



Structured evaluation & learning in the New Economy field

Background note - Evaluation & Learning Cohort

This background note looks at publicly available evidence of structured evaluation and learning in the New Economy field. Across 77 New Economy initiatives with systemic or global mission statements, **no self-published evaluation assessments could be found** regarding organisations' own work.

In two cases, references were found to evaluations carried out by external consultancy firms, however the results do not appear to have been published. In two additional cases, independent assessments produced by third parties are available.¹

The original goal of the website review was to identify emerging shared capacity challenges at the level of individual New Economy organisations. International non-profits like Oxfam or Save the Children regularly publish evaluations on their websites, covering both their service delivery and policy advocacy programmes.²

Considering the smaller size and shorter trajectory of New Economy organisations, the expectation was that the number of evaluation reports published would be

¹ The collected data (google sheet) is available on request from mheywood@eps.institute. Links to New Economy evaluation reports regarding organisations' own work are welcome, whether commissioned from external consultants or produced by an internal team; as new data becomes available I will update the data sheet and this research note accordingly.

² See for example Oxfam's publications page; applying the filter for "evaluation reports" yields 326 available resources as of October 2026.
<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/?type=evaluation-report&subject=&country=&language=&order=date%7CDESC#filter-results>

limited. As the initial scan of websites progressed, it became apparent that in fact very few, if any, self-published evaluation reports were available.

The review of New Economy websites was rerun with a systematic approach to data collection in September and October of 2026, with similar results. Over 40% of the organisations reviewed have published impact or annual reports, yet self-published evaluation reports could not be found.³

While this descriptive finding requires extensive further research, it raises initial questions around learning and adaptiveness in New Economy organisations.

Evaluation reports are primarily a tool for organisational learning, helping organisations to reflect on their own approach and projects, including what is working less well. A core purpose of regular evaluation is to inform adaptive organisational strategies: “Assessment is not just an academic review or an isolated exercise; it serves as a guide for the nonprofit’s actions.”⁴

Publication of evaluations has an accountability component, but is also an indicator of organisational culture. In addition, shared evaluations can contribute to collective learning within a field or sector.⁵

Learning and adaptiveness become particularly relevant when considering the scale of ambition in the New Economy field. Examples of mission statements and strategic goals among the organisations reviewed include:⁶

- “Transforming the global economy to benefit all people, communities, and the planet.”
- “We build paths towards fair, sustainable, and joyful societies.”
- “...reinvigorate democratic institutions on the path towards a more inclusive political economy.”
- “...championing change-making collaborations for a just and regenerative world”

³ Please see the Annex for the data collection approach.

⁴ ‘Leap of Reason: Managing to Outcomes in an Age of Scarcity’ Mario Morino et al (2011). Available as a pdf for free download via <https://leapofreason.org/>.

⁵ “Publishing these findings is part of our accountability to our supporters and the people we work with around the world, but we also hope these lessons will be of benefit to the wider aid sector.” ‘Oxfam’s Impact: A Decade of Insight’ *Oxfam* (2023) https://www.oxfam.org.uk/documents/669/Oxfam_ImpactReport2023.pdf

⁶ The quotes in this section are taken directly from New Economy organisations’ websites and documents. Names are withheld as these examples are broadly illustrative of the field as a whole and the purpose of the exercise is not to assess or compare individual organisations.

- “...to create a new economy that is democratic, sustainable and just.”

Intermediate and national-level outcomes can also be large in both scale and scope, for instance:

- “A critical mass of the population understands that the economy is the key driver of the problems they face and that systemic changes are needed.”
- “Within 10 years all UK businesses act as a 'force for good' by default, operating for the benefit of all their stakeholders.”

When pursuing ambitious goals with scarce resources, the ability to track progress and course correct in the short-term becomes essential. Initial conversations with staff and leadership of New Economy organisations have indicated that, beyond donor-required project evaluations, opportunities for organisational reflection are indeed limited.

It has to be recognised that, in particular when first implemented, evaluation is not a risk-free tool. It can have negative short-term impacts on organisations, in particular if it affects funding.⁷

At the same time, organisational size should usually not be seen as an insurmountable barrier to the introduction of evaluation methods, with a range of open source tools and approaches available.⁸

As a contribution to field-wide learning, the next section outlines a newly developed evaluation approach, developed specifically for New Economy organisations by the EPSI with partner organisation Collaborative Impact.⁹

⁷ “The first time they conduct a rigorous assessment, nonprofits stand to lose as much as they might gain. Should their results provide evidence of significant impact, securing resources for their operations will be easier. However, poor results or—even worse—a misinterpretation of results could very well lead to lower levels of financial support, and even de-funding.” Leap of Reason.

⁸ “No one would expect, for example, that small organizations with budgets under \$1 million a year would invest hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars in building fancy performance management systems to monitor results in real time. But even the smallest organizations can find ideas here to help them manage in a way that allows them to know whether they’re making a difference or not.” Leap of Reason.

⁹ <https://collabimpact.org/>

Evaluation & Learning Cohort – New Economy

The Evaluation & Learning Cohort – New Economy (ELC) provides a structured space and process for a small, time-bound Cohort of New Economy organisations to voluntarily have their individual work independently evaluated.

In addition to the value of structured reflection to individual organisations, the Cohort model allows for the ongoing sharing of lessons learned and reflections among peers.

Collective Cohort-level reflections will be published and shared with the broader field; the publication of individual evaluation reports is encouraged but not required. Evaluation teams will also capture and publish learnings regarding the application of structured evaluation methods in the New Economy field.

Outcomes include:

- Individual organisations make a specific, self-defined strategic choice or organisational adaptation as a result of the learning and evaluation process
- A Cohort synthesis report captures common patterns and differences among participating organisations (without forcing consensus)
- Increased understanding of evaluation requirements particular to the New Economy field.

The first Cohort aims to launch as a pilot in Q1 2027. Organisations with potential interest are invited to contact Max on mheywood@eps.institute for an introductory call and presentation with the project leads.

October 2026

Contact:

Max Heywood

Coordinator – Economic & Political Systems Institute (EPSI)

mheywood@eps.institute

Mobile / WA / Signal: +49 (0) 176 8033 0926

Annex: Data collection approach

The goal of the website review was to find evaluation reports self-published by New Economy organisations. For the purposes of this review, an evaluation report (including website pages) is defined as a publication that, at a minimum, includes:

- Findings generated by a data collection system set up to monitor progress towards project or organisational goals
- Reflections and lessons learned drawing on the findings and data collected
- Forward-looking suggestions for project design, organisational strategy, workplans or ways of working.

Evaluation reports can be independently produced e.g. by a professional evaluator, or internally coordinated e.g. by a Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) specialist.

Collection process

The source lists of New Economy organisations are the New Economy Index for Europe (<https://neweconomyindex.eu/#/>) and the New Economy Coalition site for the U.S. (<https://neweconomy.net/>). No overview for New Economy organisations in the Global South could be found.

Organisations were selected based on the description on the source list sites, according to whether they are directly working towards systemic change (rather than on a specific policy area or in a particular subnational region).

The website review sequence was:

- Homepage
- About page and similar pages e.g. “What We do” and “Who We Are”, including subpages such as “Our organisation”
- Publications page, or equivalents including “Media & Reports”, “Case Studies”
- “Latest” or “News” pages
- Accountability, Impact and annual reports pages
- Website footers: scan for additional relevant links
- Search engines: “[Organisation name]” + “Evaluation” on [google.com](https://www.google.com) and [noaiduckduckgo](https://www.noaiduckduckgo.com). Where organisations operated in a language other than English, the search was also done using the translated term for Evaluation (via DeepL) e.g. “Evaluierung” in German.