

ARCC Round 6 Seed Grant Project Summaries

Partnership Building Grants

Building a Community-Academic Partnership to Formulate Research on the Outcomes of the Global Gardens Refugee Training Farm

Marta Pereyra, Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly, and Madelyn Iris, Preventive Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine

Ensuring the health and well-being of refugees in the U.S. is a major concern for health care and social service providers, advocates, and refugees themselves. Diversity among refugee populations poses a challenge to ensuring adequate access to and provision of both physical and mental health care, with potential negative impacts on long-term health and well-being. Refugees, by definition, come from situations of hardship, persecution and personal danger, putting them at significant disadvantage upon resettlement. Burmese and Bhutanese refugees are among the most recent to arrive in Chicago. Both groups endured prolonged refugee situations and little is known about their cultural understandings of health and health care. The Global Gardens Refugee Training Farm (the Farm), operated by the Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly (CLESE), is one intervention that erases resettlement for these two groups.

This partnership project seeks to establish a Farm Health and Research Advisory Committee (FHRAC) for the Farm, that will identify key research questions, establish research priorities and oversee future research on the Farm's impact on the physical, mental and emotional health of elderly participants. The project will bring together members of the Bhutanese and Burmese communities, non-profit organizations providing supportive and direct care services, and academic researchers. Founded on the principles of CBPR, the FHRAC will seek to better understand the social and cultural dimensions of the refugees' health, with maximum input and participation from community members. CBPR builds research capacity among academic and community partners and ensures more equitable involvement in future studies. The goal is to further research efforts that address issues of greatest concern to the communities, using language and concepts that most meaningful. This partnership will provide a platform for advancing research for both academic and practical purposes, focusing on increasing our understanding of health outcomes for refugee urban farmers.

The Courage to Love: Developing Relational Approaches to Eliminating Disparities in Preterm Birth and Infant Mortality

Kirsten Peachey, The Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation (Advocate Health Center and University of Illinois at Chicago), and Craig Garfield, Pediatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine

The Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation, the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition and Dr. Craig Garfield of the Feinberg School of Medicine are partnering to convene the Courage to Love Collaborative, a community of diverse stakeholders working to design a fundable research agenda to examine the power of love as a framework for eliminating disparities of infant

mortality and preterm births in Chicago's African American communities. The causes for these disparities are complex, but the stress of racism and poverty appear to be a factor. Studies also show that social connectedness seems to encourage resilience, immunity, a sense of well-being, and better physical functioning.

Joining with partners from four Chicago communities with high preterm birth rates, the Collaborative will wrestle with the question:

Assuming racism is fundamentally a relational issue, could love—reproductive social capital—help mediate its affects and provide a protective buffer for African American families who experience the “weathering” of racism to reduce disparities in preterm birth and infant mortality in a Chicago community?

Our activities will focus on preparing to implement a CBPR research initiative. During the first 12 months, we will build the Courage to Love Collaborative, focusing on relationship building; clarifying our purpose, theory, approach, and resources; designing an RFP process by which to identify a community with which to develop a fundable, CBPR research program. We then turn to laying the groundwork for an on-going research initiative by developing an RFP for communities to apply to be a partner to take these initial ideas, refine and shape them into research questions and apply for funding to carry out the research agenda.

We assume that people of faith have unique capacities for relational approaches, so the collaborative will intentionally integrate faith language, theology and practices alongside physical and social science.

Reach to Faith: Research and Education for African American Caregiver Health

Etta McGregor-Jones, Amani Trinity United Community Health Corporation, and Darby Morhardt, Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease Center, Feinberg School of Medicine

In response to the growing number of African American older adults with Alzheimer's disease, the strong influence of religious beliefs and spirituality among African Americans and the lack of research in collaboration with faith-based organizations in the African-American community. Amani-Trinity United Community Health Corporation and Northwestern's Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease Center are seeking partnership building support from the Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities.

CNADC and Amani each brings unique strengths to the proposed partnership, including several combined years of clinical social work experience, including working with older adults and caregiving families, prior experience in community-based participatory research (CNADC), comprehensive knowledge of dementia related diseases (CNADC), and a 12-year history responding to the needs of the African-American community (Amani).

Our goals are to:

- 1) Establish a strong working relationship and infrastructure among Amani, Northwestern CNADC and 7 faith based organizations (FBOs),

- 2) Involve the FBOs in an exploration of attitudes about Alzheimer's disease, caregiving and barriers to seeking help among the African-American community,
- 3) Build a collective capacity on dementia knowledge, issues faced by caregiving families specifically those unique to African American community, and
- 4) Develop culturally appropriate research tools for future use in implementation.

At the conclusion of the partnership building phase, Amani, the 7 FBOs and the CNADC will be prepared to conduct a needs assessment of African American caregivers in the 7 FBOs who are caring for a family member with cognitive impairment. Amani hopes to use data from this research to develop an intervention within the FBOs. The CNADC hopes to expand their understanding of the cultural effect on conceptualizations of Alzheimer's disease, caregiving, help-seeking, and research participation in the African American community, as well as develop a CBPR approach to conducting needs assessments in FBOs that can be replicated in other ethnic communities.

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Implementation Grants

Evaluating the Dissemination of Community-level HIV Prevention Information Using a Social Networks Approach

Dianna Manjarrez, MPH, Vida/SIDA- Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and George Greene, Medical Social Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine

Ethnic and racial disparities in the HIV/AIDS epidemic are a pressing health concern among young Latino men. Moreover, there is a very limited understanding of the factors that underlie racial disparities in HIV among young men who have sex with men (YMSM). Although some differences in risk factors have been identified, evidence strongly suggests that social network factors play a role in HIV disparities in HIV. To address this disparity, Vida/SIDA, a program of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, has attained funding from the CDC to implement the "Mpowerment Project," a community-level HIV prevention intervention for MSM. Utilizing an innovative social networks methodology, the overarching goal of this proposal is to evaluate the diffusion of HIV prevention information among young, Latino MSM (18-24 years old) enrolled in this intervention. Specifically, this proposal aims to: (1) identify and describe the structure of the social networks of Mpowerment Project participants (n=120); and (2) assess the degree and processes through which HIV preventive messages are disseminated through their social networks. To accomplish the study aims, our community-academic partnership between Vida/SIDA and the IMPACT LGBT Health and Development Program in the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine will collect cross-sectional, computer-assisted surveys and conduct face-to-face social network interviews with study participants. This innovative study extends established social science approaches to understand network processes which provide social support, access to resources and information, as well as influence the health behavior of YMSM. Vida/SIDA, the IMPACT Program, and local community members will be involved in every phase of this research, from identification of community needs and proposal development, to interpretation and dissemination of study results. Beginning with research that is relevant to community stakeholders, our community-based participatory research approach has the potential to impact community health by informing future HIV prevention research and intervention.

Partnership for a Better Roseland- Choose Life Project

Sherida Morrison, Demoiselle 2 Femme, and Virginia Bishop, Preventive Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine

Partnership for a Better Roseland (PBR) consists of nine organizations engaged in CBPR through an initial Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC) partnership building grant. The mission of PBR is to coordinate the efforts of community and faith-based organizations to improve the health, safety and wellness of youth in our community. Roseland is a low-income, primarily African American Chicago community which gained national attention when a high school student was beaten to death by a gang mob. Over the past 28 months, PBR has identified health priorities, community resources and worked on strengthening infrastructure needed to conduct research. Partnership for a Better Roseland is seeking an ARCC Seed Implementation Grant to conduct activities which support “Choose Life”- a Community-Based Participatory Research Project to Reduce School-Related Youth Violence in Greater Roseland.

The purpose of the “Choose Life” study is to: examine and address school-related violence as a health priority among Roseland youth ages 14-18; gather community specific youth violence data through qualitative analysis administered to the Roseland community high school students; classify and prioritize the factors associated with the violence experience of these Greater Roseland Community youth; and disseminate findings to key stakeholders for broader impact through community action plans, policy development and contribution to the research field. Students who participated in the “Choose Life” youth violence survey will be asked to review, comment, and interpret findings. Tens students from each school be randomly selected for the focus group discussing the survey results and prioritizing the issues specific to their school and to Roseland community school policies. Key stakeholders: faith and community representatives and residents, youth, school administration, policy makers and politicians will be targeted for dissemination of findings and recommendations. Specific to the grant request, PBR is seeking ARCC funding for translation and dissemination of research findings form the “Choose Life” survey data. Research activities are divided into specific (2) Phases: Qualitative Research and Data Interpretation, and Dissemination.