Community-based participatory research (CBPR)

- Multiple terms used interchangeably:

Action research

Action inquiry

Community-based research

Action Science

Participatory action research

Participatory research

Cooperative inquiry

- What they have in common:
  - **Collaborative approach** between researchers, organizations and communities
  - **Recognition of the strengths** and resources of a community
  - **Relevance** of community-defined problems
  - **Iterative process** to develop and maintain community partnerships
  - **Dissemination of knowledge** gained from the CBPR project to and by all involved partners

Necessity of CPBR

- Lacking expertise of community-defined problems
- Top-down approaches often don't work as they don't tackle community-defined problems
- Community members are participants but no direct action is taken after the research

Defining principles of CPBR

Community is the key unit of identity in CBPR

- Participants are individuals, but those individuals belong to larger communities
- Communities share connection and identification with their community members and share values and norms, mutual influence, common interest and needs
- Often CBPR is applied to marginalized communities that experience health inequalities and inequities, but this is no prerequisite

Defining principles of CPBR

CBPR addresses issues of race, ethnicity, sexism and social class and embraces cultural humility

- CBPR practitioners are committed to identifying and addressing social determinants of poverty, discrimination, and racism
- CBPR practitioners cultivate cultural humility, which has been defined as having an accurate view of one's own identity; not assuming one's own identities, values and perspectives are superior to others'; and being open to and interested in the identities, values and perspectives of others

Defining principles of CPBR

CBPR is guided by an ecological, multideterminant perspective

- CBPR practitioners consider research questions from an ecological perspective that acknowledges that health status is not solely individually determined, but is shaped by larger interpersonal, community, societal forces

- Therefore, it is important to have multidisciplinary and identity diverse teams to provide a differentiated and comprehensive set of perspectives to inform the research process

Defining principles of CPBR

CBPR aims to build equitable research partnerships

- CBPR emphasizes collaborative, equitable partnerships among researchers, stakeholders and community members throughout all phases of research.
- Researchers acknowledge power differentials and ameliorate these through building trust, mutual respect, and community empowerment.

Defining principles of CPBR

CBPR researchers acknowledge and promote community strengths

- Foundational to a CBPR approach is the acknowledgment of communities' strengths, including local and institutional knowledge (e.g., gatekeepers, historical and larger community perspectives, communication styles) and skills (e.g., community engagement, relationship building, data collection and interpretation)

- CBPR practitioners support communities' existing strengths through capacity building

Defining principles of CPBR

The CBPR process is cyclical and iterative

- Research methods, endpoints and deliverables cannot be entirely fixed at the start of the research process

Defining principles of CPBR

CBPR strives to create relevant, sustainable and positive change for communities

- CBPR practitioners aim to contribute to generalizable, scientific knowledge while also ensuring that community partners experience lasting benefits from research collaborations

- These benefits should endure beyond the timeframe of any specific research project and thus should be able to be maintained by the community after the research is completed

3 key components

1. **Community Defined:** the problem under investigation is defined by the community itself, or in collaboration with the formally trained researchers

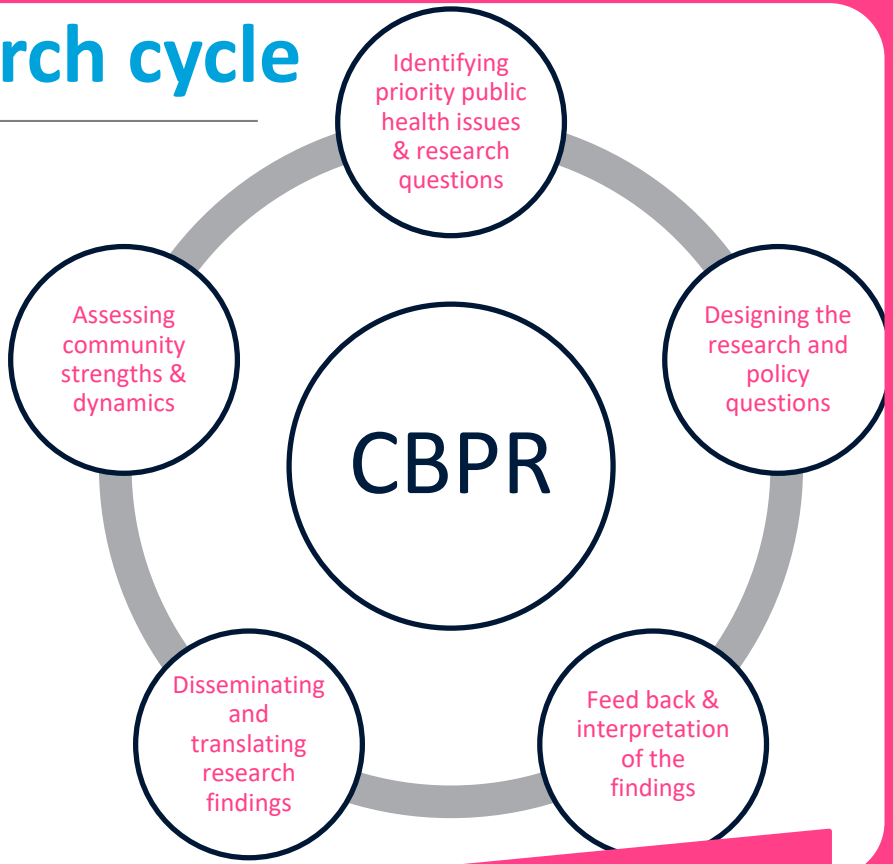
2. **Equitable Collaboration**: power and decision-making are shared in all phases of the research and intervention processes

3. **Action Outcome:** the project must include a component that enables direct action on the problem set under investigation

The research cycle

CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community…

… and has the aim of ***combining knowledge with action*** to achieve social change.



The research cycle

- Identify existing community knowledge and skills
- Identify community individuals or organizations to partner with
- Identify where assistance in further developing community members', institutions' and organizations' skills, resources, and competencies is needed

The research cycle

- Community defined problems
  - What is the problem at hand?
  - What are the underlying factors, why is it a problem?
  - What is needed and what needs to change?
  - Who is needed for change?
  - What is NOT needed?
  - Etc…
- Data collection
  - Surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc…

The research cycle

- Data analysis
  - Endpoints are discussed together
  - Data analysis varies on skills: choice of data analysis method, conducting analysis

- Data interpretation (!) – validation of research findings
  - Relying on community strengths & dynamics
    → Cultural humility

The research cycle

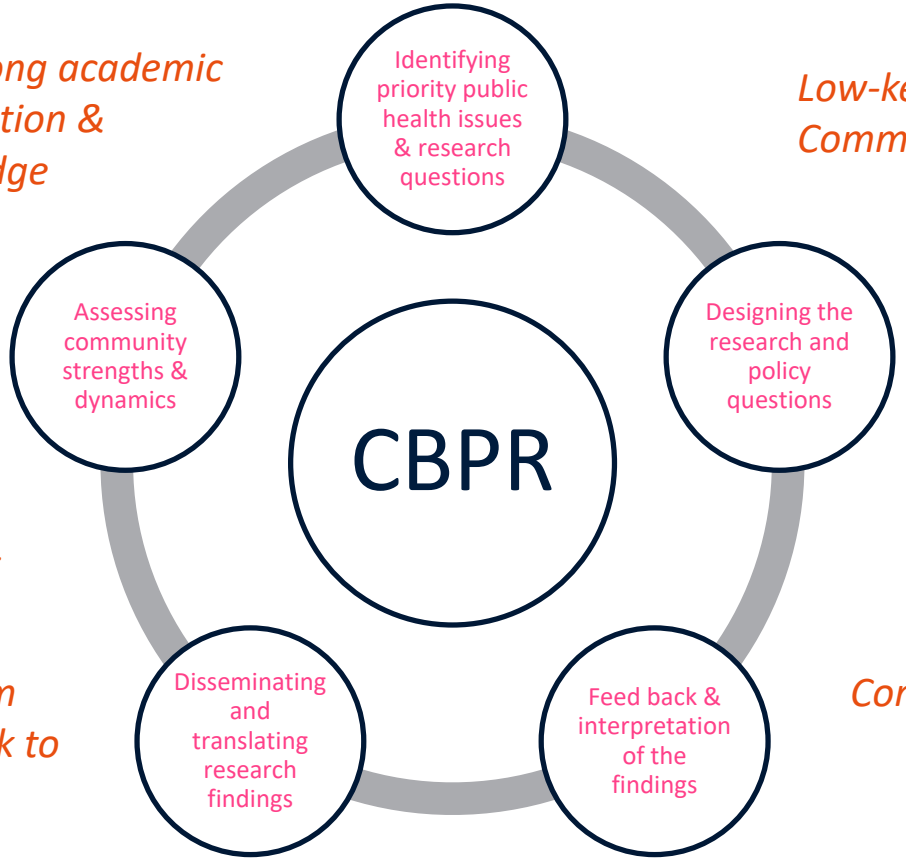
- Data dissemination
  - Communities guide what is most important to disseminate
  - Discuss who needs to disseminate what to whom?
    - Academic
    - Policy makers
    - Communities
  - Discuss how do we disseminate to whom?
    - Research articles, policy briefs, video's, factsheets, etc…
- Translation of findings into action
  - Active role for community for maintenance

Response to strong academic / NGO collaboration & existing knowledge

Low-key recruitment
Community interviewers

Strengths

Empowerment of community interviewers:
- research skills
- contract at recognized organization
- recommendation letters



Action points came from community & gives back to community

Continuous feedback

Maastricht University
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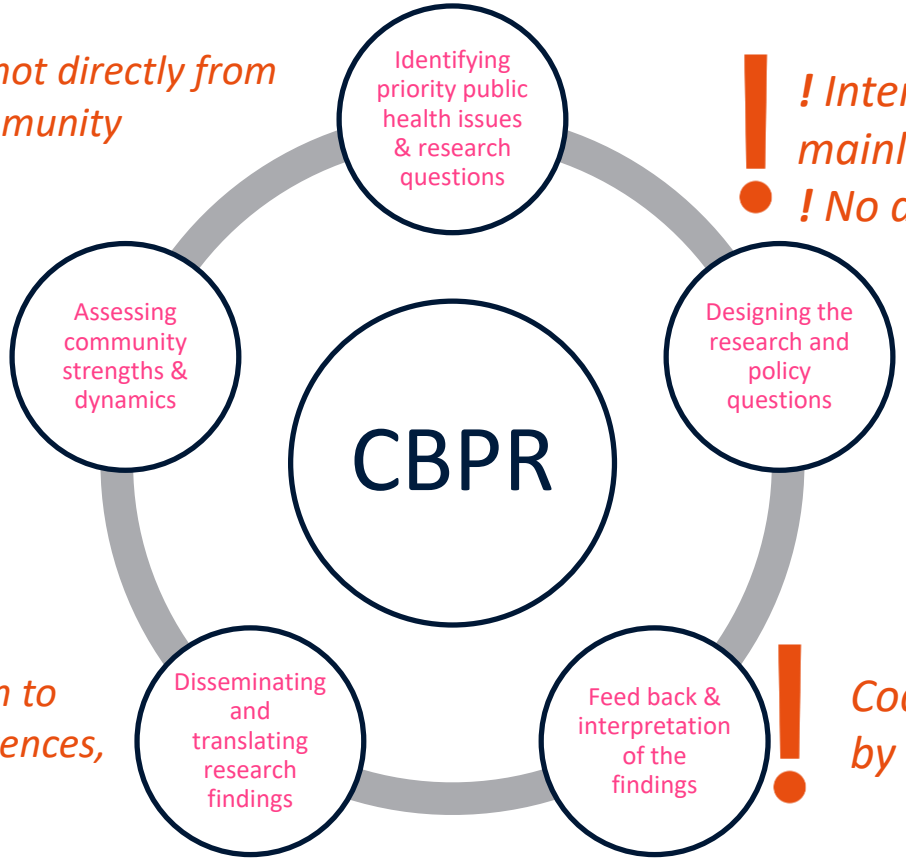
Mi HEALTH

Challenges

! *RQ not directly from community*

! *Interview guide development mainly done by us*

! *No direct role in recruitment*



! *No role in dissemination to policy / scientific conferences, only to community*

! *Coding/analysis done mainly by us*

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Challenges

Power dynamics leading to unequal status of community members

- ! Higher positions in this research were still by more privileged persons → volunteer status of community researchers
- ! Unfair compensation due to lack of funding: Payment only for interviews (but fair compensation of 150 euro), but no additional payment for all other meetings

Involvement throughout research cycle: Most prominent until data collection

Continuation: No structural involvement of community researchers after this one project

Active role in dissemination to decision-makers: Communication/dissemination mainly done by main researchers