Advancing Health Equity through Community-University Research Partnerships

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Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
Agenda

- Some background on CCPH
- Community-engaged research – what & why?
- What's working & not working
- Principles of partnership
- Critical issues
Mission

To promote health (broadly defined) through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions
Goals

- **Leverage 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** central to service-learning & community-based participatory research (CBPR)
Defining Community

CCPH board of directors, 2005

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?
- Are those with resources (e.g., knowledge, connections, funding) needed to address the issue at the table?
- Do they play decision making roles?
## Continuum of Community-Engaged Research

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<th>Community-Driven Partnerships</th>
<th>Community-Based Participatory Research</th>
<th>University-Led Research</th>
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<td>Action is primary</td>
<td>Action &amp; Research</td>
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What is CBPR?

“...a partnership approach to research that equitably involves, for example, community members, organizational representatives, and researchers in all aspects of the research process; with all partners contributing their expertise and sharing responsibility and ownership to enhance understanding of a given phenomenon, and to integrate the knowledge gained with interventions to improve the health and well being of community members.”

Israel, BA Annual Review of Public Health, 1998
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 and has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change...”

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2001
Why Do CBPR?

Historically, research has...

- Rarely directly benefited and sometimes actually harmed the communities involved
- Excluded them from influence over the research process
- Resulted in understandable distrust of, and reluctance to participate in, research
- Been labeled by communities as parachute, helicopter or drive-by research
Why Do CBPR?

*Health interventions have often not been as effective as they could be…*

Not tailored to the concerns & cultures of participants

Rarely include participants in all aspects of intervention design, implementation & evaluation

Focused narrowly on individual behavior change with less attention to broader social & structural issues
“In many areas of health promotion & disease prevention, researchers and community advocates alike are beginning to focus their efforts further “upstream” in the socio-ecologic model, encouraging a greater emphasis on policy and environmental changes that facilitate proactive health choices at the individual level. CBPR is well positioned to address such approaches…”
Purpose: Advance authentic community-higher education partnerships by mobilizing network of experienced community partners

Sponsors: Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, WK Kellogg Foundation, Johnson Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies

Supporters: Community-Based Public Health Caucus of the American Public Health Association, the National Community-Based Organization Network and the National Community Committee of the CDC Prevention Research Centers Program.

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

- 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
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

- 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.”
Community-Campus Partnerships

The Current Reality

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
“We had heard horror stories about universities being there just for the money. My experience has been that the university was there for the community, to share knowledge, not to empower per se. The university wanted the knowledge gained would be given to others. We have had a long history of working together. We decided to focus on a new opportunity, and decided that this time the community would be a major decision maker in the process of project design. Our role as a co-applicant was as a facilitator to get the community involved, the women directly affected.”

~ Lola Sablos Santos, Guam Communications Network, Long Beach, CA
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 roles and expectations of all partners
- Support from funding agency that understands how authentic partnerships are developed and sustained
- Community partners valued/compensated for expertise
- Community and academic partners gain transferable skills
- Community peer networks for mentoring, learning and sharing of best practices
“Many communities start getting into doing this kind of research with academics because the funding is there. But oftentimes, before any common ground is established through someone who can serve as a bridge/translator between both sides, the study moves forward and the community is left with a different understanding of what was supposed to happen.”

~Vince Crisostomo, GUAM HIV/AIDS Network Project/Pacific Island Jurisdictions AIDS Action Group, Arlington, VA
Community-Campus Partnerships

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
Characteristics of Success


- Partnership is formed to address genuine community concern and addresses strategic partner issues, not to get a grant
- Partnership builds on prior positive relationships, trust
- Partnership involves organizations and individuals as partners
- Partnership starts small, with community leaders/CBOs that have history of engagement and are well respected
- Partnership explicitly defines who is “the community” and who “represents” the community
Characteristics of Success


- 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
Characteristics of Success


- 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 and communicate enthusiasm
Characteristics of Success


- Human resources
  - Partnership “liaison” who is comfortable in both worlds
  - Culturally competent and appropriately skilled staff, researchers
  - Community competencies
  - Mentoring
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
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
Critical issues for community-campus partnerships

View partnerships as mission-critical
Address key underlying power issues
Document & disseminate outcomes
Supportive policies at multiple level
Linking efforts without squelching entrepreneurial spirit
Infrastructure support for communities
Funding agency policy
Address concerns about rigor and validity
Upcoming Deadlines
Nov 15: CCPH board applications
Dec 1: Products of community-engaged Scholarship in refugee/immigrant health

Upcoming Events

Community-University Partnerships: Bringing Global Perspectives to Local Action, May 10-14, 2011, Waterloo Region, Ontario, Canada
http://www.cuexpo2011.ca

Online Reports & Toolkits
Developing & Sustaining CBPR Partnerships
http://www.cbprcurriculum.info
CES4Health.info: http://CES4Health.info
Community-Engaged Scholarship
http://communityengagedscholarship.info

Electronic Discussion Groups
CBPR, community partners, service-learning
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

Contact us by phone 206-666-3406 or email at ccph.info@gmail.com or visit us online at www.ccph.info