

CBPR as Community Health Intervention: Institutionalizing CBPR Within Community Based Organizations

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Abstract

Background: A community-academy partnership was created with a commitment to developing a program for institutionalizing community-based participatory research (CBPR) capacity within community-based organizations (CBOs), with the intention to enhance CBOs' existing capabilities to understand and improve community health.

Objectives: This article presents the design and conceptual foundations for a year-long CBPR education and training program in which CBO teams learn research design, discuss the principles of CBPR, design and implement a community health-related research project tailored to their program and community, conduct analyses, and initiate integration of the results into the organization and community. One objective is to integrate a commitment to and the practice of CBPR within CBOs' program and policies.

Methods: An initial partnership was created between the Center for Border Health, El Paso, and Texas A&M University School of Rural Public Health, College Station. Three additional CBOs then joined the partnership and participated in the CBPR education and training program consisting of four

stages: (1) 3 intensive months devoted to learning about and creating a research design; (2) 6 months for implementation of the design; (3) 2 months for analyses, interpretation, and consolidation of results into one or more final products; and (4) 1 month for development of protocols for integrating research results into community health development.

Results: In the first iteration, an interactive process evaluation was conducted during each program stage, plus a final year-end exit interview with each participating CBO. Evaluation demonstrated strong positive results and specific lessons learned. A proposal incorporating the lessons learned was presented to the funding source. A second iteration has been funded, with monies included to develop a formal outcome evaluation.

Keywords

Community-based participatory research, building research capacity, community based organizations, community research partnerships, research as community health intervention

This article describes a CBPR Project entitled "Building Research Capacity within Community Based Organizations, Transforming Research Capacity into Social and Organizational Change" (hereafter "the Program"), followed by a discussion of the conceptual framework that shaped the development and execution the Program.

The Program is a model designed to take the practice of participatory research deeper inside CBOs, with an intent to

institutionalize CBPR-grounded research as an integral part of a CBO's program and policy. This CBPR model addresses four specific concerns observed over time in our, and others', practice of CBPR.

1. Even when CBOs are engaged in active partnering, non-academic partners continue to be disadvantaged because they do not possess the language of research, or the requisite skills, for engaging in the research dis-

course and sharing control of systematically designing and implementing the research.

2. CBOs often have not embedded within their organizations a “culture of systematic inquiry” that incentivizes, empowers, and legitimates designing and conducting research as part of their core function.
3. CBOs’ full and legitimate involvement as coequal partner in research is preempted by the dominance, in our society, of an exclusive status and culture of science.
4. Finally, in CBPR partnerships there remains the question of sustainability, that is, the extent to which a CBO partnering with a university actually internalizes and institutionalizes sustainable research capacity by which it will continue to conduct research on its own, within its own mission-driven needs.

THE MODEL

In May, 2005, supported by a grant from the Paso del Norte Health Foundation of El Paso, Texas, a CBPR partnership was created between the Center for Border Health Research (CBHR)—a CBO in El Paso, Texas—and the Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health (the partnership will be hereafter referred to as the P:1). The P:1 has two goals: (1) to be a first step toward fulfilling CBHR’s commitment to integrating CBPR-grounded research practices into its mission and program and (2) to create a means for disseminating and institutionalizing CBPR-grounded research practices in CBOs throughout the region served by CBHR.

To fulfill these goals, the P:1 designed the Program as a year-long CBPR demonstration project built around a curriculum designed to deliver education, training and technical support to CBOs. Teams of four, each representing a CBO, learn and practice the language and skills of research grounded in CBPR, design and implement a community-based research project related to improvement of health in their community, and implement a protocol for integrating the research results into their community. The ultimate objective of the Program

is that research knowledge and skills be integrated into each CBO’s organizational structure and programmatic design.

The Program Design

The Program has four programmatic goals:

- to teach CBOs research skills grounded in CBPR principles,
- to assist CBOs in utilizing those skills to design, implement, and complete community-specific research projects,
- to empower CBOs to utilize research results in evidence-based practice to improve health conditions in the community(ies) served, and
- to enhance a culture of systematic inquiry within the CBO.

These goals are achieved through four objectives.

Objective 1: Build CBO Research Capacity. The Program begins with P:1 forming partnerships with three other CBOs (P:2, P:3, P:4—one CBO each from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua; El Paso, Texas; and Alamogordo, New Mexico).^{*} Each of the CBOs then selects a research Team (hereafter referred as “the Team”) consisting of four representatives from the CBO that will participate in the Program curriculum over the next year. The four CBO Team participants, selected by the CBO, represent some combination of positions or stakeholders in the organization, such as Executive Directors, board members, proposal writers, direct service providers, service recipients, or leaders of other organizations with a history of partnering with the CBO.

The emphasis throughout the Program is on building research capacity and enhancing a culture of systematic inquiry throughout the individual CBO organizations. Having Teams that represent a broad cross-section of their particular CBO sends a message that (1) CBPR values the inclusion of multiple organizational stakeholders’ perspectives, (2) research and evidence-based practice are important throughout the

* Because this was P:1’s first attempt at CBPR capacity building within individual CBOs, we elected to limit the number of CBO partners to three—one from each part of the service area. CBO selection was conducted purposively, through a series of networks known to the P:1, networks that could recommend CBOs they knew to be stable financially, programmatically and structurally. Additional criteria in selecting P:2 through P:4 included a clear, indicated interest in, and some past experience with, collaborative partnerships. The Program has been refunded for a second year and has undergone several revisions based on lessons learned. One revision is a more formal process for soliciting and selecting CBO participants: a request for applications (RFA) was sent, applications submitted, and CBO participants selected by a peer review panel. Four CBOs were selected for the second year. The second year funding also includes the creation of a systematic evaluation of the Program.

organization as a whole, and (3) fielding a Team broadly based in the organization helps to embed throughout the organization a sense of a growing culture of systematic inquiry, namely, that research and evidence based practice are a part of the organization's core program components. Once the Teams are formed, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is signed between each participating CBO and P:1. The MOA signals mutual commitment to, and the beginning of, involvement in the Program. Table 1 displays a summary of the Program's structure and content.

Objective 2: Incorporate an Academic Technical Support (ATS) Person as a Team Member. Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt¹ found in a survey of advanced practice nurses that one of the facilitating conditions encouraging integration of research knowledge and capacity into their practices was "implementation resources." Following this conclusion, each CBO Team includes as a full member an ATS person as one form of implementation resources. Criteria for selecting the ATS emphasize that she/he is someone who:

1. is an experienced researcher,
2. is a supporter of the principles of CBPR,
3. is known by the CBO and/or the Team with whom they have had previous experience,
4. has a relationship with an academic institution, one value of which is access to Institutional Review Board processes,
5. can positively model an academic culture to community partners who often are skeptical, even negative, about academia's relationship with communities, and thereby help construct a positive community-campus partnership, and
6. believes in and will model, through examples and ideas, the integration of research as a programmatic component within the CBO.

The ATS is essential for two reasons. (1) CBPR is built on the idea of community-academy partnerships. (2) Building research capacity within CBOs implies, for the CBO members of the Team, learning new research concepts, vocabulary, and

Table 1. Stages of the Program Throughout the Year

The Program Stages	Length of Each Stage (months)	Description of Work in Each Stage
Stage 1	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three, 2-day intensive research design workshops, each about 1 month apart. • Between workshops, Teams have specific assignments to consolidate the work of the previous workshop and prepare for the next. • By the end of stage 1, each Team has developed a research design ready for field implementation that includes a specified research problem and questions generated from their program interests, appropriate methodology(ies), preparation of an Institutional Review Board application and an implementation protocol.*
Stage 2	4-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams field their research design. • The ATS role (see Objective 2) plays a particularly critical role in implementation. Support in the form of specialized mini-workshops (see Objective 3).
Stage 3	8-11 (overlaps with stage 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database creation. • Completion of data analysis and interpretation. • Choosing and preparing their reporting methods. (see Objectives 3 and 4).
Stage 4	11-12 (overlaps with stage 3)	Teams take their results to their local and regional stakeholder communities. In some cases, results are shared at regional and national professional meetings.

*The two U.S. CBOs in iteration 1 and the three U.S. CBOs in iteration 2 of The Program submitted an application through the IRB of the university of the ATS team member and were approved. The two Mexican CBOs, one in each of iterations 1 and 2, followed the procedures in their respective country and university for implementation of research.

skills. One contribution the ATS brings to the partnership is a commitment to sharing her/his knowledge about, and experience in, designing and conducting research.

Objective 3: Conduct Periodic Specialized Mini-Workshops for Teams. Stage 2 is a particularly crucial transition “from paper to field” and is a period in which many barriers and problems arise that need resolution. The Teams find that they have need for specialized knowledge for which the Program provides a series of specialized mini-workshops focusing on topics such as how to sustain partnerships, focus group interview training, research instrument testing, data management, data analysis, report writing, academic poster design, and other forms of dissemination. Individual mini-workshops may be conducted by the principal investigator (PI) and co-PI of the Program, or one or more of the ATS staff members. Likewise, CBO members of the Team may present mini-workshops to provide the university partners with specialized knowledge about community development, their CBO, or other knowledge and experiential needs that arise.

Objective 4: Provide Opportunities for the Teams to Integrate and Disseminate Their Work. An essential element of CBPR is the dissemination of the research results to the key stakeholders with whom the research is conducted. The Program has taken a multifaceted approach on Objective 4.

End-of-Year Conference for Interested Local Parties. The Program includes an end-of-year conference providing a showcase venue for the participating CBO Teams. A wide range of local and regional community organizations, agencies, and individuals (including the funding agency for the project) are invited to this showcase. Each Team showcases a poster session, makes a formal presentation, and participates in an open discussion/feedback session.[†]

A highlight of the end-of-year conference features a CBO-participant-only brunch, hosted by the Program, to which each CBO Team invites up to four strategic community stakeholders with whom they worked in their research project and for whom the results of their research are particularly relevant. This meeting facilitates integration of the research results into the community. Finally, a prominent national

expert in CBPR and community-campus partnerships is invited as the keynote speaker and spends the day meeting with each of the Teams to provide feedback and insight to their research project.

Presentation in Other Venues. The Program facilitates opportunities for the Teams to present at state, regional, national, or international conferences, workshops, and professional meetings.

Publication in a Variety of Outlets. Teams are encouraged to prepare their research results (or parts of their research results) for publication in multiple types of outlets, for example, local and regional newspapers, newsletters, professional magazines, and/or journals.

Proposal Writing and Future Research Funding Strategies. The Program encourages Teams to think in terms of how their current research experience builds into the future design, direction, and policies of their CBO, emphasizing opportunities for continuing to develop community-campus partnerships and new forms of collaboration.

A CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT FOR THE PROGRAM

Haalboom et al. discuss what they call “research as intervention” (RAI):

Research as Intervention entails purposefully using aspects of a research process and results feedback to contribute to desired changes in knowledge and practice of research participants and stakeholders. RAI may involve using all or several stages of the research process to increase awareness, knowledge or to change behaviour.^{2p292; italics added}

The Program is a form of RAI. The Program as intervention aims to make changes that enhance and sustain CBPR by (1) achieving a greater balance in the practice of power and control in community-campus partnerships, through developing CBO research language and skills capacity, expanding a culture of systematic inquiry within CBOs, thereby augmenting CBO negotiating capacity with university partners and (2) improving the sustainability of CBPR in CBOs through more directly embedding research capacity within the CBO.

[†] Table 2, Appendix 1, identifies each CBO Team in the first iteration of The Program, the title of its research project and a list of accomplishments each has attained to date.

Greater Balancing of Power and Control

May et al. note that a challenge to conducting CBPR has to do with:

the locus of the power to control in the research process. In this . . . criterion are three sub-dimensions: (a) input control before any research is designed (i.e., whether research should be allowed at all in a particular community, and if it is allowed, who decides on how, when, and where it will be done); (b) process control during research (i.e., decision making about research design, methodology, research personnel, data gathering, research questions, how data analysis and interpretation is done and by whom); and (c) outcome control after the research has been conducted (i.e., decision making about how, when, and where knowledge is presented and used).^{3p1574}

A key strength of the Program is that from the initial stages a CBO takes the lead in creating CBPR partnerships. The CBO initiates the P:1 by inviting a university to join in the Partnership, not the other way around.[‡] This helps to avoid both the appearance, and sometimes the reality, that the university is the initial and primary partner. With the CBO leading from the get-go, a clear statement is made that the partnership is initiated in the local setting by local CBOs. Further, initiating and conducting the Program in this way encourages nicely defined research designs tailored to unique communities and helps avoid CBO partners (the P:2–P:4) in the Program being forced into a consensus on a common research topic and/or a common set of research questions. CBO partners P:2–P:4[§] each defines, literally, the meaning of community unique to its particular CBO, and in turn creates a research design unique to its particular organization and community, with a uniquely focused set of research questions particular to its needs and assets. Conceptually, then, the distribution and flow of power and control in the Program is embedded in each set of community–campus partners.[¶] Local control of the research design and implementation is enhanced by each partner's unique responsibility for identifying, recruiting, and integrating its unique set of partners. This helps to

ensure that each CBO in the partnerships holds a reasonable balance of control and power related to its CBPR project.

Stating this, however, begs the question “What is implied by balancing power and control in a complex community–campus research partnership?” In part, the partnership is defined by how power and control are allocated in a society. In the United States, specialized knowledge and education attainment are dominant definers of power and status. CBPR analysts emphasize that CBPR is about the business of empowering nonacademic, CBO partners. Israel et al. describe nine CBPR principles, each “representing a goal to strive to achieve, for example, equitable participation and shared control over all phases of the research process.”^{4p177–8} Hatch et al. assert that in CBPR “the opportunity arises for communities and science to work in tandem to ensure a more balanced set of political, social, economic, and cultural priorities, which satisfy the demands of both scientific research and communities at higher risk.”^{5p31}

The Program is one attempt to institutionalize a balanced practice of power and control in the research process by embedding the CBPR principles and research process inside CBOs. McEwan and Bek⁶ provide a useful analytical frame by which to understand the Program's objectives. They present two distinct ways by which to understand power. One is to understand power as “power to,” that is, enhancing the ability (of an individual, an organization, and/or a community) to act in a particular way, which works to the advantage of those who do not have power, but does not necessarily increase the disadvantage of the already empowered, and which is beneficial to organizations and communities together. Central to the concept of “power to” is capacity building and self-organization by individuals, organizations, and/or communities, thereby improving access to, control over, and distribution of resources for all involved.⁷ A second is to understand power as “power from within,” in which enhancing power within an individual, organization, and/or community involves enabling people to contemplate alternative ways of existing and generating a belief in their own abilities to shape and enact change. The

[‡] The initial Partnership was P:1, with the Center for Border Health Research (the CBO) inviting Texas A&M University System School of Rural Public Health to become a partner.

[§] Partnerships 2–4 were created when the initial Partnership (P:1) invited three other CBOs to become partners in this project. Table 2 identifies P:2–P:4.

[¶] Partners 2, 3, and 4 also then invite a university partner in the form of the ATS person to join the Team, forming partnerships P:5, P:6, and P:7.

intent here is in coming to consider oneself as a capable agent, as much as it is on the process and the material end result.

The Program focuses on enhancing both the “power to” and the “power from within” in CBOs. Together they enhance the possibilities for the Program to succeed because by working together they simultaneously teach CBPR principles, build research capacity, and enliven within the CBO a culture of systematic inquiry that integrates research capacities as a program component. The Program teaches CBPR and research language and skills as one means to building organizational culture that embraces CBPR principles and research at the core of its program and policy.

Enhancing the Sustainability of CBPR Through CBOs

CBPR is taught and practiced in increasingly varied ways these days, for example, in short-term (2-day, 5-day, week-long) CBPR training programs. At a more extensive level are programs like the Urban Research Centers (URCs), initially funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The URCs bring together combinations of governmental units (city, county, state), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and universities. The URC is a partnership bringing together multiple stakeholders and interests that creates its own partnership organization infrastructure. The needs and assets of local CBO and community partners necessarily get folded into the larger URC interests, some of which will be common to locals, many of which are not.⁵

Regarding sustainability, the short-term training programs have few built-in mechanisms to ensure that the CBPR training participants will have support, knowledge, and guidance as they return to their communities to initiate CBPR. The URCs, on the other hand, have greater potential for sustaining the practice of CBPR in that they create an extensive organization incorporating multiple and varied types of stakeholders, communities, agencies, and organizations. That infrastructure, however, requires significant amounts of time, effort, and funding to sustain itself, let alone practicing and integrating CBPR into the participating CBOs. In the end, it is an empirical question the extent to which the CBO partner organizations institutionalize research capacity that directly increase their own “power to” and “power from within.”

These observations were, in part, a motivation and rationale in creating the Program and our attempt to focus attention on building research capacity in local CBOs and their communities. By transferring some degree of the “power to” design and implement research to a CBO research Team, the Program has moved one step in the direction of engendering a greater “power from within” as a CBO research Team learns the principles of CBPR, the language and skills of research, and has designed and carried out a complete research project directly relevant for its mission and its community(ies). This stimulates localized sustainability because it enables CBO participants to contemplate alternative ways of relating to the community health needs, which they work to address and generates belief in their own abilities to shape and enact change.

Yet, achieving this level of sustainability is just a beginning, we believe, because in and of itself it does not focus on creating an organizational environment that continues to sustain and support what the CBO research Team is learning. A broader base of sustainability is needed that institutionalizes CBPR-informed research capacity and commitment within the CBO organizational structures, and enlarges the participating CBOs culture of systematic inquiry that accepts research capacity and practice at the core of its program and policy.

The findings of James Irvine Foundation’s Working on Workforce Development Project¹¹ confirmed our interest in institutionalizing CBPR in CBO organizations. The final report concludes that:

If organizations know how to gather and use data to assess performance, their service to clients will improve. . . . The idea was that good data would help the staff . . . know what worked in their programs, what did not, and why—and use that knowledge to make needed changes.

But we soon found that establishing these systems alone was not enough. In the end, *the project’s success had less to do with whether measurement systems were developed and more to do with whether the organizations were able to create a culture that valued the process of self-evaluation.* The agencies needed a new mindset that embraced data as an essential tool for improvement rather than as mere paperwork required for funding.

It takes a conscious effort to foster agency-wide shifts in mindset, norms, and practices. It takes organizational

⁵ For descriptions and explanations of these Centers—their successes and challenges—see Higgins and Metzler,⁸ Metzler et al.,⁹ and Israel.¹⁰

changes in belief systems about the value of grounding decisions that affect clients in hard data.^{P2; italics added}

The challenge, of course, is in how to nurture and extend CBOs' culture of systematic inquiry. The approach integrated into the Program is to ensure that at every step the CBOs are repeatedly provided information as to why institutionalizing CBPR principles and systematic research inquiry in their organizations is important, and how the skills they are learning can be utilized toward improving community health and their organizations' program development. This is a difficult objective because most CBOs do not, and have not, understood research to be at the core of what they do. We do not claim to have achieved this level of sustainability, yet, but there are some indications that a commitment to CBPR is growing in some of the participating CBOs. For example, one participating CBO Team created a "litmus test" questionnaire to use when approached by university researchers.[#] This "test" is one step toward the CBO taking some control in defining what research is needed, what research is done, what role the local organization will have in any projects, and what is done with the research. Further, the director of one of the CBOs has asked the PI and co-PI of the Program to consult with her in how to include research in the CBO's activities as they development their next year's strategic plan. In another case, the CBO Team has written a funding proposal based on a research design built from their initial study. This same CBO research Team has expanded the initial CBPR partnership since their first study and has invited the PI and co-PI of the Program to conduct a CBPR orientation seminar with the new partnership members.

CONCLUSIONS

Community Complementing the Academy and Vice Versa

One of our colleagues, hearing a presentation of the Program, said "The danger I see in what you are doing is that you turn over almost all control of the research to the CBOs." His concern is understandable; it reflects a common paradigm

assuming that research expertise resides in the academic side of the partnership. How does the academy fit into the Program? First, it brings an advanced expertise in the skills, philosophy, and practice of research. The Program sets up an environment that invites the university research experts to share as much of their expertise as possible in a short period, all the while knowing that the CBO research Teams have varying capacities and interests in what level of research capacity they achieve. CBOs participating in the Program are not seeking to achieve the level of research competency held by a university partner; they are principally motivated to find ways to more effectively address their missions. Some CBOs will become proficient researchers, but none is looking to displace their university research partners as experts.

The university is fully represented in the CBO research Teams in the form of the ATS staff. All ATS persons are university connected and are participating members of a CBO research Team. The ATS person brings to the table knowledge and experience in designing and conducting research. She/he never gives that up and is asked to share it with the CBO members of the research Team.

The Program is Complementary to Other CBPR Practices

The creators of the Program have understood from the beginning that it is another way of practicing, extending, and sustaining CBPR and not meant to replace or displace other approaches. We think of it as a part of a larger system of CBPR practices. Within the ecology of CBPR, the Program represents one level of system integration that focuses on a midlevel of practice and sustainability. The Program strategy for accomplishing this is to nurture CBPR-based research language and skills capacities from the inside out, from the bottom up, and to do so by working with clusters of CBOs. The needs and assets of local CBOs and communities inherently take priority, their own systematic evidence needs are addressed, the CBOs integrate research capacity that in turn informs and assists in sustaining the organizations' and communities' program and

During participation in the Program, this CBO was approached by a university researcher for permission to utilize their CBO as the research base to gather data. The university researcher offered to hire two of the CBO field staff part time, train them, and pay them for gathering the data. Otherwise, the CBO staff was not involved in designing, implementing, or producing the results from the research. Based on that experience and their participation in the Program, the CBO team, collaborating with the Program PI, developed a series of questions and requests based on the nine CBPR principles to which the university research was asked to respond before permission could be considered.

policy. The Program intends to underwrite more localized CBPR sustainability.

Lessons Learned

Two types of lessons learned derive from the first iteration: lessons learned that apply to the design and implementation of the Program, and lessons learned relating to some of the barriers faced by CBOs and how they can be overcome. Table 3 itemizes the major lessons learned and applied to the design of the Program.

The barriers faced by CBOs have been eye opening; the barriers we experienced, and the ways they can be overcome, go to the heart of one of the most common questions we hear from others when they learn about The Program, namely, "Are CBOs really able to do this?" The answer is, "Perhaps not all can, but many can if we take care to address several key barriers." Table 4 briefly describes the barriers we experienced and how they were addressed.

Table 2. CBO Participants, Their Research Projects, and Accomplishments to Date

CBO and Its Research Team	Accomplishments Achieved
<p>Youth Empowerment Association/Otero Preventative Action Towards Health (Otero PATH) Otero County, New Mexico</p> <p>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 agencies. 2. Creation of an outreach and education program within Otero county. 3. Have been recognized by the state as one of the effective meth awareness programs. 4. Using data from their CBPR project, the team has 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 awareness. 5. Met with their U.S. representative and U.S. senator about their work. 6. Made formal presentation at Third International Conference on Education, Labor, and Emancipation. 7. Currently working on two articles, based on their CBPR project, to submit for publication (one to a state-based public health journal and one to a national CBPR journal).
<p>Organizacion Popular Independiente Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México</p> <p>Project Title: "¿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 Juárez?]</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</p> <p>Project Title: 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 and procedures to minimize burdens on families. 3. Made formal presentation at Third International Conference on Education, Labor, and Emancipation. 4. Consulting with PIs of the Program to develop ways for including CBO-based research in their 2008 strategic plan.

Table 3. Design and Implementation: Lessons Learned and Applied

Lessons Learned—1st Iteration	Changes Recommended	Implemented—2nd Iteration
Original title did not reflect well the nature of the Program	Changed title from “Empowering Communities Through Knowledge, Transforming Knowledge into Action” to “Building Research Capacity in Community Based Organizations—Transforming 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 Program	Yes
CBOs need better understanding about the Program before they apply	Added a 3-hour orientation session that gives a full overview of the Program 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 were selected based on prior knowledge of CBO and proactive presentation and invitation to the CBO to participate; not comprehensive enough in selection scope	A formal RFA was created and announced throughout the region that included brief overview of the Program, invitation to the orientation session, and instructions for how to apply	Yes
Selection was done too ad hoc and by too few reviewers	A peer review process was created, with peer review team including representatives from the 1st iteration	Yes
ATS Team Participant chosen by Program Staff only; not fully successful	CBO applicants are asked to identify potential ATS participants (if they have any) in application; Program staff collaborate with CBOs in final selection of ATS	Yes
Failure to emphasize enough the objective of transforming CBO institutional structures to include research as integral to its mission and program	Greater emphasis on this objective in the Orientation; continual reiteration of this point during the Program with the CBO Research Teams; inclusion of this objective in the evaluation design	Yes
Lack of understanding the importance of learning critical thinking	Conscious inclusion of critical thinking tools (e.g., logic modeling); care taken to develop a psychosocial 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 Program; formal evaluation design created; qualitative and quantitative evaluation instruments developed and utilized	Yes

Table 4. Lessons Learned: Potential CBO Barriers and Ways to Address Them

Barriers CBOs Experience	Addressing the Barriers
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>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 The Program in a manner that says “you can do this, we are here as coaches and problem solvers.” • the academic PI must never talk down to, or personalize any criticism of the work of CBO participants. • the nonacademic PI and academic PI maintain a positive, collaborative relationship with one another.
Busy schedules of all CBOs	<p>This is effectively addressed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (\$3,000 per CBO) plus availability of small research assistance funds (\$1,000–\$1,200) for which each CBO can apply during the year. <p>Experience shows that CBOs value the structured opportunities to get away from day-to-day activities provides to focus on development of their CBPR projects.</p>
Direct criticism of one’s work is taken personally; perceived status differentials between the academics involved and the nonacademics	<p>Academics tend to depersonalize direct criticism of each other’s work; nonacademics are less likely to do so, making direct criticism of nonacademics’ work appear to be a put-down of the person(s). A nonacademic co-PI is helpful. She/he can sensitize an academic co-PI in ways to express criticism of work that are more productive and at the same time sensitize nonacademics in the importance of objective criticism to their research design, implementation and dissemination of results. With time, both the academic and nonacademic PIs can become effective at addressing this barrier, with nonacademics coming to appreciate the values of objective criticism.</p>
Logical thinking	<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>
CBOs are focused heavily on creating and implementing interventions/programming; research is usually thought of as secondary, even tertiary	<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 of community advocacy efforts, and the development and revision of CBO programs and policies because consistent research provides essential evidence-based information.

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Podcast Interview Transcript

Marlynn May and Jon Law

In each volume of *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*, the editors select one article for our Beyond the Manuscript podcast interview with the authors. Beyond the Manuscript provides authors with the opportunity to tell listeners what they would want to know about the project beyond what went into the final manuscript. Beyond the Manuscript podcasts are available for download on the journal's website (www.press.jhu.edu/journals/progress_in_community_health_partnerships/multimedia.html). This Beyond the Manuscript podcast is with Professor Marlynn May of the Texas A&M Health Sciences—Department of Social and Behavioral Health, School of Rural Public Health, and Jon Law of the Center for Border Health Research authors of CBPR as Community Health Intervention: Institutionalizing CBPR within Community Based Organizations. Associate Editor David Levine conducted the interview. The following is an edited transcript of the Beyond the Manuscript podcast.

David Levine: I'd like to start off by asking you a question in regard to the manuscript. In that, you indicated the importance of the community-based organization taking the lead from the beginning in initiating the partnership. You also indicated selection of community-based organizations was conducted purposely, presumably, by the School of Public Health. Could you explain further how the initiation is accomplished?

Jon Law: The partnership was initiated by the Center for Border Health Research, which is a 501(c)(3) in El Paso, Texas. We invited Dr. May to engage in the project with us, and he certainly had a number of ideas of how it would look. So it was a community-academic partnership from the very beginning. We've done this for 2 years. We finished 1 year, and we're in the second half of the second year.

We were looking for organizations that had a strong history and a level of strength that they would be able to start and finish the project because it's a year-long project. We received recommendations from a number of people in the region where we implemented the project, which is the Paso del Norte region on the Texas, New Mexico, and the Chihuahua border, and then invited organizations to engage in the project.

The second time we did it we were a lot more intentional about it, and we actually issued an RFP [request for proposals].

Marlynn May: We were a lot smarter.

Jon Law: Yes, the first time it actually worked out well. Our selection process was very successful, and we got good input as to which organizations would be able to start and finish the whole process. The second time the RFP started with an orientation where groups were told about the project, expectations of them, benefits of participating, and then they submitted a very brief one- to two-page proposal.

Jon Law:

The proposals were evaluated by a review panel, including one representative from each year 1 CBO. Selection was based upon the organizations' reasons for wanting to participate in the project, their commitment to and their ability to participate in the year-long process, and their identification of a research topic of their interest that was strongly relevant to their organization's mission and primary activities.

Marlynn May:

I might also add to that Jon that the initial mailing of the RFP went out to a mailing list that the Center for Border Health Research maintains. And so what—there were probably 150 organizations? Is that correct on that list?

Jon Law:

At least. It was our broad mailing list. So really we work with some of them—almost all of the nonprofit organizations in the region.

David Levine:

I think that will help readers understand that much more in-depth. A second area that we were interested in pursuing a bit more was that you mentioned that important elements of the program include an academic support person from a local or regional university, workshops and conferences for the community-based organizations. How are these initially funded? And how do you maintain support for these elements?

Marlynn May:

These are funded through the regular budget that was agreed upon from the initial proposal. So in that budget, there is a specific amount for each of the technical support staff to receive a stipend.

I want to be clear about the technical support staff. We try to select them with the community-based organizations. If at all possible, we'd like to have a university representative on the team that has worked with or knows the community-based organization team as well or members of the time and know the organization. In some cases, they've actually worked with them before in some capacity.

The technical support staff are not from the School of Public Health. They are actually from academic institutions in the region where the community-based organizations are, which we feel is really important, because the technical support staff really serve two very important roles. One is, of course, they bring a certain level of expertise to the research process, to the community-based participatory process that will give ongoing support for the community-based organizations.

But the other is that we really see these technical support staff as regular members of the team. We've had an interesting kind of discussion about this because we believe very strongly in as much equitable relationship in community and university representation as possible. And so we didn't want them to be an add-on or the expert coming in and being there if the help was needed.

They are actually engaged for the entire year. They participate in the initial workshops that we do. We do three 2-day intensive workshops with the community-based organizations. And then they work with them throughout the year. And so we really emphasize that aspect of it.

Jon Law:

Just to add a little bit, the funding for the overall project was provided by the Paso del Norte Health Foundation in El Paso, Texas. It's a private foundation. To strengthen what Marlynn just said, the technical support persons, in many of the cases, already had a relationship with the organization but not necessarily from the standpoint of their research expertise or work interest. Some were board members of the organization. Some were volunteers with these organizations.

- David Levine:* I think that will particularly help other programs who may be getting started. I'd like to ask now regarding the area of sustainability. Your program has been more successful than most in addressing this very important issue, and I congratulate you on it. How are you currently sustaining the programs within the community-based organizations? And how would you advise others to do this?
- Jon Law:* Well, I think the key thing is to keep in mind that the sustainability we're looking for is that research continues to be part of the overall program of the organization.
- One of the things we did with this year-long training curricula is require that each team that participated had four members participate in the project, and preferably four members with different roles or different relationships to the organization. Part of our purpose in doing this was that if one or two members of the team moved away or left the organization for some reason, that some of the capacity would stay with the organization.
- The other expectation that was part of the selection process was that the research project developed by the team be core to the organization's mission. And we have found this to be successful because the research is an integral part of what the organization is doing. So sustaining the research or continuing to mine whatever data sources the group has or continuing to engage in the literature related to their study becomes a natural part of what they want to do already and what they're charged to do as part of their mission.
- Marlynn May:* I want to add an anecdote. One of the "ah-ha" moments for one of the community-based organizations came in an e-mail exchange. We do a lot of communication back and forth using e-mail. And this was at the end, when they were beginning to think about where they were going.
- They kept thinking about research as being somehow added on to what they were already doing as far as programming is concerned. And through the course of discussion, what came out was that Jon and I encouraged them to think about research as a part of program, as a part of programming, and it was like a light bulb came on. Because they didn't necessarily see it as an add-on, they began to think more and more about it as a value added intrinsically in the organization. So we really do try to emphasize that aspect of it.
- David Levine:* The last question I'd like to ask both of you, please, is that you note the importance of ongoing evaluation. Could you please comment further on how this has been incorporated and sustained within the community-based organizations?
- Marlynn May:* When we talk about evaluation, at this point in the development of this program and the evolution of this program, we primarily focus on evaluating the project. That is to say, we're interested in seeing what kinds of outcomes and what kinds of impacts the project has, not just on the individuals in the research teams, but also in the organization itself. So evaluation is primarily from that point of view at this stage of development.
- David Levine:* Just to add a little bit further on that, because this is, again, a very sentinel area, would you have any comments on where you see evaluation going in the future in regard to these programs?
- Marlynn May:* This second year was the year we really began to develop a formal evaluation. We hope that this evaluation now will become more refined so that it can be utilized in other locations. One of the things we haven't mentioned is that we are scaling up this project.

Marlynn May:

We are going to be translating it and transferring to Houston, where there is a Center for Excellence in Community-Based Participatory Research. One of the things we will do is to take this evaluation paradigm with it so that we will then have evaluation data from not only our current project but that project as well. Then we hope to do the same in the future as we expand to other locations.

With regard to evaluation internal to each of the community-based organizations, that's a little more difficult to think about at this point. Certainly, we can look at certain indicators as to whether or not the project has had some kind of impact on the organization. There are probably several anecdotes that we could provide that would give some indication of that. But at this point, we haven't designed an evaluation that would be done by the CBO on itself in terms of its own project.

Jon, do you want to add to that?

David Levine:

I want to compliment you. I think you've got a really exemplary program, and I think this has allowed us and researchers to get even more insight into it. So thank you very much.

Mark Newgent:

Marlynn, Jon, is there anything else you'd like to add that we didn't get to or anything else in the manuscript that you would like listeners or readers of the transcript to know?

Jon Law:

I think what's exciting about this project is really that the research is *initiated* by the community organization and *conducted* by the community organization. So the Program really just provides support and different access to different types of expertise that they can utilize as they see fit.

Marlynn May:

It's probably also part of the evaluation because to the extent that their research has produced results that they can then use within the program in some way is a really good indicator of the impact.