



i-eval Flash news

The ILO Evaluation Office is pleased to share the twenty-eighth edition of *i*-eval Flash news. Through this triannual electronic bulletin, we provide readers with updates, news and information on publications and upcoming events related to evaluation.



Governing Body reaffirms support for more strategic clustered evaluations and calls upon the Office to strengthen the use of evaluation findings

by Guy Thijs, Director

The 337th Session of the Governing Body (GB) discussed the Evaluation Office's (EVAL) [Annual Evaluation Report 2018-19](#) and three high-level evaluations covering: the [ILO's public-private partnerships](#); [ILO's work regarding the informal economy](#); and [Decent Work Country Programmes in Southern Africa](#).

Constituents expressed satisfaction with the overall performance of the evaluation function, as measured against the evaluation strategy (2018-2021). They also reflected on findings from recent external quality assessments that showed that the quality of evaluation reports improved on all fronts, including gender coverage. It was noted that progress could have been faster on meeting the targets for the new and more challenging transformational outcomes, acknowledging, however, that these are areas where the enabling environment determines the speed with which the evaluation function can proceed. That environment requires a strong learning culture; good knowledge management; resilient participation in the evaluation process and use of findings by line managers; good design of projects by incorporating lesson learned; and state-of-the-art monitoring and reporting systems. Furthermore, there was a renewed call to move away from fragmented project evaluation approaches to more strategic clustered evaluations. Constituents also called upon the Office to review project design and approval processes to better reflect recurring drivers for project success, as identified in recent [meta-studies and synthesis reviews of evaluation reports](#).

The three high-level evaluations garnered lively debates by members of the Governing Body and stressed the importance of using evaluation findings. Each evaluation provided positive and/or negative findings, lessons learned, good or bad practices and recommendations that have the potential to inform the ILO's future work. Theoretically, the ideal use of evaluation findings is to support decisions (instrumental use) and foster learning (conceptual use). Rational non-use of evaluation findings might also occur because of the report's timing (decisions have already been taken), poor quality of communication efforts or just flawed evaluation designs that lead to irrelevant findings. Fortunately, global evaluation experience shows that the intended users of evaluations are customarily also the champions of appropriate use and the guardians against misuse, thus providing for that all so necessary equilibrium.

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Innovation & Research

Completed studies

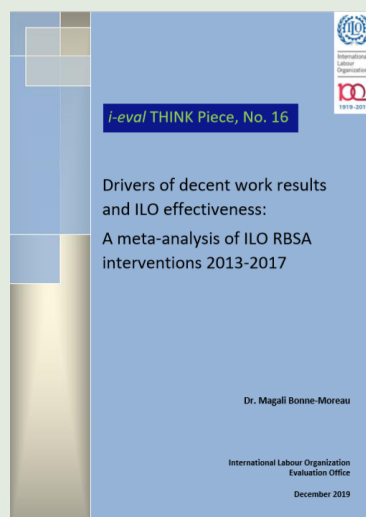
A synthesis review of ILO's social protection (social security) interventions undertaken between 2012-2018: What works and why

Since 2012 EVAL has been regularly contributing to the International Labour Conference recurrent discussions by preparing companion pieces to recurrent reports to enhance organizational learning. So far, EVAL has produced synthesis reviews to accompany recurrent discussion reports on [Social Dialogue \(2013\)](#); [Employment \(2014\)](#); [Social Protection \(Labour Protection\) \(2015\)](#); and [Social Dialogue \(2017\)](#).

This year, EVAL undertook a synthesis review to review lessons learnt from ILO interventions in social protection for the period 2012-2018. The review informs the Recurrent Discussions on Social Protection (Social Security) scheduled for International Labour Conference (ILC) 2020.

Synthesizing the relevant findings from 24 evaluation reports, the review identifies key areas related to social protection and delineates what worked across these interventions and the factors that made them work. The study was completed on time giving ample scope for the Recurrent Report drafting team to use the findings. The synthesis review report will be formally published by the first quarter of 2020, ahead of the ILC in 2020.

Think Piece: Drivers of decent work results and ILO effectiveness: A meta-analysis of ILO RBSA-supported interventions 2013-2017



Close to 40 evaluations of RBSA-funded interventions have been completed by EVAL over the last couple of years. As part of our transparency policy, these reports are all publicly available [i-eval Discovery](#). In early 2018-19, EVAL undertook a meta-analysis of evaluations and projects that received significant RBSA support during the period 2013-17. The report used the standard methodology

developed by EVAL to measure effectiveness of ILO's work towards delivering Decent Work results. The study analyzed the areas where RBSA supported interventions performed well, the areas that were relatively weak and the underlying factors that led to these varying performance levels across a set of indicators. The key findings of this review has been summarized in a Think Piece that is available on [EVAL's website](#).

Planned and ongoing studies

Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: Meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations and review of methodology and approach

The ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) has to date conducted four biennial meta-analyses of independent project evaluations that were completed in the periods [2009-2010](#); [2011-2012](#), [2013-2016](#) and [2017-2018](#) to provide feedback on the ILO's effectiveness in advancing decent work.

The meta-analyses follow a methodology that has evolved over time while also allowing for comparison across the reporting periods. In early 2020, a similar meta-analysis covering the period 2019 will be undertaken. EVAL has been contemplating to do this exercise on a rolling basis (i.e. scoring against the effectiveness indicators as soon as the evaluation report is finalized) instead of waiting until enough reports have been accumulated to assess them as a batch. The review team will therefore also assess the advantages and disadvantages of undertaking the decent work effectiveness exercise on a rolling basis in the future vis-à-vis the current periodic approach.

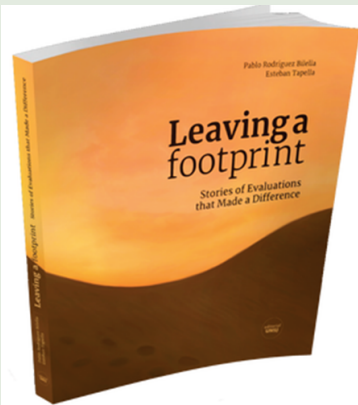
Maintaining quality through external ex-post reviews of project evaluations

EVAL is accountable for the independence and quality of all independent evaluations. In order to fulfill its responsibility, EVAL has commissioned quality appraisals since 2007. A Think Piece on the most recent quality assessments of ILO project evaluations will be completed by the end of the year.



New Books and Articles on Evaluation

Leaving a Footprint: Stories of Evaluations that Made a Difference By Pablo Rodríguez Bilella and Esteban Tapella



Summary, “A book to (re)discover the value of evaluation: learning stories and social change: This book gathers seven stories of evaluations in development contexts that in a diverse and innovative way produced positive effects in the space in which they took place. Located throughout Latin

America and the Caribbean, stories address the evaluation of interventions with populations of rural children and youth, indigenous women, health programs and university self-evaluation. Through surprising and attractive stories, the stories identify the elements that make it possible to make social evaluation a factor in development. The illustrations that accompany these stories of change aim to reinforce their transformative and integral character.”

News from the Departments

Conditions of Work and Equality Department

High-level Independent Evaluation of the ILO's Strategy and Actions Towards the Formalization of the Informal Economy, 2014-2018



In 2019, EVAL conducted an independent evaluation of ILO's strategy and actions towards formalization of the informal economy. The evaluation assessed the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of ILO's work from 2014 to 2018 through a participatory process, which included the ILO's

tripartite constituents, staff and other partners. Overall, the evaluation covered 8 countries, 6 through missions (Argentina, Costa Rica, Cambodia, Nepal, Senegal and Zambia) and 2 through desk review and skype-based

interviews (Jordan and Ukraine). The evaluation benefited from inputs collected through 200 interviews, 75 online survey responses, and a Synthesis Review of 38 evaluation reports for the period 2014-18.

The high-level evaluation was discussed and the recommendations were approved without amendments during the 337th session of the Governing Body in October-November 2019. The key findings and recommendations are as follows:

Key findings

- The strategy for formalization is relevant to country needs and global concerns relating to the informal economy. Relevance is stronger where awareness levels are high.
- The ILO's strategy towards formalisation of the informal economy (IE) is effective though there is a great deal of variation with outstanding examples of good results in terms of awareness generation, capacity building and knowledge generation. Success was less evident in terms of official adoption of laws and policies supporting formalization.
- In 2015, the ILO adopted Recommendation No. 204 concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy (R204), the first normative instrument specifically aimed at tackling the informal economy. Some stakeholders see R204 as an ILO strategy rather than as a normative instrument that provides guidance on policy, legislation and practice. This suggests inadequate ownership on the part of countries of this normative instrument.
- Evidence of synergies between ILO's Policy Outcome on formalizing the informal economy and other relevant outcomes was partial. The evaluation found that there are limited incentives for ILO staff to create synergies across outcomes. This makes delivering on cross-cutting themes, such as the formalization of IE, more challenging. Tripartism and social dialogue were well integrated in ILO's strategy and actions but engagement of informal economy 'representatives' needs much greater attention from all stakeholders.
- While there are many approaches that support formalization (such as social protection, compliance, sector specific initiatives), over-focus on one can be detrimental to the integrated approach advocated in R204.
- ILO support to constituents has the potential to bring long-term changes in the understanding of and approaches to formalization processes. The ILO's capacity-building efforts at the national level are well directed to organizations and institutions that can complement and sustain the gains resulting from the ILO's efforts.

Key recommendations:

The report provided a number of recommendations intended to contribute to improved strategic direction and interventions:

- Develop a concrete formalization strategy that fosters greater collaboration among ILO departments and between HQ and Field offices. Undertake an inter-departmental review on how to make 'formalization' more explicit in Office's work.
- Promote social dialogue with participation of Informal Economy representatives and support constituents for building alliances with informal economy actors, as possible within the legal frameworks.
- Continue capacity-strengthening on formalizing the informal economy while ensuring the cascading of knowledge and skills among constituents, stakeholders and partners.
- Support the national level formulation of strategies on formalizing the informal economy and advocate strongly for the adoption of national strategies.
- Take more substantive measures towards inclusion of specific vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, refugee workers, people living with HIV for example).
- Using the existing experience, promote use of digital technologies to fast track effective and efficient formalization.
- Allow for linking a country programme outcome or global product to more than one policy outcome.

News from the Regions

Africa

High-level Independent Evaluation of ILO's Programme of Work in Four Selected Member Countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Lesotho, Madagascar, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania), 2014-2018



Each region is the subject of a high-level geographic Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) evaluation once every five years. This year was Africa's turn and the ILO Evaluation Office examined the ILO's programme of work in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member States of Lesotho, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and

Madagascar from 2014 through 2018. SADC is an intergovernmental organization made up of 16 southern African States. Its goal is to further socio-economic cooperation and integration, as well as support political and security cooperation among. SADC had a Decent Work Programme (DWP) ran from 2013 to 2019. The regional dimension of SADC's DWP covered the four member States. However, each of them also has their own Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP).

DWCPs have been established as the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries. They promote decent work as a key component of national development strategies. At the same time, they organize ILO knowledge, instruments, advocacy and cooperation for tripartite constituents in a results-based framework to advance the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

Following the ILO's evaluation policy that adheres to international standards and best practices, the evaluation team primarily used a mixed-methods approach to collect and analyse data. The high-level evaluation was discussed and the recommendations were approved during the 337th session of the Governing Body in October-November 2019. The key findings and recommendations are as follows:

Key findings

- International Labour Standards and Social Dialogue were the cross-cutting policy drivers that achieved the most results. With regard to gender equality and non-discrimination, overall, much remains to be done. Integration of environmental sustainability, as a cross-cutting policy driver, was limited in the DWCPs.
- ILO helped the constituents to better understand the Decent Work Agenda. In addition, it developed their capacities to analyse and mainstream their needs into the DWCP. This will lead to improvement of relevant institutional capacities to generate further progress towards Decent Work country objectives.
- The SADC DWP priorities continue to be important from the national perspectives. However, regional decisions need to be trickled down to the national level, with tripartite follow-up of the outcomes of regional decisions at country level.
- The likelihood of the DWCP achievements being continued/implemented/scaled-up largely depends on full national ownership, the constituents' institutional capacities, effective governance and continued ILO support.

Key recommendations:

The report provided a number of recommendations intended to contribute to the ILO's future work:

- Reinforce the capacities of the social partners. Capacity development plans should identify the capacity development needs of each constituent group and suggest delivery approaches that could best address those needs.
- Improve efforts to coordinate and promote the involvement of stakeholders in all aspects of decent work country programming (for example steering, implementation, resource mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation).
- Make additional efforts to promote gender equality and non-discrimination. Update the SADC DWP to respond more effectively to present conditions and challenges, both at the regional level and at the level of the SADC member States.
- Consider a more custom-made approach to countries' DWCP design.

Institutional evaluation

High-level Independent Evaluation of ILO's Public-Private Partnerships, 2008-2018



Institutional evaluations provide the ILO with the opportunity to examine topics that are of an enabling nature and across the organization. In 2016 the Governing Body (GB) requested a high-level evaluation (HLE) of the ILO's public-private partnerships (PPPs), making it the fourth institutional evaluation after the evaluations of the ILO's [capacity development](#)

[efforts \(2018\)](#), [ILO's field operations and structure \(2017\)](#) and [ILO's strategy for Technical Cooperation 2010-15 \(2016\)](#).

Public-private partnership, as defined by the ILO, are voluntary and collaborative relationships between the ILO and one or more partners, including private and non-state actors for the purpose of carrying out cooperative activities of mutual interest. The total financial volume of PPPs from 2008 to 2019 is US\$ 123 million, averaging 11.2 million per year. This represents less than 3% of the ILO's total annual budget.

The HLE assessed the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of PPPs from 2008-2018. It applied a mixed-methods approach to ensure the validity and reliability of findings. The evaluation intends to inform the preparation of ILO's programme and budget and development cooperation strategy for 2020-2025 and assesses how PPPs can be applied in the context of the 2030 Agenda, UN reform and the Decent Work Agenda.

The Governing Body discussed the evaluation's results on 30 October 2019. There was general appreciation of the evaluation's overall findings. The main points of discussions related to the extent to which PPPs are under-utilized in comparison to other agencies within the UN system, the processes of approving PPPs (due diligence, transparency, whether additional clearance and consultation is needed), whether an HLE should provide recommendations on thematic priorities such as global supply chain and innovative financing and applying findings to the new ILO development cooperation strategy.

Key findings

- PPPs are well suited to address decent work deficits in supply chains. Their effectiveness and sustainability is determined by their design and the context to which they have been implemented.
- The effectiveness of PPPs that target research is strengthened when there are clear arrangements for their use.
- Stakeholders are satisfied with the efficiency of PPPs which has often contributed to the efficient implementation of activities. The number of PPPs has grown substantially during 2008–18. They account for only a small proportion of the ILO's total resources, and their potential is largely under-exploited.
- While some individual units of ILO have tailored approaches for the role of PPPs, there is no Office-wide strategy for their use in support of its policy outcomes and the SDGs.
- There are challenges in demonstrating long-term impact and sustainability of PPPs. This is due to a lack of sufficient data and of ongoing review of the added value of the PPP modality.

Key recommendations

- PPPs should be a more regular and accepted modality for implementing the Decent Work Agenda and the SDGs.

- Potential partnerships for PPPs should be cultivated more strategically and proactively as part of long-term approaches, such as using relationships management approach with memoranda of understanding and long-term agreements within each policy outcome. There is potential for the ILO to capitalize on the expertise and experience of private partners when expanding the reach of labour standards, enhancing skills development through global supply chains and using innovative financing for social protection and social finance.
- Different types of partners present varying issues and need to be managed to the specific characteristics of each PPP. Procedures for PPPs should be more transparent and accountable and should use differentiated approaches (“non-state actor” is too broad a category).
- All PPPs should consistently use key design principles to maximize effectiveness and to give priority to sustainability and potential for impact in order to demonstrate the value of PPPs to the ILO, with appropriate monitoring and evaluation being integral to the PPP process.

recommendations were approved without amendments during the 337th Session of the Governing Body in October 2019.

Recommendations

1. Present strategic clustering of evaluations as the preferential option to all donors when discussing agreements and use the expertise of the evaluation function to explain the benefits and various opt-out scenarios in compliance with the evaluation policy.
2. Contextualize and consistently integrate the recurrent drivers for success identified in this report into project design and implementation to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the ILO's work.

Communication products

EVAL developed two-page Quick Facts, presentations and a video to complement the full evaluation reports for audiences with varying information needs:

ILO's Programme of Work in Africa, 2014 -2018

ILO's Public-Private Partnerships, 2008-2018

ILO's Strategy and Actions Towards the Formalization of the Informal Economy, 2014-2018

Category	Value
Completed evaluations in 2018	54
Independent evaluations	25
Internal evaluations	29
General Data (2018)	217
Completed evaluations in 2018	48
Independent evaluations	134
Internal evaluations	25

Annual Evaluation Report 2018-19

EVAL Highlights

Annual Evaluation Report 2018-19



This year's **Annual Evaluation Report** reflected on the progress made in implementing the ILO's evaluation strategy, as measured against its three outcomes: (1) Enhanced capacities and systems of evaluation for better practice and use; (2) Enhanced value of evaluation through the use of more credible and higher quality evaluations (independence, credibility and usefulness); and (3) Stronger knowledge base of evaluation findings and recommendations.

The report also provides an assessment of the ILO's overall effectiveness. The report was discussed, and its



VIDEO: *Annual Evaluation Report 2018-19*

Presentations:

- ILO's Strategy and Actions Towards the Formalization of the Informal Economy, 2014-2018
- Programme of Work in Four Selected Member Countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Lesotho, Madagascar, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania), 2014-2018

Management responses on i-eval Discovery

All planned evaluations, completed evaluations, in addition to their related summaries, lessons learned, good practices and recommendations are publicly accessible via EVAL's online application, named *i-eval Discovery*. As part of efforts to provide the full suite of evaluation information to the ILO's tripartite constituents, donors and to all ILO officials, *i-eval Discovery* will include management responses to evaluation recommendations by the end of December 2019. This is an innovative project as the ILO will be one of the few UN specialized agencies that publicly makes accessible management responses to independent evaluations.

Management responses function as an accountability tool for managers to report action on recommendations that are put forth in evaluations. Each year, EVAL synthesizes the results of management responses in its *Annual Evaluation Report* that is submitted to the ILO's Governing Body on a yearly basis for discussion and approval.

Dissemination & discussion event: Formalizing the informal economy

EVAL, in partnership with the Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations and Working Conditions Branch (INWORK), held a dissemination event on 10 December to share and discuss the findings of the earlier featured high-level evaluation of *ILO's Strategy and Actions Towards the Formalization of the Informal Economy (2014-2018)*. The uniqueness of this evaluation is driven by the cross-cutting nature of the theme of informal economy; the management

arrangements within the ILO to plan and deliver this policy outcome; and differing viewpoints of constituents and stakeholders about how informality should be addressed.

Mei Zegers (lead evaluator), Philippe Marcadent (Chief of INWORK) and Mini Thakur (EVAL member of the evaluation team) discussed the main findings of the report and actively engaged ILO staff in the field and in headquarters on the main results of evaluation. Guy Thijs (Director of the Evaluation Office) provided an introduction and acted as the event's moderator.

An additional dissemination event is planned in January 2020 on the recently completed *Independent Evaluation of ILO's Public-Private Partnerships, 2008-2018*. The evaluation's results and recommendations were approved by the Governing Body in October 2019.



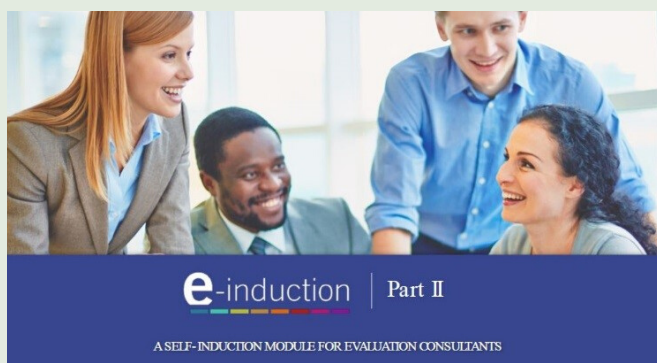
Full room of ILO staff attending the event with field staff joining online

Learning activities and events

Training programme for ILO Constituents on evaluation in the SDG era

EVAL continued support to constituents in building their knowledge on evaluation of Decent Work in the context of the SDGs. A total of 88 representatives from governments, employers' and workers' organizations were trained in 2019 alone. EVAL, in collaboration with ITC, is currently finalizing a multi-media training package to facilitate mainstreaming of the training content within existing capacity-building programmes of the ILO for its constituents at global, regional and national levels.

Calling all evaluation consultants: Complete the self-induction programme



EVAL welcomes all prospective ILO evaluators to undertake the [self-induction programme for evaluation consultants](#). The programme's purpose is to help evaluators increase their familiarity with the unique aspects of the ILO's mandate, its evaluation policy (2017) and evaluation strategy (2018). The self-induction programme takes one-hour to complete and is structured into two parts. Almost 100 evaluators have already completed the programme. Upon completion, evaluators receive an attestation of completion that they can include in future expressions of interest for ILO evaluation assignments to eval@ilo.org.

Evaluation Manager Certification Programme hosted in Tunisia

In October 2019, the 10th edition of the evaluation management certification programme workshop was held in Hammamet, Tunisia. The workshop was jointly organized by the Evaluation Office (EVAL), the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), and the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO). Twelve officers coming from various ILO offices in the Africa region completed the distance-learning phase and benefited from face-to-face training sessions. A third phase, a practicum, is already underway, in which the trained participants are managing independent project evaluations under EVAL's guidance and supervision of the Regional Evaluation Officer.



ILO officers from various offices in the Africa region took part in the Evaluation Manager Certification Programme in Tunisia in October 2019

UNEG developments

Rethinking the OECD/DAC Development Evaluation Criteria - Guidance for application

The process of reviewing and revising the standard OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria, in part to respond to the SDGs, is now complete. Final adapted definitions and principles for use have been approved by the DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) on 10 December (click [here](#) for updates). An additional criterion on **coherence** has been added to the five original - **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. The second edition DAC/OECD Glossary on Evaluation and Results Based Management which is currently under revision will include the revised definitions.

System-Wide Evaluation

In the context of Agenda 2030 and as part of UN reform, the UN Secretary General strategy for the repositioning of the UN Development System, presented to the UN General Assembly the UN policies and structures for system wide evaluation (SWE). It focuses on a 'whole of UN' approach, that seeks evaluative evidence on how the UN system is supporting members states to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNEG, through the working group on SWE of which EVAL is a part is playing an active role in the efforts to institutionalize SWE. This effort will draw on the capacities of all relevant entities, with a view to enhance system-wide coherence of evaluation to learn lessons and measure results from global, regional and country evaluations. The evaluations of the new UN Cooperation Frameworks are the main system-wide evaluation activities at the country-level and an essential backbone of the system-wide architecture. The revised policy for SWE, currently under preparation, will provide an opportunity to think in the longer term, in addition to being strategic and fit for purpose.

System-wide evaluation is a systematic and impartial assessment of the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the combined contributions of United Nations entities, to achieve the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2019 ILO Evaluation Champion**David Dorkenoo**

The Evaluation Office annually recognizes one colleague who has made an extraordinary contribution to ILO's evaluation work. Mr David Dorkenoo has been selected as the Evaluation Champion for 2019. He was recently trained by EVAL as a certified evaluation manager and has already managed 2 evaluations over the past year with more in the pipeline. His enthusiasm and advocacy for evaluation is illustrious and he is a valuable asset to the evaluation network.

All Departmental Evaluation Focal Points, Certified Evaluation Managers and Internal Evaluators are eligible.

**External knowledge sharing, conferences, courses and webinars**

Eastern Evaluation Research Society: The 43rd annual conference will take place from 26-28 April 2020 in Princeton, New Jersey.

International Conference for Realist Research, Evaluation and Synthesis:

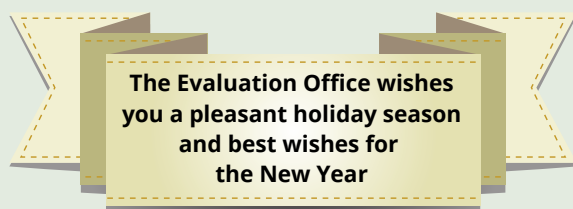
From 24-26 March 2020, Dublin will host an international conference that targets evaluators and researchers applying or thinking about using realist evaluation and/or realist research.

Blogs on evaluation

- [World Bank Blog on Impact Evaluation](#)
- [African Development Bank eval-blog](#)
- [Evaluation Capacity Development Group](#)

Other evaluation newsletters

- [United Nations Evaluation Group](#)
- [EVAL Partners Newsletter](#)
- [OIOS Inspection & Evaluation](#)



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