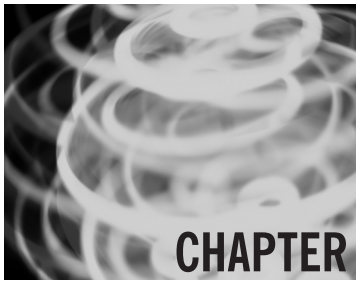

CHAPTER 3

Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice

ASSESSING LEVELS OF COMMITMENT

David M. Fetterman

Principles guide practice. This chapter discusses how empowerment evaluation principles guide empowerment evaluation practice. As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, the principles include (1) improvement, (2) community ownership, (3) inclusion, (4) democratic participation, (5) social justice, (6) community knowledge (knowledge closely related to practice), (7) evidence-based strategies (e.g., interventions, practices), (8) capacity building, (9) organizational learning, and (10) accountability. Practice represents the application of principles to real-world settings. However, practice is messy, often filled with nuance, compromise, and built-in tensions. Table 3.1, presented at the end of this chapter, highlights a few examples of each stakeholder's role in practice. In addition, the criteria for assessing high, medium, and low levels of each principle in practice are presented for each stakeholder in this table. This provides evaluators, communities,[1] and funders with guidance in the practice of empowerment evaluation.

IMPROVEMENT

Empowerment evaluations are designed to help people improve their programs and, in the process, their lives. The work is not neutral or antiseptic. Empowerment evaluators roll up their sleeves and help people to help themselves. They have a commitment to the people they work with. They help them to improve their programs through evaluation—specifically, evaluative thinking and feedback.

The commitment to improvement is an overriding orientation as much as a specific principle of practice. This commitment is manifested in many ways, including capacity-building domains such as helping people learn how to use evaluation concepts and tools to plan, implement, and evaluate.[2] It is also manifested in the effort to design and use evaluation to improve program practice. Empowerment evaluators and community-based organization staff members do not conduct research experiments without the purpose of, or prospect to, improving the program. Empowerment evaluation is never conducted for the sake of intellectual curiosity alone.

Funders are also typically focused on improvement (Millett, 1996; W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 1999, 2001; Yost & Wandersman, 1998). They have already made an initial assessment of the program or the implementing organization. Based on that assessment they have made an investment in the selected program. Evaluation is viewed as a tool to enhance the probability that the investment will pay off. This is similar to hiring a financial adviser to help them manage their money and achieve their financial goals (J. Bare, Knight Foundation, personal communication, 2004). The programs are more likely to accomplish their objectives with this kind of feedback, guidance, and assistance. Corrective feedback, validation of decisions and practices, as well as warnings about problems and "failures" are view as instrumental evaluative contributions aimed at helping programs to succeed, accomplish their objectives, and get to the desired outcomes.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Community ownership starts from day 1. The community (i.e., the specific group that is operating and shaping the program or set of activities) is responsible for the design and overall direction of the evaluation. In addition, its members specify their own goals and strategies to accomplish their objectives. The evaluator serves as a coach or critical friend to assist them, ensuring logic, rigor, and a systematic approach to inquiry (Fetterman, 2001). However, the community *owns* the evaluation

(Fetterman, 2001, p. 115). The more the group members control both the conceptual direction and the actual implementation of the evaluation, the more they are likely to use the findings and recommendations, since they are theirs. This is referred to as "process use" (Fetterman 2001, pp. 110–112; Patton, 1997).

The sense of ownership may vary in practice, based on the group's own stage of development, capacity, and history. Ownership starts from the beginning, but it is a cumulative experience. It gets deeper and stronger over time if it is reinforced. Ownership becomes stronger and more meaningful as a community uses its own evaluative findings to improve practice, finds evaluators supportive and helpful concerning the collection and interpretation of data, and experiences the trust of funders to take additional time (and the requisite detours, within reason) to accomplish its objectives. Community members come to learn that their judgment is valued and trusted. The process of doing evaluation in a climate of trust and good faith only enhances a sense of ownership and pride. Conversely, it is weakened if a funder takes charge of the effort in the middle, the evaluator shares findings without community approval, and if the community fails to follow through on its own self-assessment. The Community Toolbox provides online resources for evaluating community programs and initiatives at *http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/part_J.htm*. A few examples of each stakeholders role are provided in Table 3.1.

INCLUSION

Inclusion[3] means inviting as many stakeholders to the table as is reasonable or feasible and making a concerted effort to encourage their participation. It also is a basic prerequisite to building a family or community. Funders, program administrators, staff members, participants, and community members should be invited to participate in empowerment evaluation activities. Program participants have a tremendous amount to offer. They know their own condition. They can help ground program staff members and administrators in their reality, forcing them to reshape program implementation and practice.

Funders offer more than money. They have a tremendous amount of knowledge. They know how other similar programs work. Funders are often excluded (or exclude themselves). However, if they are included from the beginning, they are more likely to contribute to the knowledge pool and, as key participants in the process, are less likely to "pull the rug out" from under the group in mid-course.

Inclusion does not on the surface appear to be an efficient mechanism. The more groups represented, the more time required for scheduling

and consensus building. However, it is more efficient to be "inefficient" when it comes to participation. Leaders or representatives of each constituency are busy, but they should be included in discussions about group goals and strategies. While it might appear to be more efficient to delegate such tasks as selecting group goals or developing strategies, deliberate exclusion makes later group consensus on such goals all but impossible. Thus, premature delegation is in practice inefficient. Groups, particularly diverse groups, need to spend time together deciding where they want to go and how they want to get there. Evaluation can be one of their guides. Efficiently delegating these kinds of tasks to select groups and failing to include other groups simply means revisiting the same issues over and over again until everyone has had a chance to "weigh in" with their views. Worse, the alienated or excluded group may undermine the collective good will of the community.

The principle of inclusion serves to remind empowerment evaluators of their obligation to advise the people they work with to include rather than exclude. Economics, schedules, deadlines, biases, as well as vested interests all militate against inclusion. It is easy to say that there was insufficient time or a group's schedule could not be accommodated. However, failure to include all the critical players results in a missed opportunity. All of the key players bring valuable insights and interests to the table. Multicultural contributions are a plus, not a minus (see Banks, 1981; Hakuta & Garcia, 1989; Davidman & Davidman 1997, pp. 9–10). They also ensure an authentic or meaningful consensus. This is required for any plan of action to move forward. A few examples of each stakeholder's role in practice are provided in Table 3.1.

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

The principle of inclusion is often confused with democratic participation. While inclusion means bringing all the pertinent groups together, democratic participation speaks to how the groups will interact and make decisions once they are together (see Dewey, 1940; Fetterman, 2001, p. 89; Wandsworth Community Empowerment Fund Network, 2003). The first ensures some measure of diversity (particularly of those groups that have been historically excluded from discussions and decision making). The second, democratic participation, ensures that everyone has a vote in the process. This may be a literal vote or a meaningful role in decision making. In practice, that may mean that everyone gets one vote (or sticky dot) to prioritize his or her evaluative concerns about program activities or implementation. It may mean that each tribe in an 18-tribe consortium gets 1 vote per tribe as decisions are made in the empowerment evaluation. Each

patient may have a voice equal to the physician in a breast cancer screening program empowerment evaluation; in addition to equal representation, the patient's voice might provide the insight needed to ensure that women in rural areas participate in the program. Democratic participation also refers to another level, often cited as informed inquiry, deliberation, and action. In other words, democratic participation is both a means of ensuring equality and fairness and a tool to bring forth as many insights and suggestions about how to improve programs as possible. It also develops analytical skills that can be applied in society in general, such as reasoned debate (with evidence), deliberation, and action (see Table 3.1 for examples).

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice is a fundamental principle guiding empowerment evaluation (Christie, 2003, p. 11; Fetterman, 2001, p. 142; Fetterman, 2003, p. 47). In practice, empowerment evaluators typically assist people in social programs aimed at ameliorating a specific social concern or injustice. The program may be designed to improve the health care or education of disenfranchised or minority populations. The populations might include the homeless, battered women, people with disabilities, children, or minorities. Programs might include shelters, literacy programs, teenage pregnancy prevention programs, drug and alcohol prevention programs, or HIV prevention programs (See Fetterman, Kaftarian, & Wandersman, 1996). Although there is a bias toward traditionally disenfranchised populations, an empowerment evaluator might work with middle- and upper-middle class communities in an effort to ensure equality of opportunity, due process, racial or ethnic diversity, or related issues.

One of the purposes of this principle is to remind us that we pursue social justice every day by working with certain people and specific kinds of programs. This principle of social justice keeps the evaluator, community, and funder's eye on the prize of social justice, equity, and fairness (Davidman & Davidman, 1997). In practice, this reminder may influence the funder to connect the organization he or she is funding with similarly oriented organizations (i.e., nonprofits being funded or other funders). When the common commitment to social justice is placed in front of the funders on a routine basis, they are more likely to make these kinds of connections and decisions. The community may seek out like community-based organizations in remote areas because the geographic differences disappear and the social justice agenda they have in common makes them more visible. They can see connections that are not apparent on the "ground" level of daily practice. Communities that make their social jus-

tice agenda explicit are also more likely to make programmatic decisions that are in alignment with their values on a daily basis. For example, evaluative data might suggest eliminating a social service program because it is not cost-effective. However, the social justice agenda might override that decision or force the organization to find other ways to subsidize that activity.

The social justice principle is instructive on many levels. On a personal level, it influences how we treat people. Respect becomes paramount. The pride of an individual is fiercely protected, and the struggle he or she is engaged in is honored. The social justice principle also informs our decisions about how we select and use specific methodological tools. Data collection is geared toward gathering information that sheds light on whether the program is making a contribution to the larger social good, as per program mandates and agreements. In some cases this simply means: Is the program accomplishing what it says it is doing? In other cases, the social justice principle focuses attention on issues of consequential validity, forcing us to question the impact or consequences of specific findings. Does the evaluation plan lead to invidious distinctions? Are the evaluation results likely to be misused and misinterpreted in ways that do not promote the social welfare or equity of the group? The principle of social justice places the image of a just society in the hands of a community of learners engaged in a participatory form of democracy. A few examples of each stakeholder's role in practice are provided in Table 3.1.

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

Local community members have invaluable knowledge and information about their community and its programs. Respecting their knowledge and valuing it only makes sense from a pragmatic perspective. They know their children's day care and school schedules, the grocery store's hiring practices, and the hospital's policies concerning indigent care. Many conventional evaluations ignore this knowledge at their own peril. In addition to disrespecting and devaluing a community, ignoring this rich database is inefficient, resulting in needless redundant data collection efforts and misguided interpretations. In addition, local communities develop their own community knowledge within the organization. This is a bottom-up approach to knowledge sharing and development (see Palo Alto Research Center, 2004). This knowledge, if mobilized, can be an extraordinary catalyst for change in an organization (see McDermott, 2001; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002; Schön, 1983; see Table 3.1 for examples).

EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

Evidence-based strategies have much to offer developing programs. They offer programs strategies or interventions that have worked in other similar communities and populations. In essence, they offer a useful option that has a track record and external credibility. They allow local and scholarly communities to build on knowledge. Evidence-based interventions, however, should not be blindly adopted and expected to work in new communities. Instead, they should be adapted to the local environment, culture, and conditions.

Communities have been "burnt" by out-of-touch or off-target interventions introduced or mandated in the past. However, ignoring evidence-based strategies simply because they were inappropriately applied in the past is not a healthy prescription for the future. Some evidence-based strategies provide potential solutions to difficult problems. Communities that have been hurt by these interventions and consequently ignore these contributions should "move on" and with a more cautious and skeptical eye, selectively reconsider evidence-based strategies. They should not be considered "silver bullets" ready to solve a plethora of community problems—the silver bullet approach only sets communities up for failure. Instead, evidence-based strategies should be considered as useful ideas and models potentially adaptable to the local context and environment. A few examples of each stakeholder's role are presented in Table 3.1.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building is one of the most identifiable features of empowerment evaluation (see Fetterman, 2001, pp. 14, 111, 139, 144).[4] Program staff members and participants learn how to conduct their own evaluations. Communities should be building their skills in the following areas: evaluation logic, chain of reasoning, logic models, evaluation design, data collection methods (including qualitative and quantitative methods), analysis, reporting, and ethics. They should also be building evaluative capacity in the areas of making judgments and interpretations, using the data to inform decision making, and making formative and summative assessments about their programs. In some cases this might involve making a determination of merit or worth of the program. In most cases, their judgment focuses on program improvement. The bottom line is that people should be learning how to conduct their own evaluations. In practice, program staff members, participants, and funders should be engaged in some substantive part of the evaluation enterprise, ranging from data collection to reporting the findings and recommendations. In the process of internal-

izing and institutionalizing evaluation, they should be making evaluation a part of planning and management as well. In other words, as they improve their evaluative capacity they should be improving their own capacity to manage and operate their programs; see Table 3.1 for examples.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Empowerment evaluation helps to create a community of learners (Fetterman, 2001, pp. 6–7; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Schön, 1983; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). This community feeds back information about how the program or organization is working (or not working). This feedback loop is designed to make corrective or adaptive changes in organizational behavior. Empowerment evaluation makes organizations or groups more responsive to environmental changes and challenges. It also enhances an organization's receptivity to new adaptive strategies. Empowerment evaluation is able to accomplish these goals because it is focused on encouraging organizations to make data-driven decisions (data derived from their own self-reflection and analysis). In practice, the empowerment evaluator lobbies for the use of data to inform decision making at every opportunity. Empowerment evaluators encourage staff members and participants to continually evaluate their performance. This may be in the form of a simple question about how effective a staff meeting was or providing training concerning data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting functions.

The empowerment evaluator, as coach, has a role to ensure that communities receive help interpreting the data and putting it to good use. This is necessary if the organization is to learn and either maintain or modify its behavior. Timing is also critical. For example, empowerment evaluators encourage the use of evaluative data during critical phases of the budget cycle when the data is needed most. They act as historians to remind people what they found and what commitments they made in the past to help them follow through on what they have learned (and have subsequently committed to change).

Empowerment evaluators also have a responsibility to help make the environment conducive to organizational learning (see Argyris, 1992; Argyris & Schön, 1978; Fetterman & Eiler, 2001; Preskill & Torres, 1999; Schön, 1983) by making the processes simple, transparent, and trustworthy. Organization administrators have a significant role to play in practice as well. They take the lead in creating an environment conducive to taking calculated risks, experimenting, evaluating, and using data to inform decision making. They are effective when their decision making is transparent. In other words, they have a responsibility to communicate with clarity the

criteria used for decisions. They also must ensure that the data is credible and used to inform decision making. Empowerment evaluation helps organizations develop both the climate and structures for generating reflective practitioners. It also helps communities focus on systemic issues and systems thinking rather than short-term solutions and quick fixes. A few examples of each stakeholder's role are provided in Table 3.1.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Empowerment evaluation is about accountability (Fetterman, 2001, p. 118). It is useful for external accountability, but its strength is in fostering internal accountability. External forms of accountability last as long as the external agency is present to exert its force. Internal accountability is built within the structure of the organization or program and is fueled by internal peer pressures and institutionalized mechanisms developed by members of the group or organization. Empowerment evaluation does not alter the existing authority structure. Supervisors remain supervisors. However, instead of imposing their independent and often autocratic will on their employees and staff members, they hold them accountable for what they agreed to do as part of the agency's efforts. The motivation changes because the work is in alignment with individual and group interests. In practice, this principle reminds people that they are both individually accountable and accountable as a group or community of learners. Individuals hold one another accountable for promises and commitments (including memoranda of agreement). The organization is also held accountable and expected to "walk its talk." The feedback mechanisms built into empowerment evaluation lend themselves to the development of this kind of internal accountability.

Accountability does not only refer to the community and the evaluator. The funder is also accountable to "walk its talk." If it commits to being a partner, then it has to be present in the program implementation and evaluation. If it promises to put funds in the hands of the community to help build the latter's capacity to make decisions, then it cannot suddenly and without cause take over operations. Funders have to be held accountable concerning their expectations. If they expect communitywide initiatives to take hold, they have to be willing to fund operations at a level that is meaningful and realistic.

External accountability is also a fundamental reality in empowerment evaluation. Empowerment evaluations are conducted within the context of external requirements and demands. This makes the process "real." Empowerment evaluation uses internal accountability to achieve both internal goals and external requirements or outcomes. A few examples of each stakeholder's role in practice are provided in Table 3.1.

CONCLUSION

These principles in practices are overlapping and interactively reinforcing.[5] For example, the focus on improvement instead of failure, compliance, or inadequacy is a positive and constructive force in people's lives. People are receptive to approaches designed to help them accomplish their objectives and improve programs and less receptive to destructive and off-target forms of criticism. An improvement orientation also influences the evaluation design. It ensures a constructive approach, including corrective feedback, allowing for mid-course corrections and program enhancement. It also typically builds on strengths.

Inclusion and democratic participation are also inviting features of empowerment evaluation. These principles help to create an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, and community. They help communities capitalize on their own human capital (valuing their members' contributions). Instead of reinventing the wheel, their knowledge is respected and used, saving precious time and resources.

A social justice orientation attracts people committed to the same ideals. It conveys a unifying sense of purpose. It reminds people of their commitment by placing the larger picture in front of them. It is easy to forget about the bigger picture when mired in the daily duty of program implementation. A social justice orientation provides a focal point for designing and implementing a program and an evaluation. It provides a unifying purpose that permeates both the program and the evaluation, shaping daily decisions and actions.

Community knowledge is generated from a community of learners. When the force of a community of learners is coupled with transparency in decision making, organizational learning becomes possible. Community ownership and capacity building make a learning organization sustainable.

Evidence-based strategies contribute to organizational learning. It is more efficient to consider past evidence-based strategies when building a learning organization. In addition, considering evidence-based strategies is a form of respect. Valuing both local and scholarly communities' evidence-based strategies recognizes the work of others who preceded the current community. The use of evidence-based strategies also lends additional credibility to the evaluation and to the program's implementation.

All of these principles in practice encourage and make possible internal accountability, one of the only sustainable forms of accountability. Internal forms of accountability are in place day after day, long after the external evaluators and funders have come and gone.

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed empowerment evaluation principles in practice. The purpose was to provide scholars and practitioners with additional guidance in their pursuit of quality in their empowerment evaluation endeavors. Individual principles have been used to orga-

nize the discussion. In addition, a table of quality ratings has been used to assess the various (high, medium, and low) levels of commitment to empowerment evaluation principles in practice. These principles were assessed according to the specific roles in this collaborative enterprise, namely, that of the evaluator, the community, and the funder. This tripartite partnership is required to accomplish any meaningful empowerment evaluation. This discussion is not exhaustive but rather is illustrative of the collaborative and multilayered nature of empowerment evaluation principles in practice. In succeeding chapters we reflect on these principles in practice in greater depth by examining a series of empowerment evaluation case studies.

NOTES

1. The term "community" refers to the specific group using evaluation in the organization or local community—rather than the entire town or city.
2. Tools vary, ranging from the "three-step model" (Fetterman, 2001) to the 10-step "Getting to Outcomes" approach (Chinman et al., 2004). The emphasis is on both processes and outcomes (as well as impacts). Evaluators may help train staff members and participants to design a pretest and posttest survey in order to determine if the program or intervention had a desirable outcome. They might help them conduct interviews and write up case studies. The data would be used to reinforce successful efforts and question less effective strategies.
3. Empowerment evaluation has been influenced by the full-inclusion movement that relates to individuals with disabilities (see Fetterman, 1996; Hanson et al., 1998).
4. Capacity building is also a significant part of the United Nations agenda (see United Nations, 2003; One World Network, 2003; World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2004, among many other organizations, including nongovernmental organizations and nonprofits.
5. The principles can also compete with one another. This can create conflicts in priorities. However, simple rules apply. Honesty and systematic inquiry are constant. Community ownership and control are a priority.

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TABLE 3.1. Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice: Assessing Levels of Commitment

IMPROVEMENT	
Evaluator role in practice:	• Helps community build on strengths, instead of only focusing on problems • Helps focus evaluation on improvement-oriented goals • Suggests appropriate tools, tests, and instruments to measure change over time • Helps community internalize evaluation logic
High:	Encourages community to focus on improvement, helps design feedback mechanisms that are used for decision making, connects community with similar organizations guided by the same principles (of using evaluation to improve program practice)
Medium:	Minimal encouragement to focus on improvement, designs feedback mechanisms for community instead of with it, haphazard or random consideration given to making connections with other organizations
Low:	Does not spend time encouraging community to focus on improvement, does not provide (or help to provide) feedback mechanisms or tools to monitor change over time, does not connect the community with similar programs

Community role in practice:	• Uses evaluator to help keep the evaluation organized, rigorous, useful, and focused on improvement goals • Commits to the evaluation and assumes responsibility for both its direction and implementation in the spirit of program improvement • Uses the tools designed to monitor change over time and data for decision making to improve program practice
High:	Uses evaluation to improve program performance, uses tools to monitor change over time, uses data to inform decision making, follow up on recommendations to connect with similar organizations oriented toward evaluation-driven improvement
Medium:	Uses evaluation to monitor change over time with limited use of the findings to inform decision making, evaluation periodically used to guide program improvements, haphazard effort to make recommended connections with similar organizations
Low:	Does not monitor program performance or use evaluative data or insights to inform programmatic decision making, no effort to connect with similar organizations

Funder role in practice:	• Encourages community and the evaluator to create an evaluation design that generates data aimed at continual and long-term program improvement • Provides the financial support required of a community engaged in improvement-oriented evaluation efforts • Rolls up sleeves and helps problem-solve to improve the program • Respects community's right to govern itself and make its own evaluative and programmatic decisions
High:	Participates in community and evaluation efforts to problem solve, provides adequate funding to support improvement-oriented evaluations and initiatives, encourages the community and evaluators to design evaluations in a manner that will contribute to program decision making and improvement, respects the community's right to govern itself and make its own evaluative and programmatic decisions
Medium:	Participates periodically in problem-solving activities with the community and evaluator, provides minimal funds for improvement-oriented evaluation activities and program improvement, respects the community's right to self-govern but within limits
Low:	Not involved in problem solving with the community and evaluator, provides inadequate support for improvement-oriented assessments and initiatives, does not value an improvement-oriented paradigm nor respect the community's right to self-govern

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP	
Evaluator role in practice	• Ensures that program staff and participants understand they own the evaluation from day 1 • Encourages staff members and participants to take responsibility for various components of the evaluation • Provide the community with the training and tools (including online self-help guides) needed to conduct its own evaluations • Support the community as it conducts its evaluations and use the findings for decision making
High:	Ensures the community understands it owns the evaluation from the beginning of the effort, enables the community to conduct its own evaluation (with training, guides, and guidance), encourages direct participation and control of the evaluation, creates opportunities for the community to take ownership of the evaluation, defends ownership of the evaluation on behalf of and/or in concert with the community when challenged (by the funder and others)

Medium:	Expects the community to take control of the evaluation without much encouragement by the middle of the evaluation, provides training designed to enable the community to assume ownership of the evaluation by the middle of the evaluation (instead of the beginning), provides a minimal role in supporting its efforts to assert control over the evaluation when challenged or differences of opinion arise concerning ownership
Low:	Accepts the community's allowing the evaluator to maintain control of the evaluation, provides training designed to help the community conduct its evaluations but without a sense of ownership

Community role in practice:	• Takes responsibility for the evaluation (and increasing levels of responsibility for specific evaluation activities and functions) • Uses evaluators to support and guide the evaluation, but under the direction of the community and/or organization • Respects the funder (as a partner offering more than funds alone) but establishes boundaries concerning decision making, governing responsibilities, and independence
High:	Takes responsibility for the evaluation from the beginning, uses evaluators and funders as partners to enhance the quality of the evaluation and program practice, defends the right to make decisions about priorities, conduct of the evaluation, and organizational behavior (based on evaluative feedback), takes the lead in informing the funder about evaluation findings and organizational behavior changes (based on evaluation feedback)
Medium:	Assumes ownership by the middle of the evaluation (instead of the beginning), relies heavily on the evaluator to shape the conceptual direction of the evaluation as well as implementation, accepts the evaluators and/or funder's mandates about the evaluation design without much discussion
Low:	Avoids assuming ownership of the evaluation, relies on the evaluator to design and implement the evaluation (including determining the community's goals and strategies to accomplish its evaluative objectives), depends on the funder to receive and digest evaluation findings

Funder role in practice:	• Respects the autonomy of the organization or agency to pursue the evaluation, as deemed appropriate (in conjunction with the evaluator) • Encourages institutional ownership of the evaluation • Supports evaluator's efforts to create opportunities to facilitate ownership by the community • Supports institutionalization of evaluation in the organization

High:	Allows the community to own the evaluation (including conceptual direction and implementation) with the guidance and assistance of a trained evaluator, respects the autonomy of the community to make its own decisions based on the evaluative feedback, provides adequate support to enable the community to take ownership (including financial support to enable it to allocate staff time and resources to the effort), supports the evaluator's efforts to create opportunities to facilitate ownership, links up the community with similarly oriented evaluators to facilitate this process
Medium:	Allows the community to own significant portions of the evaluation, respects the autonomy of the community to make some critical decisions, provides minimal support to facilitate this process, makes minimal efforts to match up the community with the appropriate evaluator
Low:	Avoids allowing the community to take charge or ownership of evaluation, does not encourage the community to make its own decisions, does not provide sufficient support for the community to take ownership of the evaluation without straining its own budget

INCLUSION	
Evaluator role in practice:	• Reviews the demographics of the community • Asks community-based organizations to invite as many stakeholders or representatives of critical constituencies to empowerment evaluation activities • Requests the use of interpreters and/or translators for empowerment evaluation activities and documents • Respects, acknowledges, and invites cultural, political, and religious leaders in the community (as agreed to with the community) • Encourages multicultural participation in any empowerment evaluation activity
High:	Develops knowledge of the community demographics, encourages the community to include stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, encourages use of translators, facilitates multicultural participation in the evaluation
Medium:	Develops limited knowledge of or familiarity with the community, gives only minimal encouragement to invite diverse populations (typically due to time and scheduling constraints), encourages inconsistent use of translators, and minimal facilitation of multicultural participation (focused on whites and mainstream linguistic forms of expression)
Low:	Develops no knowledge of the community, does not encourage diversity among participants or use of translators, and facilitation is limited to the dominant culture or group

Community role in practice:	• Invites as many stakeholders or representatives from critical groups as possible • Ensures that voices are heard from a multicultural environment, both in evaluation activities and organizational decision making • Follows up with any group that fails to attend empowerment evaluations (to solicit its members' views and input) • Embraces diversity
High:	Invites stakeholders representing the diversity of the community or constituency, provides a framework for diverse opinions to be heard, engages a wide range of organizations and people, actively searches out voices that are not typically heard, and embraces diversity
Medium:	Invites selected stakeholders representing some measure of diversity in the community, provides a framework for evaluation but limits the diversity of opinions, engages select groups of people, rarely searches out voices that are not typically heard, and tolerates rather than embraces diversity
Low:	Does not aggressively invite stakeholders representing the diversity of the community (typically relying on a convenient sample or "old boys' network"), provides a framework for evaluation that precludes meaningful participation from diverse populations, limits the discussion by limiting participation, does not seek out diverse voices, prefers homogeneity instead of heterogeneity

Funder role in practice:	• Encourages the community and the evaluators to be as inclusive as possible • Supports inclusive efforts with advice (recommending the inclusion of relevant constituencies, as well as effective strategies promoting inclusion) • Provides appropriate funding for increased numbers and translators • Expresses an explicit expectation of inclusion
High:	Makes explicit statements supporting inclusion in the evaluation, advises the community and the evaluator concerning effective strategies promoting inclusion, provides adequate funding for increased numbers and translators and explicit expectations concerning inclusion
Medium:	Makes statements concerning inclusion but provides minimal advice concerning effective strategies, provides minimal funding to support the increased participation and little if any support for translators, and has implicit (rather than explicit) expectations concerning inclusion

Low:	Makes no statements concerning inclusion, provides no advice concerning successful strategies promoting inclusion, no funding to support participation outside the targeted or primary group, no support for translators, and no expectations concerning inclusion

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION	
Evaluator role in practice:	• Sets up a framework for democratic forms of participation in the planning, implementation, and reporting of evaluation activities • Designs democratic forms of decision making at various junctures in the evaluation • Monitors the degree of democratic participation and decision making • Feeds back information concerning democratic participation to the community
High:	Designs evaluation activities that ensure fairness and equal representation, monitors the degree of democratic participation (such as voting, equal representation in forums, open dialogue), provides the community with feedback about its democratic participation and decision making
Medium:	Encourages democratic forms of participation but provides only a minimal role in actively designing evaluation activities that promote democratic participation, notes examples of democratic participation but collects no systematic data concerning this activity and provides minimal feedback in this area
Low:	Minimizes any encouragement concerning democratic participation, makes little if any effort to design activities that promote this principle, provides no data collection concerning the implementation of this principle

Community role in practice:	• Announces that a democratic form of participation and decision making will be used • Ensures that democratic participation and decision making are used • Allocates additional time that is required for democratic forms of participation • Responds promptly to complaints concerning democratic participation
High:	Explicitly commits to democratic participation as a principle in the program and evaluation, demonstrates examples of democratic participation in decision making, uses evaluation tools and activities designed to promote democratic participation, tracks and records adherence to this principle, uses evaluation feedback concerning this principle to improve practice

Medium:	Influenced by democratic forms of participation, periodically demonstrates examples of democratic participation, minimizes use of evaluation tools to promote this activity, does not provide tracking concerning this form of participation (except an occasional notation)
Low:	Demonstrates periodic examples of democratic participation but typically relies on traditional authority structure for decision making, uses no evaluation tools to facilitate this form of participation or tracking of this form of participation

Funder role in practice:	• Encourages the community and evaluator to adopt democratic forms of participation and decision making • Supports democratic participation with appropriate funding and an appreciation for the additional time required
High:	Explicitly states commitment to democratic forms of participation, encourages the community to adopt this principle in the program and evaluation practice, provides the financial support required to implement this principle
Medium:	Values this form of participation but makes no concerted effort to encourage the community in this direction, offers some support for this form of participation
Low:	Makes no effort to encourage the community to adopt and implement the principle, offers little or no funding to support activities associated with this endeavor

SOCIAL JUSTICE	
Evaluator role in practice:	• Works with people striving for social justice and self-determination • Focuses on projects aligned with a social justice and self-determination agenda • Helps design evaluations that contribute to a social justice agenda • Contextualizes evaluative findings and programmatic decision making within a social justice framework • Helps the community select evaluation tools that accurately measure whether the program is achieving its objectives within a social justice framework • Helps the community think through the potential consequences of the findings
High:	Works with people and programs aligned with a social justice agenda, helps design evaluations that contribute to a social justice agenda, helps the community conduct evaluations and interpret evaluation findings within a social justice framework

Medium:	Works with people with an interest in a social justice agenda but not completely aligned with these interests, helps design evaluations that contribute to a social justice agenda but does not help the community conduct the evaluation or interpret the findings with this frame of reference
Low:	Does not work with people interested in a social justice agenda, does not help design or conduct an evaluation within this framework

Community role in practice:	• Works with disenfranchised people and/or those committed to self-determination • Focuses on program activities and services aligned with a social justice agenda • Uses evaluation findings to improve programs contributing to the larger social good, including ameliorating social inequities • Factors in the welfare of those in greatest need when designing an evaluation, interpreting evaluation findings, and using evaluation findings to inform decision making
High:	Works with disenfranchised populations or others in the service of disenfranchised populations, focuses on program activities closely aligned with social justice issues, uses evaluation to improve programs and services to those in need, uses social justice issues as a lens in program and evaluation decision making
Medium:	Works with people interested in self-determination but not typically considered disenfranchised, focuses on some program activities aligned with a social justice agenda but is equally concerned with program activities only indirectly related or completely unrelated to these issues, only rarely uses social justice as a lens in making evaluative and programmatic decisions
Low:	Avoids working with disenfranchised populations or individuals pursuing self-determination initiatives, or focusing on program activities associated with social justice concerns, or using social justice as a lens in making evaluative and programmatic decisions

Funder role in practice:	• Works with people committed to a social justice agenda • Funds programs aligned with an agenda associated with social justice and self-determination • Helps bring communities and evaluators together that share a common social justice agenda • Fosters self-determination over dependency (by allowing groups to self-govern and develop capacity) • Helps make linkages with similarly oriented programs

High:	Works with people committed to social justice agendas, funds programs designed to help people help themselves, matches communities of evaluation use with similarly oriented evaluators, respects the right of communities to self-govern and make decisions (including evaluative and programmatic decisions) for themselves
Medium:	Works with people with an indirect relationship to a social justice agenda, funds programs designed to help people help themselves but without a central or overriding civil rights or similar agenda, manifests a minimal or haphazard role in matching communities with appropriate evaluators, respects the community's right to self-govern on selected evaluative and programmatic matters
Low:	Avoids working with people committed to a social justice agenda or funding many programs designed to help people help themselves, avoids involvement in matching communities with appropriate evaluators, adopts a position respecting the right of communities to self-govern but not allowing them to self-govern in practice (micromanagement is common)

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE	
Evaluator role in practice:	• Respects and values local community knowledge • Encourages multicultural participation • Uses and validates community knowledge in evaluation activities • Provides mechanisms for the use of community knowledge in the evaluation • Cultivates and validates the community knowledge generated by the community • Helps communities combine local community knowledge with external evidence-based strategies
High:	Values local knowledge, uses local knowledge to help design and implement evaluation, encourages community participation and contribution to the evaluation, provides mechanisms to use community knowledge in the evaluation, helps the community combine local community knowledge with external evidence-based strategies
Medium:	Values limited use of community knowledge in the evaluation, encourages local participation but limits local knowledge contributions to the evaluation, occasionally provides a mechanism to use local knowledge in the evaluation, allows external evidence-based strategies to dominate local community knowledge (but still combines approaches)

Low:	Does not value local knowledge concerning the design and implementation of the evaluation, does not encourage local contributions to the evaluation or create mechanisms to facilitate the use of local knowledge in evaluations, makes no attempt to combine local community knowledge with evidence-based strategies

Community role in practice:	• Recognizes the value of own contributions in evaluation • Uses community knowledge of demographics and conditions as part of the evaluation baseline data as well as part of the data collected to document change over time • Provides evaluators with cultural context in order to help them more meaningfully interpret evaluative data • Uses community knowledge to drive the evaluation
High:	Claims the right to assert the value of local knowledge, uses local community knowledge to design and conduct evaluation, works with the evaluator to ensure that local knowledge is combined with external evidence-based strategies
Medium:	Values local community knowledge but does not assert the right to use it to shape or contribute to the evaluation, minimizes the use of local knowledge to design and conduct evaluation, minimizes effort to inform or educate evaluator about community knowledge, allows external evidence-based strategies to dominate evaluation design and implementation
Low:	Does not value own community knowledge nor advocate for the role of local community knowledge in evaluation, does not make an effort to combine community knowledge with evidence-based strategies

Funder role in practice	• Encourages communities to use their community knowledge to help provide the context for the evaluation, the design of the evaluation, and the manner in which the evaluation findings are reported and used to improve community conditions • Encourages evaluators to find ways of validating and using community knowledge • Shares examples of how community knowledge has been useful in other funded projects
High:	Recognizes and explicitly validates the use of community knowledge in an evaluation, encourages the community to use community knowledge when designing and implementing an evaluation, encourages evaluators to listen to community members concerning the role of community knowledge to design and implement the evaluation as well as interpret meaningfully the findings, links the community with other organizations that have successfully used local knowledge to better inform their evaluations and programs

Medium:	Recognizes the value of community knowledge to provide context and a baseline for the evaluation but does not encourage the community to assert its right to guide the evaluation with its knowledge, encourages evaluators to make limited use of community knowledge, minimizes sharing of examples of how community knowledge has been useful in related projects
Low:	Is respectful of cultural differences and needs, but does not value community knowledge nor encourage the use of community knowledge to significantly shape the evaluation, avoids sharing knowledge of related project activity in this regard

EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES	
Evaluator role in practice:	• Searches out and shares evidence-based strategies with the community in the organization and local community members • Help communities adapt evidence-based strategies to their own environment and populations • Help communities merge local community knowledge with evidence-based strategies • Help communities identify inappropriate or unworkable strategies for their communities • Help communities of evaluation to use, implement, and monitor the effectiveness of adapted evidence-based strategies
High:	Bring relevant and useful evidence-based strategies to communities for their own consideration and assessment, encourages the use of relevant evidence-based strategies, privileges local community knowledge over external evidence-based strategies when determining the appropriateness of a specific evaluation design or activity in practice, helps communities combine community knowledge with evidence-based strategies
Medium:	Brings only contractually mandated evidence-based strategies to the attention of a community, expresses minimal interest in and provides minimal encouragement for the use of evidence-based strategies, allows external evidence-based strategies to dominate local community knowledge in the design and execution of the evaluation
Low:	Ignores evidence-based strategies, misapplies evidence-based strategies, dominates the evaluation with external evidence-based strategies, fails to consider the local context and culture when applying or using external evidence-based strategies

Community role in practice:	• Requests evaluator assistance in identifying evidence-based strategies • Adapts evidence-based strategies to the community context and conditions • Combines local knowledge with evidence-based strategies • Uses evidence-based strategies used by comparable organizations • Rejects inappropriate or unworkable strategies
High:	Solicits evaluator's assistance in identifying appropriate evidence-based strategies, uses external evidence-based strategies (as tempered by community knowledge), adapts external evidence-based strategies to the local conditions, rejects unsound or inappropriate strategies
Medium:	Ignores or fails to consider external evidence-based strategies, engages in wholesale adoption of an evidence-based strategy without considering the local cultural context and conditions, displays indifference or ambivalence concerning the fusion of community knowledge and evidence-based strategies, gives only minimal or periodic consideration to the relative success or failure of external evidence-based strategies
Low:	Rejects external evidence-based strategies without due consideration for their usefulness in the evaluation, gives no consideration to combining local knowledge and external evidence-based strategies, readily adopts irrelevant or inappropriate strategies simply because they are mandated

Funder role in practice:	• Encourages the community to use evidence-based strategies with the caveat that they should adapt them, not adopt them without considering the local context • Shares evidence-based strategies that have been successful in similar funded programs • Encourages evaluators to help the community fuse evidence-based strategies with local knowledge • Respects the community's decision to use or abandon evidence-based strategies depending on the results of their experimentation with these strategies
High:	Encourages the community to adapt evidence-based strategies to the local context (instead of blind adoption), shares successfully adapted evidence-based strategies (based on the funder's knowledge of or experience working with similar programs and strategies), allows the community to determine if the external evidence-based strategies are useful (after due consideration and experimentation)

Medium:	Recommends evidence-based strategies with minimal consideration for local context and knowledge, rejects evidence-based strategies with minimal consideration or adaptation, only shares knowledge minimally about evidence-based strategies based on work with similarly funded projects/programs
Low:	Mandates the use of external evidence-based strategies regardless of the local condition, rejects evidence-based strategies without due consideration, fails to share what was learned from the use of evidence-based strategies in similar programs, fails to respect the local community's right to use or not use external evidence-based strategies

CAPACITY BUILDING	
Evaluator role in practice:	• Trains the community in how to use evaluation, ranging from the logic of evaluation to instrument development • Helps the community conduct its own evaluations • Encourages participation in and ownership of the community • Identifies ways to internalize and institutionalize evaluation (helps to make evaluation part of the planning and management of an agency or group)
High:	Places the evaluation in the hands of the community, provides training in conducting evaluation, creates a format that enables the community to immediately begin conducting parts of the evaluation itself, creates or structures opportunities for the community to engage in the evaluation, helps the community find ways to internalize and institutionalize evaluation
Medium:	Places the evaluation in the hands of community members halfway through the evaluation, provides minimal training, creates a format or system that enables the community to conduct parts of the evaluation itself over time, provides opportunities for the community to engage in the evaluation halfway through the evaluation, allow community members to find their own ways to internalize and institutionalize evaluation (without initial assistance)
Low:	Maintains control of the evaluation without a plan to transfer ownership of the evaluation, provides no training in evaluation, creates no opportunities for the community to engage in the evaluation gives no consideration to internalizing and institutionalizing evaluation

Community role in practice:	• Assumes responsibility for oversight and direction of the evaluation, as well as specific data collection, analysis, and/or reporting activities • Requests training as needed throughout the evaluation • Participates in evaluation training workshops and exercises • Works with an evaluator mentor (whenever possible) • Anticipates that mistakes will be made and plans to learn from them • Respects the process and the people engaged in the evaluation • Protects the rights of those engaged in the evaluation
High:	Assume control of the evaluation from the beginning, conducts various aspects of the evaluation (from the beginning), participates in training throughout the evaluation, learns and applies new skills, takes calculated risks, adheres to evaluation logic and guidelines, uses methods properly, acts in an ethical and appropriate manner that respects the rights of those engaged in the process
Medium:	Assumes minimal control of the evaluation, conducts a task or series of evaluation tasks midway through the evaluation, participates in initial evaluation training but haphazardly in additional training, learns evaluation skills and adheres to evaluation guidelines on most occasions, acts ethically
Low:	Does not assume control over the evaluation, not conduct part of the evaluation, not participate in training, not learn new skills, and has little conception of the evaluation logic or specific methods and little knowledge about ethical guidelines in evaluation

Funder role in practice:	• Specifies capacity building as an explicit expectation of the evaluation • Supports capacity building efforts by providing programs with additional experts and consultants as well as direct financial support for additional training, as needed • Shares program management and fund raising expertise as well as related knowledge with communities, as needed
High:	Explicitly values capacity building as part of program evaluation and implementation, provides experts, coaches, and related resources to facilitate capacity building, provides adequate funding to support capacity building activities, models by sharing funder management skills with communities
Medium:	Values capacity building minimally, provides little support in the area of external consultants or internal management expertise, models behavior only haphazardly
Low:	Places no value on capacity building, provides no support to facilitate capacity building, supplies little or no modeling in this area

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING	
Evaluator role in practice:	• Lobbies for the organizational learning approach with the community and funders • Creates workshops and training experiences that set the stage for organizational learning experiences • Helps the community meaningfully interpret and use data to inform decision making • Helps create learning organizational feedback loops (to inform decision making)
High:	Impresses on the community and the funder the importance of organizational learning and evaluation's role in creating a learning organization, provides training opportunities that prepare the community to engage in organizational learning, helps create structures and decision-making processes that facilitate organizational learning, helps the community interpret data in a manner that will enhance organizational learning, helps develop feedback loops
Medium:	Acknowledges the value of organizational learning, provides training to build capacity without helping to make the link to organizational learning, provides few opportunities to engage in organizational learning, helps the community of learning to interpret data for limited short-term decisions but rarely for larger organizational learning levels, makes a minimal effort to develop organizational feedback loops
Low:	Makes no mention of organizational learning as a goal, provides capacity building experiences focused on data collection but no training concerning what to do with the data after it is collected such as interpretation, decision making, and organizational learning, makes no effort to develop organizational learning feedback loops

Community role in practice:	• Commits to an organizational learning paradigm • Creates an atmosphere conducive to taking calculated risks, sharing successes and failures, and feeding back information into organizational decision making and behavior • Makes decision making transparent • Values staff member and participant engagement • Allocates time for staff members and participants to devote to the organizational learning enterprise
High:	Adopts an organizational learning paradigm, creates a climate conducive to organizational learning, values staff member and participant engagement, uses data for decision making and organizational learning, allocates time to organizational learning activities, makes significant changes in organizational behavior based on the evaluation

Medium:	Values but does not adopt an organizational learning paradigm, creates a climate conducive to conducting self-evaluation but not aware of the value of organizational learning (feeding the evaluative findings into decision making), values participation and evaluation activities but in a limited fashion, allocates minimal time to organizational learning activities rarely makes any change in organizational behavior based on evaluation findings
Low:	Does not value or adopt organizational learning paradigm, nor create an environment conducive to organizational learning, nor value participation, rarely uses evaluation for decision making or organizational learning, does not allocate time to organizational learning activities, makes no significant organizational changes based on the evaluation

Funder role in practice:	• Encourages the institutionalization of sustainable forms of organizational learning • Supports organizational learning with funding for staff support and tracking mechanisms • Shares knowledge about organizational learning, links up the funded agency with similar institutions and consultants possessing relevant expertise and a successful track record in this area • Asks what agencies are learning on this level and what they plan to do to institutionalize this form of organizational learning
High:	Explicitly states the value of organizational, learning, institutionalizing evaluation as a tool to foster organizational learning, provide adequate financial support to enable the community to engage in organizational learning activities, connects the community with organizational learning expertise and consultants, inquires about what the community and evaluators are doing and learning concerning organizational learning
Medium:	Values organizational learning but provides minimal support to engage in these activities, links up the community with appropriate organizational learning expertise but rarely inquires about what community members are learning
Low:	Does not value organizational learning, nor provide support to enable a community to become an organizational learning entity, nor connect the community with organizational learning consultants, nor inquire about what community members and evaluators are learning

ACCOUNTABILITY	
Evaluator role in practice:	• Trains community members to hold themselves accountable • Places the evaluation in the hands of community members to enable them to learn how to hold themselves accountable • Holds the funder accountable for agreements with the community in terms of community control of the evaluation (and program implementation) • Serves as a coach rather than dominating or controlling the evaluation
High:	Trains community members how to use evaluation tools to hold themselves accountable, encourages the use of internal accountability mechanisms (including positive peer pressure, evaluation measures, or benchmarks), encourages community participation in and implementation of the evaluation (to help the members learn how to take control of the evaluation by doing it), holds the community and the funder accountable for commitments (by serving as an historian or reminder), serves as a coach rather than an external expert in control of the evaluation
Medium:	Trains members in how to conduct an evaluation without a focus on how they need to hold themselves accountable and follow through on commitments, devotes minimal time to developing or encouraging the use of internal accountability mechanisms, minimizes participation in the conduct of the evaluation, takes a minimal role as an historian or reminder of commitments made by the community or funder, values internal control and ownership of the evaluation but dominates the design and implementation of the evaluation
Low:	Focuses minimally on the development or use of self-accountability measures, plays no role as an historian reminder, or archivist concerning commitments of the community or the funder, dominates the evaluation, makes community members' decisions for them, fosters dependency instead of internal accountability

Community role in practice:	• Holds each member accountable for implementing the program and conducting the evaluation • Holds the evaluator accountable for serving as a coach and critical friend and not dominating or controlling the direction or implementation of the evaluation • Holds the funder accountable for governance and ownership agreements

High:	"Walks the talk," makes community members accountable for their own actions, including conducting the evaluation, being a member of the partnership, and following through on commitments, makes the evaluator accountable to serve as a coach and facilitator (and technical assistance agent), uses data to inform decision making (even when decisions are not popular), holds the community to the highest standards (methodologically, ethically, and in terms of social justice)
Medium:	Builds mechanisms designed to foster accountability but uses them inconsistently, occasionally uses data to inform decision making, overly relies on the evaluator and other experts to solve local problems, relinquishes control over the evaluation
Low:	Is not responsible for own actions, fails to build in mechanisms for self-reflection and accountability, fails to use data to inform decision making, blames others for own problems and mistakes, fails to hold community members to the highest standards possible under the circumstances, does not hold the evaluator or funder accountable for their commitments

Funder role in practice:	• Holds the community accountable for promised results • Holds the evaluator accountable for assisting the community in accomplishing its objectives • Holds the funder accountable for supporting these efforts in a manner that is realistic and sustainable
High:	Holds the community accountable for promises and commitments (with the understanding that modifications are often required but in consultation with each of the partners), the evaluator accountable for helping the program achieve its objectives in a constructive manner using evaluation, and the funder accountable for financial commitments and philosophical self-help commitments
Medium:	Pays attention haphazardly to community commitments, pays minimal attention to the evaluator's role or allows the evaluator to dominate, and minimal attention to the role of the evaluator in helping the community implement its programs and improve members' practice, pays only erratic attention to the funder's commitments
Low:	Does not hold the community responsible for or take charge of the evaluation, ignores own commitments to the community and the evaluator