

CONTACT DETAILS



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Brighton, UK

EDUCATION

PhD | Media & Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science

MSc New Media, Information and

Society, LSE

BA (hons) Mass Media and Communication, Panteion University Athens, Greece

LANGUAGES

Greek (native speaker)

English (fluently)

French (basic)

EVANGELIA BERDOU

Senior independent MEL expert specialising in value-adding, stakeholder-centred, learning-oriented systems and outputs

EXPERTISE

Substantial expertise (> 15 years) in MEL and applied research in international development designing, implementing, leading, managing and quality assuring the successful delivery of a significant number of studies and evaluations for the British Government (FCDO, Defra, DFID), WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the European Commission. Key strengths include creating engaging products, services, and processes that cater to the immediate and long-term learning needs of diverse stakeholders, fostering both downward and upward accountability, adaptive management, and strategic thinking, including through responsible use of Al.

SECTORS

Multisectoral experience: led and delivered studies and MEL for environmental conservation/restoration, in support of livelihoods and poverty reduction, health (incl. SRHR and implementation research), inclusive governance, citizen voice, transparency and accountability (esp. for improved access to public services), evidence uptake and knowledge to policy translation, ICTs and human development, capacity building, peer-topeer collaboration, open source and open data. Evangelia excels at designing integrated monitoring systems that streamline analyses and create opportunities for learning for complex, multi-country portfolio programmes.

METHODOLOGIES

Experienced in the design and application of a range of M&E approaches, including theory-based methods, results frameworks (inc. logframes), outcome harvesting and mapping, portfolio syntheses, and most significant change. Evangelia has applied these approaches in the context of realist, developmental, utilisation-focused, process and impact evaluations and participatory M&E. She is a strong proponent of mixed-methods research and designs that leverage the best of passive, routine programme data and secondary information sources. She is especially proficient in qualitative data collection and analysis (individual semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and ethnographic observations), as well as in survey design and quantitative analysis (descriptive, inferential, multivariate statistics). One of her strengths is the ability to combine data science techniques (e.g., text analysis, automating data cleaning and wrangling and social media analytics) with information visualisation, informed by social science and MEL sensitivity, and guided by design thinking and a deep understanding of requirements of aid professionals.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- QDAS: MAXQDA, NVivo, Atlas
- Business Intelligence: Microsoft Power BI (advanced) and Tableau (intermediate)
- Graphic Design: Adobe InDesign and Illustrator (intermediate)
- Data science: R, (advanced), Python (beginner)
- Generative AI: prompt engineering for ChatGPT and other LLMs, design and deployment of custom AI agents using ChatGPT and open models, Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) pipeline design using local LLMs (e.g. via Ollama), proficient in Midjourney for AI-generated image creation and iteration, ethical guidance and training content development for responsible AI use in MEL.

COUNTRY EXPERIENCE

Egypt, Finland, Greece, India, Norway, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Tanzania, UAE, Uqanda, UK, Zambia.

ENVIRONMENT, POVERTY, LIVELIHOODS

PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature (OCEAN) Programme

DEFRA | Multi-country

Oct 2023 — May 2025 • Learning and Systems Lead • Senior Consultant • NIRAS

OCEAN is a competitive grants programme within the Blue Planet Fund (BPF) – the UK's £500 million initiative to protect the marine environment and reduce poverty in coastal communities across developing countries. As the grant administrator appointed by Defra, NIRAS manages the application cycle, oversees grant implementation, supports applicants and grantees, and leads the programme's monitoring, learning, and outreach to strengthen grantee capacity and inform adaptive management. Evangelia designed the programme's monitoring and learning framework and created the data-collection and analysis tools to meet programme requirements and stakeholder needs. Monitoring draws on passive data: information and metadata from Flexi-Grant, the IT platform used for application management, plus engagement metrics from the OCEAN website, YouTube channel, LinkedIn, email newsletter, Facebook, and other channels), Using these sources, Evangelia built two interactive Power BI dashboards (application and comms/engagement tracker), refreshed monthly and shared with the programme team. The dashboards empower team members to run their own analyses and provide a focal point for both routine and strategic learning.

Accelerating Vulnerability and Wellbeing Monitoring | UNICEF | Zambia

May 2011 — Aug 2012 • Team Leader & Principal Investigator (PI) • Research Fellow • Institute of Development Studies (IDS)

Evangelia led a team of UK-based software developers and Zambian researchers to design and pilot a cloud-based survey data collection software and hardware solution and visualisation framework to accelerate the process of getting data collected ready for analysis. The study also explore how community members can be involved in the analysis. The project built on the methodology of the 'Monitoring Shifting Vulnerabilities in the Context of Economic Crisis' programme, a two-year action research project funded by UNICEF which sought to understand the changes that people make in their lives to secure a livelihood and wellbeing in the face of the effects of unfolding economic shocks. Although the original programme adopted an innovative methodology which centred on people's wellbeing and involved communities to define what matters most to them, the turnaround for data processing and analysis was considered not fast enough to support communities and local national officials to respond appropriately to emerging threats. demonstrated that there are significant gains to be made from the mobile data collection tool that was developed in getting data ready for analysis. The project team succeeded in delivering a well-functioning software and hardware system within a short timeframe. Local researchers appreciated the portability and functionality of the tablet PC and RuralNet staff found it relatively easy to set up and manage the ODK-based survey questionnaire. The visualisation framework demonstrated the feasibility of automating certain aspects of the analysis by generating tables and graphs for predefined variables.

Mediating Voices: Can open data initiatives improve the livelihoods of young people in poor communities? DFID Kenya

Oct — Feb 2011 • Team Leader & PI • Research Fellow • IDS

Map Kibera was launched in 2009 by Erica Hagen and Mikel Maron, in response to the near-total absence of reliable public information about Kibera—one of Nairobi's, and Africa's, largest informal settlements. At the time, Kibera was either depicted as a forest or omitted entirely from official and commercial maps, reflecting its marginalisation and the lack of recognition by authorities and mainstream media. Evangelia led a DFID-funded study in collaboration with Map Kibera founders and participants to investigate the potential and risks



of open data and participatory digital platforms in marginalised urban settings. Evangelia conducted in-depth interviews and participant observation over a three-week period in Kibera, focusing on how local youth navigated the tensions between ideals of openness and the realities of precarious work, community politics, and uneven digital access. She also coordinated and captured lessons from the action research component of the poject that involved contributions from Dr. Samuel Musyoki, a seasoned participatory researcher and faciliatand Aptivate, a UK based software development firm which supported the broader objective of integrating technical with participatory practice. The research surfaced practical and ethical challenges around governing information commons in informal settlements and provided insights into how participatory development and open source practices can be meaningfully aligned.

GENDER. HEALTH

Claudia Abreu-Lopes. Research Lead at IIGH, UNU

Evangelia is an outstanding professional with strong skills in the translation of research evidence to policy using narrative and visual techniques. We have worked together on several projects for over 10 years related to digital citizen engagement, gender, and public health. Evangelia's research experience and versatility to try new approaches is her strength that leads to innovation in teams and organisations. In one of our projects, Evangelia developed a methodology - personas and pathways - to communicate the results of learners' segmentation in one of our MOOCs. Not only the method was rigorous and based on the evidence but the segments were communicated through powerful visualisations. The method has been applied to other projects, for example to comunicate narratives of gender-based violence survivors while keeping their privacy. Evangelia sensitivity to context and theoretical foundations on international development, media, communication and research methods would allow her to work in academia, industry, and NGOs. Besides her strong quantitative, qualitative and visualisation/digital skills, Evangelia is a wonderful colleague. Over the years, I have learned immensily from her and will keep looking for opportunities to work together.

Personas and Care Pathways of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Survivors UNFPA Malaysia

May — Oc 2023 • Research Consultant • International Institute for Global Health (IIGH)

Evangelia collaborated with IIGH to investigate how GBV survivors in Malaysia navigate public care pathways, specifically the One-Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC), which were established to address the multifaceted needs of survivors in an integrated manner. The study examined barriers to access and the influence of intersecting factors—such as gender, poverty, ethnicity, marital status, and migration status—on women's experiences with support services. The final report (available here offered recommendations for strengthening the health system's response to GBV in Malaysia. Evangelia employed an innovative methodology using the Personas and Pathways approach, adapted from user experience design. She synthesised findings from eleven semi-structured interviews with GBV survivors and peer-reviewed literature to develop five fictional, yet evidence-based, personal narratives that illustrate the complex realities of accessing and experiencing care. The image on the left depicts the GBV survivors' experience of the care pathways that Evangelia illustrated. This approach combines rigorous research with visual and storytelling techniques to enhance the usability and uptake of the findings.

Implementation Research Training Framework WHO-TDR Multicountry

May 2020 — Feb 2021 • Research Consultant • IIGH

Implementation research (IR) is a field of health research focusing on translating research findings and proven interventions into routine practice, ensuring that what is known to work actually benefits populations at scale. The Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), hosted by WHO, is a global leader in supporting and advancing IR, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICS). In addition to funding IR projects, TDR has invested significantly in developing resources such as its flagship massive open online course (MOOC) on IR, that are freely accessible to health professionals in LMICs. In collaboration with the client and IIGH, Evangelia developed a framework to guide the next phase of TDR's strategy for IR capacity strengthening. The framework drew on empirical evidence, expert input, and consultations with a range of stakeholders in the IR training space, and offered practical recommendations for improving IR capacity-building efforts in LMICs.

Understanding the Impact, Enablers and Barriers Faced by Health Professionals in Online Implementation Research Course | WHO-TDR | Multi-country

Mar 2021 — Apr 2022 • Research Consultant • IIGH

Evangelia led an evaluation into the usefulness, and the barries and enablers to learning for participants from LMICS in TDR's online course on implementation research. The course which was originally designed for public health researchers has been running since 2018, includes contibutions from leading health experts and practitioners and has been

Michael, J. Penkunas, PhD

Evangelia worked as a consultant throughout the first half of 2020 on a project I led. She organized and conducted virtual stakeholder interviews with leading professionals in implementation research and wrote a comprehensive report with her findings. She is very professional in her work, creates high-quality deliverables, and is always striving to add value to projects. On top of this, Evangelia is incredibly organized and a great communicator. These are especially valuable traits when working on remote teams. I highly recommend Evangelia for research and dissemination assignments in need of support from a professional and enthusiastic consultant.



RIGHTS, INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE, CITIZEN VOICE



translated into Spanish, French, Russian and Chinese. Evangelia combined survey data conducted by a previous study with insights from semi-structured individual qualitative interviews to examine two four learning outcomes dependent on whether participants completed the course and found the skills and knowledge gained applicable in their everyday practice. Evangelia synthesised findings into four learner personas (see screenshot on the left) which greatly added to their dissemination and update.

Mapping implementation research trends in WHO regions with text mining WHO-TDR Multi-country

Mar 2020 — Feb 2021 • Research Consultant • IIGH

Evangelia contributed to a methodology for mining and visualising information from research proposals submitted as part of the requirements for WHO-TDR's MOOC on implementation research. The project sought to identify emerging needs in implementation research as defined by health professionals in lower and middle-income countries. The results of the analysis were presented using interactive maps and dashboards.

Women in Open Source Development Communities DIAL Multicountry

May — Sep 2018 • Research Consultant • IDS

Evangelia co-led a multi-country study commissioned by the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) to investigate the barriers and enablers of women's participation in open source software (OSS) communities, with a focus on the humanitarian and development sectors. The project adopted a critical gender and intersectional lens and drew on extensive interviews with women OSS contributors and institutional stakeholders across Africa, South and Southeast Asia, Europe and North America. Evangelia conducted interviews with women contributors, over half of which were carried out in person in Nairobi, Kenya. The <u>final report</u> includes actionable recommendations for donors, employers, and OSS communities, highlighting the importance of safe learning spaces, inclusive workplace norms, and gender-aware funding criteria.

Final Evaluation of the Next Generation Media Programme RNW Multi-country

Oct 2020 — Jun 2021 • Team Leader & PI • Data Yarns Research

RNW Media's Next Generation Programme was an ambitious four-year (2017-2020) multi-country initiative funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support youth-led digital media platforms in advancing inclusive governance and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in restrictive environments. Building on lessons from the mid-term evaluation, Evangelia led the final evaluation, which examined projects in Egypt, Yemen, Burundi, DRC, Mali, Libya, Jordan, Syria, and China. As with the midline, she applied theoryof-change and realist evaluation approaches to assess NGP's relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact. The evidence base was organised around country case studies and included focus group discussions, individual interviews, online surveys with youth audiences, routine programme data, and digital analytics. As a final evaluation, greater emphasis was placed on NGP's contribution to civil society and media ecosystems, as well as RNW Media's internal transformation. The evaluation found that NGP platforms created trusted, safe digital spaces for youth, though challenges remained in reaching marginalised groups and influencing decision-makers. The grant also enabled RNW Media to strengthen its organisational capacity, with several country teams successfully transitioning into independent local entities.

Miep Lenoir, PMEL Team, RNW Media,

Evangelia Berdou and Kavita Abraham-Dowsing evaluated our 4-year programme on digital media communities for social change at midterm. The evaluation included both quantitative and qualitative research in eleven projects in eight countries on youth citizens' voice and SRHR. It provided us with an insightful analysis and excellent recommendations, through linking our programme to the bigger picture of the development sector and the role of media in changing social norms. Many of their recommendations have already been incorporated by our teams in their 2020 planning to strengthen the programme.

What further stood out for me was their dedication and enthusiasm for the theme, which resulted in a comprehensive report and many exciting and insightful conversations (and probably many more hours than planned). It was a great pleasure to work with you!



Mid-term Evaluation of the Next Generation Programme (NGP) RNW Media Multi-country

May — Oct 2019 • Team Leader & PI • Data Yarns Research

Leading a small team of researchers, Evangelia combined theory-of-change and realist evaluation approaches to assess NGP against four DAC criteria—relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. The mid-term evaluation focused on user engagement, platform safety, content appropriateness, operational resilience, and pathways to influence. Evangelia led fieldwork in Egypt and Yemen and contributed to cross-case analysis of 11 country platforms (Egypt, Yemen, Burundi, DRC, Mali, Libya, Jordan, Syria, and China). The evidence base comprised FGDs and individual interviews, data from online surveys with the target audience, routine programme data and digital analytics. For the impact assessment, outcomes harvested by the RNW Media PMEL team (Hilversum) were selected and examined during fieldwork. The evaluation found strong evidence of local relevance, innovative editorial and moderation strategies for safeguarding users, and adaptive models for navigating restricted civic space. It also identified gaps in reaching more diverse audiences, strengthening links to policy influence, and integrating security provisions for in-country staff. The findings informed RNW Media's strategy and policies for the programme's second phase.

Crowdsourcing Intermediaries for Improved Public Service Delivery Making All Voices Count (MAVC) | Multi-country

May 2014 — Nov 2017 • PI • Research Fellow • IDS

Evangelia conducted a study for the MAVC programme on the role of crowdsourcing intermediaries in technology-enabled transparency and accountability (T&A) initiatives. Crowdsourcing intermediaries are actors who collect and analyse citizen feedback using digital tools, and use it to support positive change. Using a novel conceptual framework that combined networked gatekeeping theory with social accountability perspectives, the study explored how intermediaries mediate citizen voice through the design and implementation of digital platforms. The research involved content analysis of 20 crowdsourcing initiative websites and case studies across South Africa, India, and Kenya. Research findings revealed significant variations in how intermediaries manage data, engage citizens, and position themselves in relation to the state and civil society. Key findings highlighted tensions between transparency ideals and data practices, and the need to hold intermediaries themselves accountable to the citizens they aim to represent.

Evaluation of UNICEF's U-Report platform | World Bank | Uganda

May 2014 — Nov 2017 • PI • Research Fellow • IDS

Evangelia led an independent evaluation of UNICEF Uganda's U-Report, a large-scale crowdsourcing platform aimed at amplifying youth voices, improving access to life-saving information, and strengthening accountability through SMS-based polling. The study combined quantitative and qualitative methods including two large-scale surveys of U-Reporters, twenty semi-structured individual interviews with male and female U-Reporters from rural and urban locations, and analysis of platform data. U-Report survey results were compared with those from comparable age groups ffrom a national representative household survey and relevant datasets from the Ugandan Bureau of statistics. The evaluation examined who participates in U-Report and why, how U-Report data compares to traditional survey data and the difference the platform makes in public debate and the lives of the U-Reporters. Findings highlighted the value for real-time feedback and civic dialogue, but also raised concerns around representativeness, inclusiveness, and impact pathways. The study recommended strategies to deepen engagement, reach marginalised groups, and improve data validity.

Matt Haikin, Digital Transformation Consultant

Evangelia on an (apparently 'seminal'!) guide for evaluating digital citizen engagement commissioned by the World Bank in 2015. Her diligence, rigour and creative approach to how we looked at the topic was invaluable, and we have stayed in touch and worked together numerous times since (albeit on smaller scale projects), and have come to appreciate and value each other's advice and insights on professional matters. She is a highly talented and resourceful research consultant, adds value to every project she is involved in, has great technical skills and does great work alone, but perhaps more importantly is an excellent collaborator and works well with all sorts of different types of teams - whether as a manager, a contributor, or simply as a member of a community of practice. I look forward to the opportunity to work with her again in the future.

Evaluation Framework for Digital Citizen Engagement platform World Bank Multi-country

May 2014 — Nov 2017 • Co-author • Research Fellow • IDS

Evangelia co-authored a practical guide on evaluating Digital Citizen Engagement (DCE) for the World Bank's Governance Global Practice. Developed collaboratively with Aptivate, IDS and ICA:UK, the guide responded to the growing demand for rigorous, context-sensitive approaches to assess digital participation initiatives. Drawing on lessons from field evaluations from Brazil, Uganda, Kenya, and Cameroon, the team developed a life-cycle evaluation approach underpinned by five analytical lenses—objective, control, participation, technology, and effects. The guide provides adaptable tools, real-world examples, and practical guidance to help development practitioners assess the relevance, inclusiveness, and impact of digital tools in citizen-state engagement.



OPEN DATA & OPEN ACCESS

Evaluation of the Global Partnership for Sustainanable Development Data (GPSDD) itad & GPSDD secretariat Multi-country

May 2018 — Feb 2021 • Research Consultant • itad

The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) was established in 2015 to mobilize the data revolution in support of both monitoring and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This theory-based, mixed-methods evaluation led by itad, sought to evaluate GSDD's progress against their 2019–2023 strategy, focusing on relevance, effectiveness, outcomes, and organisational efficiency. The itad team applied contribution analysis, outcome harvesting, and a 7S organisational capacity framework to explore GPSDD's influence across national and global data ecosystems. The team gathered evidence through 60+ semi-structured interviews, an online partner survey (covering over 80 stakeholders), a review of key programmatic documents and logframe data, and targeted case studies on country and thematic initiatives. As a member of the evaluation team, Evangelia was involved in data collection and analyses and advised on the characted and evolution of open data ecosystem for SDGs.

Evaluation Framework of Open Data on Nutrition and Agriculture Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) Programme Multi-country

May 2018 — Feb 2021 • Research Consultant • Wagenigen environmental research, ALTERRA

GODAN Action was a three-and-a-half-year programme funded by DFID, designed to enable data users, producers, and intermediaries to engage effectively with open data in agriculture and nutrition, thereby increasing its availability, accessibility, and impact. Evangelia designed an evaluation framework for understanding the contribution of open data to development outcomes that accounted for both technical and socio-political dimensions of open data. The evaluation framework was based on combined qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIIS), a capacity needs survey, and a political economy of the nutritiom and weather open data econsystems The framework highlights the critical role of intermediaries, the challenges of aligning open data with local information needs, and the skills and trust-building required to translate open data into policy-relevant insights.

DIGITAL AND AI FOR MEL: SYSTEMS & CAPACITY BUILDING

Digital & Al Systems & Capacity Bulding for MEL NIRAS Internal

Oct 2023 — May 2025 • Digital strategy implementation co-lead• Senior Consultant NIRAS

As co-lead for digital strategy implementation at NIRAS, Evangelia designed and managed an internal helpdesk to streamline the integration of innovative digital solutions across the company's service offerings. A key focus of her role, exemplified by her work on the OCEAN programme, was developing monitoring systems for fund management and complex evaluations that combined digital tools and AI with rigorous methodological approaches. During her tenure, Evangelia also authored guidelines on the ethical and appropriate use of AI in monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) practices and created tailored AI training resources for MEL colleagues. Additionally, she advanced internal knowledge management by designing a new SharePoint team site that curated and contextualized dispersed resources, embedding interactive Power BI dashboards to provide up-to-date visualizations of staff resourcing and availability.



EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Oct 2023 — Apr 2025: Senior Consultant • NIRAS International Consulting, UK

Sep 2017 — Oct 2023: Independent Research Consultant • Data Yarns Research Limited, UK

Nov 2007 — May 2017: Research Fellow • Institute of Development Studies, UK

Sep 2007 — Oct 2008: Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Postdoctoral Fellow • Science and Technology Policy Research (SPRU), University of Sussex, UK

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

- Mukherjee, Aparna, Berdou, Evangelia, & Abreu-Lopes, Claudia. (2025). <u>Portraits and Journeys of Gender-Based Violence Survivors across Malaysia's One-Stop Crisis Centres</u>. UNFPA, UNU-IIGH.
- Penkunas, M. J., Shiau, Y.C., Rhule, E.L., Berdou, E. and Allotey P. (2021). <u>Designing the next Generation of Implementation Research Training for Learners in Low- and Middle-Income Countries.</u> Globalization and Health 17, no. 1: 63. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-021-00714-3
- Penkunas, M. J., Berdou, E., et al. (2021). <u>Increasing Knowledge Translation Capacity in Low- and Middle-Income Countries:</u>
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- Faith, B., Roberts, T., Berdou, E. (2018). <u>Towards a More Gender-Inclusive Open Source Community</u>. Washington, DC: Digital Impact Alliance
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- Berdou, E. (2012). <u>Participatory Methodologies and Participatory Technologies: Ways Forward for Innovative Thinking and Practice</u>. IKM Emergent Working Paper
- Berdou, E., D. Chiwele Kaputo, N. Whitestone, and E. Aguilar-Nova (2012). New Technologies in the Service of Vulnerability and Wellbeing Monitoring. Final Report for UNICEF-Zambia. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies
- Berdou, E. (2011). <u>Reimagining Participation: Opportunities and Challenges of the Open Source Model of Collaboration for Development Thinking and Practice</u> IDS Bulletin 42(5): 104-8.
- Berdou, E. (2011). <u>Organization in Open Source Communities: At the Crossroads of the Gift and Market Economies</u>. New York: Routledge
- Berdou, E. (2011). Mediating Voices, Communicating Realities: Using Information Crowdsourcing Tools, Open Data Initiatives and Digital Media to Support and Protect the Vulnerable. Final Project Report, DFID project no PO 40035949
- Mansell, R., and E. Berdou (2010). <u>Political Economy, the Internet and Free/open Source Software Development</u>. In the International Handbook for Internet Research, edited by M. Allen, J. Hunsinger, and L. Klastrup: 341-61. London; New York: Springer