

Building Research Capacity in Community Based
Organizations (CBOs) –
Transforming Research Capacity into Social and
Organizational Change
(a CBPR-based project)

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A research and training program
created and presented by the Partnership of...

Paso del Norte Health Foundation &
Center for Border Health Research

Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health

Key elements of the Project

- three CBOs – one research team from each – commitment from each CBO to participate in a year-long CBPR training program in which each...
- develops research skills and designs and implements a research project based on a need from their communities, the results of which are...
- integrated into communities for change;
- a university-based and community-based PI & Co-PI
- three university-related CBPR practitioners serving as Research Technical Support members of CBO Teams
- end-of-year professional conference specifically for CBO presentations of research results
- funding proposals developed to continue project

CBO Participants

- A four-member research team created from at least three of these levels in your organization:
 - Director
 - Asst. Director
 - Program Coordinator/Manager
 - Community resident from service area
 - Leader from partner organization
 - Other

The CBPR Program Curriculum

The CBPR Program Curriculum

Stage 1 – (Months 1 -4)

Understanding the CBPR Protocol
Developing Your Research Design

1. Identifying and refining your research topic
2. Defining your research questions
3. Identifying your community partners
4. Developing the rationale for your research
5. Identifying previous discussions of your topic and deciding how you want to gather your information
6. Writing your research proposal
7. Preparing your Institutional Review Board Application

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Stage 2 – (Months 5-9)

Putting Your Research Design to Work

1. First contacts with your community sources of info
2. Getting all agreements and consents in place
3. Refining your research implementation plan
4. Completing the implementation plan
5. Participating in 2-3 miniworkshops (possible topics include: thinking about how you want to analyze your information, how to record/maintain data, etc.)

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Stage 3 – (Months 10-11)

Working the data – what did you learn?

1. Thinking about how your analysis goes
2. Doing the analysis
3. Organizing the analyses you produced
4. Deciding what ways you can best present the information you have that will best serve your stakeholders
5. Creating the formats for your presentations

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Stage 4 – (Month 12)

Putting what you learned to work

1. Finalizing the formats in which you will present the results of your hard work
2. Developing presentation plans – who & when – and preparing the presentation schedule
3. Thinking about other ways your research can be applied – in program and policy development, in community education, etc.
4. A Professional Conference – especially for you to showcase your work!

Rationale for this CBPR Project

"Place" & Capacity Building

- Capacity building within the structures of existing organizations and communities...
 - a. avoids dissipating scarce resources (human, social, economic, cultural) from individual organizations
 - b. focuses on **organizational/structural development** as central elements in capacity building
 - c. **institutionalizes** the research capacity
 - d. enhances **sustainability** of capacity implementation and growth in the organization

Redefining and Redistributing of Expertise

- **Traditional understanding of expertise: exclusive and mono-specialized**
- **CBPR understanding of expertise: inclusive and multi-specialized**

Organizational/Community Empowerment

Empowerment –
the generation and embodiment of capable agency
invested with a power to do

Two types of power-to-do:

1. “power within”
2. “power to”

Organizational/Community Empowerment

“power within”

enabling organizations to believe in their own abilities
to have a role in enacting change

(in our project, enabling organizations to believe in, to create, and to
institutionalize a
“culture of inquiry”
within the organization)

Organizational/Community Empowerment

“power to”

access to, control over, and distribution of
resources

(enabling organizations to have the ‘power to’ control their own destiny, in this case to have the capacity to do and collaborate in research on their own terms, in their own interests)

**CBO Participants,
Their Research Projects and
Accomplishments to Date**

Table 1:

CBO Participants, Their Research Projects and Accomplishments to Date

CBO and its Research Team	Accomplishments Achieved
<p>Youth Empowerment Agency/Otero County PATH (Otero County, New Mexico) Project Title: Otero County, New Mexico Methamphetamine Use</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Creation of a Meth Coalition in Otero County including NGOs and public agencies2. Creation of an outreach and education program within Otero County;3. Have been identified by the state as one of the effective Meth Awareness programs4. Based on data from their CBPR Project, published newspaper articles, sat on panels of experts, made presentations throughout the state of New Mexico and consulted with local and regional organizations about Meth Awareness5. Met with their U.S. Representative about their work6. Made formal presentation at professional conference entitled Education, Liberation and Emancipation sponsored jointly by the University of Texas-El Paso and Universidad Autonoma Ciudad Juarez6. Currently working on two articles, based on their CBPR project, to submit for publication (one to a state-based public health journal, one to a national CBPR journal)

**Table 1 (con't):
CBO Participants, Their Research Projects and Accomplishments to Date**

<p>Organizacion Popular Independiente (Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico) <u>Project Title:</u> “¿QUIÉN CUIDA A LOS INFANTES?: BUSCANDO UNA RED DE CUIDADORAS INFANTILES” [Who Is Caring for the Children? Looking for a Child Care Network in Ciudad Juarez?]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Made formal presentation at Third International Conference on Education, Labor, and Emancipation 2. Gained evidence through the research of a strong need to improve the quality of care for children and are working to set in motion change in public policy to improve the conditions of children 3. Created a network of 14 child care workers identified in the research
<p>Colonias Program (El Paso County, Texas) <u>Project Title:</u> Student Absenteeism - Its Causes, Consequences and Possible Solutions: A Community Based Participatory Action Case Study in a Rural Elementary School in El Paso County</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. met with teachers, principal and school superintendent in the district in which the study was conducted to present findings 2. worked with school district to change policy regarding procedures for families to report illness 3. Made formal presentation at professional conference entitled Education, Liberation and Emancipation sponsored jointly by the University of Texas-El Paso and Universidad Autonoma Ciudad Juarez 4. consulting with the PIs of this Project to develop ways for including CBO-based research in their 2008 CBO strategic plan

Project Design and Implementation

Lessons Learned

Table 2:

Design and Implementation Lessons Learned and Applied

Lessons Learned – 1 st Iteration	Changes Recommended	Implemented -2 nd Iteration
Original title did not reflect well the nature of the Project	Changed title from “Empowering Communities Through Knowledge, Transforming Knowledge into Action” TO “ B uilding Research Capacity in Community Based Organizations – T ransforming Research into Social and Organizational Change”	Yes
Originally had only one PI – an academic with assistance from community leader	Added an additional PI who is a community leader and full participant in all phases of the Project	Yes
CBOs need better understanding about the Project before they apply	Added a 3-hour orientation session that gives a full overview of the Project structure, process, intended outcomes and rationales; all CBOs interested, or even partially interested, in applying to participate are encouraged to attend	Yes
First iteration CBOs selected based only on PI’s prior knowledge of CBO and proactive presentation and invitation to the CBO to participate	A formal RFA was created and announced throughout the region that included brief overview of the Project, invitation to the Orientation session, and instructions for how to apply	Yes

**Table 2 (con't):
Design and Implementation Lessons Learned and Applied**

<p>Selection was done too ad hoc and by too few reviewers</p>	<p>A peer review process was created, with peer review team including representatives from iteration #1</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Academic Technical Support (ATS) Team Participant chosen by Project Staff only; not fully successful</p>	<p>CBO applicants are asked to identify potential ATS participants (if they have any) in application; Project staff collaborate with CBOs in final selection of ATS.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Failure to emphasize enough the objective of transforming CBO <u>institutional structures</u> to include research as integral to its mission and program</p>	<p>Greater emphasis on this objective in the Orientation; continual reiteration of this point during the Project with the CBO Research Teams; inclusion of this objective in the evaluation design</p>	<p>Yes</p>

**Table 2 (con't):
Design and Implementation Lessons Learned and Applied**

Lack of understanding the importance of learning critical thinking	Conscious inclusion of critical thinking tools (e.g. logic modeling); care taken to develop a psycho-social frame of mind that understands and appreciates that critical thinking is a “friend”	Yes
Lack of emphasis on inclusion of CBO research capacity as integral part of CBO program	Conscious inclusion of this idea and regular examples of how CBO structure and program can include research as part of its interventions plan and policy development	Yes
Informal evaluation only	Evaluator added to the Project; formal evaluation design created; qualitative and quantitative evaluation instruments developed and utilized	Yes

CBO Barriers to Participation Addressing Those Barriers

Lessons Learned:

**Table 3: Lessons Learned:
Potential CBO Barriers and Ways to Address Them**

Barriers CBOs Experience	Addressing the Barriers
<p>At the outset, Fear of being able to succeed, mixed with excitement and anticipation at having been a successful applicant, resulting in anxiety on the part of many, if not most, CBO participants</p>	<p>From the very beginning, it is essential that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * both PIs show utmost respect for every member of each CBO research team and approach every stage of CBO involvement in <i>The Program</i> in a manner that says “you can do this, we are here as coaches and problem solvers.” * the academic PI never talk down to, or personalizing criticism the work of, CBO participants and always show a positive, collaborative relationship with the non-academic PI * the non-academic PI hold a positive, collaborative relationship with the academic PI.

**Table 3 (con't): Lessons Learned:
Potential CBO Barriers and Ways to Address Them**

Busy schedules of all CBOs

This is effectively addressed by

- * clearly laying out the structure and budget of *The Program* and showing how the structure and budget recognizes CBO needs
- * being transparent about the work that is expected and how the structure addresses the time issues,
- * highlighting the potential benefits of participation,
- * providing some no-strings-attached financial incentives (\$3000 per CBO) plus availability of small research assistance funds (\$1000-\$1200) for which each CBO can apply during the year
- * experience shows that CBOs find the structured opportunity to get away from day-to-day activities provides regeneration and new focus to their work

**Table 3 (con't): Lessons Learned:
Potential CBO Barriers and Ways to Address Them**

Direct Criticism of one's work is taken personally; perceived status differentials between the academics involved and the non-academics

Academics tend to de-personalize direct criticism of each other's work; non-academics are less likely to do so, making direct criticism of non-academics' work appear to be a put-down of the person(s). A non-academic Co-PI is helpful. S/he can sensitize an academic Co-PI in ways to express criticism of work that are more productive and at the same time sensitize non-academics in the importance of objective criticism to their research design, implementation and dissemination of results. With time, both the academic and non-academic PIs can become effective at doing addressing this barrier, with non-academics coming to appreciate the values of objective criticism.

**Table 3 (con't): Lessons Learned:
Potential CBO Barriers and Ways to Address Them**

<p>Logical thinking</p>	<p>Participants mostly have good logic skills, but often have not applied them systematically. The use of logic modeling has proven a major asset, one that the participants return to often; they also tell us that they use the logic modeling skills in other aspects of their CBO work.</p>
<p>CBOs are focused heavily on creating and implementing interventions/programming; research is usually thought of as secondary, even tertiary</p>	<p>Beginning at the very outset with the Orientation session (in second iteration), both PIs take, and often create, opportunities to talk about how research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *can be integrated as one part of CBO interventions and programming, *can enhance and complement an existing “culture of systematic inquiry” in a CBO *can enhance the writing of funding proposals, the development and revision of CBO programs and policies

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CBPR principles:

1. CBPR recognizes **community as a unit of identity**
2. CBPR builds on **strengths and resources within the community** (researching from the inside out)
3. CBPR facilitates **collaborative, equitable partnerships** in all phases of the research
4. CBPR promotes **co-learning and capacity building among all partners** mutual benefit of all partners
5. CBPR integrates and achieves **a balance between research and action** for the mutual benefit of all partners
6. CBPR emphasizes **local relevance of problems and ecological perspectives**
7. CBPR involves **systemic development** through a cyclical and iterative process
8. CBPR **disseminates findings and knowledge** gained to all partners and involves all partners in the dissemination process
9. CBPR involves a **long-term process and commitment**