

Local place-based partnerships as a pathway to health equity

Aleks Czulak, Gramlich Fellow 2023

February 2, 2023



Why local, place-based efforts? And why CBOs?

- **Areas with multi-sector networks or partnerships can lead to improved system capacity and local health outcomes.**
- **Not all areas can be funded with designated resources to support improved coordination and vision setting at the local, place-based model**
- **In many places, local community-based organizations can serve in the role of a backbone lead to build local, system capital to improve health and wellbeing at the place-based level.**

Overview of research question

Research question:

What can be learned from the experiences of community-based organizations that have leveraged partnerships to create healthy and equitable communities?

For today's discussion:

- Why now
- What are the existing models
- Themes of successful practices

Research and methodology, including interviews with local organizations across the country

Research and methodology

- Review of research and reports
- Interviews with experts across research on collective impact and partnerships and health equity, community development
- Interviews and site visits with leaders and staff from NeighborWorks Network and local community-based organizations



Organization

Location



St. Louis County, MO



Oakland, CA



Evansville, IN



Poughkeepsie, NY



Oakland, CA



San Francisco, CA



Providence, RI



Oakland, CA

Four key themes from local, backbone organizations and partnerships to further health equity:



Buy-in and action to shift from a programmatic to a more holistic approach



Central importance of physical assets and on-the-ground social services



History of local collaborations – with local organizations and government



Ability to adapt, experiment, and innovate



Buy-in and action to shift from a programmatic to a more holistic approach

- **“Comprehensive services” is not necessarily a holistic or transformational approach.** However, it does help get the partners to understand the interconnectedness of their programs and services, and how they work together.
- **Be iterative and humble**
- **Shift from “it’s not my job” to “who do we need to tap in,”** while not overselling capabilities or experience.
- **Help partnership and organizations in the partnership develop** their role, identify opportunities, and instill confidence in the partnership



Central importance of physical assets and on-the-ground social services



St. Louis County, MO



Oakland, CA



History of local collaborations – with local organizations and government

Type of collaboration

Description

Local organizations

- **A rich culture and history of collaboration** brings partners together for urgent response and formalized efforts
- Some of the challenges / past friction can include:
 - Competition for limited resources and influence
 - Siloed sectors or areas of focus due to differences in terminology used, lack of trust in, between, or across sectors, and past engagement
 - Backbone orgs may not be a neutral convener– is that okay for the partnership?

Government

- There is a **balance required in when / how to engage government**
 - Raise awareness of the important work and coordination
 - Advocate for policies
 - Decide when to collaborate versus when to criticize efforts



Ability to adapt, experiment, and innovate

- **Community- and resident-driven to ensure actions are consistent with the visions**
- **Serve as a bridge or translator** across sectors, geographic levels, or areas of focus to share the work of the partnership
- **Invest in more innovative tools** to serve the community with longer-time horizon

Four key themes from local, backbone organizations and partnerships to further health equity:



Buy-in and action to shift from a programmatic to a more holistic approach



Central importance of physical assets and on-the-ground social services



History of local collaborations – with local organizations and government



Ability to adapt, experiment, and innovate



These practices can help:

- **Bridge and coordinate among sectors, community-based organizations, local anchor institutions, and residents together to work on collective vision for local communities**
- **Make meaningful improvements community health and wellbeing** so that all community members can thrive

Contact information

Aleks Czulak

aczulak@hks.harvard.edu or aczulak@mit.edu

773-614-0733