Advisory committees for evaluation of community power-building programs: experiences and lessons learned

November 11, 2022

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Session overview

- Introduction
- Brief panelist presentations
- Panelist discussion
- Q&A
Introduction

**Community power** is the ability of communities most impacted by inequity to act together to voice their needs and hopes for the future and to collectively drive structural change, hold decision-makers accountable, and advance health equity [and other goals].

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Evaluating power-building programs

- Participatory evaluation can advance the power-building goals of the program while also advancing the evaluation
- Advisory committees are one structure for this
- Today’s discussion is a space to reflect on and learn from experiences working with advisory committees for evaluation of community power-building programs
An advisory committee focused on relationship-building: Community Solutions for Health Equity
- Carrie Fisher, Institute for Community Health

An advisory committee focused on conceptual exploration: Community Change Power in Places
- Katie Fox, Grassroots Solutions and Virginia Roncaglione, Innovation Network

An advisory committee focused on evaluation planning: Voices for Health Justice
- Ranjani Paradise, Institute for Community Health
An advisory committee focused on relationship-building: Community Solutions for Health Equity (CSHE)

Carrie Fisher, Roxanne James, Sofia Ladner, Amanda Robinson, Ranjani Paradise, Karla Walker
Community Solutions for Health Equity (CSHE)

- Funded by Robert Wood Johnson (RWJF)
- Run by Community Catalyst
- National Advisory Council (NAC)
- Grantees: 11 small community-based organizations
- Focus on making local health systems more responsive to community voices and needs
CSHE values

- Moving at the speed of trust
- The process is the product
- Cultural translation – fully equal valuing of community knowledge and institutional knowledge
CSHE evaluation

- Based in Equitable Evaluation principles
- First stage pre-award
- Focused on CFP development, proposal review, and selection process
- Turned lens on the Foundation
- Told the story of how the program came to be unique
CSHE evaluation

- Second stage intended to explore program implementation
- Turned lens to CSHE at Community Catalyst
- Planned participatory methods
- Began to encounter relationship-based obstacles
- Formed Evaluation Learning Group
The Evaluation Learning Group

- Intentionally fostered diversity in members
- Monthly meetings, 1:1 make-up sessions
- Meetings: Careful balance between structure and openness
Key approach: language justice

- Prioritizing language access
  - 100% of email communication is translated
  - Live interpreters at all meetings
  - Bilingual slides
  - Bilingual facilitators translate chat in real time
Key approach: using program concepts

- Building on concepts established by program
- No shortcuts to putting in time
- 1:1s and knowing each person individually (despite Zoom!)
- Getting personal / allowing vulnerability
An advisory committee focused on conceptual exploration: Community Change Power in Places

November 11, 2022
American Evaluation Association
Community Change Power in Places Initiative

- **Peer learning cohort** of 29 community organizing groups, in 22 states and Washington, DC
- Focuses on **supporting and surfacing** successful and innovative approaches to building grassroots bases and power in Black, Brown, and immigrant communities
- The **JPB Foundation** funds both PiP and the evaluation

Number of partners in each state: 1, 2, 4
Advisory Committee Purpose and Goals

**Purpose:** To ground the PiP learning and evaluation project in the experiences and interests of the cohort organizations.

**Goal 1**
To explore and build *shared understanding of base building concepts* and practices.

**Goal 2**
To gather ideas for how we can *maximize the benefits and minimize the burden* of learning and evaluation activities for PiP partners.

**Goal 3**
To create a space and process that is *co-creative, enriching, fun, and mutually beneficial* for everyone involved.
Participant Recruitment

1) Developed criteria and a short list
2) Created a recruitment flyer
3) Recruited organizers at CC to do outreach
4) Six organizations opted in and self-selected their representative

Compensation

Each participant received $3,000 via money transfer to their organization at the end of the three sessions.

Estimated 12 total hours time commitment over 3 months at $250/hour.
The advisory committee met in three, two-hour sessions over five weeks.

**Session 1**
- 10/8/2021
- Relationship building
- Level-setting
- Discussing what base building means

**Session 2**
- 10/27/2021
- Defining base building “success”
- Sharing base building practices

**Session 3**
- 11/12/2021
- Gathering input and ideas for three learning activities
An advisory committee focused on evaluation planning: Voices for Health Justice

Ranjani Paradise, Julia Curbera, Nubia Goodwin, Sofia Ladner, Amanda Robinson, Carrie Fisher
Voices for Health Justice (VHJ)

- Provides grants and technical assistance to 25 multi-org projects in 24 states
- Goal: build community power for health justice, with focus on healthcare access, affordability, and dignity
VHJ evaluation

- Evaluation partner: Institute for Community Health (ICH)
- Recruited an Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) of grantee and subgrantee representatives

Timeline:
- April 2021
- May 2021
- June 2021
- July 2021

Evaluation plan
- Landscape scan on community power
- Theory of change
VHJ Evaluation Advisory Committee recruitment

Recruitment process
- Recruitment language emailed to all grantees and subgrantees
- Drop in Zoom Q&A sessions to learn more and ask questions

Commitment and compensation
- Asked for initial 4-month commitment, estimating ~3 hrs/mo
- Stipend corresponding to ~$250/hr

→ 19 EAC members!!!
VHJ Evaluation Advisory Committee activities

MONTHLY MEETINGS
- Relationship-building
- Discussion about progress and next steps
- Gather input and feedback on potential approaches and methods

DESIGN SESSIONS
- Session 1 – Theory of change
- Session 2 – Evaluation questions
- EAC members expected to attend one
- Pre-work: generating ideas in online shared document
- Facilitated discussion during sessions (Zoom)
After the design phase, 10 members continued on to participate in the EAC for the implementation of the evaluation.

Quarterly meetings during implementation phase:

- Relationship-building and networking
- Discuss evaluation progress and reflect on findings
- Provide input and feedback on specific evaluation activities
  - Social network analysis survey instrument
  - Selection criteria, data collection methods, and compensation for case study projects
Panelist discussion

- Successes and facilitators
- Challenges
- Advice and tips
Key takeaways

- Build relationships early and throughout
- Set clear expectations and communicate them transparently
- Let structure follow the purpose
- Relinquish control and accept uncertainty
- Create accessible spaces for people to participate
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**Use this QR code to view and download:**

- Copy of slides
- Power in Places learning brief about the advisory committee
- Power in Places advisory committee recruitment flyer
- Voices for Health Justice advisory committee recruitment “job description”