

Community-Based Participatory Research Hub (CBPR Hub)

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The idea in a nutshell: Community-Based Participatory Research Hub

What is community-based participatory research?

Community-based participatory research (CBPR), often referred to as community action research (CAR) and/or community-based action research (CBAR), broadly refers to a research approach [that](#) emphasizes close collaboration and partnerships between researchers and communities. Communities in this context are understood in a broad sense, but can include public agencies, nonprofit organizations, informal community groups, neighborhoods, or other types of groups. This approach allows for those communities or individuals (stakeholders or partners) closely affected by a community issue to participate and contribute to better understanding and addressing the issue through a collaborative research approach that can entail various components or tools. A core principle of CBPR is to allow for, recognize, and emphasize the needs and perspectives of the most under-represented voices. Thus, a priority is to make sure that all communities are included in research that affects their livelihoods. As a result, CBPR is an innovative and flexible approach to community-driven, problem-focused research [that](#) inherently varies by project, researcher, and community issue.

While most often associated with qualitative research approaches, like Photovoice, participatory decision-making, or arts-based methods, CBPR can include a range of methods or research tools, including geographic information systems (GIS), surveys, and quantitative methods and analysis. This requires close collaboration at all stages of the project, including research design or planning, tool/method training, project implementation, data analysis, and dissemination of results. CBPR also allows for nuanced community-informed and place-based research contexts to be better understood by the researcher(s) involved. CBPR is a well-tested toolbox [that](#) allows us to effectively engage and include underrepresented communities [that](#) often face exclusion, inequity, injustice, lack of power, and/or have encountered historical or intergenerational trauma, including by researchers or institutions. According to the University of Kansas' Community Toolbox, "community-based participatory research adds to or replaces academic and other professional research with research done by community members, so that research results both come from and go directly back to the people who need them most and can make the best use of them" in the ways they deem meaningful (<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/intervention-research/main>). While this hub is thematic in form, place-based projects or components are not understood to be mutually-exclusive, as CBPR relies on and directly engages communities that may identify as place-based. A CBPR Hub can offer numerous tools and techniques to broaden coastal geoscience research priorities and engagement, particularly among underrepresented communities and peoples.

Our proposed CBPR Hub includes the following specific, differentiated recommendations:

- CBPR training for researchers, organizations/institutions (other partners), and communities.
 - Potential training includes, but is not limited to: (1) interdisciplinary research design and planning; (2) method/tool training (GIS, surveys, interviews, focus groups, cognitive mapping, impact assessments, field notes/log creating, participant observation, historical/archival research, etc.); (3) project implementation; (4) community outreach, education, and group facilitation; (5) diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); (6) data analysis; and (7) data or results dissemination.
 - Note: Trainings and/or various training components will vary depending on target audience, need, community, or community issue.
- Provide an emphasis on research for community benefit.
 - The needs of the most under-represented or marginalized groups are prioritized throughout the research process.
- Emphasize equitable community engagement and empowerment as a primary goal.
 - Communities and under-represented voices should be incorporated from the beginning
- Allow communities to participate in all stages of the research process (this may vary by community and/or project).
 - This should include: community participation in RFP development and proposal review; community participation in designing or informing targeted aims; community trainings and inclusion in the research process; and community engagement in project evaluation/monitoring to ensure achieved targeted aims are met.
- Emphasize long-term relationship development and impact for all parties (researchers, organizations, institutions, and communities).
- Provide an equity requirement in RFPs to promote inclusivity, which requires funding.
- Ensure that projects are evaluated or monitored to ascertain whether the project either made its intended impact or, if not, its lessons learned are integrated for future potential projects within the same community or elsewhere.
 - This monitoring should be done by those with expertise in program evaluation.
- Allow project partners to produce and enhance general knowledge about the issue, method, CBPR, and/or content area. Best practices regarding the research and/or case study findings should be shared within the Hub, used in future trainings, and/or elsewhere through a dissemination process organized by/through the Hub.

What impact or value does it seek or deliver?

- Prioritize communities, particularly underrepresented communities, in research projects, so they are no longer an afterthought in project design and implementation.
- Break down barriers between academy and communities.
- Make research relevant to community needs.
- Build sustainable partnerships and long-term relationships to better facilitate adaptive management.

- Ensure Broader Impacts are at the forefront of research projects and prioritized by all partners.
- Create and reinforce researchers' direct community engagement experience or expertise, which can lead to richer researcher-community relationships and increase trust of research and researchers.
- Allow for more diverse perspectives about what research needs are within a particular context or around a specific issue.
- Emphasize true community empowerment by involving communities at all stages of the research process, especially at the conception.

Stormwater management provides a socio-ecological example that would benefit from a CBPR approach and the work of a CBPR Hub. Stormwater management includes: property owners, local residents, policy-makers, planners, city infrastructure and built environments, and the natural environment. In order to improve people's experiences of storms and flood risk, a CBPR approach can positively contribute to management, housing issues, infrastructure needs or issues, local knowledge or perceptions around stormwater, and stormwater's environmental impacts. For example, community mapping or other visualization tools like photography or drawings could be used to illustrate community knowledge and perceptions of flood risk and known flooding areas. Using GIS, these visualizations could be compared to other flood management tools like topographical and FEMA maps to illustrate gaps in awareness of flood-prone areas, problem areas [that](#) everyone recognizes need to be addressed, and facilitate changes to local infrastructure or practices to better facilitate stormwater management. Engaging the community and utilizing their understandings of gaps in stormwater management is especially important for coastal communities given the continual environmental changes due to erosion, sea level rise, and other coastal hazards, which intersect with people's lives.

What is the reasoning or supporting evidence behind it, if any?

- CBPR is a growing approach to research in numerous fields including public health, critical race studies, ethnic studies, queer studies, women studies, community development, and geography.
- Public health has long been at the forefront of CBPR approaches to better understand and address critical health crises, particularly among underrepresented and/or inequitably impacted communities. This is illustrated by the University of Washington's work on Developing and Sustaining Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships: A Skill-Building Curriculum (guide to CBPR and curriculum) (<http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/cbpr/index.php>).
 - The National Institutes of Health also promotes and often emphasizes the use of CBPR in its funded research and evaluation projects, particularly among tribal communities (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4455516/>).
- The NIH-funded CBPR Partnership Academy hosted by the Detroit Urban Research Center provides community-research trainings to help communities and researchers better address community-relevant problems (<https://www.detroiturc.org/expertise-programs/cbpr-partnership-academy.html>).
- Community Geography is an emerging geographic subfield emphasizing the collaborative use of GIS and other geospatial tools among communities to address local issues. Such

work has been done at Portland State University (<https://www.pdx.edu/ims/community-geography>) and Syracuse University (<https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/geography/community-geography/>).