



Review Criteria and Rating Scale for Community-Based Participatory Research

By Lawrence Green, DrPH

The following tools can help research partners gain perspective on a research idea and guide their thinking and planning for projects. They are not meant to proscribe a particular approach, but rather to spell out the categories and questions that pertain to a continuum of engagement. The first part of this document lists review criteria for community-based participatory research proposals. The second part applies a 5-point rating scale to these criteria to help researchers and their partners discern the degree to which their project design is participatory and action-oriented.



Review Criteria for CBPR Applications¹

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Participants and the nature of their involvement:

- Is the community of interest clearly described or defined?
- Do members of the defined community participating in the research have concern or experience with the issue?
- Are interested members of the defined community provided opportunities to participate in the research process?
- Has attention been given to establishing within the community an understanding of the researchers' commitment to the issue?

Origin of the research question:

- Did the impetus for the research come from the defined community?
- Is an effort to research the issue supported by members of the defined community?

Purpose of the research:

- Can the research facilitate learning among community participants about individual and collective resources for self-determination?
- Is the purpose of the research to empower the community to address determinants of health?

Process and methodological implications:

- Does the research process apply the knowledge of community participants in the phases of planning, implementation and evaluation?
- For community participants, does the process allow for learning about research methods?
- For researchers, does the process allow for learning about the community health issue?
- Are community participants involved in analytic issues: interpretation, synthesis and the verification of conclusions?

Nature of the research outcomes:

- Do community participants benefit from the research outcomes?
- Is there attention to or an explicit agreement between researchers and community participants with respect to ownership of the research data?
- Is there attention to or an explicit agreement between researchers and community participants with respect to the dissemination of the research results?

1 Drawn from Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Community-Based Participatory Research—Assessing the Evidence—Evidence Report/Technology Assessment Number 99, 2004.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evidence/pdf/cbpr/cbpr.pdf>

Review Criteria with Rating Scale of Possible Responses²

1. Participants and the nature of their involvement:

a. Is the community of interest clearly described or defined?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no description	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 inexplicit/general description	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 general description but explicit	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 general detailed description	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 detailed description
b. Do members of the defined community participating in the research have concern or experience with the issue?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no concern or experience with the issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 little concern or experience with the issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate concern or experience with the issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 much concern or experience with the issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 high concern or experience with the issue
c. Are interested members of the defined community provided opportunities to participate in the research process?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no opportunity to participate	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 little opportunity to participate	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 more than one opportunity to participate	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 several opportunities to participate	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 many opportunities to participate
d. Is attention given to barriers to participation, with consideration of those who have been under-represented in the past?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no attention to offsetting barriers	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low degree of attention to offsetting barriers	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate degree of attention to offsetting barriers	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 several opportunities to participate	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 high degree of attention to offsetting barriers
e. Has attention been given to establishing within the community an understanding of the researchers' commitment to the issue?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no attention to researchers' commitment	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low attention to researchers' commitment	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate attention to researchers' commitment	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 high attention to researchers' commitment	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 explicit agreement on researchers' commitment
f. Are community participants enabled to contribute their physical and/or intellectual resources to the research process?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no enabling of contribution from participants	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 mostly researcher effort; some support for contribution from participants	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 about equal contributions from participants and researchers	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 mostly resources and efforts of participants; researchers have some direct input	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 full enabling of participants' resources (researchers act only as facilitators)

2. Origin of the research study:

a. Did the impetus for the research come from the defined community?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 issue posed by researchers or other external bodies	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 impetus mainly from researchers; some input from community	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 impetus shared equally between researchers and community	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 impetus mainly from community; some input from researchers	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 issue posed by community
b. Is an effort to research the issue supported by members of the defined community?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 support for research from very few, if any, community members	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 less than half of community supports research on issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 community is roughly divided about research on issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 more than half of community supports research on issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 support for research from virtually all community members

3. Purpose of the research:

a. Can the research facilitate learning among community participants about individual and collective resources for self-determination?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no provision for learning process	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low provision for learning process	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate provision for learning process	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate/high provision for learning process	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 high provision for learning process
b. Can the research facilitate collaboration between community participants and resources external to the community?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no potential for collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low potential for collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate potential for collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate/high potential for collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 high potential for collaboration
c. Is the purpose of the research to empower the community to address determinants of health?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 purpose devoid of empowerment objective	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low priority given to empowerment objective	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate priority for empowerment objective	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate/high priority for empowerment objective	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 high priority for empowerment objective
d. Does the scope of the research encompass some combination of political, social and economic determinants of health?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no consideration of political, social or economic determinants	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 only one or two determinants are considered	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 limited consideration of combined determinants of health	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate consideration of combined determinants of health	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 comprehensive consideration of combined determinants

4. Process and context/methodological implications:

a. Does the research process apply the knowledge of community participants in phases of planning, implementation & evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no use of community knowledge in any phase	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 use of community knowledge in one or two phases only	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 limited use of community knowledge in all three phases	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate use of community knowledge in all three phases	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 comprehensive use of community knowledge in all three phases
b. For community participants, does the process allow for learning about research methods?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no opportunity for learning about research	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low opportunity for learning about research	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate opportunity for learning about research	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate/high opportunity for learning about research	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 high opportunity for learning about research
c. For researchers, does the process allow for learning about the community health issue?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no opportunity for learning about community issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low opportunity for learning about community issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate opportunity for learning about community issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate/high opportunity to learn about community issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 high opportunity for learning about community issue
d. Does the process allow for flexibility or change in research methods and focus, as necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 methods & focus predetermined; no potential for flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 mostly predetermined methods & focus; limited flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 equal blend of predetermined methods & focus w/ flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 high flexibility; some predetermined methods & focus	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 complete flexibility; methods & focus not predetermined
e. Are procedures in place for appraising experiences during implementation of the research?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no procedures for appraising experiences	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 few procedures for appraising experiences	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 some procedures for appraising experiences	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 many procedures for appraising experiences	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 comprehensive procedures for appraising experiences
f. Are community participants involved in analytic issues: interpretation, synthesis and the verification of conclusions?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no involvement of participants in any analytic issue	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 involvement in one or two analytic issues only	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 limited involvement of participants in all three analytic issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate involvement of participants in all three analytic issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 comprehensive involvement in all three analytic issues

5. Opportunities to address the issue of interest:

a. Is the potential of the defined community for individual and collective learning reflected by the research process?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 research process not aligned w/ potential for learning	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 limited alignment of research process w/ potential for learning	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate alignment of research process w/ potential for learning	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate/high alignment w/ potential for learning	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 comprehensive alignment w/ potential for learning
b. Is the potential of the defined community for action reflected by the research process?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 research process not aligned with potential for action	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 limited alignment of research process w/ potential for action	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate alignment of research process w/ potential for action	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate/high alignment w/ potential for action	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 comprehensive alignment w/ potential for action
c. Does process reflect commitment by researchers & community participants to social, individual or cultural actions consequent to learning acquired through research?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no commitment to action beyond data collection & analysis, writing report for funding agencies	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low commitment to social actions based on learning through research	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate commitment to social actions based on learning through research	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 moderate/high commitment to social actions based on learning through research	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 comprehensive commitment to social actions based on learning through research

6. Nature of the research outcomes:

a. Do community participants benefit from the research outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 research benefits researchers or external bodies only	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 researchers/external bodies benefit primarily; community benefit is secondary	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 equal benefit for researchers/external bodies and community	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 research benefits community primarily; benefit is secondary for researchers and external bodies	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 explicit agreement on how research will benefit community
b. Is there attention to or an explicit agreement for acknowledging/resolving in a fair and open way any differences between researchers and community participants in interpretation of results?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no attention to or any agreement re interpretation of issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low attention to interpretation of issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate consideration of interpretation issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 high attention to interpretation issues; no explicit agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 explicit agreement on interpretation issues
c. Is there attention to or an explicit agreement between researchers and community participants with respect to ownership of the research data?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no attention to or any agreement re ownership issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low attention to ownership issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate consideration of ownership issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 high attention to ownership issues; no explicit agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 explicit agreement on ownership issues
d. Is there attention to or an explicit agreement between researchers and community participants with respect to the dissemination of the research results?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 no attention to or any agreement regarding dissemination issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 low attention to dissemination issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 moderate consideration of dissemination issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 high attention to dissemination issues; no explicit agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 explicit agreement on dissemination issues

2 Guidelines and Categories for Classifying Participatory Research Projects in Health Promotion from Green LW, George MA, Daniel M, Frankish CJ, Herbert CP, Bowie WR, O'Neill M. Study of Participatory Research in Health Promotion. Royal Society of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, 1995:43-50.
<http://www.lgreen.net/guidelines.html>