



# 'Challenges for Evaluation'

An autumn 2016 series of seminars organised by the Centre for Lifelong Learning of the University of Liverpool working in collaboration with Praxis (<http://praxiscic.co.uk/>) and sponsored by the UK Evaluation Society (<http://www.evaluation.org.uk/>)

## *Rationale*

Each of these seminars will address the current state of evaluation in the area of focus and will explore the challenges facing evaluators working within them. Many different types of evaluation are conducted across service organisations, government agencies, third sector organisations, community projects and academic departments across the north-west just as is the case in other geographical regions. Usually, the evaluators concerned work in relative isolation from one another interacting only with commissioners, stakeholders and specialist colleagues. However, without the interaction of evaluators with one another the development professional networks cannot happen. This series of seminars, each led by evaluation specialists prominent in their fields, will contribute to the longer term aim of establishing a community of evaluators in the north-west.

These seminars will be of interest to professionals involved in commissioning, designing, conducting and using evaluation in each of the sectors focussed upon across the series. They will support professional contacts and networking, and will make possible future initiatives to deepen understanding of what evaluation can offer professional development and organisational improvement. Academics involved in evaluation of any kind will also benefit by attending. Post-graduate students in many disciplines may also have an interest in engaging with the questions and issues raised within the seminar discussions.

## *Costs\**

The seminars cost £35 to attend.

(£30 for members of the UK Evaluation Society; £25 for post-graduate students)

For those wishing to book for the whole series the cost is £90.

(£80 for members of the UK Evaluation Society; £65 for post-graduate students)

\* Excluding VAT

For more information about the series ask **Dr Mark O'Brien** (Evaluation and Service Development Unit at the Centre for Lifelong Learning) at [mtobrien@liv.ac.uk](mailto:mtobrien@liv.ac.uk)

**To book:** <http://payments.liv.ac.uk/browse/product.asp?compid=1&modid=2&catid=56>

## ***The ‘Challenges for Evaluation’ Seminars***

### ***Estimating impact and economic valuation in the charity sector***

Speakers: **Karen Hancock** (Pro Bono Economics) and **Derrick Jones** (Pro Bono Economics)

*1pm (12.30 for lunch), Thursday, 22 September, 2016.*

Karen and Derrick are professional economists at Pro Bono Economics, a charity that links volunteer economists with charities seeking to understand and measure their impact and value. Drawing on their experience and work with a wide range of charities, the speakers will explore the theory and practice of turning impact evaluation into economic valuation. In other words, how to estimate and value impacts and costs, and how they can be brought together to estimate the economic returns generated from the work of UK charities.

### ***Can evaluation achieve its promise and begin to play a globally progressive role?***

Speaker: **Murray Saunders** (Professor of Evaluation in Education and Work at the University of Lancaster)

*1pm (12.30 for lunch), Thursday, 3 November, 2016.*

In this seminar we will consider the ambiguous rise of evaluation as a ‘practice’ and the exponential increase of evaluation societies and associations world-wide. The role of evaluation in ‘civil society, participation in political and policy processes and what has been called the ‘global evaluation agenda’ will be all be discussed. We will focus particularly upon the tensions within professional evaluative practice that operate despite these changes and which challenge the positioning of evaluation in national policy development.

### ***Evaluating the things that we do: Lessons learnt from conservation education evaluation in world zoos***

Speaker: **Andrew Moss** (Conservation Social Scientist, Chester Zoo)

*1pm (12.30 for lunch), Thursday, 1 December, 2016.*

“Most people would agree that conserving the world’s biodiversity is extremely important, but one question worth asking is why do we need conservation in the first place? What is the common denominator in explaining why species are endangered all over the globe? The answer to both questions is simple: people. People, and their actions, directly and indirectly affect living things, either by overharvesting them, affecting or removing their habitats, or even altering the conditions they need to survive via local pollution or global climate change. Believe it or not, this is where zoo education comes in. With more than 700 million visits worldwide every year, zoos and aquariums may be uniquely placed to contribute to the goal of raising understanding of biodiversity and the personal actions to help it. In addition to the quantity of all these visits, the majority of zoos and aquariums already have

in place an institutional, and in some cases legal, commitment to public education on biodiversity conservation and wider environmental themes. What has so often been lacking, however, is any empirical evidence to verify whether zoos are educational or not. To this end, Chester Zoo has been at the forefront of the education evaluation research in zoos for the last decade. In this seminar, I would like to share with you the findings from this research, as well as the many challenges we have faced and the lessons we have learnt from them.”