PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATING COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

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on behalf of the
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PREFACE

This report was produced by the Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) on behalf of the National Funding Collaborative on Violence Prevention (NFCVP). Linda Bowen, Executive Director for NFCVP, provided guidance and leadership for the project. Marcy Mistrett, Barbara Brown, Mitchell Brown, and other staff members at NFCVP also provided comments and support for this report. This report was developed by David Chavis, Kien Lee, and Elizabeth Jones.

The primary audiences for this document are evaluators and practitioners (i.e., program implementers, technical assistance providers, and trainers) who are involved in comprehensive community initiatives. Community participants (i.e., leaders of community-based organizations, community residents, community partners, and volunteers) and funders may also find this document useful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDIX A: Methodology

APPENDIX B: American Evaluation Association, Guiding Principles for Evaluators

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose

Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) represent a substantial change in the approach to community development and the prevention of social, health, and other societal problems, including violence prevention. In this document, the term "CCIs" is used to describe the full range of initiatives that take a comprehensive approach to change communities in order to improve the well-being of their residents. These initiatives "indicate a commitment to change at many levels, including individual, family, institutional, and community-wide, through processes that involve collaboration and coordination within the community and between the community and the broader society" (Kubisch et al., 1998: 2). The evaluation of these initiatives poses great challenges, yet plays an important role in strengthening the initiatives and the capacity of communities to create change.

This document describes principles for evaluating CCIs. These principles also promote the use of evaluation to build community capacity. These principles were derived from a review of the scientific and practice literature on evaluating CCIs, publications on the topic, and guidelines and standards for the evaluation profession; interviews with experienced evaluators and their review of drafts; and the experience of the authors. These principles were also reviewed by evaluators at a think tank session during the annual conference of the American Evaluation Association in 2000. (The methodology for the literature review and interviews are included in Appendix A.) The review of literature and reports is not meant to be exhaustive; however, it does cover key publications in the area of CCIs. The literature reviewed for developing these principles is listed in the references.

The purpose of these principles is to provide evaluators and others with practical guidance on how to approach the evaluation of CCIs. These principles also raise important issues to consider during the implementation of an evaluation. Another equally important purpose is to begin a learned discussion among a larger group of evaluators on the methods used to evaluate CCIs. The discussion of each principle was developed to provide some initial advice on how to conduct the evaluation of CCIs with the hope that readers can build upon the ideas in their own work and share them with others.

These principles were initially developed for the National Funding Collaborative on Violence Prevention (NFCVP) to stimulate discussion between evaluators and practitioners at NFCVP's conference, *Linking Practice and Evaluation in Comprehensive Community-Based Violence Prevention Efforts*, held in Washington, DC, in February 2000. The principles reflect the Association for the Study and Development's (ASDC) and NFCVP's belief that effective and meaningful citizen engagement in evaluation could lead to systemic change. The principles also demonstrate that evaluation can be responsive to community needs and help educate community program staff, and still adhere to scientific rigor.

1.2 The Principles

A total of 27 principles were developed. These principles are interrelated and build on each other. These principles are intended to raise the expectations for the evaluation of CCIs. The principles are organized according to the following nine major themes:

- Engagement of practitioners, community participants, funders, and other stakeholders;
- Role of the evaluator;
- Implementation of the evaluation process;
- Issues of power;
- Identification and definition of outcomes;
- Multiple levels of change;
- Attribution of results to the CCI;
- Utilization; and
- Standards for evaluation.

There principles provide guidance on how CCI evaluations can be rigorous and at the same time, be an effective tool for building community capacity. A rigorous and useful evaluation require a collaborative process for the evaluation design, adherence to the professional standards of evaluation (see Appendix B for the guiding principles for evaluators), and clarification of expectations and perceptions of the evaluation early on in the process.

1.3 Current Needs

A review and analysis of the information that contributed to these principles helped identify the following needs:1) Further conceptual and methodological developments regarding the evaluation of systemic changes, their relationship to other levels of change, and the outcomes in a CCI; and 2) Improvement of knowledge and skills of evaluators, practitioners, community leaders, and funders on the standards, methods, and strategies for evaluating CCIs.

The challenges in a CCI evaluation provide a new opportunity for everyone involved in such an initiative to develop new capacities to implement strategies that promote community change. Rigorous evaluation is evaluation based on principles and while the principles in this document need to be further tested, they represent a set of initial considerations to guide evaluators, funders, and practitioners.

2 PRINCIPLES

2.1 Engagement of Practitioners, Community Participants, Funders, and Other Stakeholders

The active engagement of all stakeholders, especially community leaders and residents, is an important value of the authors and of NFCVP. It is also an important prerequisite for a rigorous evaluation design. Principles 1 to 6 assert the importance of engaging practitioners, community participants, funders, and other stakeholders in the process of designing evaluations, interpreting evaluation results, and clarifying expectations of the evaluation process. Specific methods, steps, and details to remember are suggested for each principle.

> Principle 1: Community-based evaluations such as CCI evaluations, which are intended to build community capacity, should be participatory and inclusive of all stakeholders.

Participatory and inclusive evaluations[1] can lead to higher-quality scientific design and results (Chavis et al., 1983; Estrella & Gaventa, 1998; Mertens, 1999). If the diverse perspectives of stakeholders (i.e., community participants, practitioners, and funders) are included in the design, implementation, and interpretation of data, the evaluation will produce more feasible designs and appropriate methods; moreover, the findings will be interpreted more accurately and in greater depth. The different participants in the evaluation process bring knowledge about different sources of data, as well as a more accurate picture of how the program can operate and the contextual factors that will affect it. Community participants (e.g., residents and local leaders) should be engaged in a meaningful way by being included in decision-making about the initiative and the evaluation of the initiative. Community participants can help adapt methods that are appropriate within their communities and help check the expectations of outcomes. Their support and involvement will also lead to greater acceptance of and cooperation with the evaluation. Their insights into local community conditions will help the evaluator better understand the external factors that could have affected the initiative. The knowledge that can be generated through their participation in the interpretation of findings will provide richer evaluation reports and other products. A close relationship generated through participation and inclusion can help ensure both short- and long-term utilization of the evaluation process and findings.

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[1] Participatory evaluation is an approach that involves evaluators and community members in a collaborative process that integrates investigation with education and collective action. Participatory evaluation can be used in a variety of contexts. For more examples of how it can be applied, see Whitmore, E. (Ed.). (1998). Understanding and Practicing Participatory Evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation, No. 80*.

Principle 2: Trust and positive relationships among practitioners, community participants, funders, and evaluators should be constantly fostered and developed.

Experienced evaluators uniformly agreed that building and maintaining trust and relationships among all parties to a CCI is essential. Past positive experiences with evaluation among practitioners and community participants should be acknowledged in order to create plans to use similar approaches; negative experiences should be recognized in order to avoid repeating mistakes (Baker et al., 1999). The evaluator should work through key organizations, gatekeepers, and other community leaders to gain credibility (Harachi et al., 1996). Evaluators can build and strengthen relationships in several ways.

Evaluators should:

- Spend time getting to know the program implementers and community participants in the initiative during the first few meetings they attend, without engaging in any evaluation business during those meetings (e.g., they should just "hang out");
- Use a snowball method to meet key community leaders (i.e., start with the core participants and ask them to identify other community participants, and then ask each of these newly identified participants to suggest one or more additional persons) to learn more about the community and the initiative so that the evaluator can begin to build relationships in the community (Harachi et al., 1996);
- Accompany the community organizer or program implementer during his or her activities; and
- Assess the opportunities and barriers for forming relationships among practitioners, funders, community participants, and themselves (e.g., do skits to act out past positive and negative experiences and use them as learning moments about each other's roles).

Practitioners, funders, and evaluators together should:

- State clearly that the evaluation's goal is to facilitate a process that helps everyone learn, including the evaluator who is a co-learner in the process (Weiss, 1983, cited in Brown, 1995), in order to have equitable relations. This goal needs to be explicitly supported by funders;
- Consider the cultural appropriateness and impact (positive and negative) of using titles or academic credentials in introductions of evaluators; and
- Take time to identify and share common values (e.g., all participants want the initiative to lead to systemic changes that promote equity).

Principle 3: Practitioners, community participants, funders, and the evaluator should come to an explicit agreement about the goals of the initiative (e.g., the specific outcomes that would indicate the initiative was a success) and their roles in achieving those goals at the onset of the evaluation process.

Practitioners, community participants, and funders often have very different opinions about the goals of the CCI and how they will know when they have achieved their goals. It is not unusual for the three groups to have conflicting or competing goals that can result in an evaluation design and methodology that is undesirable to one or more of the groups. All three groups should also understand each other's goals and how realistic the goals are, given the contextual conditions of the community and initiative. If conflicting or competing goals are expressed, the practitioners, community participants, and funders must come together and *prioritize* the goals. It will often fall upon the evaluator to bring attention to the conflict and to convene the groups to resolve the conflict. The evaluator can sometimes help resolve the conflict by providing guidance on where the most lessons could be learned.

Clearly defining terms is often part of this process. One should not assume that all terms and jargon have the same meaning to everyone. According to experienced evaluators, it is critical to ensure agreement on the meaning of key terms (e.g., outcome, prevention, participation) to avoid major misunderstandings. Developing and sharing a glossary when the evaluation begins can enhance communications and equalize relationships among the stakeholders. Evaluators found such a glossary was particularly useful to clarify technical and process terms (e.g., accountability, triangulation, program theory, and quasi-experimental design).

Principle 4: Practitioners and community participants should make their expectations for the evaluation explicit and clear. They should not delegate authority to the evaluator that they believe is essential for their role or that reduces their accountability to their constituencies.

Practitioners and community participants need to state clearly their expectations of the evaluation, as well as the lessons learned and positive and negative experiences with previous evaluations. Practitioners, community participants, and the evaluator should ensure clarity about *who, what, and when* regarding the following matters:

- Accountability—To whom is each practitioner and participant accountable (e.g., the board of directors, the funders, a task force made up of community participants) (Brown, 1995, 1996; Weiss, 1995) and what information does the practitioner and participant need from the evaluator to support their accountability? The lack of clarity regarding accountability could lead to conflicts about reporting timelines and about the content of information that will be shared.
- Role—What is the practitioner and the community participant's role in terms of coordination and communication in order to support their accountability?

- Decision-making power—What information does the practitioner and the community participant review and who provides the consent for changing, sharing, and disseminating the information? How are these decisions made?
- Timeline—When and in what format do practitioners and community participants need information from the evaluator in order to help them make decisions, write grant proposals, and submit reports to their boards and funders?

> Principle 5: All the stakeholders (i.e., practitioners, community participants, funders, and the evaluator) should be brought together to work out conflicts that emerge during the evaluation, particularly in the beginning of the process.

Conflicts could arise over different issues throughout the evaluation process, such as the definition of outcomes, the identification of short-term benchmarks (e.g., the extent of attitudinal changes within a given time period), and the process for handling revisions to the evaluation report. These conflicts must be worked out in order for the evaluation and the CCI to be beneficial. The evaluator should call a meeting to address the conflicts if he or she has heard different goals and expectations from the funders, practitioners, and community participants. Sometimes it is necessary and appropriate to engage a facilitator to help transform the conflict.

> Principle 6: Ongoing structures and processes should be established to keep all stakeholders, including the evaluator and project director, informed and involved.

It may not always be possible to engage everyone in the evaluation process; however, a structure and process should be established to keep everyone informed and involved (Baker et al., 1999; Brown, 1995, 1996; D'Aunno et al., 1985; Patton, 1997; W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998). For example, a task force, an evaluation subcommittee, a learning team, or a steering committee can be established to serve as a liaison between the evaluation and the governing body of the initiative (e.g., the partnership or collaborative). These committees and governing bodies should have clearly stated processes for:

- Communication (Who will be the direct contact(s) for the evaluator, and how and when information will be communicated?);
- Accountability (Who will be responsible for informing which constituencies about the evaluation process and findings?);
- Decision-making (Who will review evaluation materials and make final decisions, and how decisions will be made?);
- Criteria for participating in the governing body (How and what will the stakeholder contribute to the process?); and
- Procedures for facilitation (Who will facilitate the meetings?).

This structure and process will enable the evaluator to maintain and strengthen relationships among all the stakeholders. The decisions made by the governing body should be

documented and revisited periodically to ensure that the evaluation still meets the needs of the community and captures the dynamic process of the initiative.

Experienced evaluators also stressed the importance of joint presentations (e.g., updates and reports on findings) by members of the evaluation committee, initiative staff, and the evaluator.

2.2 Role of the Evaluator

The evaluator's role has transformed over the past 20 years from that of a traditional scientist to that of an educator who facilitates learning and capacity building (The Aspen Institute, 1997; Brown, 1995; W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998) and helps translate program processes into a language that can be understood by all the stakeholders. Because of these initiatives' complex design, multiple levels of change, and wide range of stakeholders, nothing has challenged the evaluator's role more than have CCIs. Principles 7 and 8 describe what evaluators have to do to address some of the challenges they might encounter through their involvement with CCIs.

> Principle 7: Evaluators should to be clear to themselves and to other stakeholders about their own principles and values and about their accountability to the goals of the initiative.

According to experienced evaluators, it is difficult to meet everyone's needs (i.e., the funders and community participants). The evaluator risks getting caught in a power struggle between the funder and the community when attempting to establish an equitable funder-grantee relationship (Brown, 1995) because the funder generally pays for the evaluation and therefore attempts to control its questions and process. The power dynamic is complicated further by issues of race and class. Most funders tend to be of European descent, whereas most grantees tend to be marginalized minority communities (Brown, 1995). The evaluator is not excluded from that power dynamic because he or she also represents a certain race and class. (Most evaluators tend to be of European descent and with a higher educational status.) Even when evaluators do represent the same race or class group as the communities involved, the distance and power dynamic may still remain. The evaluator will make choices about his or her priority to meet the funder's needs, the community's needs, or his or her own needs, and how to handle them. For instance, the evaluator will need to decide the extent to which he or she will engage the funder in a discussion, even if it means creating tensions, about modifying existing program guidelines in order to be more responsive to a community's needs. Evaluators need to be clear to themselves and other stakeholders on this matter.

> Principle 8: Evaluators and funders should be clear about what decisions they are or are not willing to share with or delegate to community participants and practitioners.

The previous principles underscored how community participants and practitioners should and could be engaged in planning the evaluation. At the same time, evaluators and

funders must be clear about the decisions they are or are not willing to share with or delegate to community participants and practitioners. They have to be explicit about who has the appropriate knowledge, authority, and accountability to make certain decisions. Funders also need to help community participants, practitioners, and evaluators understand which expectations related to reporting requirements, sharing of information, and cross-site learning are negotiable and which are not. The following questions were recommended by evaluators as issues to consider from the beginning of the evaluation design:

- Who determines the criteria for success, and how much power does the evaluator have to negotiate those criteria (Estrella & Gaventa, 1998)?
- How much consideration should the evaluator give to the funder's recommendations for the evaluation design and data collection methods over the recommendations of others and the evaluator's best judgment?
- How much involvement should the funder have in decision-making—Does the funder want to review and approve all decisions made by the community and the evaluator? If not, what are the parameters of the community's and the evaluator's decision-making power?
- How much cross-site learning is permissible, and to what extent can the evaluator share information with other funders, communities, and other initiatives?
- How should edits and changes in evaluation materials be handled—Are the funder's changes final, or is the funder willing to leave suggested changes to the evaluator's discretion?
- To what extent can the evaluator present findings and lessons learned at professional meetings and conferences? What review responsibilities do funders, staff, and community leaders want to have?
- How much direction can the evaluator provide to the grantee or community, based on his or her judgment about the initiative's progress, in order to build local capacity (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998)?

2.3 Implementation of the Evaluation Process

It is important to be concerned with how the evaluation process is implemented as well as how to measure specific variables. Principles 9 and 10 describe specific considerations that could be useful in implementing the evaluation process for CCIs.

> Principle 9: Evaluators, practitioners, and program implementers should work together to integrate evaluation activities into program implementation.

Integrating evaluation into a program can increase the utility of findings and program and cost-effectiveness; increase program implementers' and community participants' interest in the evaluation activities; and reduce the traditional distance between the evaluator, program implementers, and community participants (Brown, 1995, 1996; Chavis et al., 1983; Madison, 1992; Mertens, 1999; Patton, 1988). Experienced evaluators suggested several ways to integrate evaluation activities into program activities, when possible and appropriate.

Their suggestions included the following:

- Rather than create separate assessment forms for management or technical assistance, use these information collection activities (e.g., meeting minutes and action plans) for several purposes, including monitoring and evaluation;
- Allocate time at each program staff meeting to provide updates about the evaluation, present interim findings, no matter how brief, and ask questions about what was learned in order to encourage habitual thinking about the usefulness of evaluation; and
- Conduct telephone interviews with grantees to simultaneously collect administrative information required by funders and information needed for the evaluation. Grantees will then not have to submit two separate forms to the funder and the evaluator. These interviews should focus on self-reflection and allow participants to "tell their stories." The insights and knowledge that a grantee could gain from the self-reflection process can strengthen the initiative (Schon, 1983; Senge, 1990). A summary of the interview becomes the grantees' progress report to the funder. Other than financial accounting, there should be no differences in the information needs of funders or evaluators regarding program implementation, achievements, and needs. This becomes a great opportunity for evaluators to help improve the forms and data collected by funders and to increase the grantees' learning.

> Principle 10: Stakeholders should seize opportunities to make the evaluation a part of decision-making and learning.

Experienced evaluators stressed the importance of making the evaluation useful to funders, practitioners, and community participants. In order to optimize the usefulness of the evaluation, all the stakeholders, including the evaluator, should jointly review all program timelines from time to time to determine when and what information can be used for decision-making and learning. The evaluator should also attend as many program leadership meetings (e.g., advisory committee meetings) as possible. This will not only reduce the distance between the evaluation and the program, but also create opportunities to make the evaluation information useful in decision-making and learning.

The following examples of how funders have made the evaluation a part of decision-making and learning are drawn from the evaluators' and ASDC's experiences:

- For development of funding guidelines and Requests for Proposals (RFPs)—Progress reports and updates from grantees are useful to help funders modify their funding guidelines and RFPs for the next grant round. Interim evaluation findings help funders understand whether their initial goals and expectations were unrealistic and how they might need to adjust them. The evaluation can also provide examples of successful efforts to include in the funding guidelines or RFP for the benefit of future applicants.
- For capacity building—Interim evaluation findings can help funders determine the grantees' technical assistance and training needs, resulting in an improved technical assistance program that can better complement the grant program's goals. A thorough and careful process evaluation can document a project's developmental process. Understanding the

developmental capacity of grantees can help funders and technical assistance providers sequence expectations and support more strategically.

- For replication—Evaluation findings can help funders decide whether or not to replicate the initiative in another location and can provide insights into the capacities and other conditions required for replication.

2.4 Issues of Power

The interviews and evaluation literature did not provide much information conducive to formulating instructive principles about the issues related to power. The often exploitive and almost colonial view of researcher and evaluators in disenfranchised communities has been well documented (Chavis et al., 1983; Chavis & Wandersman, 1986). Experienced evaluators recognized the challenge of addressing such issues beyond discussions about diversity, cultural competence, and inclusion. Race and status were mentioned by the evaluators as the power-related issues that they most frequently experienced in their work. (Principle 7 described how race could affect the dynamics between the funder, the community members, and the evaluator.) Status comes from the power of money that funders possess and the power of information that the evaluators control (Brown, 1995; Estrella & Gaventa, 1998; Stone & Butler, 2000). The evaluators also acknowledged that grantees and communities possess a certain amount of power. The evaluator depends on community participants to provide reliable information, and the funder depends on the grantee to help demonstrate the initiative's success. Community participants find refusal to participate as one of their greatest sources of power. Exercising this power creates conflict that rarely ends up addressing the root causes of power inequities based on money, status, and privilege.

Principles 11 to 15 provide insights into how evaluators, funders, practitioners, and community participants can begin to address issues related to power.

Principle 11: Evaluators, funders, and practitioners need to actively and explicitly work to address issues of class and race and how they lead to unearned privilege and inequities. It is every stakeholder's responsibility to address these issues.

All stakeholders should be aware of how the characteristics of the evaluator and the context within which the evaluation is conducted affect power dynamics. The literature does not address class issues as extensively as other issues related to power. During the interviews, discussions about class focused on the evaluator's academic credentials, which place him or her in a higher socioeconomic status, often regardless of race. In addition, evaluators often represent large, powerful institutions (e.g., foundations, government agencies, or universities). Depending on the situation, one characteristic (e.g., class) can have a more consequential effect over another (e.g., race).

Two race-related concerns emerged from the literature and interviews. The first concern is to ensure that the evaluator has the appropriate cultural knowledge and skills and shares the experiences of the evaluation's participants (Stanfield, 1999); the second is to ensure that persons

from different racial backgrounds are engaged in the program and evaluation process (House, 1999; Madison, 1992; Stone & Butler, 2000). Certain status, privilege, prejudice, and equities are associated with different races. Racism and unearned privilege given to European Americans are real factors in communities and are equally real factors in the evaluation of CCIs.

Evaluators should also be aware of the way in which other stakeholders perceive the institutions that sponsor the evaluation. It is likely that the evaluator will be initially perceived in the same way in which the institution is perceived. For example, if the institution is perceived as a predominantly White, middle class, and exploitive of the community, the evaluator may be immediately associated with this perception and may therefore be unable to obtain participation from community members.

The tensions that some evaluators may feel about working in their own communities— the "insider" versus the "outsider" status—is another issue evaluators may need to address. This issue has been explored extensively in the literature about conducting sensitive research. [2] Community participants could be ready to cooperate with an evaluator who shares the same background as them (e.g., race, gender, personal history) and provide as much information as needed. Their cooperation could lend credibility to the evaluator and encourage similar participation by others. On the other hand, the evaluator's assumptions and expectations about their own community could offend participants. An evaluator of the same race or culture as the community participants may have certain insights about the group, but he or she also brings certain "baggage" that can provoke intragroup tensions that result from class and other differences. The fact that the evaluator is of the same race and culture, in and of itself, is neither a benefit nor disadvantage.

Evaluators need to develop their capacities to address issues related to power. There are no simple ways to resolve these issues, but evaluators can better address them by:

- Actively identifying issues related to power at the beginning of and throughout the evaluation process;
- Freely acknowledging the issues and committing to struggle through them, even if they create discomfort among all the stakeholders;
- Establishing an evaluation team comprised of diverse members and creating a process for checking each other's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors;
- Sharing information related to and generated by the evaluation with participants on a regular basis;
- Inviting participants to be part of presentations about the evaluation;
- Asking participants to share their ideas and recommendations; and
- Validating participants' concerns and working with them to find ways to address them.

Many of the early principles, especially those addressing decision-making with participants and participatory processes, can also help address issues related to power.

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[2] For further examination of this issue, see Gallagher, C.A. (2000). White like me? In Twine, F.W. & Warren, J.W. (eds). *Racing Research, Researching Race: Methodological Dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*. New York: New York University Press; and

Foster, M. (1994). The power to know one thing is never the power to know all things. In Gitlin, A. (ed.). *Power and Method* (pp. 129-146). New York: Routledge.

Principle 12: Evaluators should integrate issues related to power into all aspects of the evaluation design, from the way evaluation questions are phrased to how the evaluation findings are interpreted and conveyed.

Many evaluators have raised the concern that some programs are based on negative assumptions about individuals (e.g., blaming the victim) and cultural norms (e.g., Asian children perform better in math than do African-American children) (House, 1990; Mertens, 1999; Stanfield, 1999). If it contains questions and indicators based on these assumptions, the evaluation will not address the inequities that are associated with perceptions and prejudices about other groups. Evaluators have to actively consider the assumptions that underlie their questions and hypotheses and bring all the stakeholders' attention to these assumptions at the beginning of and throughout the evaluation process. In theory of change [3] evaluation, stakeholders continuously examine their expectations and assumptions about how the CCI works in order to uncover components impacted by power dynamics and address them (Milligan, 2000). Evaluators should ensure that there is an established process for such reflections in the evaluation design and implementation.

Principle 13: Evaluators need to acknowledge, capture, legitimize, and contextualize the experiences of community participants and practitioners, and allow for their voices to be given equal stature.

Evaluators have to acknowledge that practitioners and community participants possess valuable knowledge and expertise about the relationships, processes, and conditions of their communities (Chavis et al., 1983; Estrella & Gaventa, 1998; House & Howe, 1998, cited in House, 1999; Madison, 1992; Patton, 1988). A structure and process (e.g., an evaluation oversight committee or feedback meetings) must be developed that allows practitioners and community participants to integrate this knowledge into the evaluation design and interpretation of findings. Such a process also enables appropriate consideration for cross-cultural definitions and implications. House (1999) has described how the evaluation of Jesse Jackson's PUSH/Excel educational program was damaged because the evaluators' European-American definition of an educational program did not reflect the African-American cultural context of the program. Consequently, the evaluation could not identify the true outcome of the program. The evaluators did not provide a structure or process to learn from the community participants and practitioners about how they defined an educational program or about their reactions to the evaluation findings. Had this happened, the value of the evaluation results would have been quite different.

Evaluation can also legitimize contextual conditions and their effects on an initiative. By listening to what community participants have to say about their communities' conditions,

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[3] A program model that identifies "program resources, program activities, and intended program outcomes, and specifies a chain of causal assumptions linking program resources, activities, intermediate outcomes, and ultimate goals" (Wholey, 1987: 78).

evaluators can demonstrate how these conditions, such as funding cutbacks, could indirectly or directly affect the impact of an initiative.

Experienced evaluators emphasized the importance of conducting meetings with funders, community participants, and practitioners to discuss the evaluation's findings before the results are finalized and disseminated. They listed four factors that have to be considered whenever the evaluator presents information and recommendations to the stakeholders:

- When is the most appropriate time to present the evaluation findings (both preliminary and final)?
- Where is the most appropriate venue for the meeting and discussion?
- What is the most appropriate vehicle for communication?
- What happens when the findings are disputed?

Principle 14: Stakeholders and the evaluator should examine and discuss the perceived risks and benefits of the evaluation.

The evaluator's relationship with the funder and the perception of other stakeholders that evaluation findings could affect future funding give the evaluator a good deal of power and responsibility. The perceived risks and benefits of an evaluation effort are rarely discussed in a candid manner and have not been explicitly addressed in the evaluation literature. There are, however, many lessons about risks and benefits that can be borrowed from researchers who have conducted research on sensitive topics (e.g., substance abuse, sexual behavior, and marital rape). Sieber (1993) made it clear that perceptions of risks and benefits are highly subjective and that they determine the perceived power of the evaluation process and the dynamics of that process. One person's risk could be another person's benefit. Some of the key questions that should be considered in an analysis of risks and benefits are:

- How will the evaluation's findings be used by politicians, policymakers, journalists, and special interest groups? Will the findings incur stigma on any particular community or group (Sieber, 1993)?
- What are the self-serving purposes of the evaluation to the funder and the evaluator? (McIntyre, 1982 cited in Renzetti and Lee, 1993);
- What are the resources for publishing or preventing the publication of findings, depending on the perceived risks and benefits (Ayella, 1993)?
- How will the evaluation impact the community that is involved given local public policies and responses toward the social and justice issues addressed through the evaluation (Curran & Cook, 1993)?

In the discussions and analyses, it would be helpful to use a facilitator who is not involved in the evaluation process and can be neutral and objective about the perceptions.

> Principle 15: Practitioners, community participants, and funders need to learn about the diversity among evaluators (i.e., different approaches, methods, values, and appreciation for building relationships) in order to choose the most appropriate evaluator for their work.

The roles of evaluation and the evaluator have changed over the past 20 years. The American Evaluation Association (AEA) has led this change in professional practice and has used its annual conferences to emphasize the use of evaluation for capacity building and for addressing issues related to oppression and discrimination (see *The American Journal of Evaluation*, Fall 1999, Volume 20, No. 3; and *New Directions for Evaluation*, Fall 1999, No. 83). Practitioners, community participants, and funders should stay informed about this transformation so that they may become better consumers of evaluation. There is a perception among funders, practitioners, and, to some extent, community participants, that evaluation means only a quantitative experimental paradigm (Patton, 1997). This perception has cut off many funders, practitioners, and community participants from considering other methods, including more appropriate evaluation research paradigms.[4] Evaluators believed that some funders wrongly insist that evaluators use only quantitative and experimental approaches, thinking that no other method can demonstrate the effectiveness of their initiatives. The evaluators discussed how important it is for practitioners, community participants, and funders to understand that different evaluation approaches and methods are available. Explicit acknowledgment of the different evaluation approaches and methods by evaluators is required so that every group is aware of the advantages and trade-offs made when one approach is selected over another. Stakeholders should look at what information is needed to answer their questions and can be collected with the resources available, and only then choose an evaluation methodology. An evaluator should be able to adjust the methodology and preferably combine different methods to meet different needs and circumstances. A good and useful evaluation should not be about methods, but about the approach, underlying values, and responsiveness to the needs and concerns of the stakeholders (Chen, 1990). The W. K. Kellogg Foundation's *Evaluation Handbook* (1998) has an entire section on selecting an evaluator that would be very beneficial to CCIs.

2.5 Identification and Definition of Outcomes

The identification and definition of outcomes are often considered the most critical components of evaluation design. There are four concerns regarding the identification and definition of outcomes in CCIs: types of expected outcomes, the process for identifying the expected outcomes, when to expect the outcomes, and the conclusions that can be drawn from the outcomes. Principles 16 to 19 address these concerns. Readers should remember the importance of prior principles regarding diversity of methods during the process of identifying and defining outcomes.

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[4] Among these paradigms and approaches are participatory monitoring and evaluation (Estrella & Gaventa, 1998); transformatory evaluation (Mertens, 1999); and integrative approach (Chen, 1990).

> Principle 16: Evaluators should rely on previous research and the wisdom of people in the community to inform the process of identifying and defining outcomes.

Relationships between activities and outcomes have been established through previous research. Stakeholders, particularly funders, can be assured that through a theory of change for the CCI, the derived outcomes will result from the activities. Outcomes based on the experiences of community participants can expand the knowledge about the relationships between activities and outcomes. Previous research and local experiences combined can provide a powerful opportunity to learn about comprehensive community change and help evaluators make informed judgements about what to measure.

Experienced evaluators were cautious about the process used to ask community participants to identify and define outcomes. The evaluators stressed that the types of outcomes identified and defined depend on the way questions are asked and the cultural context of the terms used. For example, said one evaluator, in an effort to identify the outcomes of a community arts and culture initiative, one could ask, "Do you have adequate arts and culture activities in your community?" This question would elicit information about the number of museums in the community. If, by contrast, the evaluator asked, "Are there opportunities for you to be creative?," the answers would be broader and would perhaps include information about gardening projects as well as traditional arts programs. In this situation, the evaluation has to consider gardening projects as an outcome of the initiative because that is the way the community defines arts and culture. This point is similar to the example given earlier about the PUSH/Excel education program and the definition of an educational program within an African-American cultural context.

> Principle 17: Evaluators should ensure that CCIs identify, capture, and include community building-related outcomes (e.g., increased organizational capacity, improved relations, a more responsive government, and increased sense of community) and social problem outcomes (e.g., lower rates of child abuse, domestic violence, school dropout, and illnesses).

Several experienced evaluators noted that tension often emerges between evaluators and funders, who emphasize changes in social outcomes (e.g., lower rates of domestic violence), and community participants and practitioners, who perceive that their efforts are best represented by community building-related outcomes (e.g., increased sense of community, and new and strengthened relationships). For instance, a substance abuse prevention program requires that community coalitions be established. The coalitions must comprise state and local agencies and community-based organizations. The funders would emphasize outcomes that indicate a reduction in substance abuse (e.g., reduced alcohol sales), while community participants would consider new relationships between the public and private partners in the coalition as indicators of success.

These different perceptions about change reflect differences in what is considered the means and the end. Evaluators and funders need to recognize that all of these outcomes are valid

in a CCI. Established indicators such as crime-related outcomes in a community violence prevention initiative are obvious outcomes, and they reflect long-term change. Community building-related outcomes reflect both immediate (e.g., new relationships) and long-term change (e.g., improved quality of life). Funders and evaluators must identify, investigate, and document these outcomes as valid indicators of successful CCIs.

Principle 18: All the stakeholders should agree on the appropriate amount of time needed to expect evidence of the outcomes.

Evaluators, funders, practitioners, and community participants need to engage in discussions to negotiate and prioritize the expected outcomes so that they are identifiable, attainable, and measurable within the time period of the allocated resources. In order to receive funding, community participants and practitioners may have to make large-scale, unrealistic claims. Everyone will be disappointed if the outcomes are not realistic, based on the resources and scope of work. Evaluators, community participants, practitioners, and funders need to work together to assess whether those outcomes are realistic under specific time frames and when the outcomes can be expected, so that everyone can see that the initiative is progressing towards its goals. A popular approach for identifying and defining outcomes in a sequential manner is the theory of change approach (explained before in Principle 12) (Fulbright-Anderson et al., 1998). This approach can be used to identify immediate and intermediate outcomes that are associated with the expected long-term outcomes. This approach also helps check the integrity of the assumptions regarding how activities and the anticipated process of changes lead to the anticipated outcomes.

Principle 19: Evaluators should identify and define process outcomes so that lessons can be learned about how the goals of a CCI were achieved and the capacities and conditions required to achieve them.

Process outcomes[5] need to be considered in the evaluation of a CCI. Such outcomes provide valuable information to help guide an initiative's approach and activities. They can also inform interpretation of outcome findings by allowing examination of links between *what* was done, *how* it was done, *why* it was done, and the impact of the initiative (Connell & Kubisch, 1998). For this reason, the experienced evaluators emphasized the need for inclusion and examination of process outcomes.

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[5] Process outcomes are outcomes associated with program implementation. For a description of how to identify process outcomes, refer to Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

2.6 Multiple Levels of Change

CCIs are often intended to effect change at multiple levels—individual, organizational, community, and systems levels. Several of the experiences evaluators indicated the challenge of demonstrating the changes that could occur at the different levels as a result of such initiatives. Among the challenges are the linking of activities and outcomes from one level to the next, and the increasing amount of time it takes to observe changes at the community and systemic levels. Principles 20 and 21 provide suggestions of several evaluators for addressing this challenge.

> Principle 20: Evaluators should separate and specify outcomes that are expected at different levels and then examine the interrelations among these outcomes.

A theory of change can be used to identify and clarify the change that is expected to occur at different levels (Weiss, 1995). A combination of instruments and tools that measure change at each level is necessary (Kubisch et al., 1995; Weiss, 1995). Different studies with different samples could also be conducted for each level with different samples to break the evaluation into smaller, more manageable components. Small teams could be established to work on the smaller studies to keep all the stakeholders involved. One evaluator suggested that the smaller projects could also allow for quasi-experimental and experimental designs that may be appropriate for drawing certain conclusions about individual change. Nevertheless, the interrelations between outcomes must be made explicit so that the different studies could collectively demonstrate the impact of the initiative.

> Principle 21: Evaluators should review the causal path of the CCI to ensure that the nature and intensity of its activities are sufficient to produce systems-level changes. Evaluators also should ensure that the outcomes along the causal path can be tracked to determine that systems change has been achieved by the initiative.

Very often, initiatives that express systems change as a goal do not plan activities during the course of the initiative that do more than build relations among agencies or groups. Although relationship building is an important change, intermediate and long-term systemic changes include changes in institutional policies, practices, procedures, and resources. The evaluation process provides an opportunity to understand the possibility of such outcomes and to sharpen and plan the initiative's focus on systemic change.

2.7 Attribution of Results to the Initiative

CCIs are complex initiatives that are intended to effect change at multiple levels. The evaluation design must consider principled ways to determine the pattern of causal relationships in order to be able to attribute the results to the initiative. Principles 22 and 23 illustrate ways in CCI evaluations to help determine a pattern that lead to change.

> Principle 22: Evaluators should implement an evaluation design that can determine an association or pattern of relationships leading to outcomes. Rival explanations and the influence of contextual conditions need to be explored.

A theory of change that allows for logical linking of activities, events, and outcomes is more likely than are traditional experimental approaches and procedures to be an appropriate and feasible way to evaluate a CCI (Herbert & Anderson, 1998; Kubisch et al., 1995) and to determine the pattern of relationships. According to the literature and the experienced evaluators, an evaluation design that can determine an association or pattern of relationships should entail procedures to:

- Describe in detail the activities and specific outcomes expected from each activity to demonstrate linkages between the activities and the outcomes;
- Demonstrate convergence or divergence of patterns and trends (e.g., through the use of triangulation[6]) rather than test solely for statistical significance[7] (Weiss, 1983, cited in Brown, 1995);
- Identify and describe unexpected outcomes that are associated with or can be attributed to the initiative, such as activities that have spun off the initiative;
- Examine, document, and discuss rival explanations or counterfactuals to determine other initiatives, efforts, or external factors that could have influenced the evaluation findings. The rival explanations could also be used to identify efforts or organizations that contributed to the findings and that could become partners for the collaborative that is responsible for conducting the initiative (Hollister & Hill, 1995); and
- Examine, document, and discuss contextual conditions (political, social, economic, and cultural) that affect outcomes. For instance, the closing down of a factory will have a significant impact on a CCI's attempt to increase employment opportunities.

> Principle 23: Multiple studies over a period of time are required to prove causation.

While there is the tendency to treat each CCI and evaluation as the definitive work, the "science" of CCIs is a cumulative process. Only through the evaluation of several well-designed and fully implemented initiatives can causality be established. Funders and evaluators need to draw on previous work and share their reports with each other regardless of the perceived success of the CCIs or the evaluation. Only through increased sharing of reports and lessons learned can the implementation and evaluation of CCIs be improved.

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[6] "Triangulation" refers to the combination of methodologies to reveal different aspects of empirical reality. This combination could mean the use of a variety of data sources, several different evaluators, multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data, and multiple methods to study a single initiative (Denzin, 1978).

[7] Statistical significance indicates that the observed difference or change is too large to attribute to chance (Mertens, 1998).

2.8 Utilization

Principles 24 to 26 illustrate ways to increase the utility of the evaluation, that is, to make it more likely that the findings will be used by the intended consumers.

> Principle 24: All the stakeholders should make explicit at the beginning of the evaluation process what they want to know from the evaluation, when they want the information, the form in which they want it, for whom they want it, and how they will use it.

Consumers of evaluation (i.e., funders, practitioners, and community participants) are unlikely to use evaluation results if the information collected does not answer the questions they have about the initiative or cannot inform their decision-making. To ensure that the findings are useful to the consumers, it is necessary to determine at the outset what they want to learn from the evaluation and to design the evaluation to answer those questions (Patton, 1997). It is critical that all the stakeholders have realistic expectations regarding the utilization and application of the evaluation findings. They should be cautious about expecting immediate policy or program changes based on the findings, but be cognizant about how to apply the findings to improve policies and program design and implementation.

Evaluators must provide information when funders, practitioners, and community participants need it. If the evaluators provide information about the evaluation and evaluation results on a regular and strategic basis, it is less likely that the evaluation will be perceived as an independent or separate function. Instead, evaluation will become a part of the overall initiative in a more integrated and natural manner. Sometimes evaluators can plan when to provide information. At other times, evaluators have to be prepared to respond quickly and provide information to the stakeholders when an unexpected situation arises that requires the information.

Findings are more likely to be used if they are easily understood. Reports should be concise and written in a straightforward manner with little jargon. Numbers should be broken up with anecdotes to which readers can relate and that they will find interesting. Findings will have to be presented differently to different audiences. Those who write the report should keep in mind the following:

- Who the audience is;
- How to present the findings; and
- Who the primary messenger for the findings is.

For example, funders may want more numbers or information on cost-effectiveness, whereas community members may be more interested in anecdotal information on how the program has affected people's lives. Experienced evaluators reported that concise visual and oral presentations that included adequate discussion were among the most valued types of presentations.

Evaluation findings do not have to be revolutionary to be useful. All of the information gathered is potentially useful, even if it appears to be common knowledge. Careful and systematic documentation of something commonly known can make a difference in policy because of the credibility and validity of evaluation findings. The evaluator should document and report lessons learned about a CCI. Information on what does not work—especially when accompanied by information on why it did not—can be as useful as information on what does work.

> Principle 25: All the stakeholders should agree on the processes for reviewing the information before disseminating it widely.

Stakeholders (e.g., funders, executive directors of organizations, and community leaders) may want a chance to review and discuss findings before they are distributed. At the beginning of the process, the stakeholders should agree on who should review the findings and how much say each stakeholder should have in the final presentation of the findings. Creation of two reports, one internal and one for dissemination, has been found to be a useful strategy. The internal report can be frank and constructive, and the dissemination report can inform others about the lessons learned from the initiative and can be used to help leverage additional funding and to disseminate the value of similar initiatives.

> Principle 26: CCIs have multiple audiences that require specific information in different format and styles.

Evaluation findings are useful for not only immediate stakeholders but also for implementers of other programs, policy makers, and other evaluators. A major way to share information with these audiences is through publications, conferences, and similar mechanisms. Many of the experienced evaluators reported that funders would not release evaluation reports, even when the reports were mostly favorable. This has hindered the stakeholders' and the larger community's ability to learn about ways to build the capacity of communities through efforts such as CCIs.

2.9 Standards for Evaluators

Evaluators need to abide by general evaluation standards, and consumers need to be aware of those standards and hold evaluators accountable to them. Several evaluators suggested that the challenges of evaluating such initiatives are not that different from the challenges of conducting any good research. This last principle describes the standards that have been established for the evaluation profession.

> Principle 27: Evaluators should follow the professional principles and standards for evaluation and educate the public about them.

Many people, including evaluators themselves, are unaware of the standards and principles of the evaluation profession. A discussion about the standards for evaluation was recommended as an effective strategy for helping practitioners, community participants, and funders understand clearly what an evaluation can do, what a useful and good evaluation looks like, and the limitations to which an evaluation is subject. This discussion was also suggested as an effective strategy for engaging participants in a dialogue about their expectations of the evaluation and previous experiences with evaluation and for identifying stakeholders who need to be involved in the evaluation process. The standards and principles of the evaluation profession should be included in contracts and presentations.

The evaluators suggested using the standards promulgated by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994).[8] These standards are as follows:

- *Feasibility*—This standard helps participants understand that evaluation activities should not be burdensome. A discussion about this standard can help participants think about ways to integrate evaluation into their ongoing program activities as much as possible, including ways for modifying their current data collection procedures.
- *Utility*—This standard helps participants think about the beneficiaries of the evaluation and identify additional stakeholders who should be involved in the evaluation process, as well as about what the participants will do with the results.
- *Propriety*—This standard helps participants anticipate and prevent actions and processes that could be harmful to persons involved in the evaluation or to persons who will be affected by the evaluation findings.
- *Accuracy*—This standard helps participants understand that the evaluation will reveal technically adequate and reliable information.
- *Transformative*—This standard helps participants consider what changes they would like to see as a result of an initiative and how the evaluation can make explicit the change process and its results (Mertens, 1998, 1999).

The AEA also has its own set of standards for evaluation (Shadish et al., 1995). They are:

- *Systematic inquiry*—Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries about whatever is being evaluated.
- *Competence*—Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.

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[8] The Joint Committee is chaired by a member of the Evaluation Center at the Western Michigan University and is sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators, American Education Research Association, American Evaluation Association, American Federation of Teachers, American Psychological Association, Association for Assessment in Counseling, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Canadian Evaluation Society, Canadian Society for the Study of Education, Council of Chief State School Officers, Council of Great City Schools, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Council on Measurement in Education, National Education Association, and National School Boards Association.

- *Integrity/honesty*—Evaluators ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.
- *Respect for people*—Evaluators respect the security, dignity, and self-worth of the respondents, program participants, clients, and other stakeholders with whom they interact.
- *Responsibilities for general and public welfare*—Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of interests and values that may be related to the general and public welfare.

These above standards are reflected in all the principles that have been discussed in this paper. A complete description of the principles is included in Appendix B.

3 CONCLUSION

This report is an initial review of a broad range of principles for evaluating CCIs. These principles reflect the lessons being learned by experienced evaluators and practitioners of CCIs. The following conclusions can be drawn from this review and analysis:

- Evaluation can be a very effective tool for building community capacity if there is sufficient planning, resources, training and technical assistance, reflection, and evaluator capacity.
- All the key stakeholders need to be meaningfully involved in the evaluation from beginning to end, and their level of involvement should be made clear at the beginning.
- A great deal of attention needs to be given to the fit between the evaluator, the initiative being evaluated, and the expectations of the stakeholders.
- Different perceptions need to be addressed and conflicts resolved early and thoroughly.
- Research methods should be rigorous, but need not be limited to experimental or quasi-experimental designs.
- There is a shared responsibility for ensuring that the evaluation is useful and usable.
- There needs to be more conceptual and methodological development regarding the evaluation of systemic changes and their relationship to other levels of change and outcomes in a CCI.
- There is a great need to improve the knowledge and skills of evaluators, practitioners, community leaders, and funders on the standards, methods, and strategies for evaluating CCIs.

CCIs are based on the premise that social problems can be addressed at the local community level through multifaceted strategies. The strategies used in a CCI are implemented at the local community, institutional, family, and individual levels, as well as at the larger systems level. CCIs involve participants with a range of power, resources, cultures, capacities, and interests. They are complex approaches that provide extensive challenges for all those involved. CCIs are a new frontier for promoting social change that can improve the quality of life for people in our most distressed communities. Building the capacity within a community or across communities to plan and implement a CCI is a daunting task that at times has brought the feasibility of this approach into question. Evaluation can help foster the learning and capacity building that communities need to address these challenges. To do this evaluators must push themselves to develop and use new relations, practices, and methods that are appropriate to the

needs and complexity of CCIs. Many evaluators have found that they can conduct useful, usable, and scientifically valid evaluations if they engage in a collaborative learning process with community leaders, funders, and practitioners. Evaluators must also push themselves, their colleagues, and funders beyond their comfort zone to develop and use new methods that are scientifically principled (rigorous) and appropriate to CCIs.

Community leaders, practitioners, and funders also need to change their expectations of evaluators. They often expect evaluators to be detached and disengaged in order to be objective. Evaluators should be expected to conduct themselves with integrity rather than objectivity (i.e., to be able to provide verifiable information) as part of the capacity building effort. If evaluators can work collaboratively, then community leaders, technical assistance providers, and practitioners should welcome the opportunity to learn how to improve their initiative.

Accepting and applying the knowledge that can come from evaluation of CCIs pose another set of challenges for community leaders, funders, practitioners, and technical assistance providers. Differences in knowledge and information are among the disparities in power that participants of CCIs (funders, community members, technical assistance providers, and evaluators) will face. For example, the knowledge and information generated from the evaluation may raise issues about the effectiveness of the initiative or its components. The collaboration among evaluators, practitioners, funders, and community leaders provides the opportunity to address and transform the conflicts that will arise because of differences in power and can help enhance the initiative's capacity.

Evaluators face the challenge of constructively presenting information. Implementers of CCI face a new level of accountability. These challenges provide a new opportunity for all participants, including the evaluator, to develop new capacities to implement strategies that promote community change.

Rigorous evaluation is evaluation based on principles. This report has presented a set of principles derived from experienced evaluators, funders, and practitioners that can help guide the evaluation of CCIs. These principles need to be further tested, and more specific recommendations need to be developed on how evaluators, funders, and community leaders can collaboratively implement them.

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APPENDIX A

Methodology for Literature Review and Interviews

Method

Very few accounts have been published on the lessons learned regarding the considerable challenges facing the evaluation of CCIs. In order to learn how evaluators are addressing these challenges, it was necessary to go directly to leading national and local evaluators. ASDC and NFCVP developed a list of 17 potential interviewees, all experienced evaluators. These evaluators have evaluated many CCIs and other complex community initiatives. ASDC sent letters to the evaluators requesting an individual or group interview, depending on the evaluators' availability and interests. The letters described the purpose of this report and the interview questions. The questions were as follows:

1. How do you recommend engaging citizens and other practitioners in the design, planning, interpretation, and utilization of comprehensive violence prevention initiative evaluations?
2. How do you recommend addressing issues of race, class, power, and accountability as part of the evaluation process, from design to use of findings?
3. How should outcomes for comprehensive violence prevention initiatives be identified and defined?
4. How do you recommend addressing the multiple levels of change (e.g., individual, organization, community, and larger system) that comprehensive violence prevention initiatives effect?
5. How do you recommend addressing issues of causality in comprehensive violence prevention initiatives?
6. How do you recommend improving the use of evaluation findings?
7. What are the major works you recommend we look at as part of the literature review?

Nine evaluators were available and responded to the request:

- Heather Barton, Illinois Center for Violence Prevention
- Prudence Brown, Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago
- Ronald Ferguson, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
- Cheryl Grills, Psychology Department, Loyola Marymount University
- James Hawdon, Sociology Department, Clemson University
- Jamie Kridler, Department of Applied Human Services, East Tennessee State University
- Laura Leviton, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Donna Mertens, Gallaudet University
- Christopher Walker, The Urban Institute

Other evaluators who were contacted, but were not available to be interviewed, sent in written comments or provided citations to be included. These evaluators included John Gaventa (Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex), Denise Gottfredson (Gottfredson Associates, Inc.), Michael Quinn Patton (The Union Institute—Utilization-Focused Evaluation), and Burt Barnow (Institute for Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University).

The literature review was done in two steps. First, social science databases such as PsychInfo were searched for literature that described CCIs or discussed issues related to the evaluation of CCIs. This was done using combinations of phrases such as "comprehensive

violence prevention initiative," "comprehensive community initiative," "violence prevention," and "evaluation." The citations contained in the literature obtained through the first step were then used to identify additional publications.

Themes were derived from the interviews and literature in combination, and these themes were arranged into principles. Individual interviewees are not cited here; all information not attributed to a literature citation was derived from more than one interview response.

The first draft of this document was shared with the evaluators and practitioners who attended NFCVP's conference in February 2000. The participants' comments and suggestions regarding additional literature to review were integrated into the subsequent draft. The revised draft was then distributed at a "think tank" (i.e., group discussion) session at the American Evaluation Association's annual conference in November 2000. Fifty participants, primarily evaluators, attended the session. The participants divided into small groups to discuss the following questions with respect to the principles:

1. What capacities do evaluators need to implement these principles?
2. What capacities do practitioners, funders, and community leaders need?

In reviewing these questions, the participants provided further information about the principles that were also incorporated into this document.