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**Roles and Functions of the Community Manager  
within the Framework of Collaborative Approaches to  
Evaluation (CAE). Case Analysis of the Galibar  
Community Development Plan (Spain)**

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## **Abstract**

In this study, the authors retrospectively analyze a case of participatory evaluation in community development in a lower working class community near Barcelona using the CAE principles as a lens. Of particular interest was the role of the community manager, the processes of negotiation and the development of social relations among participating stakeholders. The authors use a case study methodology augmented by post-evaluation interviews and observations to consider how the principles are operationalized and what added value they may bring to the research. The chapter ends with some implications for the ongoing use of CAE principles.

## Introduction

This chapter forms part of a Spanish national research project that proposes a strategy of Participatory Evaluation (PE) as a working methodology to facilitate individual and community empowerment at the community level (Úcar, Heras & Soler, 2014). It was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation with the aim of carrying out research activities during the period 2010-2013. The research was developed in collaboration with the regional Government of Catalonia, which promotes and evaluates the Community Development Plans of Catalonia, Spain. We used the Principles to Guide Collaborative Approaches to Evaluation (CAE) (Shulha, Whitmore, Cousins, Gilbert, & Al Hudib, 2016) to inform the evaluation of community actions linked to one specific Community Development Plan (CDP).

The participatory evaluation used as the basis for this chapter was implemented between June 2011 and January 2013. The first step consisted of a negotiation between officials from the regional Government of Catalonia and evaluators to select the CDP that should form part of the research. The selected CDP meets the following three criteria: (a) having positive annual evaluations; (b) the community managers in charge of the CDP being entrepreneurs; and (c) there being some geographical proximity between the communities and universities to facilitate evaluators' access to the communities. It is worth noting that in our context the community organization professionals who manage the CDP are referred to as "*community managers*".

As a result of the initial negotiation, we selected three CDPs. Two were located in neighbourhoods in Barcelona and Girona and a third in Galibar<sup>1</sup>, a town near Barcelona. For reasons of convenience, the research we present here focuses on the third CDP. The town is located near to the research team's university, which facilitated working with the community. Our aim in this chapter is to describe the roles and functions carried out by the community manager to facilitate the evaluation process in each of the five phases into which the PE was divided.

Due to recent advances in CAE, (Cousins, Whitmore, & Shulha, 2013; Shulha, et al., 2016), and specifically the development and validation of evidence-based CAE principles, we decided to use this framework to retrospectively analyze the PE study of community actions, elaborating these actions with updated information obtained from some of the original participants.

We presented the original PE participants with the CAE principles as a set of methodological elements that guide and facilitate evaluations based on collaboration. In doing so, we wished to determine whether: a) they observed any overlap between the actions developed in the different phases of the original PE and the CAE principles; and b) how they thought the CAE principles should be applied in future evaluations to favor collaboration among the various stakeholders based on their previous experience in the EP of Galibar CDP.

Our aim was to provide new data to complement and complete the information initially collected, especially in relation to the role and functions carried out by community managers in these processes. With this text, our purpose is to reflect on the PE processes related to the community actions carried out via the new perspective of CAE principles. Our study therefore provides a field test of the principles.

The aims of our work are as follows:

1. To characterize the role and functions of the community manager, thereby facilitating the PE evaluation process.
2. To reflect on whether the community manager's choices when conducting PE on community actions were consistent with the CAE principles.
3. To analyse whether these principles are useful for evaluating community actions and why.

We have structured this text into four sections. In the first, we provide a brief theoretical framework. Next, we present the case under analysis, characterizing the context, the methodology followed and the results obtained. The final sections are dedicated to a discussion of findings and conclusions.

## Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, we focus on the actions of those people who participate in a PE process but are not trained evaluators. Daigneault and Jacob (2009) posed the question “Who are those people not usually involved in traditional evaluation but who are involved in participatory evaluation?” (p. 335). These authors coined the term “non-

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<sup>1</sup> We have used a pseudonym for the town to protect the identity of participants in the research.

evaluative stakeholders” to refer to participants who form part of an evaluation process but who are not specialists in evaluation, presenting a list of types of non-evaluative stakeholders, which includes the following: a) political and organizational decision-makers; b) technical personnel; c) participants and/or beneficiaries of programs; d) civil society and citizens in general.

Our analysis of the scientific literature indicates that, among other aspects, studies have been conducted on the social relationships existing between evaluators and those involved in community evaluation processes (Abma & Widdershoven, 2008) and also on the negotiation skills needed by evaluators to facilitate such processes (McDonald, 2008; Sharkey & Sharples, 2008). A first idea worth noting is that the scientific production focuses on researching the functions and roles of professional evaluators (DeLuca, Poth, & Searle, 2009; Folkman & Rai, 1997). These evaluators mainly come from the university environment and act as external evaluators in relation to the social or educational intervention project being evaluated. They have two main functions: a) using their theoretical-technical knowledge to give advice regarding an evaluation process that is shared and led by a heterogeneous group of people; and b) accompanying the community group that has been set up to develop the evaluation process.

Our literature analysis also revealed that there is little information on the functions of other participants - the staff members of the social or community organizations in which PE processes are implemented. CAE represent an opportunity to carry out evaluations that involve local community employees and members of communities participating in the decision-making process regarding the planning and implementation of evaluation activities.

CAE are based on the principles of inclusion, dialogue and deliberation (House, 2005; Suárez-Herrera, Springett & Kagan, 2009). They are practices that move away from the management tradition of evaluation (Plottu & Plottu, 2009) and foster new scenarios in the relationship between professional evaluators and participants in the evaluation. Authors such as Bryson, Patton and Bowman (2011) consider the involvement of participants with a non-evaluating profile to represent an improvement in the design and implementation of evaluations, and yielding greater usefulness of evaluation results in subsequent decision making.

These dynamics of collaborative and participatory evaluation constitute, from our point of view, co-design experiences with a strong socio-educational component, as “both -evaluators and participants- acquire new learning and new resources that empower them as individuals and/or professionals” (Úcar, 2014, p. 16). Secondly, dialogue and interpersonal relationships are the basis of participatory and collaborative approaches in evaluation. For dialogue to occur, dynamics must be developed which are based on mutual interaction, cooperation and negotiation between the actors (Suárez-Herrera et al., 2009). Negotiation processes assume primary importance, as a space where the actors’ multiple values are acknowledged (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and as a strategy to involve them in decision making regarding the development of the program (Sharkey & Sharples, 2008). Finally, we consider that the negotiation processes occurring during CAE generate individual, collective and organizational learning (DeLuca et al., 2009) as a result of evaluation processes (Preskill & Torres, 1999).

## Case Study Presentation

### Context

CPDs originated in Catalonia in 1996 with the launch of three pilot plans, two of them in cities located in the metropolitan area of Barcelona - El Prat de Llobregat and Badalona - and the third in Barcelona’s Old Town district. In 1998, the regional Government of Catalonia began to implement this initiative throughout the region. We now find 67 CDPs spread around Catalonia, in both rural and urban areas. CDPs are social and territorial strategies that seek to provide a global response to the needs of a community through the participation of stakeholders and to improve the quality of life of people in the territory (Government of Catalonia, 2008).

We can identify two principal goals of CDPs: a) to promote co-responsibility among all stakeholders of a community so as to optimize and rationalize existing resources; and b) to strengthen collective living by promoting constructive relationships that resolve potential conflicts. To start a CDP within a community, agreement between three groups of actors is required: 1) the regional Government of Catalonia; 2) the local authorities; and 3) a civic or social organization located in the community. Both public authorities have responsibility for evaluating the proposal and if an agreement is reached on the initial project, for funding the CDP. It is common for CDPs to carry out

a wide range of community-based initiatives and for not-for-profit organizations or foundations to manage them while receiving technical support.

One of these CPDs was implemented in the town of Galibar. It started in 2002, based on an agreement between the regional Government of Catalonia, Galibar Town Council and representatives of the town's social fabric in the form of the Local Residents' Association. It is the association that sought government support for implementation of the plan as a measure to improve social and community services in the town.

Galibar is a town located in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. During the 1960s it experienced rapid population growth due to the arrival of people from other, mostly southern, regions of Spain. Many of the new arrivals were seeking employment opportunities. With a population of over 13,000 inhabitants in an area of about 1 km<sup>2</sup>, it has one of the highest population density rates in Catalonia, with close to 15,000 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. The rapid growth of the town from the 1960s onwards led to dense, vertical housing with few green areas; it is also isolated from other towns by several freeways, which act as a physical barrier. It is worth highlighting the abundance of active associations present in the town, with over 80 organizations, 2 local participation bodies (the Cultural Council and the Health Council), and 9 groups defined as social networks, including the Time Bank, the Assembly of the Unemployed and the Galibar Educa project.

Since 2002, the CDP has been managed by two Foundations in the social third sector over two different periods. In Spain, the social third sector comprises the set of professionalized social entities that develop social, educational and cultural intervention projects and that, in general, provide social services to citizens. It is made up of a broad and diverse group of entities, including foundations, non-governmental organizations and social work cooperatives. What characterizes this sector is that while the organizations comprising it are private, the objectives they pursue are of public interest. It should be noted that in Spain, these organizations usually obtain complementary funding from the different public administrations (at the local, regional and state levels). The role played by the Foundations in Galibar's CDP included technical coordination through the design, implementation and evaluation of community actions that serve the interests and demands of the population. They were also responsible for recruiting the

community manager in charge of the plan. The action areas of the Galibar CDP were as follows:

1. Associations, social participation and social cohesion.
2. Culture.
3. Sustainability and the environment.
4. Planning: public space.
5. Health.
6. Promoting economic development - employment.

## Method

The results presented in this chapter are based on an instrumental case study (Stake, 1998) implemented for the Galibar CDP. From a methodological viewpoint, we used the case study first to provide an in-depth description of a PE process employed for community action, and second to identify and describe the roles and functions of the community manager in facilitating PE.

During the case study, we used four data collection techniques: 1) documentary analysis; 2) participant observation; 3) semi-structured interviews, which can be consulted in Appendix 1; and 4) researcher portfolios.

First, we analyzed eight documents provided by Galibar Town Council and the Foundation that manages the Galibar CDP. Using this information, we drew up a map of community actions implemented in the town to allow the evaluators and community manager to identify said actions. Our aim here was to systematize information so that the steering group could later select and prioritize which community actions to evaluate.

In relation to participant observation, we carried out 18 observations: 12 of the community manager's actions within the evaluation dynamic of the PE steering group and 6 observations during the evaluators' entry into the community and the dissemination of PE results to the community as a whole. In order to ensure objectivity in data collection, we designed two instruments: 1) a table of observation categories and 2) an observation sheet.

We conducted two semi-structured interviews with the community manager in charge of the Galibar CDP. First, we conducted an initial interview during the first weeks of the PE to collect information regarding her perception of the community,

including opportunities and weaknesses, and initial possibilities of applying participatory approaches in the evaluation of community actions. The final interview took place once the PE was completed. We collected information on the work she did during the PE, asking her what kind of functions the community manager used to facilitate PE in the community. We also asked about her perception of the professional role of the “community manager.”

In a second step, we interviewed four people involved in the PE process. These were professionals from various local services and local residents participating in the PE steering group. We collected information on their perception regarding the community manager’s performance and the type of functions the manager discharged to facilitate PE.

Finally, we collected information via researcher portfolios, consisting of information gathered systematically during the PE. This allowed us to compile a set of research materials consisting of the researcher’s field diary and notes from the meetings.

In order to process and analyze the qualitative information collected through the 6 recorded semi-structured interviews and the researcher’s portfolio, we followed the steps detailed below:

1. Designing categories for analysis, which comprised the dimensions and research variables. These dimensions and research variables were generated from an analysis of the documents of the Galibar CDP and of the academic literature on participatory evaluation processes.
2. Taking the following decisions to organize the information:
  - a. Use of the Atlas.Ti program (Version 5.0) as a computer tool for processing the information.
  - b. Entering the transcriptions of the 6 semi-structured interviews, 18 observation sheets and 30 minutes of meetings (12 meetings between the researcher and the community manager, 12 meetings of the EP steering group, and 6 meetings with other stakeholders in the community: professionals and local residents) into the Atlas.Ti program (documents in RTF or PDF format).
  - c. Analysis, via several in-depth readings, of the investigator’s field diary.

3. Encoding the information. We assigned one or more codes to each analysis category, which were then entered into the Atlas.Ti program (Version 5.0). Analysis of the information followed a deductive-inductive logic: it started with a system of categories generated from the dimensions and research variables (deduction) and new codes were incorporated or existing ones re-formulated during the researcher's reflection on the analysis (induction).

We elaborated on the information collected from the original project using a group interview process. The interview was conducted in the month of July 2017 with four participants who formed part of the original PE group. One of the people in the group was the community manager, who has managed the CDP since 2011 and therefore participated in the initial research process. In this interview, we explored the extent to which CAE principles had been applied in the PE processes. To do this, the researcher first explained the aim of the interview and made a short presentation of the CAE principles based on the work of Shulha et al. (2016). We then conducted the group interview. Treatment and analysis of this information followed the same procedure as in the retrospective case study. Appendix 1 contains the interview guide designed for this group interview.

## Results

The results of the research we present here describe the roles and functions performed by the community manager in facilitating the evaluation process in each of the five phases of the PE. We completed and contrasted this information with the referential framework resulting from the principles of CAE.

In relation to the role played by the community manager during the PE, we have grouped the data into two blocks: (a) the community manager's self-perception regarding her professional role. This information was gleaned from the interviews carried out with the community manager of the Galibar CDP; and (b) others' perceptions of the professional role of the Galibar community manager. This information was taken from the interview with the four key agents who participated in the PE.

*(a) Self-perception regarding the professional role of “community manager”*

The community manager considered that she has acted as an *intermediary* between participants of the steering group in developing the dynamics of the evaluation. Her role has been to reformulate the dynamics of the evaluation and the relational dynamics that occur within them, and to mediate in the relationships generated between the evaluators, local residents and local community employees.

A second role is to act as *facilitator*. Various actions fit within this role, the most notable being: (1) the logistical management of meetings: booking and equipping venues; providing snacks; (2) receiving people at the venue prior to the meeting; and (3) ending the session and sending documentation related to the PE. The role of facilitator is also interpreted as that of *companion* in implementing the PE.

Thirdly, there is the role of *reviewer*. Her work has involved reviewing the evaluators' initial proposals and adapting and implementing them in the specific practice of the PE dynamics. The aim here has been to anticipate how the people of the community in the steering group will receive and experience the evaluation dynamics proposed by the evaluators, since the community manager has a more in-depth knowledge of them.

*(b) Others' perceptions of the professional role of the Galibar community manager*

All of the key agents interviewed considered the community manager to be a *facilitator* of the Galibar PE.

Key agent 1 characterized her as a *moderator*, '*channeler*' and *coach*. She has acted as a link between all those involved in the action. Key agent 2 considered her a *coordinator*, who has not wanted to highlight her own role in the process but rather that of the people in the community. She has been the bridge between evaluators, residents and other local community employees.

Key agent 3 saw her role as that of a *companion* to the people in the community. In his own words, he thought that “She has been one of the key figures, without monopolizing the sessions”; and that she has acted as a great reference point for the population because “People really love her; they've accepted her and she's not some stranger who bothers them”.

Key agent 4 understood the role of the community manager as a *link* between the evaluators, local community employees and the entities of the community. This role has allowed the specialized local community employees in each area (social services, youth, etc.) to design their interventions with her support, since she has a general and broad knowledge of what happens in the community. He also thought of her as the *translator* between the evaluators and the people in the steering group. This role has consisted in explaining evaluation concepts used by the professional evaluators to all of the people in the steering group, since not all are used to this type of technical language or have specialized training. Lastly, she was characterized as the *general coordinator* of the PE.

Table 1 summarizes the information on the professional role of the community manager presented by each of the interviewees.

**Insert Table 1 about here**

The functions performed by the community manager to facilitate the PE of community actions are organized according to the successive phases of the evaluation process. These are presented in Figure 1, which represents the Galibar PE process chronologically:

**Insert Figure 1 about here**

In Figure 1, we have grouped the functions performed by the community manager to facilitate PE into five categories. The categories overlap with the usual stages of conducting an evaluation but they have been expanded to include community level negotiations in context.

**Phase 1: Negotiating the terms of the PE**

Negotiating the PE took place on two different levels –regional and local–, local negotiation being the one that most influences subsequent decisions within the PE process. In the first meeting dedicated to negotiating the evaluation at the local level, we contacted the Galibar Town Council coordinator for social actions. Our aim was that this person would be responsible for informing local politicians about the PE to be developed in the town and invite them to form part of the steering group. We also decided that the evaluators should visit the participating areas already established in the town to instigate relationships with members of the community. Two objectives were pursued with this:

1. To take advantage of the organizational structures existing in the town to facilitate the evaluators' entry into the community.
2. To take a first step towards presenting and disseminating the PE project among the local people and groups.

Three further meetings were held to continue negotiating the terms of the PE.

The objectives were:

- To find affinities and common objectives between the evaluators and the community manager.
- To analyse the community and the CDP in which the PE was to be implemented.
- To identify the actions that took place in the community and were directly or indirectly related to the CDP.

We generated a first outcome or result of the process on the basis of the initial PE negotiation, which we have called “Map of Community Actions”. This map consists of a graphic representation including all the community actions being carried out and the people, groups and services involved.

We would also emphasize that the function of negotiation was present throughout the PE process and not only in its initial phases. The community manager performed the functions of mediator and resolver of conflicts that occurred during the PE process. She also supported and explained the process and helped resolve any doubts expressed by steering group participants regarding the evaluation dynamics used in the PE sessions.

In this respect, the work of the community manager and the evaluators consisted in helping participants refocus the community processes by means of realistic and viable approaches. The objective was to lower initial expectations, which are often difficult to fulfil in these processes. To this end, we proposed that work be done on the basis of much more short and medium-term operational objectives, allowing the people of the community to clearly perceive that they were achieving their goals. This contributes to making processes sustainable, as it positively feeds behaviors and the actions carried out. At this point, we see that our process coincided with the aforementioned CAE principle that it is necessary to work on “evaluator and stakeholder expectations” (Shulha, et al., 2016, p.199).

## **Phase 2: Supporting the evaluators' acceptance in the community**

It was essential for the community manager to instigate and negotiate the evaluators' acceptance into the community. In order to accomplish this, she provided the evaluators with documentation for the CDP and the community actions organized in the town. A second function was to introduce the evaluators into daily community dynamics linked to the CDP. The aim here was for the evaluators to familiarize themselves with the existing venues for participation and understand how these were organized and managed. Such considerations were essential to the evaluators in order to help them understand the information needs of the community and the types of issues the evaluation might address.

To instigate the evaluators' entry into the community and implement the initial dissemination of the PE, the evaluators participated in three of the meetings held regularly in the locality within the framework of community work. The community manager contacted other professionals working in Galibar, who offered their work spaces as venues for an initial presentation of the PE project:

- The Galibar Town Council diversity manager invited the evaluators to an activity called “tea time” in November 2011. This was a monthly intercultural event that brought women from Galibar together with women of diverse cultural origins, usually recent immigrants to the town.
- The Galibar Town Council participation manager invited the evaluators, during that same month, to a local Time Bank meeting.
- Finally, as one of her functions in the Galibar CDP, the community manager headed the town’s committee for the elderly. The evaluators attended the monthly meeting in December 2011 and made the first presentation of the PE project.

## **Phase 3: Initial dissemination of the PE process in the community**

The community manager's initial dissemination of the PE focused on advising the evaluators on the best strategies for explaining the PE project to residents and local community employees, as well as putting the evaluators in contact with key community agents to explain the PE project to them and invite them to participate in it.

The operating structures already existing in the CDP were used for the initial framing and justification of the evaluation with people of the community. This decision was based on the fact that these projects and activities were spaces that the community manager coordinated and knew well. Cousins and Chouinard (2012) considered that evaluators must constantly adapt their evaluation practices to local conditions and to the diverse needs of the people involved. The function of the evaluators, in this instance, was to accompany the community manager in: a) briefly introducing the PE initiative; and b) recruiting community members to participate.

Some of the tasks carried out by the community manager in collaboration with the evaluators in this phase were:

- Deciding which people would be involved in the PE and motivating them to participate.
- Facilitating the evaluators' access to community activities and accompanying them in presenting the main ideas of the PE project.
- Helping create the PE steering group, comprised of the evaluators, local community employees and members of the community.
- Publicizing and explaining the PE in the community manager's professional network.
- Communicating the start of the PE on digital social networks.

At this point of the PE process, it was necessary to generate significant relationships between the actors involved, since, according to Shulha et al. "a successful CAE [...] relies on the quality of the relationship that evaluators and stakeholders are able to develop and sustain" (2016, p. 201).

During the PE process, in the interview with the community manager, she pointed out that "it is important to avoid breaking the frames of relationship with people and, if necessary, create more". The community manager is committed to PE processes focused on people. This is what she meant when she talked about generating neutral spaces in the implementation of PEs:

"It's not an easy situation, but we must try to avoid divisions on a political level, and here –in relation to the PE– it has been possible to do so. I believe that the success of these spaces is to seek a certain neutrality, in the sense of working together to achieve objectives that we certainly share in community work. We must forget, to a certain

point, our organizations –referring to the entities– in order to be able to work from a more personal perspective”.

#### **Phase 4: Implementing and monitoring the PE process**

We believe that the participatory process needs monitoring and logistical support. Without the effective implementation of both components, the process will undoubtedly suffer.

In this case, the monitoring took place over the five phases of the PE and was carried out without the involvement of the steering group via follow-up meetings between the evaluators and the community manager. This is a fundamental methodological element of PE. This face-to-face work was complemented by monitoring in the form of emails between the evaluators and the community manager. Finally, these meetings were interspersed with those of the steering group specifically dedicated to evaluating community actions. The aim here was to have constant feedback between the evaluators and the community manager so as to include the opinions and decisions of members of the steering group in each evaluation session and keep the PE process up-to-date in this respect.

The functions of the community manager during the follow-up meetings with the evaluators were as follows:

- To introduce the evaluators into the dynamics of the community, helping them integrate within the community under the best possible conditions.
- To offer methodological and community advice to the evaluators so as to facilitate PE.
- To recommend interviews with key people in the community who could offer information about the community actions to be evaluated.

With regard to logistical support for monitoring the PE, the community manager had the following responsibilities:

- To make calls and send emails to: a) set up a meeting to present the PE project; and b) issue reminders regarding steering group meetings a few days before they were held.
- To book and organize meeting rooms to be used for the PE.

- To distribute documentation generated during the PE to members of the steering group.
- To distribute the PE schedule to members of the steering group.

Some of the other functions the community manager carried out during the PE within the framework of this principle were:

- Promoting working relationships based on trust and avoiding hierarchical differences between the actors involved: evaluators, local community employees and community residents.
- Considering all those involved in the community process to be important; each contributes according to their capabilities.

The participation of those involved in the PE must be based on the three characteristics set out in the work of Cousins and Chouinard (2012) and Cousins and Whitmore (1998): (1) who the agents involved in the evaluation are, which is related to the diversity of those involved; (2) how these agents participate, which is related to the depth of their participation; and (3) which agents have control in the decision making that takes place in the different phases of the PE.

When asked about their participation in the PE during the group interview, the interviewees reported that they made decisions about the gradual implementation of the PE at each successive phase and that their decisions were respected and included in the evaluation process in the form of concrete actions. For example, members of the steering group selected the two community actions evaluated under participatory principles from among the total of twelve actions being implemented in the community. They also decided on the specific format for disseminating the results of the PE to the whole community through the creation of a theatre-forum.

#### **Phase 5: Wide dissemination of PE within the community**

The aim of the fifth phase of the PE was to open a space for reflection within the steering group before it disseminated the results of the PE to the rest of the community. This constituted the final phase of the participatory evaluation process. For this reason, and in order to reach as many people as possible, the steps to be followed in disseminating the PE to the entire community were decided during two sessions with the steering group.

Guided discussions were conducted in each of the two sessions, based on the following two key ideas: 1) the guiding aim for the design of extensive dissemination actions was to present the evaluation results for community actions evaluated by the steering group; and 2) the dissemination actions had to be based on a clear plan, with agreed objectives to implement actions.

Some of the functions carried out by the community manager in this phase were:

- Proposing places within the community to disseminate the results of the PE.

Trying to link this phase of the process with bodies recently created within the community, such as the Participation Council and the Galibar Health Council.

- Moderating turn-taking among participants in the steering group.

## **Analysis of Results in Relation to CAE**

In this section, we reflect on the extent to which and how the principles that guide CAE, as posited in the work by Shulha et al. (2016), applied in the case study of PE described above. To this end, we relate the guiding principles of CAE to the phases of the PE and consider the role of the community manager throughout the process.

Table 2 shows the relationship between the phases of the PE, the CAE principles and the functions of the community manager in the PE of community actions. We elaborate below, including some reflections on the overlap with the CAE principles.

### **Insert Table 2 about here**

“Clarify motivation for collaboration” is a guiding principle for CAE that was applied in the following phases in our case study: *1. Negotiating the terms of Participatory Evaluation; 3. Initially disseminating the Participatory Evaluation process in the community; and 4. Implementing and Monitoring the Participatory Evaluation process*. These are phases of the PE that clarify the purpose of evaluation and the expectations of different stakeholders. The aim, according to Shulha et al., involves “making understandings around the purpose of the evaluation, the information and process needs embedded in the purpose, and the expectations of stakeholders around the collaboration explicit and transparent for all collaborators” (2016, p. 200).

Two main actions were carried out to this end. First, a map of the community actions in the town was created through negotiation between the community manager and the evaluators. This map of community actions in Galibar served to clarify the specific community actions that took place in the community and the participating

teams (both local community employees and local residents). This is a key result of the PE process, since participants in the evaluation selected two of the community actions identified to be evaluated using participatory and collaborative principles.

Second, the initial mobilization within the community served to present the PE project, invite people to participate and set up the steering group that would evaluate community actions by means of a collaborative approach. At this stage, participants were informed, doubts and questions about the PE were answered and the needs of the evaluation process were identified.

Shulha et al. point out that “trust among evaluators and their stakeholders is not ensured by contract” (2016, p. 202). We believe that significant relationships were created between all of those involved in the PE of community actions thanks to the generation of a good relational climate and good teamwork spirit, which in turn led to a positive work environment focused on the task objectives. We consider that this trust was based on:

- Constant and fluid communication maintained between all actors through different formats: face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, e-mail.
- Joint responsibility in carrying out tasks, which were previously defined and negotiated among the different participants comprising the PE steering group.
- Mutual support among the participants, both technically and emotionally.
- High motivation among the participants in the face of a shared project focused on their own community.

The CAE principle “Foster meaningful relationships” is directly related to phases *1. Negotiating the terms of Participatory Evaluation; 2. Supporting the evaluators’ acceptance in the community and; 3. Initially disseminating the Participatory Evaluation process in the community*. The participants in the group interview still consider today, several years after the end of the PE process, that one of its main successes was the generation of a climate of trust and respect among local community employees and local residents who had not previously known each other. And also being able to form a steering group that led the PE through structured monthly meetings maintained over time<sup>2</sup>. This climate of trust and good relations made it

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<sup>2</sup> The 1st meeting of the PE steering group took place on January 18, 2012 and the 12th and final meeting was held on January 29, 2013. It is also worth noting that the first negotiation meeting at the regional level was held on June 30, 2011 and the first negotiation meeting at the local level on October

possible to achieve the desired outcome of the PE process. That is, to evaluate in a participative way two of the community actions that were carried out in the town and observe outcomes of the PE process, including: individual and community learning taking place, and the empowerment of the people participating in the EP.

One of the local community employees that participated in the group interview explained that at a technical level, the PE helped her better understand a participatory process –the evaluation of community actions– and learn from it. She also considered that the local residents comprising the steering group were empowered and subsequently interested in issues related to their local area and citizen participation.

The CAE principle “Promote appropriate participatory processes” is directly related to phases 4. Implementing and Monitoring the Participatory Evaluation process and 5. Wide dissemination of Participatory Evaluation within the community. The generation of appropriate participatory processes must include the following factors:

1. A diversity of stakeholders.
2. Depth of participation.
3. Control over decision making.

There is evidence to show that these factors were fulfilled in achieving the participation and collaboration of those involved during the PE process. In relation to the first factor, the steering group was constituted by combining the presence of people with an evaluator profile, represented in this PE by evaluators from the university sphere, and people with a non-evaluator profile (Daigneault & Jacob, 2009), represented by the community manager, local community employees and local residents.

In relation to control over decision making, there is evidence that those with a non-evaluator profile made decisions in Phase 1 of the PE, dedicated to the initial negotiation of the evaluation. This includes, for example, the defining of community actions, the identifying of key agents, and reviewing proposals for methodological evaluation, among others. There is also evidence that their decision making increased as the evaluation process progressed.

The CAE principles “Monitor evaluation progress and quality” and “Monitor and respond to the resource availability” are directly related to *Phase 4. Implementing*

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26, 2011. These dates reflect the systematization of the PE process through the design of a stable participatory framework maintained over time that allowed a PE process to be carried out on the town’s community actions.

*and Monitoring the Participatory Evaluation.* Monitoring the progress and quality of the evaluation was a task shared mainly between the community manager and the evaluators. The aforementioned actors held a total of 12 meetings to this end. This type of meeting was held during all five phases of the PE, and interspersed between the evaluation meetings held by the steering group. The meetings had three main objectives: 1) to provide constant feedback regarding the evaluation sessions; 2) to analyze the data collected in the evaluation sessions with the steering group; and 3) to adapt the design of activities and dynamics used in the steering group sessions based on the technical opinion of the community manager and the decisions taken by the local residents and local community employees in the steering group.

We consider the monitoring of the PE that took place outside the dynamics of the steering group's evaluation to have been a key element in conducting the evaluation. This is due to the fact that the methodological design of the PE was emergent and dynamic during the process: the evaluators and the community manager negotiated the design of the evaluation, which was modified and adapted based on the decisions of the stakeholders comprising the steering group. As evidence of how the PE was monitored, the 13 meetings added up to 18.5 hours of work and a total of 45 sheets of minutes. The evaluators sent a total of 54 emails to the different parties involved and received a total of 45 emails in return. They made seven telephone calls and received six.

The CAE principle “Promote evaluating thinking” is related with all phases of the PE process. We agree with the contribution by Preskill and Torres (1999), who identified evaluative thinking with a learning process. The key agents interviewed pointed out that by participating in the PE of community actions, they have improved (1) their knowledge and abilities with regard to evaluation (especially the managers); (2) their knowledge of the programs developed within the framework of the CDP (especially the local residents); and, in general, (3) their relationships with all of the agents involved.

Lastly, the CAE principle “Follow through to realize use” was not observed to any great extent in the retrospective study of the PE of community actions. However, in the group interview conducted with 4 agents who participated in the PE, they did claim to observe transformative outcomes in two of the situations generated. They stated that the participants in the steering group with a managerial profile had modified their view on what evaluation is and stands for. Prior to participating in this project, they had

understood the evaluation of community action as a means of collecting quantitative data that justified the implementation of the community actions carried out. Evaluation therefore focused on quantifying, among other aspects, the number of actions developed and the number of participating residents. From the PE they say they have learned new evaluation techniques and dynamics and how to implement them and have modified the way they see evaluation and how the results can be oriented to the continuous improvement of programs. They have also learned that evaluation in community action can favor social relationships among participants. The participants of the steering group who were residents of Galibar related their participation to learning and an improvement in their personal well-being. They learned about themselves, about other residents and managers who participated in the steering group, and about the projects and actions that take place in Galibar, which some of them were previously not aware of.

## Conclusions

This chapter presents a retrospective study of a PE of community actions using the framework of Shulha et al's principles to guide CAE. The analysis has mainly been based on the role played by the community manager during the successive phases of a participatory evaluation process implemented in the town of Galibar.

After reviewing the PE process carried out between June 2011 and January 2013 and expanding the results with information gathered during a recent group interview with four members of the PE's original steering group, we can conclude that the fundamental role played by the community manager is that of facilitator. This role is expressed in different ways: as a mediator between the evaluators and the participating members of the community - citizens and local community employees; as a translator of the technical language used by the evaluators for citizens; as a coordinator of the joint work carried out during the PE; and finally, as a 'channeller' of the exchanges between the two groups that made up the steering group.

With regard to the conceptual principles of CAE, we can state that within the framework of community work they can be used as a methodological guide that facilitates evaluations in the field of community action.

First of all, it is important to determine the profiles of those people involved in the evaluation. This information is used to decide the negotiation strategies needed to

(1) explain the purpose of the evaluation, and (2) clarify the expectations of those involved. We recommend that technical language be simplified in the community action, as in many cases it is only used among professionals, and that spaces be respected for relationships among participants, avoiding calling additional meetings or activities in the community not already used by the population.

Secondly, in order to implement appropriate participatory processes, it is necessary to adapt evaluation sessions to the availability of community agents. Community action involves residents engaging altruistically in social actions in their free time, outside of their work and family obligations. This fact conditions the implementation of the EP. Too many meetings can discourage their participation.

A third methodological element is related to promoting significant relationships among those involved. In the collaborative evaluation of community actions, it is recommended that minimum shared objectives be defined among all those involved. These shared objectives –promoting citizen security in the community, for example– help to unite participants, regardless of their cultural diversity or geographical origin. Constant negotiation between those involved, the expressing of opinions, the search for consensus and regular communication are factors that influence the creation of meaningful relationships among those involved.

Finally, we also believe that using the conceptual principles of CAE is very appropriate for evaluations carried out in the field of community actions and work, fundamentally for three reasons. First, because they enable and promote a horizontal-type relationship between evaluators and non-evaluators; that is, between evaluation experts -professional evaluators- and experts in living life in their particular contexts - citizens. We believe that this type of relationship helps bridge the gap between expert knowledge and knowledge of life and ultimately improves social and cultural integration beyond class and social or cultural levels.

Second, because they enable and promote the participation of people in target communities in the very dynamics in which their daily lives unfold; dynamics they may not be entirely aware of. This is something that is achieved through participatory evaluation processes. Participating in the evaluation supposes an awareness of the reality in which they live, the life and sociocultural processes in which they are involved, and finally the multiple instances and forces that their life in the community entails. In line with that posited by Freire, one might say that “awareness”, an awareness

of one's own reality, is always the result of a more or less conscious process of evaluation. The CAE proposal is that this process be conscious and intentional.

Third, because the processes that guide and promote CAE principles in areas of community work are first and foremost socio-educational learning processes, meaning learning contextualized in the life realities that participants experience on a daily basis. And therefore learning that can help them transform themselves and the communities in which they live.

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## Appendix A: Focus group guide



### AIM OF THE INTERVIEW:

To explore the extent to which CAE principles had been applied in the PE processes.

To determine how the CAE principles might guide the practice of PE in community actions.

### INFORMATION PRIOR TO THE GROUP INTERVIEW:

Present/explain the CAE principles to participants in the group interview, based on the work by Shulha et al. (2016)<sup>3</sup>

1. Clarify motivation for collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluation purpose</li><li>• Evaluation and stakeholder expectations</li><li>• Information and process needs</li></ul>
2. Foster meaningful relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respect, trust and transparency</li><li>• Structured and sustained interactivity</li><li>• Cultural competency</li></ul>
3. Develop a shared understanding of the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program logic</li><li>• Organizational context</li></ul>
4. Promote appropriate participatory processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversity of stakeholders</li><li>• Depth of participation</li><li>• Control of decision-making</li></ul>
5. Monitor and respond to resource availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time</li><li>• Budget</li><li>• Personnel</li></ul>
6. Monitor evaluation progress and quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluation design</li></ul>

<sup>3</sup> Shulha, L.M., Whitmore, E., Cousins, J.B., Gilbert, N., & Al Hudib, H. (2016). Introducing evidence-based principles to guide collaborative approaches to evaluation: results of an empirical process. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 37(2), 193-215

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection</li> </ul>
7.Promote evaluative thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry orientation</li> <li>• Focus on learning</li> </ul>
8.Follow through to realize use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical outcomes</li> <li>• Transformative outcomes</li> </ul>

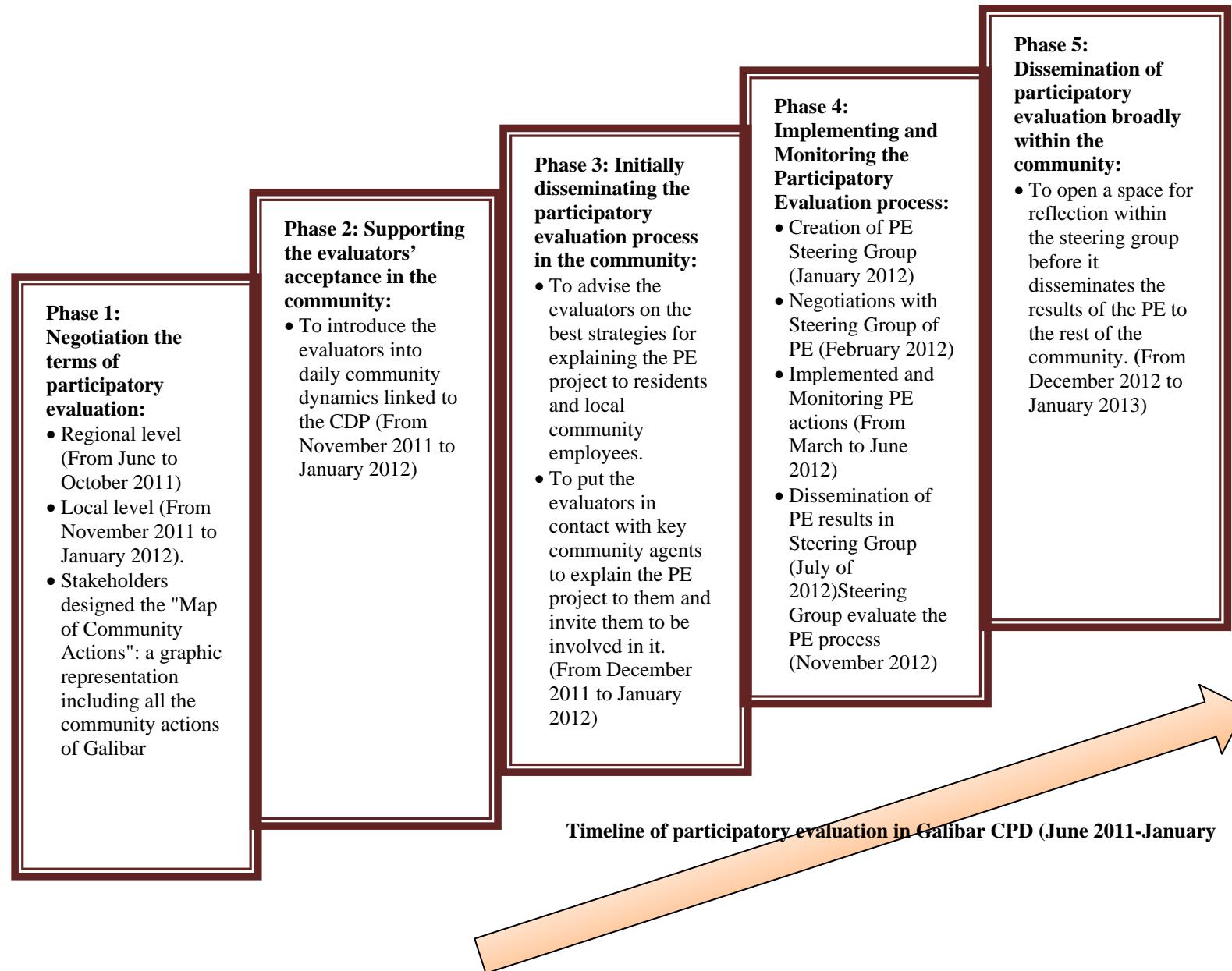
**QUESTIONS:**

- 1) At the beginning of the PE, do you consider that both the aim and purpose of the evaluation were clearly stated? Did the dynamics used help to clarify the purpose of the evaluation to those involved?  
Explain, in your own words, some strategies that you would use to clarify the expectations of stakeholders in a PE.
- 2) The PE sessions with the steering group were held once a month. Do you consider that enough? Why? Do you think that more sessions would have been needed? If so, what for?
- 3) Do you think that there were enough coordination meetings between the UAB evaluators and the community manager? If not, why?
- 4) Describe in your own words the relational climate generated among the people who comprised the PE steering group. What factors do you think influenced the creation of meaningful and positive relationships among the participants?
- 5) In the PE process you participated in, do you think that it was a systematic or a disorganized process? What would you highlight about its design?
- 6) Do you think that the people who participated in the PE steering group made effective decisions and took effective actions in the evaluation? Can you give an example? Or, contrarily, do you think they were only here for consultation? How do you think stakeholder diversity and control in decision-making can be fostered within an evaluation?

- 7) Do you think that the collection of evaluation data within the PE process was successful? Was it done systematically? Do you think that the dynamics used were consistent with the profile of the people comprising the steering group?
- 8) Do you think the PE process had an impact on the community? On one of the participants (a particular resident or manager), for example; or on a program or future decision-making with regard to how to approach the evaluation of activities?
- 9) Would you relate the PE process you participated in to learning? Explain in your own words how an evaluation can be guided to promote evaluative thinking.

COMMUNITY MANAGER'S SELF-PERCEPTION OF PROFESSIONAL ROLE		KEY AGENTS' PERCEPTION OF PROFESSIONAL ROLE PLAYED BY COMMUNITY MANAGER		
	Common element	Contributions of key agents		
Intermediary  Facilitator  Companion  Reviewer	Facilitators	Moderator 'Chaneller' Coach	Key agent 1	
		Coordinator	Key agent 2	
		Companion	Key agent 3	
		Link Translator General coordinator	Key agent 4	

**Table 1. Professional role played by Community Manager in Participatory Evaluation.**



**Figure 1. Timeline of the PE process for community actions in Galibar CDP**

PHASES OF THE PE PROCESS	ASSOCIATED CAE PRINCIPLES	COMMUNITY MANAGER'S FUNCTIONS IN PE PROCESS
1. Negotiation the terms of Participatory Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify motivation for collaboration</li> <li>Foster meaningful relationship</li> <li>Promote evaluating thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer evaluators information about the community</li> <li>Define key agents and entities that can participate in the PE</li> <li>Clarify discrepancies and mediate between the actors</li> </ul>
2. Supporting the evaluators' acceptance in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster meaningful relationship</li> <li>Promote evaluating thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To negotiate the acceptance of the evaluators into the community</li> <li>To introduce evaluators into daily community dynamics linked to the CDP</li> </ul>
3. Initially disseminating the Participatory Evaluation process in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify motivation for collaboration</li> <li>Foster meaningful relationship</li> <li>Promote evaluating thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To involve people in the PE and motivating them to participate</li> <li>To facilitate the evaluators' access to community activities and accompanying them in presenting the PE project</li> <li>To create the PE steering group</li> <li>To explain broadly the PE in the community manager's professional network</li> <li>To communicate the start of the PE on digital social</li> </ul>

		networks
4. Implementing and Monitoring the Participatory Evaluation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify motivation for collaboration</li> <li>Monitor and respond to the resource availability</li> <li>Monitor evaluation progress and quality</li> <li>Promote appropriate participatory processes</li> <li>Promote evaluating thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To offer methodological and community advice to the evaluators to facilitate PE</li> <li>To recommend interviews with key people in the community</li> <li>To make calls and send emails to: a) set up a meeting to present the PE project; b) issue reminders regarding steering group meetings a few days before they were held</li> <li>To book and organize meeting rooms</li> <li>To distribute documentation generated during the PE to members of the steering group</li> <li>To distribute the PE schedule to members of the steering group</li> </ul>
5. Dissemination of Participatory Evaluation broadly within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote appropriate participatory processes</li> <li>Promote evaluating thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propose community spaces in which to disseminate the results of the PE</li> <li>Moderate turntaking among participants of the steering group</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Relationship between the functions of the PE, CAE principles and functions of the community manager in the PE of community actions**