Community-Engaged Research Principles

Community-engaged research takes place in community settings and involves community members in the design and implementation of research projects. Such activities should demonstrate respect for the contributions of success which are made by community partners as well as respect for the principle of "doing no harm" to the communities involved.

In order to achieve these goals, the following principles should guide the development of research projects involving collaboration between researchers and community partners, whether the community partners are formally structured community-based organizations or informal groups of individual community members.

Principles:

Community partners should be involved at the earliest stages of the project, helping to define research objectives, having input into how the project will be organized and ensuring that the research respects the specific community context.

Community partners should have real influence on project direction--that is, enough leverage to ensure that the original goals, mission, and methods of the project are adhered to.

Research processes and outcomes should benefit the community. Community members should be hired and trained whenever possible and appropriate, and the research should help build and enhance community assets.

Community members should be part of the analysis and interpretation of data and should have the opportunity to be included in the authorship of articles. In addition, they should have input into how the results are distributed. This does not imply censorship of data or of publication, but rather the opportunity to make clear the community's views about the interpretation prior to final publication.

Productive partnerships between researchers and community members should be encouraged to last beyond the life of the project. This will make it more likely that research findings will be incorporated into ongoing community programs and therefore provide the greatest possible benefit to the community from research.

Community members should be empowered to initiate their own research projects which address needs they identify themselves.

Adapted from: Community-Based Research Principles, University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine, http://sphcm.washington.edu/research/community.asp