OPRE Methods Meeting
Community Engagement Methods
About the Presenters

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Community Engaged Methods (CEM) @ Urban Institute

CEM Tools: Data Walks; Community Advisory Boards; Surveys; Youth; Partnerships
Urban Institute – Community Engaged Methods
Examples of CEM initiatives at Urban

- Community Driven Program Development
  - Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health and Safety (PASS); Teens and Hunger

- Community Based Participatory Research
  - East Baltimore Research Project (EBRP)

- Federal Initiatives
  - Promise Neighborhoods

- Municipal and County Government work in Racial Equity
  - Gates Mobility from Poverty
Why Community Engaged Methods

➢ Ethical considerations
➢ Accuracy and robustness of the data
➢ Impact and reach
➢ Sustainability and capacity building
Based on Sherry Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation – Developed while at HUD in 1968.
CEM Tool: Data Walks
Data Walk

Sharing data in a gallery format, in small groups, with discussion questions to guide conversation. Data can include tables, charts, quotes, images, news articles, maps, and more.

Implementing Data Walks at the various stages of a project:

- Community Outreach
- Agenda Setting
- Research Question Development
- Needs Assessment
- Data Analysis
- Dissemination
- Strategic Planning
Goals for an Effective Data Walk

- Include a representative group of stakeholders
- Balance of strength and deficit data
- Avoid telling community members about their own community – value various sources of expertise
- Include various forms of “data” – charts, images, maps, quotes
- End with a visioning or next steps station and commitments
Data Walk - Guiding Questions

- What is the first reaction you have to seeing this data?
- What is the story behind this particular data point?
- Is there data or detail missing from this station that would provide a more nuanced understanding of this topic?
Virtual Data Walk Approaches

- Videoconferencing
- Social Media Facebook and Instagram
- Collaborate with community-based organizations
Virtual Data Walk Approaches – Google Jamboard

What do you think of when you hear the term “racial equity”?

- Much needed part of our work but so difficult to translate for our grantees
- Racial justice
- Race doesn’t determine the outcome
- Culture, policy, structures.
- Making sure you think through how to implement solutions that work for individual groups of people
- Depression about how much has gone wrong in the past and how hard it will be to fix
- Profound empathy
- Fairness of outcomes (a few steps beyond only fairness of access/opportunity)
- Race is no longer something that will predict someone’s success
- Navigating structural barriers, especially those designed to keep people out
- Creating a sense of fairness across race
- Equity is not the same as equality! Important to understand the difference
- Becoming a topic more understood and practiced, but lots of work to do on how to actualize
- In the context of our financial empowerment work, when I think about racial equity I think about people with disproportionately high needs
- Not just being nice but actual systems change
- Doubts about the definition and whether people mean the same thing when they say it
- A catch phrase that people use to feel current, but not sure that people are very thoughtful.
- Equal footing to start a project/program
- Race doesn’t determine the outcome (not “people being nicer”)
Interactive Station Options

- Post your thoughts
- Mapping exercises
- Document what’s happening with consent
- Ending with a visioning exercise
Challenges

- Strengths-based framing
- Ensuring the community is a source of “expertise”
- Language/Translation
- Logistics: number of participants, space and time constraints, scheduling, transportation, child care
- So. Much. Data!!!
CEM Tool: Community Advisory Boards
Community Advisory Board (CAB)

- CABs are typically comprised of a diverse group of individuals selected to act as a link between the research center and the communities involved in the research.

- Improve quality of research through:
  - Promotion of community policies, services, and equity
  - Prioritization of local priorities and concerns
  - Community trust building
CAB Purposes

- Different types of CABs serve different purposes

**Advisory CAB**
Provide input but do not have final say in what is decided

**Governance CAB**
Authority to make decisions-operational/funding etc.
CAB Best Practices

- Include the CAB in the project design from the beginning
  - Difficult to apply retroactively
- Create a Relationship
  - Orientations needed for CAB members, but also for the staff to discuss history, expectations, responsibilities
- Gather information on a continuous basis
  - Continually survey CAB about its needs and priorities
- Be transparent of compensation, resources & timeline
  - Create a calendar, expectations log or other means to ensure CAB members receives their non-monetary benefits as well
- Create checkpoints for people to provide feedback on the CAB
Practical Tips

- Orientation – for CAB members and for institutional staff
- Commitment to transparency and accountability
- Aligning vision and setting expectations
- Highlighting progress and sharing information regularly with broader community
- Number of CAB members (8-15)
- Fair compensation
- Flexibility
CEM Tool: Community Engaged Surveys
Community Engaged Survey Continuum

INFORM
Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health and Safety

CONSULT

INVOLVE
Family Centered Community Change

COLLABORATE

EMPOWER
East Baltimore Research Project
Key Considerations

Ask yourself...

- How much time and resources do I have?
- How willing are you to yield on question development?
- What infrastructure is needed for sharing back data?
- Does the budget support additional deliverables?

What's the motivation for seeking community partnership?

Is there a benefit to community members? If so, how can that be uplifted?
Analyzing a Community-Engaged Surveys

- Findings should always be shared with community members
- Internal analysis or co-analysis?
- Best approach to data analysis depends on survey complexity, project resources, and need

**Internal Analysis**
- Missing data
- Low response rate
- Limited time and resources

**Co-Analysis**
- Resources for trainings & TA
- High community buy-in
- Clear community benefit
Internal Analysis: Feedback Loop

- Timing
- Format
- Incorporating Input
CEM Tool: Engaging Youth
Youth Engagement

Youth engagement is the building of a relationship between young people and adults through interactions that are intentional, inclusive, and mutually beneficial.

Benefits of Youth Engagement

- Builds capacity and capabilities for the next generation
- Promotes inclusivity—in research, policies, programs, and services
- Encourages adult engagement
- Enhances effectiveness and leads to more nuanced findings and next steps
- More thorough that a traditional pilot or beta testing
- Broadens social networks
- Provides alternative to parent input on behalf of children
Best Practices for Youth Engagement

Data Walks
• Young people can participate and lead presentations at each data walk station

Community advisory boards
• Made up of community-based young people who were selected to give their perspectives as advisers and decisionmakers to the project team

Photo Voice
• A visual research method that puts cameras in the hands of young people, enabling them to document and explore aspects of a topic in their community

Social Media
• Powerful way to “meet young people where they are”
CEM Tool: Fostering Partnership
Partnership Building

- Time
- Trust
- Collaboration
- Communication
Developing Partnerships: Best Strategies

Consider how you will work to achieve equity around decision making, resource allocation, and other power dynamics.

Do your homework on community history, context, and stakeholders prior to project partnership.

Build in mechanisms and processes for transparency and accountability so that information sharing and feedback happens regularly.

Meet community leaders to connect with potential partners and gauge which parts of the community may not be represented.
Thank you!