

# Profile of the Czech Evaluation Society

*Jiri Remr*<sup>1</sup>

## General Introduction

The Czech Evaluation Society (hereinafter referred to as CES) is a non-profit, non-governmental and independent organization staffed only by volunteers without any paid employees. The main goal of CES is to associate individuals and institutions interested in evaluations. Members of CES are driven by their concern in building evaluation capacities within the Czech Republic, increasing the awareness of evaluations among the relevant target groups, improving the reputation of evaluations as well as advancing the professional skills of all evaluators, i.e. practitioners and commissioners. CES represents a platform supporting the cooperation with international associations and networks of evaluators, especially with NESE (Network of European Evaluation Societies) and IDEAS (International Development Evaluation Association).

CES was founded in 2007 by a group of individuals who were interested and engaged in evaluations. The current CES board consists of five members: Jiri Remr (Chairman) and Vladimir Sodomka (Vice-Chairman), representing the statutory body. Further board members are Oto Potluka, Inka Pibilova and Daniel Svoboda.

Up to 2015, there was no formal working group; CES only had an informal task force that evolved spontaneously as a consequence of the division of labor. However, since 2015 CES has three official working groups:

a) DEV

is focused on evaluations of development cooperation programs. CES members cooperate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Czech Development Agency that establishes an institutional framework of the Czech development cooperation and participates in the creation of development cooperation programs. On a long-term basis the CES members perform peer review of evaluation reports, assist with drafting the terms of reference (ToR) and help with the implementation of evaluation conclusions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Czech Evaluation Society, Prague

- b) ESIF  
is concerned with issues associated with evaluating the European Structural and Investment Funds. CES members provide feedback to official and binding guidelines and manuals for evaluation and submit comments of legislation relevant to evaluation (e.g. Financial Control Act, etc.).
- c) LEC  
which is engaged in lecturing. CES members organize sessions and seminars with various stakeholders in order to teach and improve the professional skills in performing evaluations and in utilization of evaluation conclusions. Current activities cover not only ad hoc training but also higher (university) education, especially lecturing at the Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prague, even as part of the ERASMUS program when lectures on evaluation research are open to all students coming from other EU Member States.

Apart from these working groups, the new statutes (came into force in 2015) brought also the Cassation and Ethics Committee. It is expected that in the near future such a committee will also serve as a fourth working group. Its aim is to interpret the provisions of the Ethical Code and the Standards for Evaluations, to find and comment the case studies accused of breaching the rules or customs and to provide mentoring to members and other stakeholders outside the CES. The Cassation and Ethics Committee also resolves and reconciles the disputes among members and provides opinions on professional and ethical matters concerning the evaluations performed.

## Membership

CES currently has more than 30 members who are mainly evaluation practitioners. However, among the members there are also academicians (approximately 20%) and evaluation commissioners/clients – usually civil servants and representatives of the managing authorities of the operational programs financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (approximately 17%). CES currently relies on individual membership. However, the new statutes will enable institutions to become members from 2016 on. The membership base is stable and moderately growing: Approximately five to eight new members apply for membership each year.

As a matter of fact, it is not easy to become a CES member. The entrance procedure is a multistage process that is strictly based on a referral system, i.e. each new applicant must gain the recommendations from at least two current members. Moreover, she/he has to fill in the application form and must explicitly confirm the compliance with the Ethical Code and the Standards for Evaluation. There are basically two routes how one can become a member:

- a) In case current CES members know the applicant, they know her/his work and are aware of the applicant's past and current activities, they do approve the integrity of the applicant and provide recommendations to the Board that (after considering the facts in the application form, the provided recommendations and other credentials of the applicant) approves or disapproves the membership.

- b) In case none of the current CES members knows the applicant, two Board members conduct independently interviews with the applicant focusing on the applicant's professional activities, her/his effort in improving evaluations and building evaluation capacity. The two Board members also inform the applicant about CES activities, opportunities for the applicant's involvement (in case of admission) and principles of ethical and professional conduct. Applicants must show the commitment to comply with the Ethical Code and the Standards for Evaluations. The interviewers then report on the results of the interviews to the Board that makes the decision.

At the end of this process, new members receive an official letter confirming their membership and specifying the names of the two CES members who provided recommendations or performed interviews (such members are considered as 'godfathers'). Full membership obviously requires paying the annual fee. New entrants are introduced to the current CES members in the Newsletter and their profiles are also published on the CES website.

## Key Activities of the CES

### *Annual Conference*

In 2015, the Conference was held for the fifth time. Since 2011, this one-day conference has become the most important evaluation event in the Czech Republic. Each year, more than 100 participants attend approximately 15 lectures by Czech and foreign speakers, carefully selected by the Conference Steering Committee. Usually, the opportunities, prospects and alternative routes of future development of evaluations are discussed. However, substantial attention is always paid to evaluation methodology and its advances. Especially, new methods and techniques in evaluation are popular among the auditorium. The conference is also open to those who prefer to present a poster on their case studies or evaluations that used unique design or inquiry that might inspire others.

### *Peer-Reviewed Journal*

Under the auspices of CES, the professional peer-reviewed journal "Evaluation Theory and Practice" is issued. It is the only journal in the Czech Republic that focuses on evaluations and is recognized by the Czech Government as a scientific journal. "Evaluation Theory and Practice" is released twice a year and is mostly written in Czech language (in order to help developing a proper terminology). However, all abstracts and even some articles from foreign authors are published in English. There are 500 copies per issue which are distributed to practitioners, public administration, NGOs, academicians and libraries. All members of CES receive a copy of the journal as part of their membership.

### *Training*

CES is accredited by the Ministry of the Interior to perform courses on evaluation for civil servants in municipalities. Beside this, CES organizes other ad hoc trainings, for instance, in January 2015 two of our members performed a two-day training in participative evaluations that was much appreciated. For some training events CES invites foreign lecturers – e.g. in fall 2015 CES organizes a training in conducting the focus groups and in qualitative data analysis led by Janet Mancini Billson, PhD.

### *EPDET*

CES, together with Development Worldwide and the Slovak Evaluation Society, is co-organizing the European Program for Development Evaluation Training (EPDET). It is a comprehensive, intensive, five-day training program that is open to evaluators and managers of development projects and programs from the whole world. It is the European offer of the summer school IPDET (International Program for Development Evaluation), organized by the Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, and that is why its structure and content follow a successful scheme of the IPDET.

### *Evaluation Café*

In 2015, CES introduced a new format of meetings for evaluators (CES members are invited guests as well). These sessions in an informal atmosphere provide the great opportunity for approximately seven to ten people to discuss important issues concerning the current evaluation practice. For instance, the title of our last Café was “Evaluations that really had impact”.

### *Newsletter*

Each member bi-monthly receives the newsletter that has a form of e-zine. The newsletter summarizes the key events of the past two months, informs about planned conferences in Europe and other parts of the world, about the CES Board decisions and activities of working groups, and introduces new members.

## Documents of CES

There are two documents that CES considers crucial, apart from our statutes and other legal documents:

### *Ethical Code*

CES has its own Ethical Code since 2011. This document reflects the values that CES considers important in the course of evaluation conduct – proficiency, integri-

ty and accountability. Each value is further elaborated in detail and a set of specific provisions is defined.

### *Standards for Evaluation*

Beside the Ethical Code, CES implemented the Joint Committee Standards for Educational Evaluation. In this respect CES decided not to create an own set of standards because they wanted to express commitment and adherence to the norms that were adopted by many evaluation societies around the world. In doing so, CES shows its appreciation to principles defined by evaluators from countries with longer tradition in evaluations.

Both documents are generally binding in the Czech Republic because they were approved by the government and released as an appendix of governmental decree (No. 597/2013) on guiding documents for evaluation.

## UNSERE BUCHEMPFEHLUNG



Marie-Luise Schütt

### **E-Learning als Baustein im inklusiven Unterstützungs- und Beratungssystem in Deutschland**

Konzeption, Implementierung und Evaluation des Onlineangebots „MIT BISS“ für Regelschullehrerinnen und Regelschullehrer

*Internationale Hochschulschriften, Bd. 617, 2015, 252 Seiten, br., 34,90 €, ISBN 978-3-8309-3218-5 E-Book: 30,99 €, ISBN 978-3-8309-8218-0*

**A**ngesichts des (inter-)nationalen Bestrebens, inklusive sowie qualitativ hochwertige Bildungsstrukturen zu verwirklichen, müssen die spezifischen Belange von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Beeinträchtigung in das Zentrum des Handelns aller professionellen Akteure gestellt werden. Im Rahmen dieser Arbeit wurde das notwendige Know-how im Umgang mit Schülerinnen und Schülern mit Sehbeeinträchtigung an der allgemeinen Schule empirisch geprüft. In Verbindung mit lerntheoretischen und mediendidaktischen Erkenntnissen kam es zur Konzeption des Onlineangebots MIT BISS (Methodisches • Informatives • Theoretisches – Basics zur inklusiven Beschulung sehgeschädigter Schülerinnen und Schüler), welches die eigenständige Weiterqualifizierung ermöglicht.

Basierend auf den Forschungsergebnissen zu MIT BISS werden Nutzenpotentiale digitaler Anwendungen für den zukünftigen Einsatz im inklusiven Unterstützungs- und Beratungsprozess herausgestellt und relevante Empfehlungen für das Handlungsfeld Schule unter Bezugnahme auf theoretische Konzepte gegeben.



**WAXMANN**

[www.waxmann.com](http://www.waxmann.com)  
[order@waxmann.com](mailto:order@waxmann.com)