming that under circumstances X, Y, and Z, a system will predictably exhibit behavior that is qualitatively different from its constituent parts, and that appreciating this reality will affect evaluation design, data interpretation, and discussions with stakeholders. This workshop will present a small number of concepts from Complexity Science that are applicable to a wide range of evaluation scenarios. It will show how those concepts can be applied by using familiar methodologies, how to employ complexity at different stages of the evaluation lifecycle, the trade-offs between invoking complexity or relying on traditional evaluation approaches, and how to discuss complexity with program stakeholders. Discussions and exercises will rely heavily on the experience of the workshop's participants.

#### Teaching methods:

The learning approach will be to provide a series of short "lecturers" on relevant topics, interspersed with participant discussion of application to evaluation scenarios. Facilitation will be aimed at making these discussions rigorous and detailed, with as much discussion among participants as possible.

## Equity and Social Justice Consideration in Evaluation

### Facilitator

- **Khalil Bitar**, Wyss Academy for Nature, University of Bern, Switzerland. Khalil Bitar has a strong record in evaluation practice, research, and networks and is currently the Learning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Lead at Wyss Academy for Nature at the University of Bern; Senior Evaluation Advisor in the Evaluation Methods Advisory Panel of the World Food Programme; and faculty member at EnCompass Learning Center.

### Targeted Audience

Ideal for evaluation practitioners, researchers, and implementers/ managers interested in the intersection of evaluation and equity/social justice and its practical implications.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Develop a deepened understanding of equity and social justice considerations in the evaluation field, theoretically and in practice;
2. Acquire practical tools to incorporate equity and social justice considerations systematically in evaluation work.

### Workshop Outline

This workshop will cover two key modules:

- Module 1 - Equity and Social Justice in Evaluation Theory
- Module 2 - Equity and Social Justice in Evaluation Practice.

### Teaching Methods

The workshop will be delivered virtually through Zoom, combining an interactive presentation, discussions, and practical group exercises.