

## Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August, 9am-5pm: Introduction to Realist Evaluation

Instead of asking whether or not a program or intervention ‘works’, realist evaluation provides methods for determining “what works for whom in what contexts, in what respects, and how”. This type of theory-based evaluation is particularly important when new interventions are being developed; when interventions are being considered for replication or scaling up; when programs are complex or are being introduced in complex settings; or when previous evaluations of programs have found mixed outcomes.

This practical and applied program will:

- introduce the concepts that underpin realist approaches;
- explain the particular meanings, and provide examples of, the three key ideas in realist evaluation – context, mechanism and outcome;
- explain how realist program theory differs from other kinds of program theory and provide techniques for ‘getting to realist program theory’;
- introduce realist evaluation design, including aspects such as developing realist questions, selecting appropriate data collection methods, and the analytic approach;
- provide opportunities for participants to practice applying the ideas to their own policies or programs.

### **Outcomes and Benefits**

By the end of the workshop, it is expected that participants will:

- Understand where realist evaluation ‘fits’ and how it differs from other evaluation approaches (including other theory based approaches)
- Understand how to move from descriptive evaluation to explanatory evaluation;
- Be able to explain key ideas to colleagues;
- Understand how to approach realist evaluation design.

### **Target Audience**

Evaluation practitioners and commissioners in Government, NGOs, consultants, and academics will benefit from this program. evaluation (commissioning, designing and/or conducting). No experience in realist evaluation is necessary. Those with some background in realist approaches will be assisted to work at a more advanced level. This will be an applied program and all participants are requested to 'bring a program' (or policy, initiative, strategy) to work on.

