

Examples:

Practical considerations in collaborative research

van Ewijk identifies some of the more practical matters that come up in collaborative research, such as dealing with disagreements and dissent, working through and coping with different roles, and involving co-researchers. While it is easy to say that it is important to work through disagreements and differing opinions, it is significantly more difficult to put these ideas into practice while maintaining the goals of both the project itself, and of the CBR approach.

van Ewijk, H. (2011). Collaboration in community research. *European Journal of Social Work*, 14 (1), 41-52.

Power relationships in research

The author examines issues of power between a researcher who comes in to evaluate an initiative, and the community within which that initiative is taking place. Wallerstein emphasizes the need to continue discussions of power dynamics within research based on the CBR approach in order to be able to achieve the goals of CBR inquiry.

Wallerstein, N. (1999). Power between evaluator and community: Research relationships within New Mexico's healthier communities. *Social Science & Medicine*, 49, 39-53.

Challenges in collaborative partnerships

The authors provide advice on how the principles of the CBR approach to partnerships can be applied. A road map is presented as a way of establishing and maintaining collaborative research partnerships, while acknowledging that there is not a set way to go about this.

Ross, L.F., Loup, A. Neslon, R.M., Botkin, J.R., Kost, R., Smith, G.R., & Gehlert, S. (2010). The challenges of collaboration for academic and community partners in a research partnership: points to consider. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics: An International Journal*, 5 (1), 19-32.

Issues in international collaboration

A discussion is given of the various difficulties encountered by the researchers in their partnerships with one another, and the strategies they employed to work out these difficulties. Because the authors situate their discussion in actual examples of problems and strategies, they are able to connect their practical issues with possible issues encountered in other research projects which may, or may not, appear similar.

Schensul, S.L., Nastasi, B.K., & Verma, R.K. (2006). Community-based research in India: A case example of international and transdisciplinary collaboration. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 38, 95-111.

Resources and Links:

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. Available at www.ccp.h.info.

Developing and Sustaining CBPR Partnerships: A Skill-Building Curriculum. Available at: www.cbprcurriculum.info

Hall, Budd L. (2005). In from the cold? Reflections on participatory research from 1970-2005. *Convergence*, 38 (1), 5-24.

Israel, B.A., Schulz, A.J., Parker, E.A., Becker, A.B., Allen, A.J., & Guzman, J.R. (2003). Critical issues in developing and following community based participatory research principles. In M. Minkler & N. Wallerstein (Eds.), *Community Based Participatory Research for Health* (pp. 53-76). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Office of International Research Ethics at Family Health International. *Curriculum for Community Representatives*. Available at: www.fhi.org/en/RH/Training/trainmat/ethicscurr/retccr.htm

Schensul, J. (1994). *The Development and Maintenance of Community Research Partnerships*. Occasional Papers in Applied Research Methods, Institute for Community Research, Hartford, CT. Available at: www.mapcruzin.com/community-research/index.html

Strand, K., Marullo, S., Cutforth, N., Stoecker, R., & Donohue, P. (2003). Principles of best practice for community-based research. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Spring, 5-15.

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Community-Based Research (CBR) Partnerships:

Partnerships in community-based research (CBR) are collaborative, community-driven and, if successful, can democratize the creation and dissemination of knowledge. CBR partnerships provide communities with opportunities to be a part of researching solutions, and provide academic institutions with innovative methods for integrating teaching, community service, and research. These partnerships can also transform colleges and universities into learning communities, and into becoming more relevant to their adjacent communities in ways that can potentially transform both.



Budd Hall, PhD (founding director of OCBR-UVic), with Vancouver Island Community Research Alliance (VICRA) executive from Camosun College, Royal Roads University, and Vancouver Island University at the CBR-Canada Launch in May 2008



University of Victoria

Office of
Community-Based
Research

Developing & Sustaining CBR Partnerships

CBR partnerships bring community members and faculty together in partnerships that share research goals, and in which equitable relationships are created. In optimal contexts, community members and university researchers share control of the research process from inception to dissemination of results. CBR partnerships envision creating a better future through an iterative process of learning, reflection

and action. The process and results of the partnerships are useful to community members and university partners in a wide range of areas developing social equity and creating positive social and institutional change.

A number of researchers have identified key principles that are the foundation of successful community-campus partnerships. The following ten have been adapted from these sources: Hall (el

Successful Partners:

Have mutual trust and mutual respect

Partners must prepare to share in a spirit of mutual trust and respect. Each partner must be able to trust the other partners to exercise good judgment, keep the others' interests in mind, and work for the success of the partnership. Finally, this trust depends on the shared assumption that multiple sources and kinds of knowledge are equally valid and essential. When each person involved in the project is seen not only as an indispensable source of ideas and information but also as an expert in their own lives and experiences, mutual trust and respect can find a fertile setting in which to flourish and grow.

Agree about goals and strategies

Partners need to develop a clear understanding of what they wish to achieve, what their strategies will be, what each person's role is to be, who will make key decisions, and how disagreements will be approached. It is also important to remember that sometimes the best decision is to do something else, if the original idea is not working.

Share power

CBR is based on the understanding that all relationships involve some sort of power. Because the various partners involved in a project come from different backgrounds and occupy different positions in society, there are inevitable inequalities in power distribution. In order to equalize this, partners need to be reflexive and recognize positions of relative privilege, and work to ensure that equitable collaboration and power sharing is actually taking place.

Communicate clearly and listen carefully

Communicating clearly and actively listening are essential to developing and maintaining partnerships, as is the development of common discourses. Assuming positive intent and working through conflicts and disagreements as soon as possible are essential. Although conflicts inevitably arise, they can be resolved through careful communication so that the partnership is not jeopardized.

Understand and empathize with one another's circumstances

Understanding and empathizing with one another's circumstances is not only limited to personal histories and cultural differences. Often in CBR projects, different institutions are involved, and each institution has its own structure along with differences in priorities, financial ability, accountability processes, reward structures, deadlines, and requirements of the partner's time and energy.

Share a worldview

Although differences in points of view are extremely important, there needs to be a basic worldview shared by the researchers, specifically philosophical understandings of people, communities and society. Questions regarding what humans are capable of (such as governing themselves, or understanding their situations), as well as what "community" is, must have similar, workable answers if a project is to proceed. Otherwise, partners will find that their basic assumptions about how to do things are at odds.



UVic ethnobotanist, Nancy Turner, PhD, has established many successful research partnerships throughout British Columbia. Here, she speaks with Tina Robinson from the Gitga'at First Nation in Hartley Bay.

Remain flexible

Despite the best of intentions, circumstances and abilities do change. Flexibility is crucial in being able to work through the challenges that may arise. Sometimes goals and strategies must be modified to meet changing needs and circumstances.

Strive to ensure that partners' primary interests and needs are met

Each partner brings with them a different set of needs and goals, in addition to the main intention of producing useful research findings. Sometimes this means writing reports for a university, completing a requirement towards a degree, satisfying funders, writing a publication, or making the money needed to survive. Satisfying these other goals need not be seen as problematic or contradictory to the main project goals. Instead, recognizing the complexity of each partner's social position and striving to ensure these interests are met strengthen the partnership and thus the project as a whole.

Strive to ensure that partners' organizational capacities are enhanced

The most successful partnerships are those that empower partners and allow them all to grow and learn. Helping faculty, students and community members develop new skills and a solid understanding of research processes and strategies for working with others can help make the next project more successful.

Understand and agree to the long-term commitment

Because of the iterative nature of CBR approaches, researchers must understand that solutions and results will not be created quickly. The partnerships that are created must be maintained over the long-term in order to give those involved time to renegotiate strategies, come up with new ideas, and evaluate whether the approaches they are using are helping achieve the goals of the research. Often, the relationships forged through CBR projects last long after the initial project has been completed, and can foster the creation of new projects and new relationships in the future.