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Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is an effective approach to understand and address health inequities. Few CBPR capacity-building programs entail co-learning among community and academic partners with ongoing support to foster equitable partnership development. In 2014, the Detroit Urban Research Center established the CBPR Partnership Academy, convening 3 cohorts of 12 community-academic teams each. The yearlong integrated program included an in-person week-long course, partnership development grants, mentoring, online forums, and networking.

### **CBPR Partnership Academy Scholars Network: Integrating and Sharing Experiences across Cohorts**

To sustain impact beyond the yearlong program, we extended the Scholars Network by conducting a year of integrative activities for all three cohorts together, that included pilot grants, mentoring, webinars, peer exchange, e-newsletters, and a national symposium. Evaluation included documentation of participation and team accomplishments, a symposium questionnaire, and video interviews.

#### **Results**

3/4 of Partnership Academy members participated in Network activities.

- Four teams received **pilot project grants** ranging from \$7,000-\$15,000 (total \$47,000)
- Three **webinars/online forums** featured cutting-edge issues identified by participants, presented by members
- Eleven teams requested **mentoring and consultation** with community and academic experts
- E-newsletters **provided information** on funding, career development, accomplishments, and resource exchange

### National CBPR Partnership Academy Symposium: Promoting CBPR to Achieve Health Equity

The year culminated in a 2-day symposium for Network members to share accomplishments, discuss strategies, enhance CBPR skills, build and sustain relationships across the Network, and celebrate successes. Partnerships from all 3 cohorts presented their work, engaged in small groups, and networked. Mentors and instructors attended.

- 10 panel presentations on partnership development, community assessment, and developing and implementing CBPR projects
- 4 lightning talks on “CBPR Partnerships in Action”
- 6 poster presentations
- 2 nationally recognized keynote speakers
- An expert panel reflecting on the past, present, and future of CBPR



100% of participants said they were satisfied/very satisfied with the symposium, gained new ideas and insights from others, and felt that what they learned will be beneficial to their work.

“This coming together of researchers and community advocates from across the country has been phenomenal because we have learned together...this has been the best convening...*This is a community.*”

*Community partner*

## Lessons Learned

- Co-learning of diverse community and academic partners with experienced CBPR facilitators
- Multiple strategies for co-learning, capacity building, networking, exchange of knowledge
- Guided by and highlighting the work of Network participants
- Value of in-person sharing of experiences, strategies, perspectives
- Opportunities for members to bring their new partners into the Network
- Emphasis on enhancing relationships toward equitable partnerships

“I now feel I have a family across the country that I can lean on when things aren’t going as I planned or when things are going great and I can celebrate with them. Two words – energy and synergy.”

*Community partner*

“As an academic researcher, you’re told don’t do this... there’s a list of steps... I’ve learned to trust the process... Trust your partner, ask questions, don’t be afraid to say I don’t know what I’m doing.”

*Academic partner*

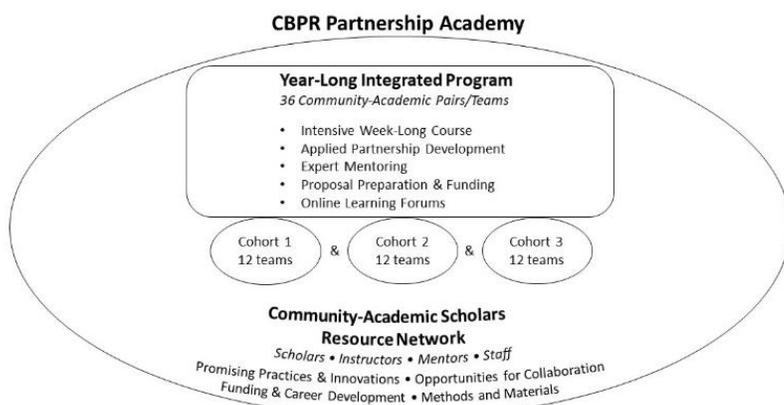
It takes time to develop the skills and trusting relationships to form equitable CBPR partnerships. An intensive community-academic, partner-based program supported by ongoing Network activities can deepen and sustain learning and innovation in CBPR for health and equity.

## CBPR Partnership Academy – 2015-2019

The CBPR Partnership Academy is a yearlong, multi-faceted national training program to build capacity of community-academic partnership teams to engage in a CBPR approach to eliminate health inequities in their own communities. The 72 participants were pairs of one community and one academic partner new to CBPR. Participants reflect multiple dimensions of diversity, including 18 states and 2 tribal nations, 2/3 from racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in research, multiple disciplines, and 81% of the researchers are women. Accomplishments of partnerships include: grants funded; research studies conducted; and dissemination through presentations, publications, workshops, and courses.

“More people are coming to us and asking how to do CBPR, how to find a partner... People are excited by the approach and recognize that it brings something unique to the work that we’re trying to do.”

*Community partner*



Three year-long cohorts of 12 Community and Academic pairs/teams (36 pairs, 72 individuals). All cohort members are eligible for Scholars Resource Network membership.

## Publications

- Coombe, C. M., Schulz, A. J., Guluma, L., Allen, A. J., Gray, C., Brakefield-Caldwell, W., Guzman, J.R., Lewis, T.C., Reyes, A.G., Rowe, Z., Pappas, L.A., Israel, B. A. (2018). Enhancing capacity of community-academic partnerships to achieve health equity: Results from the CBPR Partnership Academy. *Health Promotion Practice*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839918818830>
- Coombe, C.M., Schulz, A.J., Brakefield-Caldwell, W., Gray, C., Guzman, J.R., Kieffer, E., Lewis, T., Reyes, A.G., Rowe, Z., Israel, B.A. (In press). Applying experiential action learning pedagogy to enhance community-academic partnerships: A weeklong intensive course in CBPR. *Pedagogy in Health Promotion*.

## Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center (Detroit URC)

The Detroit URC is a community-based participatory research (CBPR) partnership that involves community-based and health service organizations in Detroit and academic researchers at the University of Michigan. Since 1995, the Detroit URC and its affiliated partnerships have been working to gain a better understanding of and to reduce and ultimately eliminate health inequities in Detroit.

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Or **visit our website** at: [www.detroiturc.org](http://www.detroiturc.org) or [detroiturc.org/cbpr-partnership-academy.html](http://detroiturc.org/cbpr-partnership-academy.html)

