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| Title of the abstract | Shifting focus in a VUCA world: From impact obsession to design evaluation |
| Conference session | □ Stream A. Responsive National Evaluation Systems  □**X. Stream B. Inclusive National Evaluation Systems**  *Alternatively:*  **□** Stream C. Future Driven Systems and Approaches |
| Name(s), title(s) and institutional affiliation(s) of all other authors/contributors (if applicable) | *n/a* |
| Preferred format: | □**X**  **Formal presentation** (maximum 10 minutes)  □ Participation in a panel discussion where the experience can be shared  □ Participation in an interactive session where the example can be shared, without a formal presentation  □Other (please specify): |
| I will need to apply for bursary support, if selected. | □ Yes  □ **No** |
| Language to be used for presentation | □ **English** □ French □ Spanish □ Chinese |

**NEC Abstract Text (max. 500 words)**

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| There is much focus in national evaluation systems and in the world of development more broadly on evaluating the impact of policies, strategies and interventions. While this remains important for both learning and accountability purposes, we have to recognise that we live in a VUCA world – a world defined by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. We have to be better prepared for uncertain situations, and able to manage the associated risks. Overly simplistic theories of change continue to be common, and together with results-based management approaches tend to assume a static situation or linear progression towards the future, often over a period of 3-5 years or more.  The chance to get positive impact can increase greatly if we shift more attention to better using the value of evaluation for front-end work, before implementation or well before results start to show - specifically, having a stronger focus on ‘design evaluation’, whether of policies, strategies, portfolios or programmes. Especially when working towards systemic or transformative change, as required by the 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), design evaluation can bolster efforts towards desired changes.  However, this requires evaluation questions and criteria well beyond convention, among others engaging with systems thinking and complexity concepts applied in practice. This becomes even more important when testing whether the scaling of an intervention is appropriate.  This presentation will highlight the importance of this shift, and the implications in practice for evaluation questions and criteria – including in efforts to achieve change at scale. |