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Utilization-Focused Evaluation
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Utilization-Focused Evaluation Approaches and Learnings for Sustainable Development

This presentation will examine the implications of *utilization-focused evaluation* for evaluating sustainable development. I have just completed the 4th edition of the book, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, which will be published in May. Revising the book gave me the opportunity to review developments in evaluation over the last decade since the 3rd edition was published (1997). The field of evaluation has changed and developed enormously in the last 10 years, nowhere more so than in Europe. This presentation will present what I see as *the top ten new directions in evaluation over the last decade* and their implications for evaluating sustainable development.

The presentation will also address ways in which alternative theories of change directly affect how one evaluates sustainable development. Past EASY-ECO conferences have included substantial discussion about the need for operationalizing sustainability and agreeing on a standardized set of measures and evaluation methods. I shall argue that such a quest is misguided and will, instead, treat sustainability as a “sensitizing concept” rather than a concept in need of operationalization. I’ll outline the implications of evaluation use of these alternative approaches to conceptualizing sustainability.

Finally, I’ll use the *Panarchy*¹ ecological model to suggest how different evaluation approaches take precedence at different stages in a dynamic sustainability cycle.

¹ Gunderson, Lance and C.S. Holling. 2002. *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*. London: Island Press.
Westley, Frances, Brenda Zimmerman, and Michael Q. Patton. 2006. *Getting to Maybe: How the World Is Changed*. Toronto: Random House.