

This article was downloaded by: [University of Kansas Libraries], [Mr Christina M. Holt]
On: 12 June 2013, At: 13:09
Publisher: Routledge
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered
office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wpjic20>

Participatory Research and Capacity Building for Community Health and Development

Stephen B. Fawcett^a, Jerry A. Schultz^a, Christina M. Holt^a, Vicki Collie-Akers^a & Jomella Watson-Thompson^{a b}

^a Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, USA

^b Department of Applied Behavioral Science, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, USA

Published online: 10 Jun 2013.

To cite this article: Stephen B. Fawcett, Jerry A. Schultz, Christina M. Holt, Vicki Collie-Akers & Jomella Watson-Thompson (2013): Participatory Research and Capacity Building for Community Health and Development, Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 41:3, 139-141

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2013.788340>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Participatory Research and Capacity Building for Community Health and Development

STEPHEN B. FAWCETT, JERRY A. SCHULTZ,
CHRISTINA M. HOLT, and VICKI COLLIE-AKERS

*Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas,
Lawrence, Kansas, USA*

JOMELLA WATSON-THOMPSON

*Work Group for Community Health and Development and Department of
Applied Behavioral Science, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, USA*

This report describes engagement of the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas in pursuing its mission of collaborative research, teaching, and public service. In research, this team uses capabilities for community measurement to help discover factors and conditions that affect community change and improvement. In teaching and training, it prepares new generations of leadership for collaborative research and community practice. As part of its public service mission, the team serves as home base for the Community Tool Box, the largest Web resource of its kind for community building. This work reflects the two-fold aim of engaged scholarship: to contribute to understanding about what affects community health and development and to apply that knowledge to assure conditions that promote well-being for all those living in our communities.

KEYWORDS *capacity building, collaborative research, community measurement, teaching*

Address correspondence to Stephen B. Fawcett, Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas, 1000 Sunnyside Avenue, Dole Center, Room 4082, Lawrence, KS 66045. E-mail: sfawcett@ku.edu

Our communities face a variety of issues, such as chronic diseases or substance abuse, that affect health and human development. For those groups at social disadvantage, there are also great disparities: people living in communities with less wealth, greater exposure to risks, and limited power and resources are far more likely to experience adverse outcomes.

What roles can a university partner play? How can we engage with communities to help understand and improve efforts—locally, nationally, and globally?

Our Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas (<http://communityhealth.ku.edu>) has grappled with these questions since its inception in 1975. We came together as a collection of learners and doers from multiple disciplines—including behavioral science, public health, community psychology, anthropology, education, and urban planning. We share a commitment to social justice and an appreciation for collaborative efforts that are systematic and can be scaled up to match the level of need.

The *KU Work Group's mission* is to promote community health and development through collaborative research, teaching, and public service. In *research*, we aim to contribute to understanding about factors and conditions that affect community change and improvement. Through our research projects, we help extend the knowledge base of what works in creating conditions for improved outcomes and greater equity. In *teaching and training*, we enhance knowledge and skills in collaborative research and community practice. Through our graduate and undergraduate teaching, we aim to assure new generations of people passionate about and competent in this work.

Through the *public service* aspect of our mission, we hope to further widespread adoption and effective use of promising approaches for building healthy communities. By developing Web-based resources, we have been able to share and exchange innovations in a national and global community of practice.

This work has been made possible by two primary *capabilities* of the KU Work Group: community measurement and capacity building. Beginning in 1990, the KU team developed a *community measurement* system for systematically documenting community changes—new or modified programs, policies, and practices—brought about by collaborative efforts to improve community outcomes. This community measurement approach has been used extensively in local, state and national projects; including in the Healthy Communities Study, a National Institutes of Health (NIH)/National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) study of how communities shape children's health in over 200 communities. The KU Work Group's capability for *capacity building* is best represented by the Community Tool Box (<http://ctb.ku.edu/>), the largest resource of its kind for community building—now accessed in multiple languages by over 2 million people in over 200 countries.

These capabilities have permitted work with an array of local, national, and global partners. For instance, community measurement undergirds our

engagement as scientific and evaluation partners in many local and multisite projects. The KU Work Group's designation in 2004 as a *World Health Organization Collaborating Centre* for Community Health and Development came as a direct result of this mix of capabilities, especially the potential of the Community Tool Box as a global resource for capacity building.

None of this work would be possible without *relationships* with partners with whom we learn and contribute. These include generations of colleagues in our center and in professional networks such as the Society for Community Research and Action, the American Public Health Association, and the World Health Organization (WHO) network of collaborating centers. Particularly important have been relationships with partners in local communities working to promote health and wellbeing and social justice. We maintain our efforts to learn and contribute through support from grant making partners including governmental agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and private foundations. One particular grant, an endowment from the Kansas Health Foundation, has helped sustain the KU Work Group's efforts since the 1990s.

This themed issue of the *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community* features some recent participatory research and capacity-building efforts of the KU Work Group. It illustrates how university and community partners can work together to contribute to understanding and improvement with a variety of issues facing communities. We see how capabilities for community measurement and capacity building can play a role in advancing and integrating research, teaching, and public service.

With the privileges of a university base comes a corresponding duty: *contributing to understanding about what affects community health and development and applying that knowledge to change conditions and improve outcomes*. Scientific methods, including that of participatory research, can help us unlock these secrets. Capacity-building approaches, including Web-based assistance, can help us assure free access to knowledge and technical support. Social justice requires that we apply and make available what we learn—in local communities, and throughout the world.