Welcome to the Evaluation Community

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I am pleased to welcome the Japan Evaluation Society to the growing global community of national and regional evaluation associations. Members of the American Evaluation Association look forward to working with you to promote evaluation use and improve evaluation practices and methods.

This inaugural issue of the Japanese Journal of Evaluation Studies is a significant step in the development of your Society. We have found that our own journals have contributed immeasurably to the advancement of evaluation theory and knowledge and to the education of readers throughout the world. We look forward to learning from the many articles that will be published in the Journal from this point on. Congratulations for this achievement. We wish you continued success in making the Japanese Journal of Evaluation Studies one of the best evaluation journals in the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite members of the Japan Evaluation Society to participate in the 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Evaluation Association. The meeting will be held in St. Louis, Missouri USA on November 7-10, 2001. Information about the meeting, and registration for the meeting, is available through our website, www.eval.org. The theme for this year’s meeting is “mainstreaming evaluation”.

This theme reflects a continuing concern in the United States that we know more about the practice of evaluation than we see practiced in public, private, and civil sectors of our society. Although evaluation studies continue to be funded by our state and federal governments, although there is a continuing use of evaluation for quality assurance in the private sector, and although there is a growing use of evaluation of programs supported by civil society, there is little evidence that an evaluation culture is developing in our organizations. Evaluations are most often done because they are mandated from outside rather than initiated from within our organizations. Continuous, self critical analyses of program inputs, activities, and outcomes as a routine part of everyday work by those who work in and support our organizations, and by those affected by them, are not easily found. Evaluation appears to be a marginal activity rather than one that is contributing visibly to organizational effectiveness.

The issue of “mainstreaming evaluation”, i.e., bringing evaluation into the conscious everyday thinking of the stakeholders of organizations, has generated a number of questions that will be addressed at the AEA meeting in November:

Why is this key professional responsibility often neglected?
Can organizations continue to thrive without it?
What can we do to make evaluation part of the everyday life of organizations?
What mainstreaming successes and failures can we learn from?
What evaluation training is needed?
What is the appropriate role for evaluation in organizations?
What role should an evaluation association play in mainstreaming evaluation?

We look forward to exploring these and other important evaluation issues with our colleagues. Please plan to join us.