Community-Academic Research Partnerships for Health: Benefits and Best Practices

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Centre for Urban Health Initiatives
Annual Planning Workshop
May 3, 2004
To promote health through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions

HEALTH.....eliminating health disparities
...achieving a diverse and community-responsive health workforce

PARTNERSHIPS.....service-learning, community-based participatory research and evaluation, policy and advocacy
At-A-Glance

- Nonprofit organization launched in January ’97
- Headquartered in Seattle, WA USA
- 13-member board of directors reflect stakeholders in community-campus partnerships
- 1000+ members from communities and campuses across the US and a 12+ countries
- Private and public funding
- 5 staff, 2 senior consultants
We are working to...

- Build the capacity of communities and higher educational institutions to engage each other as partners
- Incorporate service-learning into the education of all health professionals
- Recognize and reward community-based teaching, research, service
- Develop partnerships that balance power and share resources among partners
Today’s Discussion

Why CBPR?

What are the successful outcomes of CBPR?

What are characteristics of successful partnerships?

Where are community-academic research partnerships going in the next 10 years?
Sources of Information

- Review of literature on partnerships
- Member surveys & agenda-setting sessions
- Program consultations & evaluations
- Commissioned papers
- Demonstration & evaluation projects
  - ASPH-CDC project
Why Community-Academic Partnerships?

- Communities face complex challenges and need to draw on all institutions as assets
- Public expectations of accountability and value, corporate citizenship, graduates
- Gap between research and practice, teaching and practice
- Disengagement in civic participation and democracy
What is CBPR?

“A collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community, has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve health outcomes and eliminate health disparities.”

WK Kellogg Foundation Community Health Scholars Program
-- Clip from Videotape--

“A Bridge Between Communities: The Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center”
“If we want faculty to be involved in communities, but reward them for other activities, we are our own worst enemy.”

“Research support and manuscript generation is the name of the game...community-based anything takes time, length, and breadth.”
Principles of Partnership

- Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals and measurable outcomes for the partnership
- The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment
- The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, and addresses needs considered relevant and important to all partners
- Power is balanced among partners and resources are shared

http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/principles.html#principles
Principles of Partnership

- There is clear, open and accessible communication between partners
- Roles, norms and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners
- There is feedback to, among and from all stakeholders in the partnerships
- Partners share the credit for accomplishments
- Partnerships take time to develop and evolve

http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/principles.html#principles
Why CBPR?

- “Traditional” research approaches have failed to solve complex health challenges and disparities
- Community mistrust/anger concerning research irrelevant to locally identified needs
- Gap between research and practice
- Growing recognition that significant community involvement can lead to scientifically sound research
Power of partnerships

“Participatory approach at the front-end of the research pipeline is the best assurance of relevance and utilization of the research at the other end of the pipeline.”

Lawrence Green, CDC
Enhanced understanding and relationships between communities and researchers

- community issues/context; institutional history/culture/dynamics
- increased trust and bridges cultural gaps between partners; willingness to learn from, serve as resources for, and influence one another

Opportunities for professional development

- For community and academic partners

CBPR Partnership Outcomes

- Increased quality and validity of research
  - By engaging local knowledge and theory based on experience of people involved

- Improved design and implementation of more effective health interventions, including policy change

- Enhanced relevance of research question, quality and quantity of data gathered and use of data

CBPR Partnership Outcomes

- Provision of resources for communities, recognition of existing community resources, and building of community capacity to identify and conduct research

- Improved health and well-being of communities involved
  - Directly through studying and addressing community needs, indirectly through increasing their power and control over the research process

Characteristics of Successful Partnerships

ASPH/CDC 2004

- Trusting relationships
- Equitable processes and procedures
- Diverse partners
- Leadership
- All partners benefit
- Supportive reward structures
- Science enhanced by community involvement
- Balancing process and action
- Ongoing partner development
- Sustainable impact
- Collaborative dissemination
- Ongoing assessment, improvement and celebration
Characteristics of Success: Partnership Formation

- Formed to address genuine community concern and addresses strategic partner issues, not to get a grant
  - input of all partners throughout the research partnership lifecycle (initiation through dissemination)

- Trusting relationships
  - builds on prior positive relationships
  - partners have a history of engagement and are well respected
  - recognition of skills/knowledge that each partner brings
  - understanding of needs/constraints of each partner
Characteristics of Success: Partnership Membership

- **Diverse membership**
  - Includes those directly affected by the topic of study
  - Involves organizations and individuals as partners
  - Rationale and criteria for new partners
  - Starts small, with CBOS that have history of engagement and are well-respected

- **Significant community involvement**
  - Explicit definition of who is “the community” and who “represents” the community
Characteristics of Success: Structures and Processes

- Jointly developed principles & operating procedures that ensure equity and shared control over decision making
  - Equitable distribution of costs, benefits, and resources
  - Use democratic, participatory processes

- Supportive policies and reward structures
  - Compensation for community partners
  - Promotion and tenure policies for faculty partners

- Establish and maintain necessary infrastructure
  - Partnership “liaison”
  - Staff support
Characteristics of Success: Partnership Development and Sustainability

- Ongoing evaluation of partnership process
  - Reflection, improvement, celebration
  - Disseminate “lessons learned” to benefit new and emerging partnerships
  - Conflict resolution

- Ongoing partner development
  - Provide training, technical assistance, and continuing education
  - Facilitate the ability of partners to mentor each other
Characteristics of Success: Roles and Responsibilities

- Roles and responsibilities based on knowledge bases, skill sets, and capacity-building needs of respective partners; Seek to balance power

- Leadership at multiple levels across partner organizations
  - comfortable sharing ideas, resources & power

- Appropriate skilled
  - Technical
  - Commitment
  - Capacity-building
  - Cultural diversity
  - Connections to the community
  - Interpersonal and facilitation
Characteristics of Success: Outcomes

- **Collaborative dissemination**
  - Multiple audiences and formats
  - Translate findings for policy change

- **Balance between partnership process, activities, and outcomes**
  - Process for setting priorities
  - Maintaining flexibility
  - Show tangible benefits

- **Sustainable impact**
  - Plan ahead
  - Ability to demonstrate impact
  - Obtain external funding
Current State of Community-Campus Partnerships

- Culturally competent health professionals
- Diversity of the health workforce
- Supply and distribution of the health workforce
- Improved health outcomes
  - Elimination of health disparities, increased access
- Healthy campus
- Access to information and technology
- Community and economic development
Current State: Is it a *partnership*?

- Initiated by campus; framed by academic mission and priorities
- Driven by grant and program requirements
- Institution receives funding based on location in disadvantaged community w/o involving community, sharing resources, or using them to directly benefit
- Lack of preparation and understanding of context
- Faculty structure community engagements w/o first assessing community’s interests/needs; fail to plan w/ community partners
- Episodic involvement based on grant funding, academic calendar
Success Stories

Changing funding priorities

Significant investments by public & private agencies
Publications, theme issues
Community services implemented/members hired
Health outcomes
Faculty promoted
Pre-/post-doctoral programs
Where are partnerships going in next 10 years?

New models:
More coordinated & strategic
Inter-disciplinary & inter-professional
CBOs as centers of learning, discovery & engagement
CBO-initiated partnerships
Multi-CBOs & multi-institutional partnerships
Partnership intermediary organizations
Partnerships as a global phenomenon
Critical issues for sustainability

- Document & disseminate outcomes
- Balance coordinating & linking efforts with entrepreneurial spirit
- Find & pursue connections between the dots
- Supportive policies at multiple levels
- Communities and campuses view these partnerships as mission critical
- Address key underlying power issues
- Infrastructure support for communities
- Engage funding agencies
CCPH Resources
www.ccph.info

- Member connections
- Conference~ October 6-10, 2004 in Atlanta, GA USA
- Consultancy Network
- Biweekly E-newsletter, Partnership Matters
- Annual magazine, Partnership Perspectives
- Web-based clearinghouse
- Annual award
- Research and Evaluation
  - Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research
  - Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship
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