International Year of Evaluation
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EVALUATION
PROFESSIONALIZATION AND THE
VOLUNTARY EVALUATOR PEER
REVIEW INITIATIVE (VEPR)

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How does a discipline turn into a profession?

Through a competitive process vs. allied disciplines that works best when:

• Occupational group members display expert knowledge, mastery of skills and ethical dispositions (capabilities)

• The group assumes control over designation and ensures compliance with behavioural norms (self management)
What are the implications for evaluation professionalization?

A challenge for evaluators plus joint actions towards:

• **Demonstrated expertise and judgment**: high quality tertiary education; extended exposure to practice; theoretical knowledge; mastery of techniques; etc.

• **Ethical dispositions**: independence of mind and appearance; orientation to the public interest; loyalty to the group; collegial behaviour, compliance with professional guidelines

• **Professional autonomy**: control over designation, ethical standards, quality assurance criteria. control mechanisms and disciplinary processes
Is professionalization the same as credentialing?

No: it does not guarantee success in the professionalization race ... but it is a competitive advantage since:

– It straddles all three dimensions of professionalization

– It confirms that an individual has acquired the competencies needed to carry out work to an adequate standard of quality
Where does evaluation stand in the professionalization race?

• Evaluation is at best a fledgling profession: its market is being captured by auditors, economists and management consultants
• Exposure to expert practice is improving but the number of graduate programs in the evaluation domain is still limited
• Commitment to ethical values is strong but there are no generally agreed ethical guidelines
• Autonomy: This is where evaluation lags seriously behind its competitors.
What has EES done?

• The Society has approved an evaluation capabilities framework

• A Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review (VEPR) initiative is being piloted

• Draft EES guiding principles for VEPR have been endorsed by UKES and IDEAS

• A thematic working group for training and a European Evaluation Excellence Award are planned
What is the VEPR?

• A review process where evaluators apply to their evaluation society to undergo a structured review of their capabilities and self improvement plans

• Two senior evaluation practitioners selected with applicants’ input conduct the review

• Two outcomes: (i) a report that is the property of the applicant; (ii) listing of the applicant’s name on the society’s website

• Should the peer reviewers conclude that the applicant has not demonstrated an acceptable level of competence a development plan is suggested with an invitation to a further review
What the VEPR is not

• It is **not** a test - something that the applicant might ‘pass’ or ‘fail’

• It is **not** a pre-requisite for practicing evaluation

• While consistent with the capabilities framework it does **not** seek to meet rigid prerequisites of practice

• It does **not** seek to displace other qualification or certification schemes
Where do we go from here?

• The VEPR concept was presented at the 11\textsuperscript{th} EES Biennial Conference in October 2014

• The *Dublin consensus*: VEPR should be adapted to diverse regional and national contexts and coherence should be encouraged based on a charter of guiding principles

• A panel attended by Riitta will be held in Bangkok in October (**IDEAS Conference**) to pursue the dialogue and the results will be fed into the Global Evaluation Agenda
Will you get on board?

(Thank you for your attention!)