

COST Action CA20112

# PARTICIPATION IN EVALUATION - PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

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CA20112 - PlatfoRm OF policy  
Evaluation community for  
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## ABOUT PROFEEDBACK

The COST Action PROFEEDBACK - PlatfoRm OF policy Evaluation community for improvED EU policies and Better ACKnowledgement (CA20112, MoU 052/21) 2021-2025 aims to foster the networking of the policy evaluation community at EU-level, raise awareness on the importance of evaluation policy research and improve its impact on policy-making. The Platform, following a bottom-up and open approach, **gathers** researchers and professionals from various scientific fields and sectors to present and evaluate theories, topics, tools and methods of policy evaluation. Results of the Europe-wide assessment of good practices **provides** direct and high-quality inputs for national and EU bodies responsible for policy evaluation. Policy evaluation is a key tool in understanding, developing and modernising EU policies, thus there is a growing demand for EU-wide and high quality evaluation services.

**The main challenge** is the shortage of sufficient bottom-up platforms for European researchers and professionals working in policy evaluation. They have limited possibilities to discuss common problems, assess country specific practices and share their knowledge in a mutually beneficial and effective way. The PROFEEDBACK Action aims **to contribute to these discussions during its four Grant Periods**, 18/10/2021 - 17/10/2025 and beyond.

The PROFEEDBACK Action has three key objectives to achieve during the Action period 18/10/2021 - 17/10/2025 and beyond.



**Foster networking and knowledge-exchange of the policy evaluation community at European level**



**Raise awareness on the importance of policy evaluation research and improve its impact on policy-making**



**Reinforce state-of-the-art research in the policy evaluation field and contribute to evaluation standards**

## ABOUT PROFEEDbook7

In the framework of the PROFEEDBACK Action, one conference every half-year is implemented. After each conference thematic deliverables are issued, the so called PROFEEDbooks (D4.1-D4.8). They summarise the main presentations and results of the conferences.

PROFEEDbooks support multidisciplinary, the systematisation of different methodologies and the exact transfer of know-how for the policy evaluation community. These also serve the interests of European and national policy-makers in developing the frameworks of the next programming periods and of a common European evaluation culture.

In addition, the PROFEEDbooks enrich the literature of public policy, aiming to develop theory, knowledge, method and tool base of European evaluation policy as well as a common understanding of the current problems and challenges. PROFEEDbooks support the Action in reaching audience beyond the Action members.

The **7th PROFEEDBACK Conference** in Tirana focused on **participatory evaluation practices** aimed at enhancing inclusivity, credibility, and direct community engagement in policy assessment. Held on October 1, 2024, in Albania, the event explored how involving communities, policy beneficiaries, and diverse stakeholders can transform evaluation outcomes, making them more accurate and attuned to actual needs. Key sessions highlighted participatory evaluation's role in building trust, empowering stakeholders, and facilitating real-time learning, ultimately strengthening policy relevance and impact.

The conference gathered experts from 11 countries, including emerging evaluators, to share best practices for fostering inclusive, responsive evaluation processes. Discussions addressed how participatory methods add value by aligning policies more closely with on-the-ground realities.

The conference took place in **Tirana, Albania**, on **October 1, 2024**.

The event was organized by the **University of New York Tirana**.

The graphic features a white rectangular panel tilted slightly to the right. A thick, horizontal olive green bar crosses the upper portion of the panel. A thick, horizontal dark blue bar crosses the lower portion of the panel. The text 'Panel Number One' is centered on the white panel in a bold, olive green, sans-serif font.

# **Panel Number One**



**Matteo Moscatelli, Nicoletta Pavesi, Elisabetta Carrà**

**Università Cattolica di Milano, Italy**

**EVALUATING THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILIES WELLBEING FOR LOCAL WELFARE PLANNING: A CASE STUDY OF THE VENETO REGION USING THE PARTECIPATORY FAMILENS© APPROACH**

**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the pluralization of local welfare actors in the Veneto Region of Italy, focusing on the role of families in promoting well-being. Specifically, the study explores whether and how local programming and planning interventions recognize families and foster their active involvement, assessing the extent to which families are recognized as active participants in local welfare systems. Researchers adopt the FamILens approach (Carrà, Moscatelli, 2024), a framework based on six principles—Accountability, Stability, Family Relations, Diversity, Involvement, and Family Networks—to assess local welfare policies. Methodology included a content analysis of the Local Welfare Area Plans (LWAP) (2023-2025), the design of a 31-item survey tool validated by 20 experts, and an interview involving 600 professionals participating in local welfare area plans (LWAP). The findings highlight families' involvement in well-being production; specifically, in LWAP, families are considered active participants or are encouraged to enhance their skills, even when facing particular vulnerabilities. Conversely, a notable weakness is that family associations remain underrepresented in territorial networks, and some difficulties emerged in the LWAP's capacity to promote the stability and enhancement of family relationships.

**AUTHOR(S) - Matteo Moscatelli, Nicoletta Pavesi, Elisabetta Carrà**



**Matteo Moscatelli**, researcher, teaches general sociology at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart. He is a collaborator of the Family Studies and Research University Centre. He is a member, from 2021, of the scientific council of the Social Policy section of the Italian Association of Sociology. His main research topics are about quality of social services, social innovation, intergenerational solidarity, and couple wellbeing.

**Nicoletta Pavesi** is a graduate in philosophy with a PhD in sociology and social research. Methodology is Associate Professor in Sociology (SPS/07) at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the Catholic University in Milan. Professor of Applied Sociology and of the Laboratory of theory and methodology of relational social work in the Master's Degree course in social work and services for families, minors, and communities. Coordinator of the editorial office of the journal of Sociology Studies.

**Elisabetta Carrà**, full professor, teaches sociology of the family and sociology of models of welfare for minors and families at the Faculty of Psychology of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart. She is part of the Scientific Council of the Family Studies and Research University Centre, where she leads the Family Impact Team; she is a member of the National Family Observatory. Her main research topics are about family changes and the impact of policies and interventions on family relationships.



**Martina Kubíková**

**Prague University of Economics and Business, Czech Republic**

## **ASSESSING DIGITALISATION: A RURAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT APPROACH**

### **ABSTRACT**

The digitalization landscape within EU member states is characterized by significant contrasts, particularly between urban centers and rural areas. This paper examines how regions with developed digital infrastructure are more inclined to integrate digital technologies into their planning processes. Our participatory evaluation approach, involving 241 stakeholders from various rural areas, was pivotal in addressing the data gap at regional levels.

The European Commission's Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) provides a valuable framework for assessing national digital performance. However, the limitation of the data to the national level fails to acknowledge the nuances within countries. Our study addresses this oversight by employing expert interviews to explore digitalization in the rural Czech Republic, revealing significant disparities.

Our theoretical framework is rooted in inclusive policy-making principles, focusing on bridging these data gaps through stakeholder engagement. The participatory evaluation process enabled a two-way knowledge exchange and enriched our analysis with stakeholders' experiences. Participatory methods presented challenges, including the management of diverse perspectives and the maintenance of methodological rigor. Our findings corroborate the hypothesis, indicating a positive correlation between robust digital infrastructures and proactive digital adoption in planning. This emphasizes the significance of participatory evaluations that assess infrastructure while fostering stakeholder collaboration in policy development.

This research contributes to the discourse on participatory evaluation by highlighting its application in digital policy-making and addressing regional data gaps. It provides methodological insights, ethical considerations, and lessons learned with implications for evaluations across different regions and countries.

## **AUTHOR(S) - Martina Kubíková**



**Martina Kubíková** is a PhD candidate at the Prague University of Economic and Business, specializing in regional studies. Her doctoral research focuses on the challenges of digitalization and the methods of measuring and evaluating this complex process. A primary theme of her research is the varied implementation levels of digital technologies across different regions. She is particularly interested in exploring the barriers to digitalization in rural areas to identify strategies to mitigate the urban-rural digital divide. Additionally, she is involved in research projects regarding coal transformation processes and supporting women entrepreneurs in transitioning to a circular economy.



**Ferlanda Luna**

**University of Coimbra, Portugal**

**EYES AND VOICES ON THE STREET: MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS**

**ABSTRACT**


The unequal urban development resulted in cities marked by social divisions and inadequate infrastructure. At this point, the climate crisis worsened this context. The vulnerable population that lives in slums does not feel seen or heard in mitigating the consequences of floods resulting from the new climate cycles. An ethnographic study in southern Bahia (Brazil) focuses on two cities displacing over 5,000 families impacted by floods. Due to this scenario, emerging contingency plans have arisen for the present and future crisis management. The biggest challenge is to integrate the participation of vulnerable people in the process of shaping new public policies to face climate change. As ongoing research, until this phase of the ethnography, the data collection focused on the key actors from the public administration and the residents of neighborhoods affected by the flood in 2021. The paper aims to interpret urban development public policies in light of the concept of climate justice, questioning the disjunction between the formal regime of spatial planning and the concrete practices of the state apparatus in the face of social segregation arising from this process, shedding light on the community perspective affected by disasters, worsened due to climate change events, and giving them voice and visibility to create inclusive and resilient spaces.

## AUTHOR(S) - Ferlanda Luna



**Ferlanda Luna** is a lawyer and PhD candidate in Political Economy at the Centre for Social Studies (CES) at the University of Coimbra. She specializes in "Public Policies, Social, and Collective Rights" and has an MA in Regional Economics and Public Policy (UESC), Brazil. She has been a Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology PhD fellow (2023-2027). Her research interests relate to studies about the right to the city and public policies for urban development focused on formal settlements by encompassing social and economic indicators to improve local public policies. Currently, her PhD research involves urban informality and the climate crisis from the perspective of mitigation of the consequences of climate change through the lens of social justice in two medium-sized Brazilian cities. The research aims to use multi-level governance concepts and law regulation to discuss policymakers' responsibilities to manage and evaluate measures to face the vulnerabilities of risk areas within the context of climate change.





# **Panel Number Two**

**Andrea Wandinger, João Rocha-Gomes**

**HAW Hamburg, Germany**

**Univesity of Porto, Portugal**

## **COLLABORATIVE CURATORIAL PRACTICES: NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND LEVERAGING PARTICIPATORY METHODS**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the imperative and efficacy of institution-critical, student-led cultural initiatives within artistic design academies in Hamburg, with a particular focus on the HFBK and HAW Hamburg. The broader context of this investigation stems from the notion that exhibition spaces can transcend their traditional role as mere collections of artifacts, serving instead as vital arenas for critical pedagogy and reflection (Sternfeld, 2016). The central question addressed is whether exhibition contexts can be references for critical teaching and learning, or if they are merely precursors to their total economicization, and what this implies for critical mediation practices. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing case studies of student-curated exhibitions at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences and the Hamburg University of Fine Arts. Data were collected through participant observations, in-depth interviews with student curators, and analysis of curatorial documents and exhibition materials. The study focuses on the processes and outcomes of using participatory methods, including group decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and reflective practices. Participation in this context involves active collaboration among student curators, faculty mentors, and community stakeholders. The paper details how students employed various participatory techniques, such as collaborative brainstorming sessions, feedback loops with diverse audience groups, and inclusive decision-making processes. These methods facilitated a democratic and reflective curatorial process, ensuring that multiple perspectives were considered and integrated into the final exhibitions.

The findings reveal that participatory methods significantly enhanced the curatorial process by fostering a sense of ownership and engagement among all participants. Students reported that the collaborative approach enriched the exhibitions' content and diversity and developed their criticalthinking and problem-solving skills. However, challenges such as coordinating schedules, managing differing opinions, and ensuring equitable participation were also noted.

The study concludes that while participatory methods and incuratorial practices present specific challenges, their benefits in creating more inclusive and reflective exhibitions outweigh the difficulties. The paper suggests that embedding these methods into the curatorial curriculum can enhance student learning outcomes and better prepare future curators for the collaborative nature of professional curatorial work. Recommendations for

improving participatory practices and addressing identified challenges inform future curatorial projects. The study examines the imperative and efficacy of institution-critical, student-led cultural initiatives within artistic design academies in Hamburg, with a particular focus on the HFBK and HAW Hamburg. The broader context of this investigation stems from the notion that exhibition spaces can transcend their traditional role as mere collections of artifacts, serving instead as vital arenas for critical pedagogy and reflection (Sternfeld, 2016). The central question addressed is whether exhibition contexts can be references for critical teaching and learning, or if they are merely precursors to their total economicization, and what this implies for critical mediation practices.

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## AUTHOR(S) - Andrea Wandinger, João Rocha-Gomes



**Andrea Wandinger** is pursuing academic research in book and editorial illustration at the Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg. As an illustrator and visual artist, Andrea focuses on research in accessible knowledge transmission through visual tools. Her Bachelor thesis explored emancipatory flânerie through an illustrated non-fiction book, which will be published this year by Raum Italic. Andrea is currently developing a book concept about urban park culture and its utopian potential as part of her academic work. Passionate about intersectional feminism, accessibility, culture, and urban spaces, Andrea's work aims to blend visual storytelling with social issues. .

**João Rocha Gomes** is a medical doctor and health economist with experience in both clinical and digital health sectors. Currently pursuing a PhD in Health Data Science at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Porto, his research aims to leverage data-driven approaches to improve healthcare outcomes. As an invited lecturer at the same institution, João teaches DigitalHealth, where he integrates his expertise in health economics and technology. In addition to his academic contributions, he holds leadership positions in biotech and digital health ventures. His work is dedicated to bridging the gap between academic research and industry, with a focus on developing scalable solutions to democratize access to healthcare globally.

**Renata Martins Pacheco , Vincent Caruana**  
**University of Lisbon, Portugal**  
**University of Malta, Malta**

## **SUSTAINABLE EVALUATION OF WILDFIRE POLICIES FOR ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE: A HOLISTIC APPROACH**

### **ABSTRACT**

The escalation of wildfires in Mediterranean Europe, accentuated by climate change, poses significant challenges. Among its repercussions, the impact on forest ecosystem services (ES) stands out. This study aims to not only identify current policies and needs post-wildfire in Portugal but also analyze the alignment of participatory methods used with best practices in education for sustainable development, paving the way for enhanced and innovative strategies. Furthermore, it highlights the potential for developing educational programmes that engage communities and wildfire experts in participatory evaluation processes to enrich policy decisions. Additionally, a framework is proposed to integrate sustainable development education into policy evaluation, emphasizing informed citizen participation in environmental policy-making.

An online survey targeting Portuguese wildfire experts was conducted. Using TEEB standards, experts identified ES affected by wildfires, assessed existing policies, and pinpointed areas requiring specific policy interventions.

Experts' informal knowledge sharing plays a crucial role in raising awareness about wildfires and their aftermath. This study underscores the importance of actively integrating such insights into scientific research, policy formulation, and evaluation processes. The participatory approach employed enhances the relevance and effectiveness of existing ES policies while highlighting the need for further policy development.

By exploring wildfire impacts, policy relevance, and expert-suggested needs, this study offers valuable insights for evaluating, revising, and establishing policies. Such participatory approaches not only enrich research across various domains but also prove instrumental in policymaking amidst rapidly evolving climatic conditions.

Sustaining and restoring ES is imperative for human system resilience. This study advocates for the advancement of participatory policy evaluation methods and emphasizes the importance of involving communities and experts in shaping policy decisions. It underscores the significance of integrating sustainable development education into policy evaluation, underscoring the pivotal role of informed citizen participation in environmental policy formation.

**AUTHOR(S) - Renata Martins Pacheco , Vincent Caruana**



**Renata Martins Pacheco**, post-doctoral fellow at the Center for Applied Ecology, Professor BaetaNeves. Major in Sanitary and Environmental Engineering and Master's in Environmental Engineering from the Federal University of Santa Catarina-Brazil. Ph.D. in Engineering and Public Policy from the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto. Has worked as an assistant in research projects on groundwater remediation and carbon sequestration (2012-2013). Worked at the Federal University of Santa Catarina in the institution's environmental management sector (2013-2021). She was also visiting professor for three semesters (2019-2020) at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto, being responsible for the practical classes in the disciplines of Economics and Management and Business Management.

**Vincent Caruana's** mission in life is to inspire people to take action for a better self and a better world. In 1991, he obtained an honors degree in education from the University of Malta, specializing in physics and mathematics. Three years later, he obtained a diploma in political studies from the same university. Subsequently, between 1995 and 1998, he studied environmental and development education, obtaining a M.Sc. through London South Bank University. In 2014, he obtained his PhD, focusing on education for sustainability and the social economy. Vince is currently a full-time lecturer and researcher at CEER, Malta's University Centre for Environmental Education and Research. He is an established mentor and trainer of various Civil Society Organisations and is also experienced in project management and participatory monitoring and evaluation. Other research interests include social enterprises, agroecology, permaculture, and peer mentoring.





**Vincent Caruana**

**University of Malta, Malta**

## **PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION IN SUSTAINABLE CAMPUSES: CASE STUDIES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA AND BRAZIL**

### **ABSTRACT**

The imperative for educational institutions to contribute to sustainable development has never been more pressing, as highlighted by Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goals 4.7, 12.8, and 13.3 underscore the crucial role of education in fostering sustainable development and climate action. This abstract presents case studies from the University of Malta (UM) and the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) in Brazil, showcasing participatory evaluation approaches to developing sustainability policies in higher education. At the University of Malta, the process began with a comprehensive needs analysis involving academic staff, administrative staff, and students. This needs analysis aimed at capturing the current state and aspirations of stakeholders, leading to actionable recommendations for short-term, medium-term, and long-term sustainability initiatives. In Brazil, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) was used to assess the sustainability of UFSC's campuses, providing a robust framework for evaluating organizational processes and sustainability practices. The participatory process at UM involved three surveys targeting different stakeholder groups, followed by workshops to discuss findings and formulate recommendations. As a member of the Committee for Sustainability at the University of Malta (CSUM), I also facilitated participatory workshops with university staff and sustainability leaders, enabling them to define their terms of reference and identify effective contributions to the university's sustainability goals. In Brazil, my co-author's research used STARS to engage stakeholders in evaluating and improving the sustainability practices of UFSC's campuses, addressing the unique challenges of a developing country. She was also part of the UFSC's newly established Sustainable Logistics Management Plan Committee, which aimed to increase the sustainability of the institution through multisectoral engagement and participation. At UM, the participatory evaluation led to a strategic policy document that exemplifies the whole-institution approach to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Preliminary results indicate increased stakeholder engagement and a clear roadmap for implementing sustainability initiatives. In Brazil, the STARS assessment revealed that UFSC did not have stable and structured sustainability practices, highlighting the significant role of the federal government in promoting sustainability policies. The comparative component offers valuable insights into the different contexts and challenges faced by higher education institutions in developed and developing countries.

These case studies underscore the transformative potential of participatory evaluation in advancing sustainability in higher education. By engaging stakeholders at all levels, institutions can ensure that they not only teach sustainability but also embody it in their operations and culture. Comparative insights from Malta and Brazil highlight the universal applicability and adaptability of participatory approaches, ultimately contributing to a sustainable future for all.

## **AUTHOR(S) - Vincent Caruana**



**Vincent Caruana's** mission in life is to inspire people to take action for a better self and a better world. In 1991, he obtained an honors degree in education from the University of Malta, specializing in physics and mathematics. Three years later, he obtained a diploma in political studies from the same university. Subsequently, between 1995 and 1998, he studied environmental and development education, obtaining a M.Sc. through London South Bank University. In 2014, he obtained his PhD, focusing on education for sustainability and the social economy. Vince is currently a full-time lecturer and researcher at CEER, Malta's University Centre for Environmental Education and Research. He is an established mentor and trainer of various Civil Society Organisations and is also experienced in project management and participatory monitoring and evaluation. Other research interests include social enterprises, agroecology, permaculture, and peer mentoring.



# **Panel Number Three**

**Dr. Muhammad Asaduzzaman, Elena Boriani**  
**University of Oslo, Norway**

**PRAGMATIC AND SUSTAINABLE MODELS OF SYSTEMS THINKING FOR  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY ON  
FOOD VALUE CHAIN**

**ABSTRACT**

Systems thinking is fundamentally an effort to understand how objects relate to one another within some conception of a larger whole. Systems thinking and inter/transdisciplinarity to analyze and solve health-related problems have gained momentum during the last years, also stimulated by the affirmation of various multidisciplinary principles such as One Health (OH) or Planetary Health (PH). The trend toward OH is mainly guided by international institutions (WHO, OIE, FAO), a few national and supranational governments, research institutions, and NGOs around the world, which often provide methodological guidelines to implement the above-mentioned approaches (15). This paper shares the assumption that the diffusion of OH/PH would benefit many stakeholders (e.g., professionals, policymakers, and researchers) who face complex, practical problems in their daily work. The paradigm shift toward such innovative approaches is possible at the cost of challenging and eventually innovating ordinary working routines, but this in turn requires individual and organizational investments that might discourage even the most willing ones.

The aims and challenges of this paper are to show that, in the design of multidisciplinary initiatives, several steps can be conveniently moved in a simple and intuitive way without misrepresenting the theoretical background of systems thinking, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity. Though often misused, the latter terms identify quite different ways to produce knowledge. As per Choi and Pak (1), multidisciplinary can be characterized as a form of additive juxtaposition, associated with multiple existing disciplines that remain within their boundaries; interdisciplinarity as an interactive and integrating activity pursued among existing disciplines that are in a reciprocal relationship to one another, highlighting links and possible syntheses, but with each discipline keeping its independence; and transdisciplinarity as a holistic activity, transgressing and transforming knowledge from different scientific disciplines, professionals, and other stakeholders (17-19). Defining the system and identifying the dimensions and the boundaries of health initiatives are the preliminary and fundamental steps of the system approach required by systems thinking (5). Building up a system is mutually linked with the identification of the scientific and institutional competences to be integrated for the solution of the addressed problems in a transdisciplinary context (2). Several methodologies allow putting together and building up on different kinds of evidence and

perspectives (e.g., from different sources, on different scales, more or less fine-grained) that originate not only from different disciplinary and sectoral backgrounds but also from diverse cultural and social visions and economic interests. Stakeholder Analysis (6,7), the Delphi (7) technique, and the multi-criteria analysis (8-11) are some examples. These participatory methods imply the discussion and the contribution of the stakeholders involved in the initiative, the representation of the examined issue from their different points of view, and the use of systems mapping and causal loop diagrams capturing the discussion outcomes.

In this paper, an innovative stakeholder engagement procedure has been proposed that eases the integration of the needed competences and the identification of the elements essential to the design of a systems approach. A simplified cognitive process is designed to exploit existing disciplinary, fragmented standpoints to attain systemic knowledge. The hallmark of the approach advanced here is integration, supported by using graphical representation to outline the salient elements of the system. The diagrams derived from the cognitive process can be adapted to overview a system and identify stakeholders expertise and disciplines that are needed to solve the related issues. This procedure, while clearly identifying necessary activities and by whom they should be undertaken, may lead to more efficient and collaborative work involving different disciplines. It may also adopt an iterative participatory process that involves third parties.

Our proposed method is meant to help stakeholder engagement, particularly researchers, policymakers, and any organization dealing with complex global health problems, find more efficient and effective solutions. The method is targeted to a very specific aspect of their work in the context of a wider process, leading from health problems to solutions through a holistic understanding. Nevertheless, should it demonstrate effectiveness, we expect that the whole society will gain benefits at different levels. A better understanding of global health problem complexity (e.g., human-animal-environment interface) may translate into more effective health care protocols directly affecting citizens' health standards. Further, multidisciplinary stakeholder policy strategies may improve and obtain a more effective use of the existing resources. This would directly affect the wider stakeholder community in the health system at various levels, with a possible indirect effect on citizens' welfare with multiple effects.

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## **LEVERAGING PARTICIPATORY METHODS FOR EVALUATING DIGITAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS: A CASE STUDY APPROACH**

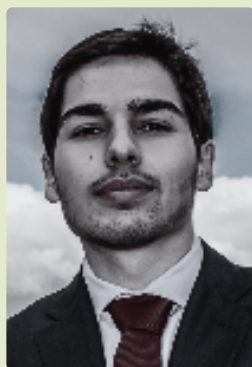
### **ABSTRACT**

This paper analyzes the impact of participatory evaluation methods on digital health interventions. By involving diverse stakeholders, the study aims to enhance the effectiveness and user acceptance of digital health solutions. A mixed-methods approach gathered qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data came from interviews and focus groups with 45 participants, including patients, healthcare professionals, and digital health developers. Quantitative data were from three case studies, focusing on metrics such as user satisfaction, health outcomes, and system usability. Data analysis involved thematic coding for qualitative data and statistical analysis for quantitative metrics.

Participatory evaluation of digital health interventions yielded significant outcomes. A mobile health app for chronic disease management saw a 35% increase in user satisfaction and a 25% improvement in patient adherence. An online mental health support platform experienced a 40% reduction in depression and anxiety symptoms. A telehealth service for remote areas led to a 50% increase in healthcare access, reducing travel time and costs for 70% of users.

Collectively, these interventions involved 150 stakeholders, ensuring tailored solutions. Participatory methods identified and mitigated barriers like digital literacy and infrastructure limitations, improving implementation success. The study highlights the value of participatory evaluation in digital health projects. By involving stakeholders, digital health interventions are better tailored to user needs, enhancing usability and outcomes. The findings advocate for broader adoption of participatory methods in health technology evaluations to ensure effective healthcare solutions. Policymakers and providers should integrate these methods into their evaluation frameworks to foster innovation and improve health outcomes.

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**João Rocha-Gomes** is a medical doctor and health economist with experience in both clinical and digital health sectors. Currently pursuing a PhD in Health Data Science at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Porto, his research aims to leverage data-driven approaches to improve healthcare outcomes. As an invited lecturer at the same institution, João teaches Digital Health, where he integrates his expertise in health economics and technology. In addition to his academic contributions, he holds leadership positions in biotech and digital health ventures. His work is dedicated to bridging the gap between academic research and industry, with a focus on developing scalable solutions to democratize access to healthcare globally.

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to explore the theoretical foundations, methods, implementation, preliminary results, and concluding remarks of applying participatory methods in subject assessment in China. Focusing on educational policies and China discipline assessment in higher education. The study analyzes the application of participatory approaches across different stages of evaluation, from design to data collection, analysis, and reporting. The author discusses the pros and cons of using participatory methods within China's specific cultural and policy contexts, examines methodological and interpretative limitations, and summarizes practical lessons learned. This study highlights the importance of incorporating stakeholders lived experiences to enhance the evaluation process and outcomes in the Chinese educational context. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. Interviews and surveys were conducted with educators, students, and other stakeholders to gather diverse perspectives. Based on this collected data, a SWOT analysis was conducted to evaluate the application of participatory methods in China Discipline Assessment. Stakeholders, including educators, students, and educational administrators, were involved at various stages of the evaluation. Their input was solicited during the design phase, data collection, and analysis.

This inclusive approach aimed to ensure that the evaluations reflect the lived experiences and insights of those directly impacted by educational policies. Initial findings indicate that participatory methods significantly enhance the relevance and accuracy of the China Discipline Assessment. Stakeholders reported feeling more valued and engaged, leading to more candid and insightful feedback, which helped identify gaps and areas for improvement that traditional methods might overlook. However, this approach is resource-intensive, presents potential biases, involves analytical complexity, and the diversity of feedback can sometimes result in divergent opinions, making consensus more challenging to achieve.

The study concludes that participatory methods are a valuable tool in the assessment of academic subjects in China. By incorporating stakeholders perspectives, evaluations become more comprehensive and actionable. Future research should continue to refine these methods and explore their applicability in other educational contexts. The findings underscore the potential for participatory approaches to transform subject assessment practices, leading to better educational outcomes.



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**Yang Yang** is a PhD candidate in Comparative Higher Education at Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary, where her research focuses on quality assurance systems in higher education. She holds both her Master's degrees and PhD studies as a recipient of the Chinese Scholarship Council. In addition to her academic pursuits, Yang serves as an education assistant at the Cultural and Educational Affairs Office of the Chinese Embassy in Hungary and actively participates in projects at the Hungarian government-affiliated think tank, Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC). She has previously worked as a teacher at the Confucius Institute of Eötvös Loránd University, a foreign affairs officer at the Shaanxi Provincial Department of Education, and an assistant to the dean at a higher education institution in Xi'an. Yang's research on quality assurance systems within higher education is critical in an era of increasing global academic mobility and institutional accountability. By examining how these systems function across different regions, her work aims to enhance the credibility and standards of higher education institutions, ensuring that students receive a high-quality, globally recognized education. This research not only contributes to institutional development but also plays a key role in international collaboration and the overall improvement of educational standards worldwide.



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