

Conference, M&E on the cutting edge series

Measuring what matters in a 'post-truth' society

6 April 2017, the Netherlands



What this conference is about

This conference seeks to get clarity and learn about how to measure what matters, when we are aiming for the Sustainable Development Goals and yet seem to live in a 'post-truth' society. In 2016, Oxford Dictionaries pronounced 'post-truth' the word of the year, following the heated and controversial political developments in Europe (Brexit) and the United States (election of President Trump). The dictionary noted that "post-truth is an adjective defined as 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief' (Oxford Dictionary, 2016). Evidence becomes contested at every turn: it takes shape according to beliefs and mental models rather than through the testimonies of experts or news agencies.

In a globalising world of rapid change and incredible complexity, this poses a particular challenge for international sustainable development. International commitment to the SDGs demands endorsement from all layers of society. "Partnership and collaboration across every sector and at every level is vital if we are to meet the 2030 Global Goals for Sustainable Development. We need to find ways to measure progress in ways that have meaning to individuals from local to global, and across every sector. The range of organizations and stakeholders present and the range of initiatives being developed show how the Goals can be used to develop a shared framework" – Jessica Fries, Executive Chairman, A4S. In: Measure What Matters: a Framework for Action (2016).

The need for evaluation and result-based management to show the impacts of development initiatives has increased in the past years. Contribution and attribution of results are increasingly demanded by donors, governments and stakeholders. However, identifying positive change and striving for effective and equitable development processes demands that organisations ask the questions that really matter. Do we get to the core of what matters to be evaluated? And for whom? And, how can we generate evidence that has meaning for society at large, not just the key players in society?

We invite you to explore these questions with us, and to join the discussion on how we can contribute to this as evaluators, programme officers and policy makers.

Conference questions

- Is post-truth really a 'fact'? How does this influence our choices in evaluative practice?
- How do we measure what matters, and for who? Decision-makers? Voters? Other stakeholders?
- What can we do to really get to the heart of what matters?

Speakers

Claire Hutchings, Head of Programme Quality, Oxfam GB (<https://tinyurl.com/h94ysza>)

Wendy Asbeek Brusse, Director Policy and Operations Evaluation (IOB), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<http://tinyurl.com/mmkvtd6>)

Robert Dijksterhuis, Board Member International Programs RVO (Netherlands Enterprise Agency) (<http://tinyurl.com/mtsdtxm>)

Who this conference is for

This conference is for people involved in development initiatives, from government, international organisations, civil society, private sector, M&E and academia.

Book launch

We aim to launch our new guide *'Managing for Sustainable Development Impact: An Integrated Approach to Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation'* at the end of the conference!

Conference organisers:

This conference is the ninth annual 'M&E on the Cutting Edge' event organised by the Wageningen University & Research, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (CDI) in collaboration with Oxfam GB.

Conference approach

Inspiring keynotes, with interactive and reflective sessions. The conference will be facilitated by:

- Irene Guijt - OXFAM GB, head of Research
- Cecile Kusters, CDI, Wageningen University & Research

Conference products

Conference products include presentations, background information, and a conference report will be placed on this conference website.



Date and location

Thursday 6 April 2017

Hof van Wageningen
(<http://www.hofvanwageningen.nl/>)
Wageningen, the Netherlands

Conference programme - tentative

8.30 Coffee and Tea

9.00 Welcome and introduction

9.30 Keynote 1: Wendy Asbeek (IOB and government perspective)

10.15 Keynote 2: Claire Hutchings (OXFAM GB and INGO perspective)

11.00 tea/coffee

11.30 Keynote 3: Robert Dijksterhuis (RVO and private sector perspective)

12.15 Reflection session

12.45 LUNCH

13.45 Reflecting on core conference questions

15.30 tea/coffee

16.00 – 17.00 Book launch

17.00 Closure with drinks

More information

conference website <http://tinyurl.com/zd7esy6>

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