

The Polish Evaluation Society

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The Polish Evaluation Society was founded in 2000 by people interested and involved in evaluation.

Our mission includes:

- building and disseminating evaluation culture in Poland,
- organizing and integrating evaluators and evaluation managers and
- enriching knowledge about evaluation to ensure high quality of research and evaluation activities.

We accomplish this by:

- organizing studies, courses and training,
- conducting evaluation studies,
- exchanging experiences with other companies, institutions and organizations,
- organizing meetings, seminars and conferences,
- publishing articles on evaluation and
- consulting and advising on evaluation activities.

Some of the projects we have conducted over the years were:

1. “Support for the monitoring and evaluation of projects of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)” (01.06-30.11.2007). The project has led to the creation of the Polish-language web portal devoted to the issues of monitoring and evaluation (www.pte.org.pl). The project was granting free consultations in the field of monitoring and evaluation to NGOs. Source of funding: Civic Initiatives Fund.
2. “Together, we create standards for evaluation in Poland” (01.01-15.11.2008). The project aimed to improve the quality of evaluations conducted in Poland through joint development of evaluation standards of approximately 60 persons representing various communities, i.e. public administration, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, employees of companies implementing evaluation studies as well as independent evaluators. The standards have served the support of the people involved in the evaluation process – authorities and implementers – to ensure the highest quality of evaluations conducted, as well as respecting ethical principles applicable in the field of evaluation. Common standards enable standardizing the understanding of various concepts related to evaluation and serve as a point of reference in the preparation, ordering and implementation of the evaluation report and dissemination of its results. The project also established a pan-European international cooperation with all nation-

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al companies with evaluation and with the European Evaluation Society (EES). Source of funding: Transition 2005 “Multisectoral project to strengthen administrative capacity”, Component 6. Strengthening the capacity evaluation in the public sector (http://pte.org.pl/attachments/article/627/PTE_Evaluation_Standards.pdf).

3. In 2013, PES in cooperation with the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (public administration unit) organized regular open seminars (every one to two months), during which issues related to the organization of the evaluation process in Poland were discussed. Currently, PES is organizing quarterly educational seminars for its members – the last one on treating counterfactual methods.
4. “The forge of evaluation”. Several editions of the project have already aimed at increasing the evaluation capacity of NGOs in Poland by introducing them to participatory evaluation, which is an effective tool for the development of NGOs as ‘learning organizations’. An important feature of participatory evaluation is a broad commitment of its various stakeholders to the process. Participants take part in a comprehensive 50-hours training devoted to planning and design of evaluation, qualitative and quantitative methods, conducting analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and the development of an evaluation report. The next phase of the project is the tutoring of NGOs by experienced evaluators – tutors are supposed to assist their partner NGOs through the entire process of participatory evaluation. They commonly develop the concept of evaluation of their projects, conduct evaluation studies, data analysis and the development of an evaluation report. NGOs also encourage local communities to increase their involvement in the design and evaluation of services provided by NGOs.

On June 1, 2015 PES started the next edition of the “forge of evaluation”, co-financed by the Civic Initiatives Fund. In the context of this project, an e-learning platform was created and we are able to carry out e-learning courses for representatives of NGOs. During the course, participants will acquire basic knowledge of how to design and conduct evaluations. The participants of the e-learning courses will also be able to attend workshops that enable them to put into practice some aspects of the evaluation process. Workshops are planned for the period from January to March 2016. For the 10 most motivated organizations, PES provides tutoring led by experienced evaluators.

5. In the Polish Evaluation Society, Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) are operating in the areas of:
 - PR for PES,
 - professionalization of evaluation in Poland and
 - training and expertise offered by PES.

Themes for TWGs are fluently changing according to actual needs for engagement.

We also offer a training module called “EVALUATION FORGE”, based on the program that we have developed throughout the years. This training is aimed at people who start their evaluation adventure. Its purpose is to:

- familiarize the audience with the key concepts of evaluation,
 - transfer key skills in the management of an evaluation research study,
 - prepare to commission an external evaluation and
 - introduce research methodology of evaluation and prepare for its practical use.
6. In March 2015, we were asked in social consultations to review the draft guidelines for the evaluation of the cohesion policy for the 2014 to 2020 financial perspective. On May 29, 2015 the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development held its first, inaugural meeting of the Evaluation Steering Group Knowledge Education Development Programme (GSE PO WER). The meeting was attended by representatives of all evaluation units – including the Managing Authority and Intermediate Body for KED OP, as well as representatives of experts, social partners and observers, including the Polish Evaluation Society in the person of its president.
 7. Between 21 and 22 May, 2015 the Polish Evaluation Society along with the Mazovia Centre for Teachers, organized a conference entitled *Evaluation in educational institutions*. The conference hosted distinguished guests from abroad, including Prof. Helen Simons of the United Kingdom Evaluation Society (UKES) and Prof. Volodymyr Yevtukh of the Ukrainian Evaluation Association (UEA). The conference focused on educational evaluation and its usefulness to improving the quality of education. Important aspects of the conference were also the issues of evaluation carried out in schools and educational institutions in the framework of pedagogical supervision and complementarity between the internal and external evaluation in the system.
 8. The conference “Using knowledge by the public administration – civil oversight mechanisms” hosted by IDEA Development Foundation was held on 10 June, 2015 in Warsaw. On that occasion, PES president Veronica Felcis gave a presentation with the title “*Can evaluation inspire a Polish NGO?*”, which is now available at: https://prezi.com/ibkki9ol96lp/wykorzystanie-wiedzy-przez-administracje-mechanizmy-nadzor/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy.
 9. In 2015, the Polish Evaluation Society for the first time hosted and co-organized the 11th International Evaluation Conference, held in Krakow (September 29 to 30, 2015). There were three parallel panels of three organizing institutions (Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure and PES). The first panel presented the results of ex post evaluations for the period between 2007 and 2013 from a variety of EU members and recommendations for the new programming period, the second panel addressed the notion of methodological innovations and big data, and the PES panel addressed the professionalization of the evaluation discipline. Thanks to our efforts, the conference was attended by key panelists for the issues analyzed:
 - Jim Rugh – Coordinator of the International Year of the World Event Evaluation (EvalPartners)
(Jim Rugh and the president of PES lead a workshop on the *real evaluation* approach),

- Prof. Helen Simons (University of Southampton) and
- Derek Poate (former President of the UKES).

The event is always free of charge for any attendants and all sessions are simultaneously translated into English.

Further information is available at: http://www.konferencja-ewaluacja.pl/2015/index_en.html.

10. The 1st Polish Evaluation Congress “Integration. Dialogue. Development” was a national event aimed at a wide audience. We set ourselves the objective of stimulating the integration of thinking about evaluation by exchanging experiences and knowledge of practitioners, trainers, representatives of companies and all those interested in the use of evaluation in their actions. The mission of the congress was based on four pillars:
 - 1) integration of evaluation areas in Poland,
 - 2) exchange of experiences related to evaluation,
 - 3) improvement of professional skills and
 - 4) spreading good practice.

The lectures and workshops were tailored to the needs of representatives of various institutions and companies looking for new ways of development using ideas emerging in connection with business niches.

Due to the specificity of the subject, we decided to use unconventional ways to stimulate creativity among attendants. Therefore, we resigned from the extended part of the lecture in favor of open space and informal talks backstage. The congress was claimed a success and will be a cyclical event of PES.

11. We are making an effort to renew the important publication *Catalogue of Evaluation Research Market* this year. The last catalogue was published in 2011. We want it to be a contribution to the institutional membership launch. We would like to include in it:
 - Polish evaluation market analysis,
 - Comments from experts and articles from honorary members,
 - Presentations of Polish evaluation companies and
 - PES members’ profiles.

This time, the catalogue will also (at least partly) be published in English. For further information, please see: <http://pte.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/KatalogPTE2011PDF.pdf>.

12. Currently, the Polish Evaluation Society is working on the establishment of the cyclic publication “The Polish Evaluation”. Until now, there is no magazine in Poland devoted to evaluation that is an arena for reflection on the evaluation process, and also a bridge between the Polish and the international community of evaluators. The journal will include texts in two languages: Polish and English. This will allow that both, national and international authors and readers can be addressed. Initially, the magazine will be issued twice per year, while the aim is four issues per year. It will be published open access, only in electronic form. The main part of the magazine will provide scientific articles in the field of evaluation. The journal will also provide space for reviews of scientific publications in the field of evaluation.

As a result of the intensive work of the board during the very special International Year of Evaluation celebrations and our 15th anniversary, we have concluded that the next steps for our development should be:

- Comeback of the methodological seminars as the new programming period of European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) starts now (there will be a bigger emphasis in the market on rigorous and innovative methods).
- Developing the discussion on the paths for evaluation professionalization in Poland – revision of PES evaluation standards and creating the Capabilities Framework.
- Putting effort on the integration of the society by creating occasions to meet informally with other members in order to strengthen common interest and solidarity among competitors for the tenders and
- Further institutional development and strengthening of transparency as well as internal and external communication.

Practical note:

We are a non-governmental and non-profit organization. Everyone in the society is working as a volunteer without receiving any remuneration.

Until 2004, we have been applying for tenders on an open market. It was a response to the market demand and insufficient preparation of research companies to conduct research in the nature of evaluation. In recent years, there has been a very dynamic development of the market of evaluation studies, which allowed the Polish Evaluation Society to direct activities towards focusing on integration and support to the benefit of evaluators and evaluation managers in Poland.

We are open to cooperation with other evaluation societies, NGOs and companies from abroad. We are keen on developing interesting projects aiming at spreading evaluation culture in Poland.