What Experience Tells Us: Building & Sustaining Effective Partnerships

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Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
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Mission

To promote health (broadly defined) through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions
At-A-Glance

- Nonprofit membership organization launched in January ‘97
- Board of directors reflective of our diverse constituencies
- 1,800 members from communities and campuses across Canada, the US & other countries
- Private & public funding
- Staff, students & senior consultants
Goals

- **Combine knowledge, wisdom & experience** in communities and in academic institutions to solve major health, social and economic challenges
- **Build capacity** of communities & higher educational institutions to engage each other in authentic partnerships
- **Support communities** in their relationships & work with academic partners
- **Recognize & reward** faculty for community engagement & community-engaged scholarship
- **Develop partnerships** that balance power & share resources equitably among partners
- **Ensure community-driven social change** is central to service-learning & community-based participatory research
Board Members

Atum Azzahir, Cultural Wellness Center, Twin Cities, MN
Renee Bayer, University of Michigan School of Public Health, Ann Arbor, MI
Cynthia Barnes-Boyd, Neighborhoods Initiative, University of Illinois-Chicago Great Cities Institute, Chicago, IL
Chuck Conner, West Virginia Rural Health Education Partnership, Spencer, WV
Diane Downing, Arlington County Dept. of Human Services, VA and George Washington University, DC
Stephanie Farquhar, Portland State University, Portland, OR
Barbara Gottlieb, Brookside Community Health Center, Jamaica Plain, MA and Harvard Schools of Medicine and Public Health, Boston, MA
Ella Greene-Moton, Community-Academic Consultant, Flint, MI and University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Susan Gust, Community Activist, Minneapolis, MN
Dennis Magill, Wellesley Institute and University of Toronto, ON, Canada
Daniel E. Korin, Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY
Creshelle Nash, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Arkansas Minority Health Commission, Little Rock, AR
Richard W. Redman, University of Michigan School of Nursing
Douglas Simmons, University of Texas, Houston Health Science Center Dental Branch
Sacoby Wilson, Institute for Families and Society, University of South Carolina
There is no “one” definition of community

- Geography
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Disability, illness or health condition
- Common interest or cause
- Shared values or norms
Defining “community” is more about the process of asking questions than about a strict definition of who “is” community or “represents” community:

- Are those most affected by the problem at the table?
- Are those who have a stake in the issue being addressed at the table?
- Do they play decision making roles?
Partnerships form to serve a specific purpose and may take on new goals over time.

Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and accountability for the partnership.

The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.

The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.

The partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
Principles of Partnership

CCPH board of directors, 1998 & 2006

- Partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority by striving to understand each other's needs and self-interests, and developing a common language.
- Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution.
- There is feedback among all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
- Partners share the benefits of the partnership's accomplishments.
- Partnerships can dissolve and need to plan a process for closure.
1. Quality processes

“We are not just talking about a process that involves partners. There needs to be a process of shared decision making.”

~ Ella Greene-Moton, Flint, MI

Relationship focused…open, honest and respectful….trust-building…acknowledging of history…committed to mutual learning…sharing credit
2. Meaningful outcomes that are tangible and relevant to communities

“OK, we can work together on community-based participatory research, but only if you support our kids in the pipeline. Bring them to campus for programs, teach them skills they use to be more marketable, give them academic credit.”

~ Vickie Ybarra, Toppenish, WA

Eliminating health disparities…affordable housing…education, economic development…
3. Transformation at multiple levels

“We build social capital when we’re doing this work. We don’t often talk about that.”

~ Douglas Taylor, Atlanta, GA

- Personal transformation, including self reflection and heightened political consciousness
- Institutional transformation, including changing policies and systems
- Community transformation, including community capacity building
- Transformation of science and knowledge, including how knowledge is generated, used and valued and what constitutes “evidence”
- Political transformation, including social justice
Creating healthier communities requires collaborative solutions which bring COMMUNITIES & INSTITUTIONS together through authentic partnerships that build upon the assets, strengths, and capacities of each.
Community-Campus Partnerships
A Strategy for Social Change

Eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities
Increasing health workforce diversity
Closing the achievement gap in primary & secondary education
Increasing access to higher education, health care, information technology
Increasing youth civic engagement
Increasing relevant of research and translating it into practice and policy
Creating healthier campuses
Decreasing college student alcohol use
Improving college student mental health
Establishing quality affordable housing
Revitalizing cities
Developing rural economies
Preparing students in a wide range of disciplines & professions for practice
Community-Campus Partnerships

The Current Reality

- Community engagement “buzz” in higher ed and funders
- Benefit of partnering with higher ed is not readily apparent to many communities – yet there can be many benefits
- Relationship between community and campus partners is largely based on individuals and not institutionalized
- Community groups sometimes lose community ties and legitimacy over time when they partner with higher ed
- Assumption that community needs the academy to have legitimate conversations and that academic knowledge has greater value than community knowledge
Community-Campus Partnerships
The Current Reality

“There is a lack of understanding within universities about what they’re doing and why. This one office in our university has changed its names 3 times since 1995. First it was community service, then service-learning, and now civic engagement. Civic engagement is a pretty word and concept, but there is a disconnect between the university view of what “engagement” means and how the community views it. The university thinks that anything outside the walls is engagement.”

~ Pearlie Toliver, Branch Banking and Trust Company, Macon, GA
Community-Campus Partnerships
The Current Reality

- Playing field between community & campus is not level
- Building community capacity through strong community-based organizations is not often an explicit goal
- Funders are investing in these partnerships - some are beginning to “get” what authentic partnerships involve
- Significant differences between mature & early partnerships
- Significant ongoing challenges, but communities keep at this work “because we know there can be benefits and because we want to protect our communities.”
Benefits perceived by community partners include...

- Further advancement of community organization’s mission
- New perspectives and insights
- Rewarding personal and professional relationships
- Access to knowledge and research on campus
- Expanded resources
- Grant opportunities
- Credibility for their own efforts
- Exposure and access to higher education
- Understanding of institutional assets & limitations
- Being viewed as teachers and experts
Community-Campus Partnerships
The Current Reality

- Predominant model: is it a partnership?
  - Initiated by campus, framed by academic mission and priorities
  - Driven by grant and program requirements
  - Disconnects and contradictions between different parts of campus, community, partnership strategies
  - Campus infrastructure: centers, offices
  - Community serves advisory role
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What’s Not Working

- No community engagement as project/proposal is developed
- Inequitable distribution of power and resources
- Decisions made “behind closed doors”
- Grants require community, but funding goes to institution
- Lack of partner commitment to the community’s future
- Researchers not community or culturally competent
- No guidelines for funders and peer reviewers
- No planning for sustainability, no exit strategy
- Community lacks infrastructure to fully engage
- Presumption that communities speak with one voice
- Presumption that benefits of having students outweighs costs
Community-Campus Partnerships
Some Common Pitfalls

• Institution receives funding based on location in disadvantaged community without involving them, sharing resources or directly benefiting them
• Students consistently assigned to tour a neighborhood, conduct needs assessments
• Lack of preparation and understanding of context
• Faculty members structure community engagements without first assessing community’s interests and needs, fail to plan with community partners
• Episodic involvement based on grant funding, calendar

Gelmon G et. al., 1998.
Community-Campus Partnerships
What’s Working

- Strong relationships: trust, honesty, transparency, respect
- Mutual benefit of all partners
- Shared ownership of partnership, its projects and products
- Clear definitions, roles and expectations of all partners
- Support from funding agency that understands how authentic partnerships are developed and sustained
- Partners are valued/compensated for expertise
- Partners gain transferable skills
- Community peer networks for mentoring, learning and sharing of best practices
Characteristics of Success
Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research Group, 2004

- Partnership has structures and processes that encourage sharing influence and control
  - Jointly developed principles & operating procedures
  - Common vision & mutually defined issues, goals, objectives
  - Democratic, participatory processes and consensus decision-making
  - Ongoing evaluation of partnership process
Leadership (core group or one visionary)

- Boundary-spanners that understand & appreciate other perspectives, are comfortable sharing ideas, resources & power
- Clear vision with flexible approaches
- Motivate members to participate and contribute
- Structure fair and productive interactions
- Negotiate among people & organizations with diverse agendas
- Maintain enthusiasm & celebrate successes
Human resources

- Partnership liaison who is comfortable in multiple “worlds”
- Community competent and appropriately skilled staff, researchers
- Mentoring & professional development
- Recognition & rewards
Characteristics of Vibrant Community-University Partnerships
WK Kellogg Foundation

Engaged higher education institutions and communities:

- See their present and future well-being as inextricably linked
- Collaboratively plan and design mutually beneficial programs and outcomes
- Engage in reciprocal learning
- Respect the history, culture, knowledge, and wisdom of the other
Characteristics of Vibrant Community-University Partnerships
WK Kellogg Foundation

- Create structures that promote open communication and equity with one another
- Have high expectations for their performance and involvement with each other
- Value and promote diversity
- Regularly conduct a joint assessment of their partnership and report results
Upcoming Events
Community-University Partnerships: Bringing Global Perspectives to Local Action, May 10-14, 2011, Waterloo Region, Ontario, Canada – Proposals Due
www.cuemexpo2011.ca

Online Reports & Toolkits
Developing & Sustaining CBPR Partnerships
Community-Engaged Scholarship
Community-Level Research Protections

Electronic Discussion Groups
CBPR, community partners, service-learning

http://www.ccph.info
Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

We invite you to join a growing network of communities & campuses that are collaborating to promote health

Email us at ccph.info@gmail.com or visit us online at http://www.ccph.info