Overcoming Obstacles Together: Creating a New Future for Research Partnerships

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Overcoming Obstacles Together: Creating a New Future for Research Partnerships

Linda Silka
Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center & School of Economics, University of Maine
November 2013
Why Research Partnerships? Why Now?

- We are recognizing the limitations with past research practices.
- We are increasingly understanding that some problems that can only be addressed through partnerships.
- We are increasingly seeing the need for many types of expertise if problems are to be understood and solved.
- We are increasingly recognizing the need for Knowledge-to-Action.
The “Take Homes” We Will Get to Today

1. People are discovering the many ways that partnerships continue to be challenging
2. That it isn’t yet time to apply a “one size fits all” approach
3. That it is time to look at and learn from what others are doing
4. Many different scientific fields are testing out partnership approaches
5. We need to find ways to learn from these different fields
6. Developing strategies for innovation may be the most important next step
Why Partnerships Are Needed

- The Missing Vector Example
- The Mattress Cover Asthma Example
- The Vacuum Cleaner Example
- The “Desperate Alewives” Studies
- The Ecuador Conservation Hotspot Studies
- River’s Calendar Studies

The Bus Metaphor Analysis
The “Wicked Problems” Analysis
Through Partnerships

- We Have the Opportunity to Strengthen Scientific Outcomes and Advancing Knowledge
- We Have the Opportunity to Link Knowledge to Action and Ensure Groups Participate in Ways that Enhance Implementation of Research Findings

Such as through....
Partnership Citizen Science

Members of the public engaging in real-world scientific investigations: asking questions, collecting data, and/or interpreting results.
Lawrence, Massachusetts

Through Latino Worker Researcher Partnerships
Through Partnerships:

- We Can Strengthen Scientific Outcomes and Advancing Knowledge

- We Can Link that Knowledge to Action: Ensuring Groups Participate in Ways that Enhance Implementation of Research Findings

But The Obstacles...
Lowell, Massachusetts

Lowell: Sometimes We Live and Work Side By Side
Maine Statewide Partnerships

But Sometimes Distance is a Challenge
Maine’s Tribal Basketmakers Saving Maine’s Basket Trees from an Invasive Insect: Western Science Meets Indigenous Knowledge

- Made from native brown ash trees, Maine Indian baskets are functional art forms passed down through generations of the region’s tribal communities.
- The future of the art is threatened by an invasive beetle species — the emerald ash borer (EAB) — that already has devastated the ash populations elsewhere.
- The tribes were not involved in any past research discussions.
But Sometimes We Work on Multiple Issues

Cambodian Community Health 2010

FOR THE CAMBODIAN COMMUNITY:
- Case Management services for Cambodian with Diabetes, hypertension, and/or Cardiovascular Disease
- Education on Cholesterol levels for Cambodian
- Toning in Lowell (such as the police department, Triniti Ambulance, Lowell General Hospital)
- Peer support groups for Cambodians with diabetes and/or Cardiovascular Disease
- Tai Chi classes
- Walking Meditation Programs
- Khmer Radio, Khmer Times, Khmer newspaper, outreach efforts
- Educational workshops (linguistically and culturally appropriate) Covering: Heart Disease, Hypertension, Diabetes, High Cholesterol, Stroke
- Audio tapes in Khmer about Diabetes, Stroke, and Hypertension
- Community screenings for blood pressure and blood sugar throughout the year
- Home visits for special concerns

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SERVICES CONTACT:
Cambodian Community Health 2010
Sidney Liang
Lowell Community Health Center
078-746-7929
sidneyliang@lchca.org

FOR PROVIDERS & COMMUNITY AGENCIES:
- STAFF & PROVIDER EDUCATION:
  - Medical interpreter training program
  - User friendly guide to Cambodian Health Care Beliefs, Practices and Culture
  - Presentations about Cambodian health beliefs, practices and culture
  - Khmer Medical Terminology Reference Booklet

- PATIENT EDUCATION & INTERVENTION:
  - Fact sheets in Khmer about Diabetes, medications and foot care
  - Fact sheets in Khmer about Heart Disease
  - A Diabetes screening tool in English and Khmer
  - Curriculum guide for community education and health promotion about Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease for Cambodians
  - Audio tapes in Khmer about Diabetes, Stroke and Hypertension
  - American Heart Association’s Six Steps to a Healthier Heart in Khmer
  - Practical Guide to Outreach in the Cambodian Community

Research:
- Results from a behavioral risk factor survey studying adult Cambodians in Lowell
- Summary data report summarizing available quantifiable data regarding Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease among Cambodians
- Community Conversations publication addressing health care needs of the Cambodian community

SELECTED HEALTH INDICATORS - LOWELL, MA

- It is estimated that over 26,000 residents of Lowell are of Southeast Asian descent, out of a total population of 105,000 residents.
- At least 72% of Cambodians were born in circumstances such as refugee camps.
- 60% of the adult Cambodian population have no formal U.S. education.
- Close to 87% of Cambodians identify as Buddhists.
- 75% of adults prefer their native Khmer language to English.
- 75% of adults practice traditional medicine and the use of herbs as treatment for illness.
- 45% of the adult Cambodian male population has never had their cholesterol checked in comparison to only 4% of the adult MA male population who have not had their cholesterol checked.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both Cambodian and all MA adults.
- Among adult Cambodians in Lowell, a disproportionate share of adult deaths are 45 and older are attributable to stroke, 15.9%, and diabetes, 15.4%, when compared with all MA residents, 9.5% and 2.5%, respectively.

Source of Health Statistics: MA DHPP & Cambodia HPP 3
Maine’s Frenchman’s Bay

Sometimes the Partners Have Similar Expectations

Scallopers
Clam Diggers
Researchers
But Often They Don’t: Food Security in Maine

- Partners with very different experiences and expectations
- Maliseet Tribe of Houlton, Maine
- Partners many hours south
And Often Everything is in Flux

The policy environment, seasons and when crops ripen, workers and which home country they are from, the economy, health provider training, etc. etc.
Obstacles to be Overcome Include

- Problems being studied vary widely
- Distances vary
- Expectations vary
- Partners, issues, resources keep changing
- Solutions vary
- And you would add_________________________

What Do We Do? How Do We Learn Across the Differences? How Can We Learn to Innovate to Create Robust Partnerships?
Questions Raised

- What Transferable Lessons Can We Learn?
- Under What Conditions Will Our Lessons Be Applicable?
- Will the Same Practices Work for Non Face-to-Face, Scaled Up Partnerships?
- What Kinds of Training Will Scientists Need?
- What Kinds of Training Will Communities Need?
Will the Same Practices Work in Local Communities Work for Non Face-to-Face, Scaled Up Partnerships?
Innovating by Understanding “Not One Size Fits All”: A Study of Partnerships

What do municipal officials prefer in the way of collaborative community-university partnerships: A partnership structure in which municipal officials and university researchers collaboratively identify the problem? A partnership in which university researchers conduct the research and municipal officials implement the solutions?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Partnership</th>
<th>Problem Identification</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Proposed Solutions</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University as <strong>Lead</strong> Partner</td>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>Municipal Officials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| University as **Consulting** Partner | Researchers  
- Municipal Officials | Researchers | Researchers | Municipal Officials |
| University as **Facilitating** Partner | Researchers  
- Municipal Officials | Researchers | Researchers  
- Municipal Officials | Municipal Officials |
| University as **Full** Partner | Researchers  
- Municipal Officials | Researchers  
- Municipal Officials | Researchers  
- Municipal Officials | Municipal Officials  
- Researchers |
Belief that University of Maine System researchers can help resolve community issues is the strongest predictor of interest in a partnership.
Municipal Survey: Implications

- Informs present and future research agendas to better align the supply of and demand for science

*I’ve been working with university researchers for a long time and nobody has asked the municipalities what research they need* (City of Bangor official, 5.17.11)

- Deepens our understanding of the factors that influence community-university partnerships
- Demonstrates the need for improved communication and research framing

Hutchins et al 2013
Multiple Approaches to Partnership

Define a question/issue
Gather information
Develop explanations
Design data collection methods
Collect samples
Analyze samples
Analyze data
Interpret data/conclude
Disseminate conclusions
Discuss results/inquire further

(Bonney et al. 2009)
Using Research Cycle Model to Think About Partnerships

Different Partnership Issues Emerge at Each Stage
Lowell Neighborhood Research Partnerships: How Might the Research Cycle Model Be Helpful?
Envisioning Issues that Might Come Up in Initial Stages, Such As:

- Who is “Allowed” to Start the Research Partnership?
- Who Decides What will be Studied?
Who Gets to Start the Partnership?

Under What Conditions?
What Issues Emerge?

**Steps in the research partnership:** The importance of our efforts in research partnerships lies not just in the particulars of *what* we do (that is, trying to address a particular hypothesis) but *when* we do it. For example, it is a problem if the researcher decides on the area of study before consultation with the community, even if the particular hypothesis is one with which community members might agree.
Such As:

**Who decide on the research agenda and research questions:** Researchers and their community partners may disagree about who should set the research agenda. Researchers with a detailed background in a particular area (for example, the causes of lead poisoning in children) may assert that they should make the decisions about the agenda. Community members aware of the health costs to the community of a health problem may assert that they should make the decisions.
Issues at Middle Stages

- Issues of Data Collection
- Issues of Data Analysis
- Issues of Data Interpretation
Issues at End of Research Cycle

- Research for Publication
- Creating Usable Knowledge
- Results that Reflect Badly on the Community
- Community Repositories of Knowledge
Such As:

When is enough known? When has enough research been done: Many underserved communities have experienced the problem of being “studied to death.” They keep being studied and yet there is little to show in the way of benefits to the community. How is the decision made that there is sufficient information to focus on interventions (as opposed to collecting more data)? And who makes this decision?
A Research Action Partnership with Diverse Teens

Lowell, Massachusetts
Looking for Innovations in Partnership That Could Help Bridge Differences

- Using the Written Word in New Ways?
- Using Networks in New Ways?
- Using Festivals and Events in New Ways?
- “We Are All in the Same Boat” Initiative
The Connection of Food
Prepared by Dora Tovar

Lowell, Massachusetts is a very diverse city. Its community is made up of various ethnic
identities. Along with these different communities comes a series of foods specific to their
country of origin. Yet many common ingredients can be found in these dishes. Fish is one such
common ingredient. Whether the dish is soup or a type of casserole. The following are
interviews I conducted with individuals from different countries that are represented in here.

Lowell, each one shared a family recipe and the significance of the dish to them.

Brazil – Tingo Jansen
"Moqueca" is a typical dish from the Northeast Brazil, in Bahia state. Moquecas are prepared with
seafood (fish, crab, and octopus). It is served with rice. Shrimp is my favorite and the most
famous. When I remember the scent of it, my mouth gets full with water and
my stomach asks for it. My mother prepares the best Moqueca. The recipe uses
shrimp or fish, onions, garlic, tomatoes, green pepper, cilantro, chilis, white onion,
limes, salt, coconut milk, and finally, the sauce that is a characteristic in every
moqueca: Dendê."

Mexico – Dora Tovar
My family comes from a Coastal State in Mexico. Many of our traditional dishes involve
seafood. One particular dish we like is "Caldo de Pescado" (fish soup). It is a recipe shared in
my family. The dish is prepared with celery, carrots, onions, tomatoes, and cooked in a spicy
tomato base soup. The fish is tender and makes the fish soup
great in the cooler. The smell is one that lingers in the air.

Indonesia – Elizabeth Surya Dewi
"Bawang Bakar." Bawang is a typical dish in my family. The recipe uses the
c mirrors, garlic, tomatoes, spicy pepper, limes, salt, and vegetable oil. My
sister-in-law makes the best Bawang grilled. We prepare it on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas, Eid (Muslim holiday), and New Year.
Sometimes we also go to beach and order this type of dish from the local
fishermen and they will cook for us. We eat this dish with warm white rice, on
the banana leaves, with our hands, no spoon or forks. We are charmed to grill
the fish, because the taste will be better and fragrant. When we cook in our front
yard, the smell will travel and our neighbors will join us.

Liberia – Henri Urey
This dish is called "Fish gravy stew." This dish is prepared with vegetables. The dish is
seasoned with fish, shrimp, onions, fresh tomatoes, mixed vegetables, spices, seasonings,
and hot peppers. The fish and the shrimp are
first steamed. The sauce is prepared separately.
Then two of them are mixed together and
allowed to boil for a few minutes. The sauce is
allowed to dry a bit before it is served hot with
rice, cassava or potatoes. My mother taught me
this dish. It is a Liberian way of cooking gravy
and a general way common to most cultures.

Cambodian – Sovny Long
"Fish with Green Mango Salad." is one of
my favorite fish dishes. The fish we like to
use is catfish, you can bake or fry it. The
side dish is a "green mango salad.” Green
mangoes are sold at every Cambodian
market, chili peppers, garlic, sugar, and fish
sauce. Mangoes are sliced into very fine
slices, and combined with chili peppers,
garlic, sugar, and a fish sauce. You can eat
with steamed rice. This fish dish is very
popular in my country because fish is just
so plentiful. This is one of the first dishes
that my mother teaches me as a child
because she knows that I love fish and
stew. The taste of the green mango salad
and the combination of that with fish.
Steps Your Can Take for Innovation: Several “Thought Experiments”

- Look at what you think isn’t working in your partnership: Jordan Karubian’s example
- Think about what you do outside of research to build trust? To communicate?
- Talk to others that use new strategies that are working in their context: “We are all in the same boat”
- Envision Using the Boundary Work literature
- Look at work such as by fisherman MacArthur “Genius” Ted Ames and Ground Fishing Research Partnerships
Thinking about Innovation: Several “Thought” Experiments

- Ex: Cooperative Extension Head seeking out a “reverse” mentor
- Frenchman’s Bay Group putting Jones’s’s bus metaphor to new uses
The “Take Homes” From Today

1. Partnerships are challenging!
2. It isn’t yet time to apply a “one size fits all” approach
3. It IS time to look at what different scientific fields—citizen science, for example—are trying out with partnership approaches
4. Find ways to learn from different fields and reduce the “silos” in the democratization of science
5. Develop strategies for innovation and problem solving
Finding Resources in Unexpected Places

- Citizenscience.org
- U of Kansas’s Community Toolkit (ctb.ku.edu)
- Community Campus Partnerships for Health (ccph.info)
- Cooperative Extensions websites (e.g. www.uwex.edu)
- NSF Research+Practice Collaboratory (Design-Based Implementation Research)
- You!
Contact Information

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