



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

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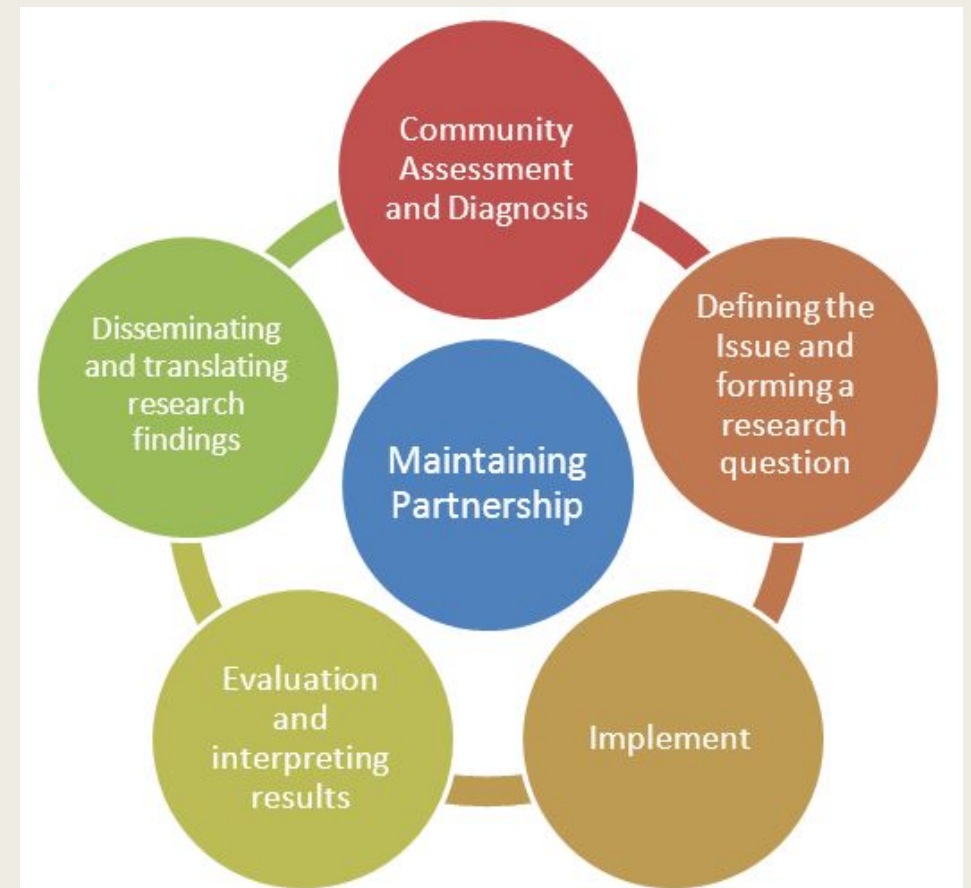
Overview

- Long Term Project Goal: To establish long-lasting partnerships and meaningful connections with community groups in NJ, with a focus on groups serving to older adults from minority groups.
- Short Term Project Goals:
 - Identify African American and African Immigrant community organizations throughout the State.
 - Make initial contact with organizations and invite them to collaborate.
 - Meet with organizations to learn about their work and identify key needs and opportunities for collaboration.
- Key concept: Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)
 - CBPR is defined as a “partnership approach to research that equitably involves community members, organizational representatives, and academic researchers in all aspects of the research process” (Detroit URC, 2019).

Community Based Participatory Research

■ Goals of CBPR:

- Enhance community capacity by supporting equal community participation in research for which they will directly benefit.
- Establish sustainable programs that improve health behaviors and health outcomes in health disparity populations.
- Accelerate the translation of research findings to health disparity communities by designing effective and culturally tailored interventions (NIH, 2018).



(Israel, 2005)

Barriers to African American Participation in Research

A systematic review of barriers and facilitators to minority research participation found the following barriers for African Americans:

- Mistrust - Perceive research will benefit Whites or the research institution and not people of color.
 - The legacy of the Tuskegee Study and lack of research integrity.
- Competing demands – Inconvenience; cost of participation.
- Unintended outcomes - Concerns about future long- and short-term side effects.
- Lack of access to information – Misconceptions about research.
- Stigma - Related to genetic or mental illness research.
- Health insurance coverage - Have basic health care or no specific health care needs, fear of discrimination (George et al, 2013).

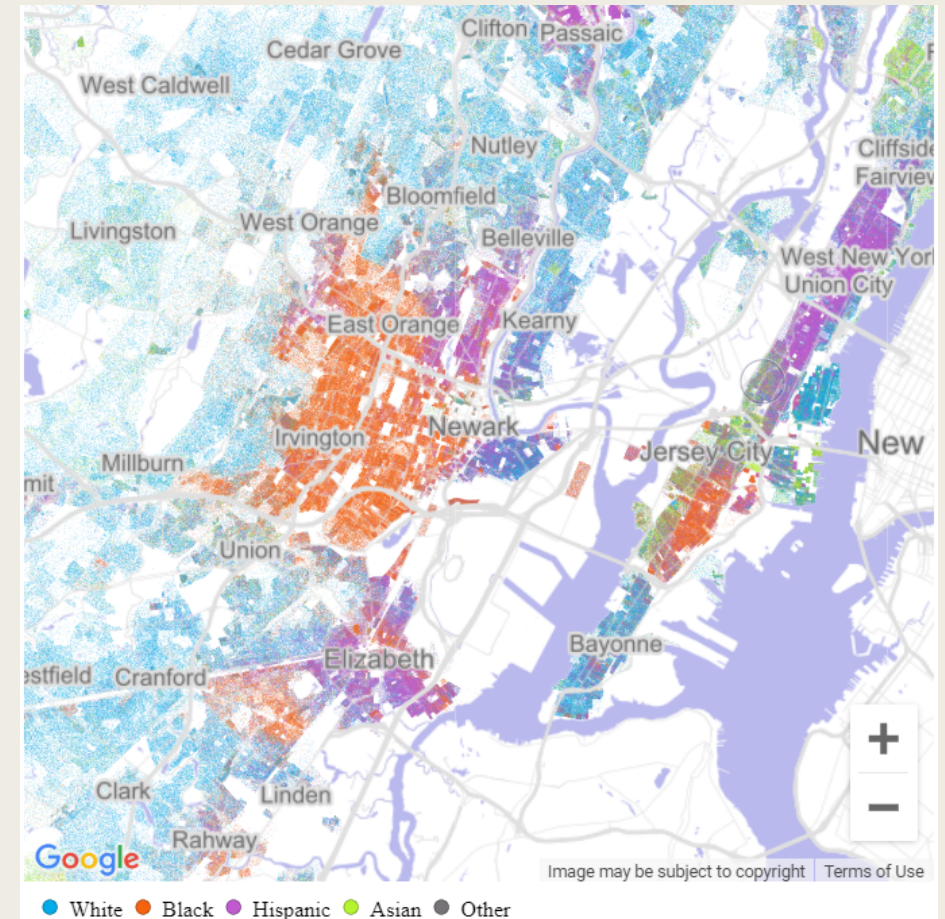


CPBR Case Study: *Your Blessed Health: A faith-based CBPR approach to addressing HIV/AIDS among African Americans*

- African Americans have the highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection of all minority groups.
- Researchers from the University of Michigan decided to approach African American faith-based organizations because they are a hub for social interactions between community members.
- The project was developed to increase HIV/AIDS awareness and reduce HIV-related stigma among the African American faith community in Flint, Michigan.
 - Barrier: HIV/AIDS has a “negative religious and moral attitude” associated with it.
 - Solution: Show HIV/AIDS as a health issue, not just a moral or sexual issue.
- **Chief Outcome:** Your Blessed Health grew from a pilot project into a community mobilization effort led by faith leaders and their congregations to address HIV/AIDS.
- This project highlights the importance of developing and testing intervention models that originate from community-based organizations to address complex and sensitive health issues among marginalized populations (Griffith et al, 2010).

Characteristics of African American and African Immigrant Populations in NJ

- 14.6% of New Jersey residents are Black or African American, compared to 13.0% of the US (ACS, 2017).
 - Newark, Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, Asbury Park and Camden all have a significant African American population.
- 5% of the foreign-born population of New Jersey was born in Africa (including North Africa).
- The top countries of birth for African immigrants are:
 - Egypt (~29,000)
 - Nigeria (~17,000)
 - Ghana (~14,000)
 - Liberia (~6,000)
 - Kenya (~6,000)



(Stirling, 2015, based on US Census Data)

Health Disparities: Selected Indicators

Selected Health Indicators	African American Population	NJ overall
Current Smoker (%)	15.3	14.1
HIV Transmission Rate (rate per 100,000)	42.5	13.4
Adults 65+ Who Have Ever Received Pneumococcal Vaccination (%)	63.5	71.6
Percentage of Physically Active Adults aged 65+ (%)	49.2	62.8
Incidence of End-Stage Renal Disease (rate per 100,000)	73.5	39.7
Average Age At Death (years)	67.0	74.9
Death Rate Due to Breast Cancer (rate per 100,000)	29.6	21.2
Death Rate Due To Diabetes (rate per 100,000)	31.4	16.9

(New Jersey State Health Department, 2018)

Finding Organizations

- **Goal:** To find organizations that serve our assigned racial group to reach out to and begin building relationships.
- Tried to look beyond common organizations like non-profit or official government organizations and think outside of the box to and include other organizations working or interacting directly with the community.
- Strategies:
 - Thinking about where I and my family and friends go often to interact with people of our own racial group.
 - Researching places of worship, schools, markets, senior centers, and local businesses like clothing stores.
 - Searching separately for organizations in each city, county, or region.
 - Searching governmental organization websites that provide lists of resources and organizations.
 - Searching by country for countries with high numbers of immigrants.
 - Asking for referrals from organizations we engaged with.

Making Contact

- Using a template provided, we drafted emails to be sent to the organizations.
 - This involved researching the organizations to understand their mission and goals to tailor the emails to each organization.
- One week after sending out the emails, we began making both follow up phone calls and cold calls to the organizations that were unable to be contacted by email.
- Results:
 - We got a handful of responses to emails, including from Church World Service, Northern New Jersey Black Nurses Association Inc and St Peter's Church Freehold.
 - Phone meetings have been held and we are following up with additional organizations to arrange a time to meet.
- Challenges:
 - Many organizations did not answer emails or phone calls.
 - It was difficult to find the right contact person from desktop searching alone.
 - Contact information online was often out of date or unavailable.
 - Meetings take a long time to organize due to organization's scheduling constraints.
 - Organizations are dispersed throughout NJ, which makes visiting organizations challenging.

Case Study: Church World Service

- We had a successful phone meeting with Church World Service.
- CWS works with refugees and asylees who have recently arrived in the US.
- The populations they work with most varies over time, but currently the majority of clients are from Egypt, Turkey and Cuba.
- Services provided include:
 - Refugee Cash Assistance
 - Employment Program
 - Career Pathways Programming
 - Youth Mentorship Program (preparing to launch)
 - Health orientation services
- Next Steps with CWS:
 - Arranging an in-person meeting at their office in Jersey City.
 - Invited CWS to attend the Resource Center for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR) Retreat at IFH next month.

Next steps for this project:

- Continue to contact more organizations on the list following the same process.
- Continue to follow up with the organizations already contacted.
- Meet in person with those who have expressed a positive response in collaborating.
- Offer to help organizations in ways they have requested (handing out health information, facilitating seminars, volunteering).
- Invite the organizations to more IFH events.

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