

Empowerment evaluation: A participatory tool to help accomplish programmatic objectives¹

David Fetterman
Stanford University

Introduction

I'm going to go over the key points of empowerment evaluation and also: *gracias*. Today we're going to be talking about empowerment evaluation as a participatory tool to accomplish program objectives. I'm going to try to weave in some of the comments I've heard today also as part of the presentation. I'm going to briefly talk about some of the basics of evaluation first, to set the framework, and then launch right into empowerment evaluation so to have even further context; José María provided



the initial context, I just want to highlight a couple of key points about evaluation.

There are a number of definitions of empowerment, of evaluation itself. The first one focuses on just the mere worth of a program or an activity. I tend to emphasize that plus the improvement component. It's important to look at many kinds of purposes for evaluation. There isn't a single purpose, there are multiple purposes. One purpose is to help program develop at its beginning. Another one is strict traditional accountability. A third one is to be a developer and learn how to evaluate many different programs. It's important to determine which kind of purpose you have in mind, otherwise you'll be talking past each other when you try to define what kind of approach is best for the project you have in mind. It is also

¹ Transcription of the lecture given by Professor David M. Fetterman at the Conference "Empowerment Evaluation: Tools to Inform Decision Making and Strategic Planning" in Madrid, May 4, 2006.

important to know who is in control. That will shape what kind of evaluation is done and what kind of input people have in the process.

One of the things that we'll be focusing on today with the empowerment evaluation is the whole issue of building capacity that lasts longer than all of us. One of the things that most of us have done is try to participate and help out other people in some fashion, sometimes by reading a report. We mentioned earlier that, at times, it simply stays there and gathers dust. That doesn't build a lot of capacity. We may look good at the time we deliver that report, but the impact may last only for a nanosecond and then, the reality is, you go away and there's not much left behind. This approach tries to build capacity. When we all get a little bit older, we want to leave something else behind, and the idea is to leave something, a tool that can help people help themselves. That's what empowerment evaluation is all about. Ultimately, it leads to organizational learning as well because it has the whole decision of questioning and using data for decision-making.

Empowerment evaluation uses the same kind of basic logic as a standard evaluation. You have to have some sort of goal or purpose. My dad used to say "if you don't know where you're going any road will get you there". And that's true. You have to have some kind of idea where you want to go. You need a base line; you need to establish where things are now if you want to go anywhere. You have to have some sort of program or intervention, otherwise, what are you measuring? So, there has to be some form of measurement--qualitative, connotative--they are all valid. There's not only one approach.

You should be looking at what José María mentioned earlier, the process of how you are accomplishing the objectives. If you only look at the outcomes you may never know how to replicate it. You'll never know how to fix it. You have to be aware of the process. This is all I want along the way. And, of course, you want to distinguish between outcome and impact. The outcomes usually happen at the end of the program; impacts are long term. This is very important. When I worked in a township in South Africa, just for example, they would come to me and say, "David, I'm very depressed. Our statistics are changing for our community." It was a program on pregnancy prevention. And I go, "Well, let's just wait for a second. How many young women are we talking about that are going through the program?" And they go, "Seven." "Seven? Why would you expect a long-term impact on the community with seven?" Now we know how many, we know seven pregnant women will tell you the outcome of the

program. Over the long term, after many young women have gone through the program, then we can talk about impact.

So, you have to be patient if you're talking long-term impact. If you are measuring a program and you focus on impact prematurely, I assure you, you'll destroy the program. It's unrealistic expectations and you'll never be given another chance to get off the ground. So, it's very important to look at organizations like developmental sequences, and you have to measure or evaluate it based on where it is developmentally fair. As I mentioned, there are intermediate outcomes once you look at it right away. Remember the question you asked about you needing a lot more time? I was listening very carefully to the questions. You do, you need to do a sustained effort, but that doesn't mean that there aren't intermediate objectives, eventual benchmarks along the way to see if you're on the right trajectory, on the right path. So, you step those out. You need those not because outside administrators are saying you're accountable, but because the community needs them as a reinforcement to keep moving forward. You need to have outcomes.

Empowerment evaluation cares about processes, but it cares equally about results. That's the reason we are here. They want to see what the results are, what are the outcomes. And, it is very important for empowerment evaluation, and evaluation in



general, the long term impact, which is the hardest to measure because there are so many other variables associated with that kind of intervention and outcome. There are many designs and methods in evaluation that you can use. For example, experimental design, where you have a group like this

under treatment or under control, and then we find out if there's any difference at the end of the course. It's a very good idea theoretically. In practice it has some problems. Methodologically, you know you are in the group. You know you're in it and then you've been contaminated. So, there are many methodological issues with treatment control particularly if you are dealing with drop-in or a teenage pregnancy prevention program. Now, I said this group can't go in. What am I doing ethically versus the methodological issue? This is a wonderful experimental design where you have to be

very careful about how you apply it and whether it makes any sense ethically or methodologically.

Ethnographic. I've read a lot of work on ethnographical qualitative describing what people's perception of reality is and very often I'll be told, "David, why do you care about what people think? The facts, that's all that matters". Well, that's not true. The reality is what people perceive to be real is as important as reality. A quick example. In a hospital psychiatric ward, there are people there that believe they can fly. I don't happen to believe they can fly. But, there are real consequences to that perception of reality, particularly when they're on the third floor with no bars in the windows. The consequences of that perceptual reality are as real as this table. So, I write about understanding the insider's view of reality as well as, of course, the external reality.

Another survey approach is that in which you have pretests and post-tests to see if there is a gain over time. To get more depth, when you're beyond the initial numbers, you need to have some interviews and focus groups to be able to understand the quality of the information you've just gathered.

There are many designs and methods of evaluation. Sometimes evaluation is used to focus on formative assessment or, in other words, feeding back information to the program along the way so it can constantly improve and refine. Or, it can be summative, but, at the end, you've been going a long time and are not really sure you have met your outcomes or who decides if you're being given more money or not. That's what the summative component will be versus the formative. In reality there is not such thing as summative, that's just a good pedagogical tool that we teach about. The reality is that there is no end. Programs permeate and transform different parts of our society. There is an end to a project as far as physical accountability, but the social reality of programs is that they actually do continue in some other form, by seeking other funding or arrangements. It's rare to find it completely disappeared. The flow of activities goes from goals to base line to program intervention, outcomes and then impacts. So, right now, this is the overall flow, the overview of evaluation processes, so that we have a context for going into empowerment evaluation.

There are also extreme forms of evaluation which are often for compliance, and you have an independent judgment or an internal form that engages participants. That's what José María was referring to earlier, when he was talking about process views. The theory behind process views is very simple: the more that you participate in your own

evaluation, the more you're going to abide by the findings and recommendations because they're yours; it's a very powerful tool. One of the biggest problems with evaluation in general is that it sits on a shelf gathering dust. The power of evaluation is for it to be used, so you try to find tools and techniques to make sure that it is used more effectively. Participatory, collaborative, and empowerment forms are aimed at getting more folks engaged and participating in the process.

Some examples of empowerment evaluation

Now let's shift views to empowerment evaluation. I hope that's useful just to show and provide a common ground about the logic of evaluation. I want to mention a couple of projects that are either ongoing or just finished, and that we're actually seeing some results and outcomes from. One, is the fifteen million dollar package digital village project. This is a project where we are helping communities that have been



disadvantaged economically and technically to bridge the visual divide. They didn't have computers or CDs or digital cameras. So we had to show disenfranchised Afro American communities, American Indian, tribes in the United States and pacific Islands how they could use all this to look for jobs, create more business, communicate,

educate, etc.. This was a community-wide initiative, using empowerment evaluation to improve security, safety of the community, housing (we were talking about the housing issue before) education and so on.

This approach is very important when you're talking about things like housing. Just as a metaphor, an example of why we're talking about why you should want to put more time into this kind of evaluation versus other kinds. We were talking about this on Friday, as well. One foundation in the United States decided to give a lot of money to a community to build beautiful quality houses. Well, they were in a rush and didn't think the community was moving fast enough so they took the money back and said: "hey, I'll do it" and they did a better job. They did a gorgeous job. The houses are gorgeous! Two years later they are garbage because no one knows how to take care of them. The

whole point was that it takes more time for people to do this themselves, it's true. But, then they know how to take care of it, to maintain it, later. That's a lot of what empowerment evaluation is about and what one of these projects was about.

We also work with the higher education--a lot of work with the medical school in Stanford--with institutes, a number of different places involved with tobacco projects. We have projects basically, literally, throughout the world. This one, as mentioned before, was fascinating because this is an issue where the community was in charge of its own assessment. We simply play the role of listener, coach, or facilitator, rather than dictator; they determine their own goals. This was very powerful, about a five-million-dollar project.

This one is in Arkansas. This is the kind of community where you can go miles and miles and miles and you never get connected to the cell phone. It is completely rural and there are only a few businesses operating. This one in the picture is just barely operating. This is closed. This is closed. There's almost nothing to do in these areas and we've been asked to work with them to improve test scores. Now I will show you how we've actually improved standardized test scores using empowerment evaluation. In Arkansas we have schools that are academically disrupted, in other words, they're operating at the twenty fifth percentile. This is a hundred; this is the lowest that can possibly operate pretty much in the United States for over six or seven years. No other intervention has been effective in moving them forward. But, we've been effective in these schools improving test scores, reducing disciplinary problems. At one point the teachers were locking the doors of their classroom to keep the students out because they were afraid of them. That's how bad the schools were for a while. Now they are inviting and want the students to learn. We have parental involvement, which is required, so you can have some source of recourse to go to when the kids are not responding. We're involved in the Arts Council, as well.

This is just an overview of the empowerment evaluation activities. We're going to go into the steps in a few moments. I just wanted to emphasize that this is called Plan Happenstance. This is the term that a friend of mine, John Crumbles, mentions and describes. This is where we work with teachers to infuse arts into education as a way of teaching sciences, math, etc. They use the empowerment evaluation as a way to self-assess how they're doing in their programs. They take pictures of all of our activities. So, right now just like this, I will take a picture of everyone here. You're ready? You're very smiling? Here we go. Good shot. Watch this, here José María, take a picture of me.

What you see? Empowerment evaluation, you see? Now, the question is what did I just do? I just transferred evaluation technology, just now. José María just documented part of this event; that's how easy empowerment evaluation is. Everyone says to me: it's too hard for people to understand how to use technology and evaluation tools. We just did it. In a little bit of fun we just showed how simple a transfer of technology of evaluation tools can be and how people can use these things to evaluate themselves. We did this same thing with their Council. We took pictures, we made a small video, a little voice over, and guess what? The sponsoring agency a week later put up their first webpage and needed material. Who had the material? We did. Plan Happenstance.

You work hard for a goal not always knowing all the opportunities that'll come up. We should always be ready for any opportunity to jump in. That's Plan Happenstance. That's what happens in this process very often in empowerment evaluation. We also work for colleges, women's technology culture We work for a variety of foundations as the Marine Foundation, Life Foundation etc. As José María mentioned, we work in Brazil and Japan. We do a lot of work with AIDS foundations, United Kingdom and throughout the United States.

The three steps of empowerment evaluation

When you compare traditional evaluation with empowerment evaluation you want to keep these lines. Typically, in traditional you have more of an external person, like me, coming in; in empowerment is an internal person--you are part of that group in one fashion or work closely with them to facilitate their work. In traditional, you're the expert; in empowerment you're the coach or facilitator. That's a very important distinction. I've been lucky in my life to have had one number of evaluational works in practice and in theory, but I know that they only had an impact for a short period of time. They may have been done very well academically and technically, but they were short term. As I got a little bit wiser I realized I wanted to leave something a bit more significant behind me.

That's why I realize I have to move from being the expert to being a coach or critical friend, because that expert role flusters dependency on me. When I'm gone, you loose the power for that initiative to move forward. When you are a coach or a critical friend you're fostering self determination, you're leaving the capacity to evaluate behind. On an immediate basic level, we can operate in a higher level of evaluation while they're doing some of the most basic things. But, everyone can do basic

evaluation. Everyone needs to do basic evaluation for their own self improvement, for the improvement of the program in their communities. In the traditional form, you do have the benefit of the independent judgment; but, in empowerment it has to be a part of a group. Having said this, there's nothing mutually exclusive with traditional evaluation and empowerment. They can work together very well. But, the traditional should be rooted in the empowerment concerns, in the community's concerns, not completely abstract and separate from those issues.

Empowerment evaluation *uno, dos, tres!* That's it. Three steps. That's all. Simple. There's nothing fancy about this approach. It all comes down to this. I may be the coach or the facilitator; I use the board (we'll do this later in the afternoon in the actual workshop to show how this is done). Basically, empowerment evaluation is regular evaluation with just one little tiny difference: you turn everything you know on its head. That's all. So instead of me being in charge, you're in charge. You tell me the mission of your program, I won't tell you. I can read through boxes of material, and I will, but you will tell me what you think the mission is and we'll write it down and we'll share it and we'll explain why this is important. You will take stock of how well we are doing as a group. Not me, you will determine. And then I will ask you to set your goals for where you want to go in the future and what strategies you think are important. Then we'll talk about what's credible evidence.

But, those are the basic steps. There's no more on empowerment evaluation, and then we're done and we go right home. We'll do a little bit more, just a little bit. With the mission, there is a chance to facilitate the development of the value system. When I ask everyone what the mission is they say, "It's not that simple." "I want that mission statement" and everyone goes, "Oh no! Mission statement again!" or "Vision



statement!" That sort of thing. I don't care what you call it. You can call it results. All I want to know is what you believe, what your dream is as a community, as a group, and how can we work together to get there. But first, you have to state what it is.

It's a democratic process

where everyone gets to participate and is expected to be involved. Let me explain what that is. Have you ever been in a meeting and you have a very interesting good point to make and your point has been ignored or slightly put down, or, my favorite, someone with a higher rank than yours, says the same exact thing and everyone goes: “Ooooh! Well done!” You know? And you go: “That was my point”. That is not being allowed to make meaning or give voice. In empowerment evaluation you are forced, compelled to be involved and have your voice heard, so you can’t be left to sabotage things later. You are involved throughout the whole process.

Mission is important. Once again is the issue of where you’re going in life and the mission, when you do it as a group you have a better sense of what the group thinks about and where we should go. Many times people tell you, “We have a mission statement.” “Who wrote it?” “The Director?” Maybe it was even 20% of the actual group five, ten years ago. “How much turnover have you had? What does it represent?” You need a mission statement every time you start a process because you have to ground the evaluation and its values, and then from there, it scuffles the mind to be prepared to think in terms of assessment and plans for the future. So, mission is step one.

Step two, taking stock, has two parts. The first part, is to ask the group to list as many activities as they think of that are critical to the operation of the program. Funding



will be probably one. Communication will be one. There are a number of different things that matter to a specific group. Let them list as long as they can. Then, very Californian, I give everybody five dots. Everybody gets five dots and gets to put the dots where they want next to what they think this is the most important thing for us to evaluate as a group. If they want to put five dots they can put them there; or two dots there or one out there, but you only get five dots. People say “David, it’s not very connotative, dots? How can I count the dots? Not complicated, wherever you find

the most dots that’s what we’re going to assess, very simple, it saves a lot of time because if you’ve ever done group facilitation you know this process can be done in

thirty, forty, fifty seconds to a minute versus four to five hours of arguing why you think that's the most important. You think that's the most important, put the dots out there then we'll see where they go. Very democratic, very simple, very fast. By the way, one of the things I haven't mentioned so far is we're talking about a very rapid process here of a couple of days and then, of course, you'll do it all the time once a month, but the initial part of it is very quick. What we can do in two days is what most people charge you to do in sixty-seven months because sometimes people get upset with this approach because it moves very quickly. So, this first one, as I've said, is mission. The first part is just to prioritize because you can't evaluate everything.



The second part is taking stock and the second part of taking stock is to put all this in an excel spreadsheet. In this, you're going to take each one of these and you're going to put one to ten. One: you're doing the worst in this area. Ten: you're doing perfection. Everyone here goes up to the posted board and writes down what you're thinking. So, if one of the categories is communication, then, you actually write down ten if it's perfect, one if it's awful, and there's nothing confidential here. These are my initials, this is a dean, this is a secretary and we take all these figures and we total them and average them in this way and turn evidence this way. This way I learn who's optimistic and pessimistic. Why does that matter? Someone who's critical, like me, says a 3.2 in my average score for most of the things that I've evaluated. The next time I say something positive everyone will go, "David said that was good! Must be really good because he's usually pretty negative." So, you get to learn who I am, who you are from an evaluative perspective. We want to know the group field which we are in for each of these categories so the group determines what they think about our progress at every stage. Can you see the basis for the bind? Because they're all participating, they're all in assessment. It also builds a cultural evidence, because it's not enough to put a rating, you have to say why.

Let me give you a quick example, this is abstracted from a real example that we did for creditation and higher education. I put down communication as a three. Why? Because we were having a meeting, like an empowerment evaluation meeting, and we

had two other meetings scheduled for the same time. That's pretty poor communication. The secretary is a better social scientist than I am. She actually had the notes and the



schedule showing the conflict, the right evidence, face facility. She goes, "Wait a minute. The dean gave it a six, a much higher level. What are we going to do now?" You ask him. So, I asked: "Why six? I gave it three. She gave it three. Why six?" He goes, "I thought we were talking about how well we're communicating in

relationship to the larger institute. In relation to the larger institute we communicate pretty effectively." So we were talking past each other because of the differences in role. Roles make a big difference in terms of how you assess and what you see. In this process, in the middle of it, we determined we had an internal and an external form of communication rating. He didn't have to change the rating, we just had to change the way in which we were doing this. But, if we didn't talk about it, if we didn't have the dialogue we never would have known that we had these differences of opinion. So, the dialogue made this a more accurate process. In any case, you see the basic targets. Over here we have to know where we're going in each stage. What's critical here is that this becomes the base line. From this point on we actually know where we are and we're going to measure and compare with these figures three months from now, six months from now, etc. Before we do that, we want to know what our mission is. We started where we are and is that enough for evaluation? Sure! Time to go home! Not in empowerment evaluation.

In empowerment evaluation you have a mission, you assess and you plan for the future where you want to go. So you take this information and ask the group to come up with goals. Not new goals relating to something new, but new goals related to those same topics, communication, funding, the things we're taking map with. You have to ask the group to come up with strategies. They'll know best because that's local knowledge. They'll know better than we will what makes sense. I can have an incredibly accurate beautiful presentation on what makes I think suits the community and be completely wrong because it's irrelevant to where they are in their cycle.

In the townships of South Africa I know a little tiny bit about puericulture and we were developing plans to make people more self-sufficient. I'm sitting over with José María, the board's over here, and was working when I hear, "Oh! I got an idea." And I get up and they go, "No David. No right now. I think we got it". The old David or evaluator would have said, "How insulting! I come from thousands of miles away just to come here and help you here in a township and you don't need me?" The new perspective of an empowerment evaluator goes "Great! They're doing it on their own! They don't need you at the same level!" That's why you ask them to come up with their own goals and their own strategies. My strategy may have been phenomenal with high-tech and everything else, but not relevant to where they are developmentally. They may be receptive to those things, but we are not where they were. So they come up with this process.

So, let me summarize these key points. The taking stock part represents the base line from an evaluation perspective. It's useful in itself, but really it is a slice of time. The new plans for the future is the intervention from an evaluation perspective that they help design so they are bound to make that work. Then you constantly use focus groups, interviews, surveys, all the traditional evaluation tools to assess how well those new strategies are working. And if the strategies are not working, put the strategy away and come up with a new one now in real time before is too late. That's why you have internal measures all along the way so by the time you come back to do another taking stock three months from now, six months from now, we're more likely to be reaching that goal because we have intervention strategies that are constantly being monitored.



We're constantly being told what is making it, what is not making it.

Technical systems, that's the other term. Same thing. All you're doing is providing technical intervention information all the way through so all your goals are probably going to be approximated by the time you do the final assessment. The aim for evaluation is not just to say "You made it or you didn't make it". Evaluation can help you

get to where you want to go when you use this approach.

The second thing in stock is the second data point, to compare it over time. Let me mention just a few examples. The Arkenstone example is where we used pre-impulse tests, baseline information, intervention, second data point and document change over time. In the little tiny towns in Arkenstone the schools perform very poorly. The board of education was very dysfunctional and the members basically hated each other. I walked into the first inspection just to look at the women's bathrooms and I had a little four years old and there were no doors on the bathroom. I ask them, "Why is this? And they said, "Because the board couldn't agree how to use the money to fix the bathrooms." So, I said, "I have some couple of dollars. You take my money and fix that hinge. That's how bad it was.

So, instead of going to the board we asked the community, the teachers, the parents, the ministers, the mayor to come and help assess how are we doing in this school and they came up with different categories and prioritized them from one to ten. Then we came up with a strategy together. How we're going to improve the school? Well we have to improve discipline. If the kids can't even keep control of themselves how are you going to teach, right? So, we have to discipline. If the parents don't know how to get involved to pressure the kids to do homework how are you going to have anything. So, we worked on all these different topics and issues.

I test the kids on where they're weak, where they're strong. I find that they're weak in Math rounding 3.5 as a 4. That's how simple I am. Then, we teach rounding and we're weak in other thing and we're going to test them on that one. And you work on each one. Six months later you come back and our rating for each one of these categories is much higher than it was before. Why? Because we provided the information every step of the way when the kid wasn't rounding then we know that we need to teach more and want to teach more until the kids understand that.

Parents weren't coming enough. We had to have a party with a lot of food to get parents over there. The strategies are otherwise perfect, but eventually you get the right ones and you'll then get to improve them over time. All this is a pre-post test orientation, that's all it is. The difference is that the crew in the community is involved into shipping it. Arkansas is one quick example.

Principles of empowerment evaluation

The newest book you might have seen out there has the principles of empowerment evaluation so that when you're in the middle of doing evaluation you can know where to go by understanding the concepts. The concept behind empowerment evaluation is improvement. It's not a neutral experiment. We're not doing evaluation just to do science and say "Oh! You failed! So what?" It's improving to help you to get where you want to go. That's not neutral. Believe in the community ownership where the community has to commit to it, has to own this for it to be able to go forwards and be sustained over time. Otherwise, you'll only last as long as that political representative is in charge or so long as that particular group has responsibility for that unit and then it fades away.

Inclusion. Let me mention a quick example as to why inclusion is important. Very often in evaluation it is easy to say, "They're too far away. They're in Toledo. They are in Puerto Banús. They're way down over there so we can't involve them. They're too far. But, they're critical and the thing will fail if you don't have them involved. You need to include them by faxing, by email.

Let me mention a quick example of what happened that highlights this point on a personal level. When I presented empowerment evaluation to the American Evaluation Association's President back in 1993, I hired a very special person to help me to introduce it. I didn't tell any of my board members who it was. I gathered in front of everyone and said, "I want to invite a special speaker, *Nobel Loria*. I've read his work as a kid. I continue reading it and I'm always impressed." I spent the whole morning describing this one person and still no one knew who it was right? So they're wondering, "Who's this guy David has invited?" Right? I want to introduce to you Doctor Albert Einstein. Of course he has died so many years ago, right? We hired an actor and we talked evaluation. His hair is all like this and he talks funny and moves his hands just like Einstein and we all thought it was just brilliant! Of course he used dinosaur words, so of course he was brilliant.

Now, two things about this story. One, we put him in a dumbwaiter, so we know it's him and it suddenly occurred me what if it gets stuck? They must think I'm crazy, you know, I'm talking about Einstein and he didn't even show up, blasters, there is no Einstein? That was one big risk. The second is this, he had the same kind of mike that I'm using right now, but it was faulty. You know sometimes it sort of flick out and the sound isn't so good. So, I had to hold his hips so that when he's talking the microphone stayed. Because if his presentation wasn't good, then I look bad and the concept doesn't

get across. So, even when technicals shouldn't matter it matters to the presentation, the way you communicate these things. So, I'm holding on to his hips looking kind of foolish like I'm dancing behind this guy who's acting like Einstein presenting part of these things. And I'm thinking this is not going to go well. This is really a fiasco. Well, there's one person in the back of the room who no one really cared for because he always acted as a nerd. He only liked all the computer equipment. I happened to like him. Ask me why, I don't know. I do like computer stuff but just happens I like him. I know he only talks about this and nothing else so he could be boring to others, but he's a very nice guy. Who's the one person in the room of thousands of people who sees a regular microphone at the edge of the room, brings it over and saves the day? Him.

So why is inclusion important? You never know who's going to come and save you. The weakest link could be the one that drops the idea that you need for housing, for self safety, for education, you don't know. And you definitely won't know if you don't include them. So, the idea is if you know where you're going you want the air of including. You want a democratic participation, to aim at social justice and you want to value community knowledge. But, if you value community knowledge, which many social scientist have not done, it's their perception of the community and what's real, what's possible, that matters. Otherwise, they won't follow through any implementation of a ground expert plan. They have to help you design what makes sense and what is realistic. Having said that you also want to value scholarship, evidence-based research. A lot of people say, "Oh! They just use us for an experiment for their publication" and get ten years. So they won't listen to me anymore. I think that's garbage. You just have to be just as careful about using this information as you would using community knowledge.

Finally, you should be using capacity building. If you're not helping people to learn how to do this themselves then you're not doing empowerment. They need to be learning a lot of the basics of the logical evaluation. The more you use it, the more you're creating organizations learning so that organizations will depend on their data for their own decision making and to go forward. Otherwise, you have nothing. You have dialogues of decision making and bottom line, but empowerment evaluation cares about accountability. You do not do this just for fun. One of the goals is that you accomplish what you said. It's not why not and why you're going to do things differently. So, to focus on accountability very briefly. In Arkansas, we reduced the numbers at or below 25%. No one has been able to accomplish that so far by using educational tools in this

kind of community. And this is just an evaluation tool. It's not an educational reading tool. It's just a feedback system.

For the digital village I was driving up from one project to another back in California and on the radio I heard the head of the Federal Communications Commission bragging about the digital village over here that built the largest wireless system in the country. That's our project. That's an outcome. These are fundamental kinds of outcomes. When you only are looking for statistical significance you're probably looking for something too small. There's nothing wrong with this, but you want to have a face facility that you know the public can't ignore. It has to be consumer oriented, so this is translated into a common language. I used graphic images to highlight the reduction from 59% to 38%. The public understands that reduction in the number of kids that are failing. Now you and I both know that that's a lot of statistic work to go behind it, but they don't have to see all. They simply need to see the successful results.

Similarly, this is a picture of me at Stanford videoconferencing with American Indians in San Diego. One of their goals is to be able to videoconference beyond the



reservation where they were segregated, isolated. The face facility associated with this picture is worth fifty million dollars because it shows that it accomplished the mission of that task of that project in one picture. See the power of images? Taking the data is complex. All the buildings, all the towers to create the

videoconferencing, the training, the arrangements between Stanford and the reservation and the tribal leaders. All this complexity disappears and you see one thing: the outcome. That's the way you present whether you accomplish your goal or not.

To be able to do this, you need to have the community, the evaluator and the donor involved. One of the things that is very unusual about empowerment is the role of the donor. The donor gives you money, right? And they're valuable because they're

money. No. The donor is someone that has knowledge, not just money. They're the ones that have invested in so many other kinds of programs. That's the person you want to tap into to help you improve your program. Don't try to play games with the donor just to get money from them. That's a small thing they have to offer. It's important, but small. It's the knowledge, the connections, the laboring they can do. At the same time, the donor has to be able to learn a new role if he wants to be actively involved as a partner and not just a patron that puts some money out and walks away.

Conclusion

I very often communicated in *uno dos tres*, just simple linear mode. This is more of a 3-D kind of mode. If you think of empowerment evaluation like this cup over here, just a physical cup, the glass of water, the structure of this cup is only strong if you have community, founder and evaluator creating this. If one of these parts is missing this is a weak cup. It won't hold the same amount of water for very long. The more you apply the principles of inclusion, social justice, the ones I have just mentioned over here, capacity building, organization learning, the higher the level of the water or the higher the level of the empowerment in this cup or the social container. The less you apply the principles the lower the level. It doesn't make it good or bad, it is just what it is. Evaluation is just a snapshot of reality, but this is a tool. So if you think that you want more empowerment you're applying more principles. If you want a stronger cup, a stronger social container, a stronger community, then you involve all three in the process of doing evaluation.

I want to conclude with a few technological tips that we use. We use online service software, digital photography, final sharing, virtual conference space, videoconferencing and web broadcasting to help communicate what we're doing and help people to share information, often for free. Digital photography, take this camera, take shots of what's going on; have participants take the shots and we can use the photography to capture our meetings. This is a picture of Arkansas where we're going to project the entire tobacco project that is aimed at getting kids away from tobacco. We take pictures of the whole van of little kids and turn it into a little tiny movie that is then put onto the marketing webpage for them, documentation of evidence for evaluation or, for the donor, where it was accomplished, a lot of face facility and it stimulates them into doing more because they see it right on the screen. We use online services. This one is with journalists. I ask them a very simple question: Would you

send your reporters and other good staff members to future conferences of this nature? We had a response right of 97% on an online survey that went onto the cover of the report. That's all we need to know. If you're running the business of training journalists what's the one thing you want to know? The people that have the money, that send their staff are the ones that will keep on doing this.

What you heard today is there is an overwhelming amount of information out there. This process helps to zero in on the key things you need to know. You can't do everything and you can't hear everything. It's overwhelming. So you have a process for reducing and focusing on what the group values are and what needs to be done now. We use videoconferencing for free. This is free software, Windows or Mac, and I can see you, you can see me with a \$25 or \$100 camera that you put on top of the computer right here and I can talk to you like we're talking right now. We often we have to have the headphones on so not to hear the echo, right? I can also take a document, Excel spreadsheet, plunk it in here and you'll receive it. Like that, just like an email attachment, but quick. I can listen to them while they chat, I can talk to you without the picture, all free. This is important because I do work in Japan. And you want to be able to communicate on a more personal level, but you don't want it to be very expensive and is very effective. Finally, sharing. I can put reports into my file over here. We can share it, edit it, whatever we need to do on a group basis.

In summary, when I talk about mission in empowerment evaluation I am talking about what are the group's values. It's a focus point. It's how you focus all that energy. Taking stock from an evaluation perspective is really creating a baseline. It is your first step as to where are we as a group? And then you reassess so your plans for the future become not just plans. It's the intervention that you're going to be assessing. The intermeasures are feedback clues. The focus groups, the interviews are soon all the way along. They are getting there, and if you're not, change the strategies. The second data point is how you compare one month to three months to four months, whatever you may want to look at and that's where you see organizational learning. The key reference is one of the books you saw over here. This one highlights the same steps we just talked about, *uno dos tres*. So if you want to recreate the steps and you want to do it in a practical fashion this book is very valuable. This is the first book to introduce the approach, so if you want to know what's going on with self abuse prevention and the scale of how this is used, this is a very good book. This one talks about the principles so that if you're in a role of guiding empowerment evaluations this is the book you may

want to have, not because you want to know the steps, but you want to know the theory behind it so that, when you're in the middle of an evaluation you know which way to go. These are just the references and we also maintain a webpage. The next time you Google empowerment evaluation or data environment, there are hundreds if not thousands of free software, webpage material, guides, online services software that you can use to do your own self assessments. In Japan, we take pictures of the processes and we turn it into a little movie so you can see what's going on in different parts of the world. These are on their webpage. And then, finally, when you want more detail about any of those processes you can email me, call me.

I hope this gives you a picture of what empowerment evaluation is about and as a response to some of the questions we heard earlier about quality, time, involvement and all the factors that make this more sustainable. In many respects, empowerment evaluation is a place, is a tool that helps people when they know, for example, that they're falling behind in the process of international competition and want to stake up their own innovative role, maximize their own talents to bring them back to where things worth not so many centuries ago, for example right here in Spain. So, thank you very much, I appreciate all of your time and attention.