Community-campus-partnerships new ways of engagement

Sandrine Motamed, MD, MPH
Harkness and Careum Fellow 2009-2010
University involvement: "community services"

Joint active process: "community campus partnership"

Health intervention

Population involvement: "community participation"
Presentation plan

- Community participation
- Community services: a role for universities
- Putting things together, why a community campus partnership?
- A community-campus partnership project: Lime Tree
- Lessons learned
Challenges: definitions (I)

- What is a “community”?  
  - Geographically defined?  
  - Group interests?

- Individual versus population  
  - Usually patient/consumer and patient associations (a sum of individuals)  
  - A specific entity, not a sum of individuals (see G. Rose)

- What is “participation”?  
  - Active or Passive?  
  - Top down or bottom up?  
  - Means or a means to an end?  
  - Mobilization or empowerment?
Challenges: definitions (II)

- Community participation: "a group of people with diverse characteristics that are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographic locations or meetings"

- Mobilization: having communities receive information and take action that professionals deemed appropriate

- Empowerment: providing opportunities and inspiration for those without power to gain knowledge, skills, experience and confidence to take action and responsibility for improving their own lives
Community participation and national policy

- First put on the global health agenda in 1978 with the Alma Ata Conference sponsored by WHO and UNICEF
- Highlighted the importance of the social determinants of health
- Key points are social justice and democracy
- Has been promoted among many European countries including the UK and the low income countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America
Community participation in health domain: what we know

- People have much to contribute from their own knowledge and experience to improve health conditions.
- People tend to be committed to seeking solutions to problems when they have been involved in the process of identification.
- Participation can increase skills and knowledge of local people thus providing opportunities to improve their lives. (Empowerment)
- Peoples’ involvement can increase resources to support health care.
- Community participation creates a “social learning” process whereby professionals and local people learn from each other and build working partnerships for sustainable improvements.
- Community participation reflects a commitment to social justice and promotion of democracy.
Role of universities

- Teaching
- Research
- Community services

- Individuals, local authorities, governmental organizations or NGOs can give to universities a mandate to help them deal with local issues.

- A waste of time for academics?
- Teaching is already a big deal...
- Not always clear what we can achieve
- High risk to perish rather than publish...
- To get out of the office...to work in the real world...
- Unplanned processes, difficult to coordinate with some other projects.
- But... worth the investment if combined with a community participatory approach to address community health issues?
Community-campus-partnership

We know…

- The fundamental need for healthier communities
- The complexity of society
- The importance of the social determinants of health
- Etiology confronts two distinct issues: the determinants of individual cases, and the determinants of incidence rate (population). They have their counterparts in prevention that should be addressed with specific strategies.
- The importance of creating learning opportunities which foster the equitable exchange of knowledge and ideas between communities and educational institutions.

What will change

- The important role that communities play in their own well-being is taken into account
- Creating healthier communities and overcoming complex societal problems requires collaborative solutions which bring communities and institutions together and build upon the assets, strengths, and capacities of each.
- Collaboration is considered inclusive in success.
- Population-based approach is used (low risk strategy for prevention).
- Power, knowledge and funding are equally shared
Lime Tree
a community-campus project

For functional mobility, intergenerational fuel!
Meinier is a village near the city of Geneva in Switzerland.

Following an initial study undertaken by students of the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (ISPM) aimed at identifying its residents' health needs, the local authority formally engaged the ISPM to try to resolve the problems disclosed, which were of a socio-economic and psycho-social nature.

Senior citizen felt isolated and wanted to remain in the village, even when they had lost their autonomy, rather than enter a nursing home elsewhere.

Young families could not get established because of a lack of available housing, financial burdens, and nonexistence of day care facilities for children.

Social links between people had diminished, especially between the generations.

Further difficulties arose from poor mobility; both for work and leisure.

Given these findings the inhabitants came together to develop a more just society, in a partnership between the authorities and our Institute that over the years has seen a novel concept of healthy living emerge.

One prominent aspect is the new village center, with its sheltered housing for the elderly, affordable accommodations for young families, child day care, a games library, shops, a restaurant, as well as an intergenerational park and living space.

The project, driven completely by community participation, is in its eighth year; the 40 million dollar budget was approved by the community and work begins in March 2010. The learning and experience gained in terms of community participation and the behavioral and social health determinants have been very important for all concerned.
Welcome to Meinier
What health problems are in Meinier?

- After a first student project, the local authorities mandate our ISPM in helping the inhabitants to formulate their own health needs…
  - local authorities more involved in health than before
  - part of a political agenda for election?
  - a help to the communal master plan?

- Key informants
- Newsletters
- Meetings with the population
« Yes, we have problems… »

- Senior citizens had to leave the area to go into nursing homes in town. (heartbreaking)

- No more social links between the people, especially between the generations. Beautiful « dormitory suburb ».

- Young people could not settle in Meinier
  - No housing available or too expensive
  - No day-care facilities (Kindergarten)

- Mobility issues for every generation
  - It’s a difficult commute between Meinier and Geneva city (private/public transportation system)
  - Functional mobility for senior citizen (no car, bus challenging)
  - Recreational mobility (physical activities)
From needs assessment to intervention:

- Inhabitants asked the local authorities mandated ISPM to « develop a new healthy living style in Meinier through the development of a community project that would enhance social links, especially between the generations, and create a new physical environment more favorable to healthy behaviours and which would bring more well-being and quality of life for all. »

- We all together have decided to create a new center for the village with:
  - housing for young families and sheltered spaces for senior citizens (ageing friendly village)
  - Kindergarden/ day-care
  - New services: a restaurant, health care and social spaces, sports area and an inter-generational park.

- Resolve mobility issues in the village, between the villages, and with the city.
- Key informants
- Health meetings with Meinier residents
- Newsletters

- Concept: new inter-generational living center
- Multi-disciplinary council (that includes residents)

- Architectural contest
- Presentations to the residents
- Feed-back from the residents
- Modifications of facilities (parking, shops…)

- Budget approved by the residents
- No referendum
- Building the new center of the village
SOCIAL and MEDICAL spaces
& SHOPS & RESTAURANT &
DAY-CARE
One month ago
What did I learn?
A great educational process for public health specialists

- discovery of community participation process
  - meeting with the Meinier community
  - democracy in action
- world of politics at communal and cantonal level
  - political timing
  - elections and changes
- work with and manage multi-disciplinary team
  - jargon and glossary
  - knowledge
- working around important concepts (social determinants of health)
  - housing and loss of autonomy
  - mobility, security
  - social links, generations
  - new health professional profile
- writing scientific articles and reports
  - adapted to different audiences
  - deal with journalists
- field work used to teach community health
In a year...
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References


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