



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

History and Overview

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Empowerment evaluation is the use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination. (Fetterman, 1994)

[Empowerment evaluation is] an evaluation approach that aims to increase the likelihood that programs will achieve results by increasing the capacity of program stakeholders to plan, implement, and evaluate their own programs. (Wandersman et al., 2005, p. 28)

Empowerment evaluation is a global phenomenon. It has been used in over 16 countries and in places ranging from the corporate offices of Hewlett-Packard to squatter settlements and townships in South Africa to create sustainable community health initiatives. Empowerment evaluation has been applied by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services to foster self-determination, as well as by Native Americans in reservations stretching from Michigan to San Diego. Empowerment evaluation has also been used in higher education in accreditation self-studies at Stanford University and the California Institute of Integral Studies.

Youth are conducting their own empowerment evaluations. It can be found operating in child abuse prevention programs, as well as after school program collaborations. Empowerment evaluation has even dared to reach for the stars by contributing to the NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory's efforts to educate youth about the prototype Mars rover (Fetterman & Bowman, 2002). (A sample of the breadth and scope of empowerment evaluation is captured in Table 1.1.)

Table 1.1 A Sample of the International Scope of Empowerment Evaluation in Practice

Countries	Foundations	Government	Higher Education	Native American Reservations	Community-Based Social Programs
Australia	Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts	NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory Schools	California Institute of Integral Studies (Fetterman, 2001, 2012)	National Indian Child Welfare Association, Michigan	Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drug Prevention Programs (CBOs)
Brazil*	John S. and James L. Knight Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic distress (Fetterman, 2005a, pp. 107–120) High performing Gifted and talented 	Hebrew Union College (Rhea Hirsch School of Education)	Native Aspirations, Washington	Family Support Services (Keener, Snell-Johns, Livei, & Wandersman, 2005)
Canada	Marin Community Foundation	U.S. Department of Education	Stanford University's School of Medicine (Fetterman, 2009; Fetterman, Deitz, & Gesundheit, 2010)	Tribal Digital Village, San Diego, CA	Squatter Settlement Assistance (South Africa)
Ethiopia	Mary Black Foundation	U.S. DOE's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services			The Night Ministry† Tobacco Prevention (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007)
Finland†	W. K. Kellogg Foundation	U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration			
Israel					
Japan					
Korea					
Nepal					
Mexico					
New Zealand					
South Africa					
Spain					
Thailand					
United Kingdom					
United States					

CBOs, Community-based organizations; DOE, Department of Education.

* Dr. Thereza Penna Firme (2003) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and the Cesgranrio Foundation in Brazil is applying empowerment evaluation to the Educational Program in Amazonian Brazil.

† Riitta Haverinen from Stakes National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health; Liisa Horelli, Research Fellow at the University of Helsinki; Juha Siitonen (Siitonen & Robinson, 1998) from the University of Oulu; and Heljä Antola Robinson from Bradley University are applying empowerment evaluation.

‡ The Night Ministry is a nondenominational church-based organization that reaches out to Chicago's nighttime street communities through a street and health outreach program (see Wandersman et al., 2004).

HISTORY

The history of empowerment evaluation has been one of evolving conceptual clarity and methodological specificity. Empowerment evaluation was introduced in a presidential address at the American Evaluation Association (AEA; Fetterman, 1994). The empowerment evaluation approach was painted with broad strokes focusing on the definition, conceptual roots, and developmental facets or stages, including training, facilitation, advocacy, illumination, and liberation. In addition, caveats and concerns were raised. The new approach created a tremendous amount of intellectual and emotional excitement, commentary, and debate. It was an idea “whose time had come.” The approach spread like wildfire and was embraced by evaluators from around the world. The depth and breadth of adoption was so rapid it was called a movement (Scriven, 1997; Sechrest, 1997). It challenged the status quo and thus touched a nerve among many traditional evaluators, resulting in highly charged exchanges in the journal *Evaluation Practice* (Fetterman, 1994, 1995; Stufflebeam, 1994). Nevertheless, while making it clear that “empowerment evaluation is not a panacea,” empowerment evaluators seized the moment and applied the approach to a wide variety of programs and diverse populations. Empowerment evaluation spoke to issues at the very heart of evaluation. What is the purpose of evaluation? Who is in control? Who am I (as an evaluator)?

The introduction of empowerment evaluation to the AEA and the resulting dialogues led to the first collection of works concerning this approach. It was titled *Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-Assessment and Accountability* (Fetterman, Kaftarian, & Wandersman, 1996). The collection provided an introduction to the theory and practice of this approach. It also highlighted the scope of empowerment evaluation, ranging from its use in a national educational reform movement to its endorsement by the former W. K. Kellogg Foundation’s director of evaluation. The book also presented examples of empowerment evaluation in various contexts, including federal, state, and local government; HIV prevention and related health initiatives; African American communities; and battered women’s shelters. This first volume also provided various theoretical and philosophical frameworks as well as workshop and technical assistance tools. The first book helped to launch a new approach to evaluation, setting the stage for future developments. It also sparked additional debate and discussion with some of the most prominent leaders in the field of evaluation (Fetterman, 1997a, 1997b; Patton, 1997; Scriven, 1997). Wild’s review of the book captured the spirit of the times: “Fetterman et al. have nailed their theses to the door of the cathedral. Now the question is, How tolerant is the establishment of dissent?” (Wild, 1996, p. 172).

Foundations of Empowerment Evaluation (Fetterman, 2001), the second empowerment evaluation book, raised the bar in empowerment evaluation, building on the previous collection of knowledge and shared experience. The approach was less controversial at the time. The book was pragmatic, providing clear steps and examples of empowerment evaluation work, including a high-stakes higher education accreditation self-study. The book also applied the standards to empowerment evaluation, including utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy standards (see Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994; Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011). *Foundations of Empowerment Evaluation* made several additional contributions, including the following:

1. Explaining the role of process use (as people conduct their own evaluations, they enhance their ownership of the evaluation)
2. Comparing collaborative, participatory, and empowerment evaluation
3. Discussing similarities with utilization-focused evaluation
4. Discussing the multiple purposes of evaluation, including program development, accountability, and knowledge

The collection was followed by a number of articles and contributions to encyclopedias and leading texts in the field (e.g., Fetterman 2004a, 2004b; Wandersman et al., 2004). Empowerment evaluation, at that stage of development, had become a part of the intellectual landscape of evaluation.

Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005) represented a milestone in the development of empowerment evaluation. In pursuit of additional conceptual clarity, it elaborated on the existing definition of empowerment evaluation, emphasizing capacity building, outcomes, and institutionalization. In addition, although empowerment evaluation had been guided by principles since its inception, many of them were implicit rather than explicit. This led to some inconsistency in empowerment evaluation practice. This motivated a cadre of empowerment evaluator leaders and practitioners (contributors to the collection) to make these principles explicit. The 10 principles are as follows:

1. Improvement
2. Community ownership
3. Inclusion
4. Democratic participation

5. Social justice
6. Community knowledge
7. Evidence-based strategies
8. Capacity building
9. Organizational learning
10. Accountability

These principles should guide empowerment evaluation from conceptualization to implementation. The principles of empowerment evaluation serve as a lens to focus an evaluation. (They are discussed in detail in Chapter 2 and in Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005.) Case examples from educational reform, youth development programs, and child abuse prevention programs were used to highlight the use of these guiding principles. This book, like past collections, generated a lively debate among many of the same leaders in the field (Fetterman, 2005b; Patton, 2005; Scriven, 2005; Wandersman & Snell-Johns, 2005).

A 2005 AEA conference panel session titled “Empowerment Evaluation and Traditional Evaluation: 10 Years Later” provided another opportunity to engage in this ongoing dialogue in the field and reflect on the development and evolution of empowerment evaluation. Speakers included Drs. Robin Miller, Christina Christie, Nick Smith, Michael Scriven, Abraham Wandersman, and David Fetterman. Based on the 2005 panel at AEA, a substantial and systematic review¹ of empowerment evaluation was published (Miller & Campbell, 2006). They highlighted types or modes of empowerment evaluation, settings, reasons for selecting the approach, who selects the approach, and degree of involvement of participants. The relationship between the type of empowerment evaluation mode and related variables was useful. They provided many insights, including the continuum of flexibility to structure and standardization in empowerment evaluation wording, based on the size of the project. Miller and Campbell (2006) also noted that the reasons for selecting empowerment evaluation were generally appropriate, including capacity building, self-determination, accountability, making evaluation a part of the organizational

1. See also Christie (2003) for an insightful comparison of empowerment evaluation with deliberative democratic evaluation (House & Howe, 2000), highlighting theoretical similarities and differences in practice. The focus was on degree of stakeholder involvement. See also Fetterman (2003). Sheldon (2014) also presents survey results of empowerment evaluators.

routine, and cultivating staff buy-in. Nick Smith complemented their work with his application of an ideological lens to the analysis of empowerment evaluation (Smith, 2007).

This same 2005 AEA session was responsible for a series of additional empowerment evaluation related publications. One of the publications was titled “Empowerment Evaluation: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow” (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007). It consolidated over a decade of critiques and responses concerning empowerment evaluation. It helped to further clarify the purpose and objectives of empowerment evaluations and discussed misperceptions and misunderstandings. The article addressed issues of people empowering themselves, advocacy, role of consumers, complementarity of internal and external evaluation, as well as traditional and empowerment evaluation, practical and transformative empowerment evaluation, bias, ideology, and social agenda. It was one of the *American Journal of Evaluation*’s most downloaded articles, which speaks to the relevance² of empowerment evaluation in the field at the time.

This book marks the 21st anniversary of the approach. *Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-Assessment, Evaluation Capacity Building, and Accountability* builds on a wealth of empowerment evaluation discussions, presentations, publications, and practice. This collection takes one more step toward enhancing conceptual clarity and methodological specificity.

First, this collection (building on the last one) highlights the role of the empowerment evaluation principles in practice. Selected principles are discussed throughout the collection. The chapters demonstrate how the principles serve as a guiding force in each of the empowerment evaluations.

Second, this book brings to the surface a central theme in empowerment evaluation: evaluation capacity building. “Evaluation capacity building (ECB) is an intentional process to increase individual motivation, knowledge, and skills, and to enhance a group or organization’s ability to conduct or use evaluation” (Labin, Duffy, Meyers, Wandersman, & Lesesne, 2012, p. 308). This concept was a driving force in our first empowerment evaluation book (Fetterman, Kattarian, & Wandersman, 1996) and a light motif or refrain in our second book (Fetterman, 2001). It is listed as one of the 10 principles in our third book (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005). After 21 years of empowerment

2. Empowerment evaluation continued to play a central role in the field as evidenced by an internationally broadcast debate between Fetterman, Scriven, and Patton at Claremont Graduate University in 2009. It is in the university’s virtual library at <http://ccdlibraries.claremont.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/lap/id/69>. See Donaldson, Patton, Fetterman, and Scriven (2010).

evaluation practice, evaluation capacity building has emerged as an overriding focal point and is discussed explicitly in many of the chapters of this book.

Third, this latest edition helps to document the empowerment evaluation continuum (Fetterman, 2001, p. 114; Fetterman, 2005, pp. 42–72; see also Cousins, 2005, p. 188). The first book emphasized themes of transformative empowerment evaluation, explaining how “the investigation of worth or merit and plans for program improvement were typically viewed as the means by which self-determination is fostered, illumination generated, and liberation actualized” (Fetterman, 1996, p. 381). Examples of illumination and liberation were presented, based on work in a township in South Africa, as well as in the Oakland public school system in California. The transformative tone of empowerment evaluation was captured by one empowerment evaluator who exclaimed in the middle of their presentation: “I get it: It is not formative, it is transformative” (Fetterman, 2001, p. 38). In contrast, the *Foundations of Empowerment Evaluation* book acknowledged the value of classifying some efforts as the application of empowerment evaluation concepts and techniques (as compared with a more comprehensive empowerment evaluation). This book complements (but does not replace) the earlier volumes, emphasizing the practical empowerment evaluation end of the spectrum. This stream focuses on utilization and specifically program decision making and problem solving to increase the probability of achieving outcomes.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

This book contains a wealth of wisdom, in terms of both theory and practice. This introductory chapter, containing a brief history of the approach, is followed by a chapter about the theory, principles, concepts, and steps of empowerment evaluation. It should be used as a lens with which to read the remaining chapters.

Part II of the book highlights the scope and breadth of the approach. It presents the views of authors from a community health foundation and a national foundation. It is followed by two international case examples, including one in Peru and the Visible Learning program operating in 10 countries, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Holland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States. Part II also includes chapters on empowerment evaluations in the United States. Corporate philanthropy and government-sponsored examples also help document the range of empowerment evaluation settings.

Tools are needed to translate theory into practice. In Part III, five tools are highlighted within the context of concrete case examples; they are Getting To Outcomes®, Caseload Evaluation Tracking System, Evaluation Capacity Assessment Instrument, Quality Implementation Tool, and Empowerment Evaluation Dashboard. In addition, the use of conventional tools such as focus groups, concept mapping, and questionnaires are discussed.

It is consistent with the spirit of empowerment evaluation to continually reflect on practice. The collection concludes with a chapter about some of the research that has been conducted concerning the approach and a discussion about emergent themes and next steps.

Highlights

Theory, Principles, Concepts, and Steps

David M. Fetterman summarizes empowerment evaluation theories, principles, concepts, and steps in Chapter 2. Theories guide behavior, providing an overall road map or conceptual map of the terrain. Instrumental empowerment evaluation theories shaping practice include empowerment, self-determination, and process use, as well as theories of use and action. Principles represent the next logical level to inform practice. The 10 empowerment evaluation principles help ensure empowerment evaluations remain focused and authentic.

Empowerment evaluation concepts provide additional conceptual clarity. They are intellectual landmarks on the landscape. Key concepts include critical friends, culture of evidence, cycles of reflection and action, communities of learners, and reflective practitioners. There are many ways to conduct an empowerment evaluation. The two most common approaches—the 3-step and 10-step models—are discussed to help inform practice. Both are designed to build capacity and enhance the probability of program success. Chapter 2 also briefly discusses the role of the empowerment evaluator, as a collaborator, facilitator, and critical friend.

Scope and Breadth

One test of an approach is its adoption and use. The entire book speaks to the breadth and scope of empowerment evaluation, from domestic to international contexts and from government to corporate philanthropic settings. Foundations play a particularly unique role in society. They are powerful

catalysts for change. Empowerment evaluation is philosophically and strategically in alignment with many foundations. Foundations' choices have both symbolic and substantive impacts in the field. Therefore, their views and use of empowerment evaluation are important to discuss.

Foundations

Two authors from two foundations highlight their views as they apply and reflect on the power of empowerment evaluation. Jan B. Yost, author of Chapter 3, is the president of the Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, a regional community health foundation. She describes the evolving philanthropic landscape from disinterested benevolence to an interest in accountability. Empowerment evaluation is viewed as a conduit for achieving results. Jan explains how funders can operationalize empowerment evaluation using her foundation as an example, focusing on the partnership between grantee, funder, and evaluator.

Laura C. Leviton is the senior advisor for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, one of the largest foundations devoted to health in the United States. Laura describes how the foundation is driven by its philanthropic strategy for social change, including its choice of evaluation approaches. In Chapter 4, she describes the potential role of empowerment evaluation in achieving such a strategy. Laura focuses on several empowerment evaluation principles, including capacity building, inclusion, and community knowledge.

International

Empowerment evaluation is international in scope, operating in more than 16 countries. Two international examples are presented in this section of the collection. In Chapter 5, Susana Sastre-Merino, Pablo Vidueira, José María Díaz-Puente, and María José Fernández-Moral, members of the Planning and Management of Sustainable Rural Development Research Group at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, describe a Peruvian empowerment evaluation. They explain how rural Aymara women used empowerment evaluation to transform their craft activities into a successful and sustainable business. They highlight the utility of the following empowerment evaluation principles in guiding their work: improvement, inclusion, democratic participation, capacity building, community knowledge, community ownership, and accountability.

Janet Clinton and John Hattie, from the University of Melbourne, provide an international example, in Chapter 6, of an empowerment evaluation in action, that is, building capacity in an educational setting. Their Visible Learning

approach has operated in 10 countries. It is based on more than 800 meta-evaluations about what impacts student learning. They highlight the importance of teachers “knowing their impact” and being interpreters of evidence, above and beyond being data collectors. They demonstrate how empowerment evaluation principles have been incorporated into the Visible Learning model of schooling, helping to maximize student learning and achievement. Principles driving their efforts include improvement, culture of evidence, community ownership, capacity building, social justice, and accountability.

United States

Corporate Philanthropy. Shifting gears to domestic programs and initiatives, in Chapter 7, David M. Fetterman provides an insight into Hewlett-Packard’s Digital Village initiative. It was a \$15 million effort to bridge the digital divide in communities of color. Empowerment evaluation was used to drive community efforts to create economic sustainability, provide educational opportunity, and preserve cultural heritage. This initiative is an example of corporate philanthropy. Principles of improvement, respect for local knowledge, and organizational learning helped shape the empowerment evaluation. However, the focus of the discussion is on evaluation capacity building and outcomes.

Government. In Chapter 8, Pam Imm, Matthew Biewener, and Kim Dash, from the Education Development Center, and Dawn Oparah, from Amadi Leadership Associates, describe a U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) initiative. The logic behind the initiative was to help communities conduct more rigorous evaluations of “practitioner-initiated” programs and in turn implement more effective substance abuse prevention programs. They applied empowerment evaluation principles, such as improvement, inclusion, democratic participation, capacity building, respect for community knowledge, evidence-based strategies, social justice, organizational learning, and accountability. They describe how the principles were operationalized and applied to cultivate local ownership of evaluation practices and enhance program sustainability. The authors also discuss the role of the critical friend in helping to facilitate the evaluation.

Tools

Empowerment evaluation is about use. Tools are continually being introduced, applied, tested, and refined. They help practitioners operationalize and

transform empowerment evaluation principles into practice. The six chapters in Part III describe how empowerment evaluation principles guided these practitioners' efforts. However, they also highlight tools that can be adapted for wider use; these tools include the Getting To Outcomes® model; Caseload Evaluation Tracking System; focus groups, concept mapping, and questionnaires; the Evaluation Capacity Assessment Instrument; the Quality Implementation Tool, and the Empowerment Evaluation Dashboard. These tools are provided in each of the chapters.

Getting To Outcomes® (CDC-Funded Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program)

Getting To Outcomes® (GTO®) is one of the most popular tools used to conduct an empowerment evaluation. It involves asking and answering 10 accountability questions, which are (1) What are the underlying needs and conditions to address? (2) What are the goals, priority populations, and objectives? (3) Which science (evidence-based) methods and best practices can be useful in reaching the goals? (4) What actions need to be taken so the selected program fits the community context? (5) What organizational capacities are needed to implement the program? (6) What is the plan for this program? (7) How will the quality of program and/or initiative implementation be assessed? (8) How well did the program work? (9) How will continuous quality improvement strategies be incorporated? (10) If the program is successful, how will it be sustained?³

GTO, described in Chapter 9, explicitly provides stakeholders with tools for assessing the planning, implementation, and self-evaluation of their programs. GTO manuals or how-to workbooks have been developed for substance abuse prevention, positive youth development, underage drinking prevention, and teenage pregnancy prevention. An initiative on teenage pregnancy prevention, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is used to highlight GTO features.

Caseload Evaluation Tracking System (Charter School Social Workers)

Described in Chapter 10, the Mastery Charter Schools is an example of a school turnaround success story. President Obama recognized the charter school for its “no excuses” approach and its high-stakes, performance-based culture. Ivan Haskell, director of Social and Psychological Services at the Mastery

3. Adapted from Chinman, Imm, and Wandersman (2004).

Charter Schools, and Aidyn L. Iachini, from the University of South Carolina, describe an empowerment evaluation of the Mastery Charter school social work program. Their work focused on (1) helping social workers develop and take ownership of a new evaluation tracking system; (2) understanding the impact of their services on youth; and (3) improving social work practitioners' evaluation capacity in order to improve the effectiveness of their work with individual students. Their caseload evaluation tracking system spreadsheet is a useful tool that can be adapted for many other purposes. Capacity building, community ownership, and continuous improvement were hallmarks of their efforts.

Focus Groups, Concept Mapping, and Questionnaires (Elementary School Youth)

Empowerment evaluations are also conducted by youth. In Chapter 11, Regina Day Langhout and Jesica Siham Fernández describe an empowerment evaluation conducted by fourth and fifth graders in California. It was part of an ongoing collaborative community-based research project. Youth identified a problem in their schools, set goals, and developed a strategy to achieve their goals. However, the real story is how they evaluated their initiative and, based on their findings, reshaped their ongoing initiative. Their tools included focus groups, concept mapping, and questionnaires. Guiding empowerment evaluation principles in the initiative included social justice, inclusion, improvement, evidence-based strategies, capacity building, and community ownership.

Evaluation Capacity Assessment Instrument (University-Community Based Organization Partnership)

Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, Tina Taylor-Ritzler, and Gloria Morales-Curtin (a member of the community-based organization), in Chapter 12, highlight the empowerment evaluation efforts of a 7-year university-community-based organization partnership. They describe their work in terms of the developmental stages of empowerment evaluation, including training, facilitation, advocacy, illumination, and liberation (Fetterman, 1996). In essence, they describe a process of organizational transformation. As the transformation unfolded, the evaluators' role changed from facilitators and coaches to critical friends. Evaluation capacity building was a fundamental component of this effort. The Evaluation Capacity Assessment Instrument proved to be a useful evaluation needs assessment tool in the process. Organizational learning, improvement, inclusion, social justice, and accountability were also guiding empowerment evaluation principles in this initiative.

Quality Implementation Tool (School District Mobile Computing Initiative)

Andrea E. Lamont, Annie Wright, Abraham Wandersman, and Debra Hamm conducted an empowerment evaluation, described in Chapter 13, of a technology integration initiative in a school district in South Carolina. The initiative provided students in Grades 3 through 12 with their own mobile computing devices (e.g., iPads and Chromebooks). The focus of the initiative was on building capacity to ensure the program was implemented with quality. Implementing with quality is considered a key to success and sustainability in the implementation science literature. These authors describe the use of the Quality Implementation Tool to build capacity and facilitate quality implementation. One of the coauthors, Debbie Hamm, was the school superintendent in charge of the initiative.

Evaluation Dashboard (State of Arkansas Tobacco Prevention Program)

David M. Fetterman, Linda Delaney, and Beverly Triana-Tremain conducted a decade-long empowerment evaluation of a statewide tobacco prevention initiative in Arkansas, which they discuss in Chapter 14. Marian Evans-Lee, the program coordinator, is a coauthor. The initiative was funded by the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement and administered by the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, under the auspices of the Minority Initiative Sub-Recipient Research Grant Office (MISRGO). The tobacco prevention initiative was guided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. There were 20 grantees across the state conducting tobacco prevention and cessation programs. An evaluation dashboard was developed to help grantees monitor their own performance. It consists of goals, benchmarks or milestones, baselines, and actual performance. Grantees used it to determine if they were making progress toward stated annual goals. It allowed them to make mid-course corrections as needed. The dashboards also enabled the sponsor (Arkansas Health Department), grant administrators (MISRGO), and evaluators to monitor grantee progress as a group throughout the state. The same dashboard findings were reported to the legislature to respond to accountability concerns and future fund allocations.

Research and Reflections

One of the milestones of an approach as it matures is critique and exchange. Empowerment evaluation has been engaged (and, at times, embroiled) in

critique, exchange, discourse, and review for two decades (Alkin & Christie, 2004; Altman, 1997; Brown, 1997; Cousins, 2005, 2013; Fetterman, 1994, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 2005b; Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007; Patton, 1997, 2005; Scriven, 1997, 2005; Sechrest, 1997; Smith, 2007; Stufflebeam, 1994; Wandersman & Snell-Johns, 2005; Wild, 1996). Empowerment evaluation has benefited greatly from this phase of its development, helping to enhance conceptual clarity and methodological specificity.

A second milestone in the evolution of an approach is when research is conducted about it. Research about empowerment evaluation has been growing for over a decade. For example, Christie (2003) conducted a comparison between empowerment evaluation and deliberative democratic evaluation (House & Howe, 2000). She highlighted theoretical similarities and differences in practice, focusing on the degree of stakeholder involvement (see also Fetterman, 2003). Miller and Campbell (2006) conducted a systematic review of empowerment evaluation, as discussed earlier. They found that the reasons for selecting the approach were appropriate. Jeffrey Sheldon (2014) conducted a survey of empowerment evaluators. The findings provided insight into empowerment evaluation theories and mechanisms, as well as the conditions associated with realizing empowerment and self-determination.

In Chapter 15, Matthew Chinman, Joie Acosta, Sarah B. Hunter, and Patricia Ebener summarize 11 years of research on empowerment evaluation. They discuss six studies focused on Getting To Outcomes[®], a 10-step result-based approach to accountability that is an operationalization of empowerment evaluation. It is designed to increase the capacity of community-based practitioners to plan, implement, and evaluate quality programs and produce desired outcomes. These authors document how empowerment evaluation improves capacity and performance of key programming activities. They also demonstrate how their measures of capacity predict measures of performance.

David M. Fetterman, Abraham Wandersman, and Shakeh J. Kaftarian bring this volume to a conclusion in Chapter 16. They provide their reflections on emergent themes and next steps, just as they concluded the first volume 21 years ago. However, this time the collection reflects the international scope of the approach. It is a measure of the global acceptance and use of empowerment evaluation. In addition, the tenure of the approach has allowed for colleagues to conduct, study, and learn from long-term (10-year) empowerment evaluations. The aim is to improve practice. The adaptability of empowerment evaluation is also acknowledged, as it operates in a wide variety of settings, including government, corporate, nonprofit, and foundation-funded environments.

However, on reflection, the most significant observation about empowerment evaluation over the past two decades is its growth, in terms of its conceptual clarity and methodological specificity. This includes guiding principles and specific steps and tools.

Fetterman, Wandersman, and Kaftarian venture to consider next steps for empowerment evaluation in the conclusion, recognizing their ideas are based on past practice and experience. As McLuhan phrased it, “We look at the present through a rear-view mirror. We march backwards into the future” (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, pp. 74–75).

Although no one can predict the future, calculated guesses, probable scenarios, and thoughtful speculations are presented about the future of empowerment evaluation.

CONCLUSION

This book is a paradox much like Plutarch’s ship of Theseus. Plutarch raised the question of whether a ship, once restored by replacing every piece, is still the same ship. This collection began as a “simple” revision of the book that helped launch the empowerment evaluation approach—*Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-Assessment and Accountability*. However, in the process of creating a “simple” revision and update, we have replaced every single chapter. In addition, we have added principles and tools that did not exist when the approach was first launched. The revision is so radical that even the title of the book has been changed to explicitly include the term *evaluation capacity building*. Part of the paradox is that many of the principles were implicit. Capacity building was always a fundamental part of the approach. Nevertheless, we believe this collection represents a transformation, literally decades beyond our first voyage. Ultimately, we leave it to the reader to determine if this is the same ship with new sails or an entirely new vessel as they chart their own journey across this book’s ocean of discourse, insight, and experience.

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