



Transform Practice

Centering community voices in all that we do
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Thirst-quenching conversation: Evaluation and reporting in health promotion

Alliance for Healthier Communities WEBINAR - January 20, 2026

Have you ever felt that you didn't quite fit in? Like when everything that matters and is unique about you must be tucked away and hidden? Or when you are invited to tell your story, the questions being asked are not central to your story at all? This may be the case with reporting and evaluation for many community health centres as non-profit organizations devoted to community development, health promotion, and social justice.

Our research paper [Round Peg in a Square Hole](#) (*Journal of Public and Non-profit Affairs*, Vol 10, No.2, 2024) explores what can happen when reporting and evaluation overemphasize a funder's functional requirements - to the detriment of community priorities, organizational values, and professional standards.

Key graphics from the journal article

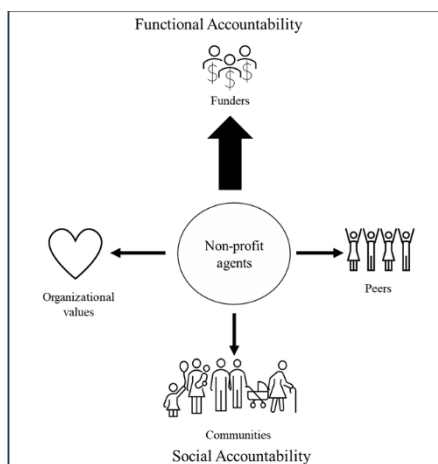


Image 1 - Existing Directions of Accountability in the Non-Profit Sector and their Funder Bias

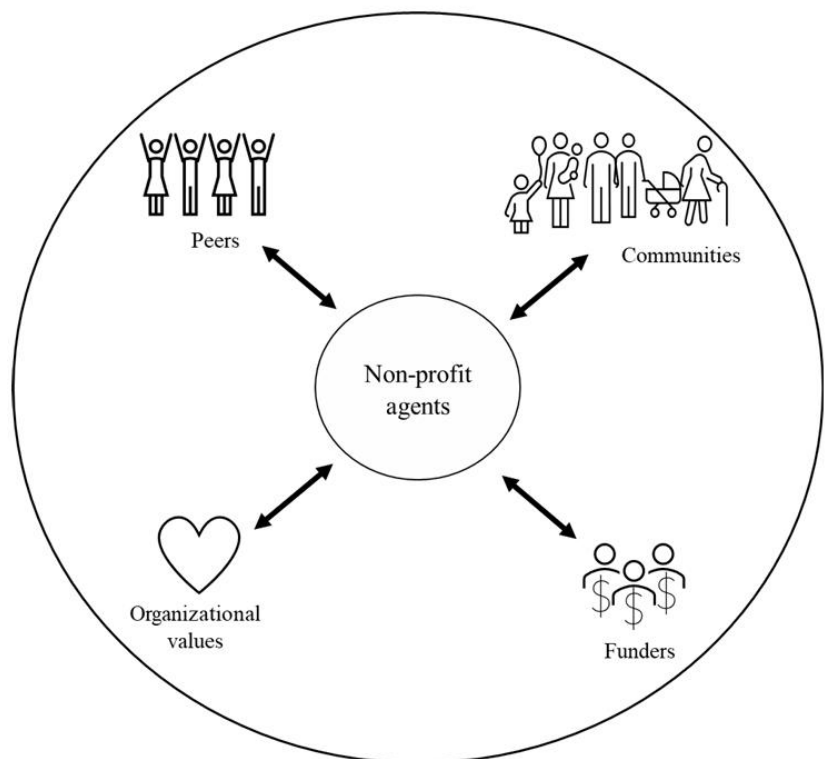


Image 2 - Circular Framework for a Wholistic Accountability System





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Actions for enabling wholistic accountability in health promotion (from the journal article, p.169)

Funders:

- Resource evaluation to inform organizational learning and program development.
- Ensure the designated budget for evaluation activities can sufficiently support program participants and service users to meaningfully participate in shaping and driving reporting and evaluation.
- Require evaluative learning considerations as a part of project proposals, using questions prompts that encourage participatory evaluation.
- Assess evaluation strategies for their alignment with key health promotion and systems change principles, and for their appropriateness to context, e.g., enabling equitable inclusion of people with lived experiences of an issue at hand.
- Build comprehensive capacity for participatory evaluation within the funding agency, and resource and motivate capacity development among grantees.

Executive leadership:

- Ensure a designated core budget that supports comprehensive participatory evaluations.
- Integrate evaluative learning activities in organizational workplans, planning cycles, and general organizational culture.
- Continuously nourish organizational capacity for participatory evaluation.
- Sustain equitable participation of community members by sufficiently compensating their time, skills, and knowledge.

Frontline practitioners:

- Integrate participatory evaluation principles and techniques in all forms and stages of evaluation, with particular attention to enabling community participation in codesign.
- Enable participation of a broader range of stakeholders by addressing access barriers such as child/eldercare, transportation, food security, meeting schedules and locations.
- Compensate community members for their time, skills, and knowledge.
- Stay committed to evaluative learning and reflective practice.





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Key Resources

Research paper [“Round Peg in a Square Hole”: Lessons from Community Health Promotion Practice on Dynamics of Accountability, Reporting and Evaluation, and Governance](#), Journal of Public and Non-Profit Affairs, Vol. 10., No.2 (2024).

Blogpost [Round Peg in a Square Hole: Misfit between reporting requirements and evaluation practice in community health promotion](#), EPIC News, Newsletter of the Alliance’s EPIC Learning Health System

[3 Approaches to Evaluation](#) (infographic, page 41 of a toolkit for systems change partnerships)

[The Power of Reflection](#) (short introductory resource with 3 dynamic participatory evaluation techniques)

[Participatory Evaluation Toolkit](#) (companion resource with longer intro and 7 more participatory techniques)



Transform Practice

[Transform Practice](#) is a non-profit worker co-op. We nurture brave spaces that centre community voices; we facilitate power sharing to co-create new relationships, knowledge, and strategies; together with others, we collectively facilitate systems change by **shifting from conventional to transformative, equity-centered practices**. Through various methods and techniques, including popular education, arts-based activities, community-based participatory research, theater of the oppressed, and story telling, we facilitate transformation in reporting and evaluation, community engagement, co-design, and action in partnership.

Learn more: www.transformpractice.ca

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