



Research Article

THE ROLE OF A LOCAL COLLEGE IN THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Prof. Marwin M. de la Cruz¹

¹Vice President for Planning, Research, and Extension Bulacan State University Malolos City, Philippines

Correspondence should be addressed to **Prof. Marwin M. de la Cruz**

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ABSTRACT

Colleges are so focused on their mandate as an academic, having in mind that educational institutions are economic catalysts and stimulating multiple business opportunities. On the other hand, educational goals tend to forget that there is one which should also be given attention to, that is, the health of the community. To address this seemingly differing idea, the methodology that can be employed as Zappia, and L. Puntenny, (2010) puts it, the establishment of specific training to individual groups, in areas such as leadership development, engaging hard-to-reach residents, and launching small community improvement efforts. In this way, ensuring resident involvement in the planning makes the difference. At the Bulacan State University, partnership is created by calling together a group of interested stakeholder to discuss ideas and concerns for the community. The formation of this affiliation and association addresses social determinants of health within the community and cohesive relationships between them.

KEYWORD: Community engagement, educational Institution, Bulacan State University, Health, Community.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, higher educational institutions are sometimes at fault for being rigid and slow in meeting the emerging needs of the community. However, in the recent years, colleges have stepped forward to realize the challenges of helping their communities to create jobs and to develop the workforce. As Brand (1997) puts it, colleges have an encompassing workforce development and transfer programs linked together, each supporting the other. On the other hand, as they develop, most colleges found that their mission was tied only to the academic and educational goals of their Students and they tend to forget that there is one which should also be prioritized, that is, the health of the community. Probably, because colleges are so focused on their mandate as an academic institution.

What seems to be the role now of an academic institution in the health of the community? According to MacQueen

(2001) (in Zakus JD and Lysack CL (1998) the lack of an accepted definition of community can result in different collaborators forming contradictory or incompatible assumptions about community and can undermine our ability to evaluate the contribution of community collaborations to achieve of public health objectives. On the other hand, a community can be described in a numerous ways, such as from the point of view of health community and health outcomes, (Marmot MG, Bobak M, Smith GD, 1995). Every community possesses a set of structures and norms that govern interactions among its members. Thus, someone living in an economically depressed might have less access to affordable healthy food options (e.g., grocery stores or supermarkets) and medical care (e.g., hospitals or clinics). Because of the complexity of this social relationship, effects vary from one community to another.

According to Butterfoss FD, Goodman RM, Wandersman A. (1993), the recognition of these facts has led to increased calls for community collaboration as an



important strategy for successful public health programs. As stated in the Ottawa Charter, "To reach a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. In this way, people cannot achieve their fullest health potential unless they take control of those things that determine their health".

The role of the college now is to design and implement its work based on the vision it develops for a healthier future and the assets it identifies as available for mobilizing to action. As residents organized around relatively small activities and plans, they would gradually increase their capacity to effect larger scale change. In this way, ensuring resident involvement in the planning makes the difference.

On the issues of health, a partnership should be created. The partners contribute unique strengths and shared responsibilities to enhance understanding of a given phenomenon. (Israel 1998). Partner should take the lead roles in community development efforts. Others, such as public health practitioners, researchers, and community organizers, can assist community members by presenting processes for facilitating meetings, problem-solving, and consensus building.

In the case of new partnerships, (Seifer SD, Shore N, Holmes SL, 2003) the process focus is on building trust and a shared purpose, which may include understanding one's own and each other's capacities and limitations as well as establishing operating norms and study objectives.

There are varieties of methodology that can be employed. The establishment of specific training to individual groups, in areas such as leadership development, engaging hard-to-reach residents, and launching small community improvement efforts through the use of neighborhood mini-grants, talk together about ideas that had worked, and issues and challenges they were all facing. (Zappia, and L. Puntenney, 2010)

Consequently, community development becomes a set of processes or efforts to create community change at the local level through strengthening social ties, increasing awareness of issues affecting the community, and enhancing community members' participation.



Figure adapted from Brownson et al., 2003 and Green et al., 1991.^{2,3,4}

academic institution serves as an "anchor" for the community in which they are situated because they can and should play a vital role in the economic development. In this way, both the community and the college that collaborate strategically, link multiple activities and realize the broader vision by which it is anchored.

The Bulacan State University is paying attention to advancing the skills of its staff and increasing organizational capacity to address critical skills in health care. The University is in a "win-win" proposition that enables the community residents to acquire a network of partners collaborating to remove challenges and have adopted the framework espoused by Brownson et al., (2003). It is important to ensure that the models and processes suggested can be modified by community members as needed.

What do we do at the Bulacan State University?

We promote the partnership by developing a shared group identity that relies on understanding, trust, acceptance of differences, and cohesive relationships. As partners, we create a purposive relationship to pursue an agenda or goal of mutual benefit. These build partnerships that address social determinants is not a monopoly of a single group, be it health care providers, public health practitioners, or community members because accomplishing things required for changing social, economic, and environmental conditions that have an impact on health is a collaborative effort.

The University as community health workers practice a wide variety of settings and assumed various roles.

TYPICAL FUNCTIONS

The functions performed by community health workers will vary by level, but may include the following:

- i. Evaluate health position of people and their community by implementing appropriate nursing interventions.
- ii. Determines health capability necessary to community health needs.
- iii. Provide expert nursing care in health care faculties.
- iv. Provide learning opportunities to the community.
- v. Provides administration of other health care requirements.

Specifically

Clinician: Provides a well-rounded health care support to a wide range of the wellness-illness field;

Educator: Assist client education on a broad range of subject and act as expert to the community. They also share information informally with clients.

Advocate: To help clients find out what services are available, which ones they are entitled to, and how to obtain these services. To influence change and make the system more relevant and responsible to clients' needs."Nurses must transmit the values of the nursing profession to society, so that society may change in accord with these values"(Fowler, 1989, p 98)

This alignment is critical for both university and community partner. They are completely equal in decision-making power to the academic partners. However,

Manager: Assist and convey quality nursing care as well as to manage the environment in which the care is administered. The need specific decision-making behaviors are also manifested.

Collaborator: Work hand-in-hand with clients, other co-health care provider.

Leader: Influence health planning to effect change.

Researcher: Employ methodical study, collection, and analysis to enhance community health practice.

Role of the community

One of the most important capacities to develop is a shared language and common understanding of how social determinants influence health.

- i. Encourage broad community participation in planning, organizing, and implementing projects.
- ii. Build unity and solidarity among community members.
- iii. Conduct timely discussions with the community by engaging them in a collaborative manner.
- iv. Establish social networks in the workplace to get the interest of the community. In this way they can express their condition so that it can be addressed.
- v. Provide the venue and opportunity for sharing leadership capability to ensure that their roles and responsibilities are appreciated.

FUTURE ISSUES

For a community to improve its health, its members must often change aspects of the physical, social, organizational, and even political environments to eliminate or reduce factors that contribute to health problems or to introduce new elements that promote better health. It is incumbent upon the University to expand and include the following:

- i. Secure women's contribution to the well-being of society specifically reproductive prospective.
- ii. Perform function such as provider of information for the prevention of illness.
- iii. Serve as counselor for mothers to carry out their task as co-leader of the community.

In cases where community health promotion activities are initiated by a health department or organization, organizers have a responsibility to engage the community to realize the vision of healthy people in healthy communities is possible only if the community, in its full cultural, social, and economic diversity, is an authentic partner in changing the conditions for health.

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