Deepening Partnerships to Advance Scientific Knowledge and Social Change through Community-Based Participatory Action Research

The partnership has been supported by two NIH awards: 5R03HD059613-03 from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development and P60MD006912 from the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities.
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- Melissa Ramos, Community Advisory Committee of Por Ahi Dicen,
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Gaston Institute
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Office of Community Partnership
- Kathleen Banfield, Assistant Director
The mission of the Gastón Institute is to inform policy makers about issues vital to the state’s growing Latino community and to provide this community with the information and analysis necessary for effective participation in public policy development.

The Gastón Institute responds to requests from government and foundations for CBPR studies seeking to test theories and methods for addressing disparities in educational, health, and economic outcomes in U.S. Latino and Latin American communities.

Our current research in this area seeks to answer questions about the factors that contribute to the production of disparities in health, educational, and economic outcomes.

Our current CBPR projects seek to test intervention strategies with a focus on translation of knowledge into policies, programs and practices that build organizational capacity for equity and cultural responsiveness.
The mission of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Inc. is to advocate for cultural, educational, leadership and economic development programs and to facilitate access to available resources by the Puerto Rican and other Spanish Speaking communities in Western Massachusetts.
Our Partnership History

2006
Developed Proposal for *Para un Futuro Mejor*

2008
Obtained NIH R03 Award

2008-2010
Implemented R03 Photovoice Project

2010
Developed follow-up proposal for the Challenge RFPs
*Por ahí dicen* (PAD)

2012
PAD was funded

2012-2016

2010-12 Submitted proposal as Project 2 –of a larger proposal (P60) submitted by UMW Med School

Gastón Institute, April 10, 2013
Types of Community Research

Community Research

Community-based Participatory Research

Community Participatory Action Research

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Community Research

- It is directed by the researchers
- Can include some participation or not
- May use quantitative or qualitative or both
- Findings can be accessed or not by community participants and others who can benefited from research
Community Participatory Research

- Collaborative approach
- Responsive to cultural, educational, class and gender differences
- Co-participants influence the process of selecting research questions, methods for data collection and analysis
- Findings and reports may be accessible to participants but not to decision makers such as elected officials, planners and others who can change current policies, programs and practices
Community Participatory Action Research (CB-PAR)

Community Participatory Research
- Collaborative approach
- Responsive to cultural, educational, class and gender differences
- Co-participants influence the process of selecting research questions, methods for data collection and analysis
- Findings and reports may be accessible to participants but not to decision makers such as elected officials, planners and others who can change current policies, programs and practices

Provide public access to data results.

Use data to seek solutions, reduce harm and/or risk factors, improve health and promote equity.


1950s

*Ford Foundation, India* Papers Series *Planning Research and Action Institute in India*.


1960s


Hall (1975) "Participatory research: an approach for change", *Convergence*.

1970s-1980s


Hall (1975) "Participatory research: an approach for change", *Convergence*.


United States


Gaston Institute, April 10, 2013
Advantages of CB-PAR

Relevance of research to participants' needs

Co-production of knowledge
Bi-directional learning

Grounded in social experience
Better quality and validity

Research literacy & trust in academic partners
Culturally-responsive
Institutionalization of CB-PAR in National Institute of Health (NIH)

1950’s to 1980’s

Conferences and Developments

- Canada: International Council of Adult Education
- US: Highlander Center
- Colombia: World Symposium of Action Research

1990s

- Investment of Foundations in Community Partnerships with a focus on community capacity building and participatory research.
- US Health Promotion Scholars (e.g., Wallerstein Minkler, Eng, and Israel) published their application of CB-PAR in the U.S. Communities; trained a new generation of public health students that were employed at NIH.

2000s

- The elimination health disparities became a public health goal
- The NIH established the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD).
- CDC established the Prevention Centers in response to a congressional request
- NCMHD makes it a norm in research portfolio and require it.

Gastón Institute, April 10, 2013
2012 Partnership Symposium
1. Develop a theory-based, culturally responsive, Spanish media campaign to target Puerto Rican mother-child communication about sexuality and sexual health protection.

2. Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the media campaign developed in Aim 1 on Puerto Rican mothers’ outcome expectations, self-efficacy, and mother-child communication regarding sexuality and sexual health protection.
Project Components

- Community Advisory Committee
- Leadership Development
- Rapid Ethnographic Mapping
- Community Survey
- Public Service Announcement Campaign
- Post-PSA Survey
# Leadership Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics Discussed</th>
<th>Pedagogical Framework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ What makes a good leader?</td>
<td>✓ Participant’s own fountains of knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Understanding leadership styles</td>
<td>✓ Mutuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Consensus Building</td>
<td>✓ Active learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Effective communication</td>
<td>✓ Modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Building a volunteer base</td>
<td>✓ Guided practice and reflections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Working with diverse groups of people</td>
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**Gastón Institute, April 10, 2013**
Community Advisory Committee

Recruitment of CAC was conducted by Community Researchers who completed the research training.

Hosted an “Open House” to introduce the project to community and recruit potential members.

The role of the CAC is to provide feedback, concerns, and ideas that will strengthen the work of Por Ahi Dicen.
CAC Membership Goals

✓ Committee Members: Max 12
✓ 50% Puerto Rican mothers with children (10-19 years old) living Springfield, MA.
✓ 10% Young mother (under 20 years
✓ 20% Community leaders or health professionals
✓ 20% Representatives from the media
The Significance of Enumeration

- Non-occupied housing in 2012
- Non-existent census block
Post-2010 Census Development
Tornado Damage
Enumeration: a tool for community participation and research literacy

- Research literacy
- Community participation
Trained 6 community residents in basic research tools and field work methods

Provided leadership development training for community advisory committee (CAC) members

Experienced bidirectional transfer of skills and experiences between community members and students.

Increased capacity to work with university-trained researchers.
The Gastón Institute’s Partnership with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Springfield, MA

**History: 2008 to present**

- 2012 to 2016: NIH P60 - Center for Health Equity Intervention Research (CHEIR) Por Ahí Dicen
- 2008 to 2010: NIH R03 Para un Futuro Mejor Partnership

**Recent Project Activities**

- Community Advisory Committee
- Enumeration of Randomly Selected Census Blocks
- Development of Survey Questionnaire

**Impacts**

- Field work training for five undergraduate students and one graduate student
- 6,000+ households identified for pre- and post- intervention survey
- Transfer of skills and experiences among students and community residents

**GASTÓN INSTITUTE**

- Increased capacity to translate research methodologies from the classroom to the field
- Build methods to enhance the validity of data and the applicability of data to promote health equity

**PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL CENTER**

- Trained six community residents in health research tactics and field work methods
- Leadership Development Training for Community Advisory Committee Members
- Transfer of skills and experiences among students and community residents
- Increased capacity to work with academic resources and to seek opportunities for future projects

**Aims for Por Ahí Dicen**

- Develop a theory-based, culturally responsive, Spanish media campaign to target Puerto Rican mother-child communication about sexuality and sexual health protection.

**Methodology**

- Research Literacy – Learning by Doing - Freirian Approach to Learning and Teaching
- Co-production of Knowledge – Bi-directional Learning – Co-authorship of Manuscript
- Building Capacity – Research Embraced as a Vehicle for Community Development

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Challenges of CB-PAR
Israel A et al (1998); Minkler and Wallenstein (2006)

- Synchronize community calendars with:
  - cycles of funding
  - IRB approval process
  - academic courses
  - community partners commitments

- Competing community priorities & assumptions:
  - research process
  - community needs
  - limited resources

- Mistrust of researchers:
  - overcoming negative experiences

- Making a long-term commitment
  - establishing institutional agreements.
Strengthening the Partnership: Next Steps to Consider

• Establish an Institutional Agreement
  • Memorandum of Understanding

• Develop a clear pathway for members of community research team to access higher education
  • Formalize relationship between local community college and UMass Boston

• Explore how other UMass Boston faculty/staff can strengthen partnership by supporting additional PRCC needs
  • Pre-collegiate programs or educational resources
Identifying a Potential CB-PAR Project: Guiding Questions

1. Is the issue consistent with the long-range goals or agenda of the community? *(Builds upon existing efforts)*

2. Will the issue contribute to community capacity building? *(Provides educational experience and skill development for leaders/community members)*

3. Will CB-PAR on this issue lead to an improved health or social outcome for the community? *(Relationship to other issues, policy impact=far-reaching)*

4. Is the issue able to attract external funding? *(Feasibility, should not drive process)*

**Suggested Resource:** Developing and Sustaining Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships: A Skill-Building Curriculum

http://www.cbprcurriculum.info/
Practical Tips to Getting Started on a CB-PAR Project

- **Identify a need or interest** (community, research) – OCP can help explore if there is mutual interest (campus-community).

- **Plan ahead.** At least one year prior to submitting proposal for funding.

- **Start small and build.** It’s a long-term commitment.

- **Equitable and collaborative process** (for everything).

- **Value strengths and expertise** (of all stakeholders including community).

- **Full participation/presence** (of faculty/staff and community members).

- **Learn by doing:** Build success through common experiences.

- **Transfer knowledge generously.** Builds capacity of community and researchers to work together.