

**Community Involvement in Partnerships with
Educational Institutions, Medical Centers, and Utility Companies**

A paper prepared by the Aspen Institute Roundtable on
Comprehensive Community Initiatives
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Background

In the spring of 1999, the Aspen Institute Roundtable began an exploration of partnerships between community-based organizations and colleges, universities, medical centers, and public utilities that we collectively refer to as anchor institutions. We use this term to refer to institutions that have a significant infrastructure investment in a specific community and are therefore unlikely to move out of that community.¹ The purpose of this project was to document and assess the experiences of the *communities* that participate in such partnerships, using community-based organizations as our principal data source for this information.

Our intent was to understand the kinds of experiences – both positive and negative -- that can result from such partnerships; the opportunities such partnerships offer for bringing about community and institutional change; and the conditions and practices that seem to facilitate or impede their effectiveness.

The project was conducted in three stages and the information summarized below was derived from several data sources. As a first step in this inquiry, we reviewed written documents, conducted Internet searches, and interviewed numerous observers of this field. Through this process we identified issues that arise within the context of community partnerships with anchor institutions, and sites from which useful lessons could be drawn. We interviewed over 40 observers of this field.

Our next step involved interviewing CBO directors about their partnership experiences. We targeted our interviews to organizations that were engaged in community improvement or revitalization efforts, rather than on those solely involved in service learning projects. We explored several issues related to the nature, structure, processes and outcomes of the partnerships in

¹ It is important to note that when we introduced and defined our use of the phrase “anchor institution” at a roundtable discussion with community representatives from these partnerships the participants had mixed responses. While many indicated that they found the phrase useful, at least one member of the group felt that the term had negative connotations. Specifically, this CBO director expressed the view that collectively residents are more reliable as an anchor than locally situated institutions. She noted that: “If you really look at what an anchor is, it is that piece that holds something in place and keeps it from moving... So I would like to redefine anchor institutions to be more the residents in the community, who are there for the long haul, rather than academic or medical institutions.”

which they were involved. For example, we asked interviewees about the development and evolution of the partnership, the role of residents, the challenges and opportunities presented by the partnership, the factors that contribute to and work against the effective functioning of the partnership, and the benefits of the partnership for the community. We interviewed 32 CBO representatives, engaged in partnerships with approximately 17 universities, 12 medical centers and 4 utility companies.²

Our third step consisted of a roundtable discussion with a subset of the CBO directors who we interviewed in stage two. Roundtable participants represented partnerships with universities, medical centers, and regulated public utilities and included observers of this field.

Appendix A contains a list of the community based representatives with whom we conducted interviews. Appendix B contains the questions that guided our interviews with observers and with CBO representatives, and the roundtable discussion.

In the paragraphs that follow we synthesize the findings from the three stages of this project.

State of Knowledge about Partnerships

Most of what is being done in the field focuses on partnerships between colleges/universities and communities. There appear to be fewer examples of and much less attention paid to partnerships between communities and medical centers and utilities. In addition, much of the literature on partnerships between anchor institutions and communities focuses on the institutions rather than on the community perspective. Moreover, the definition of community varies greatly across such partnerships and, in some cases, is as likely to mean having government and corporate involvement as having grassroots participation.

For all of these reasons, the role of the community, the types of community groups or organizations that are involved, and the way partnerships are institutionalized at the local level are less well understood than the roles and concerns of anchor institutions.

² Note that the number of directors interviewed and the number of anchor institutions does not match up. This variation is accounted for by the fact that in some cases we interviewed: more than one person from a CBO; CBO representatives that are in partnership with multiple institutions; and representatives of different CBOs that are in partnership with the same institution.

Motivations for Involvement in Partnerships

Enlightened self-interest provides a strong motivation for an institution to establish a relationship with a distressed community. There is consensus within the literature and among our respondents that the significant real estate and physical plant investments made by anchor institutions constitute a primary motivation for participation in community partnerships. While other institutions may come and go, these institutions are not going to move. When deteriorating physical conditions, crime, and a generally unpleasant environment surround them, it affects their staff, clients, and students, thus motivating many to find ways to promote or cooperate with community improvement efforts.

For example, some universities located in the inner city have had difficulty recruiting students because of their location in or near neighborhoods that are perceived as being unsafe. Similarly, hospital staff, particularly those who work late shifts, may experience difficulties or be concerned about their safety as they travel back and forth between the hospital and the surrounding community. Hospitals also worry about losing patients who do not want to come into inner-city areas that they view as unsafe or unsightly. Often the institutions that become involved in partnerships realize that community conditions are more likely to improve if they participate in and support the change process.

Communities also provide an opportunity for universities to advance the intellectual and practical learning of their students and faculty, and are therefore seen as natural laboratories in which to undertake both basic and applied research. At the same time, through service learning opportunities, communities provide a place in which to enhance the capacities of students to be good citizens.

For a number of institutions, it is part of their mission and tradition to serve the community. In a historical review of university-community partnerships, Harkavy noted that in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries a number of university presidents envisioned their institutions as places that could improve the quality of life in American cities.³ However, as Harkavy and others are quick to point out, with some notable exceptions few universities operationalized this vision during this period. At the same time, Catholic hospitals, land-grant universities, and historically black colleges and universities

³ Ira Harkavy, "Background Paper: Historical Evolution of University-Community Partnerships." (1998). Paper prepared for the Fannie Mae Foundation Research Roundtable Series, University Partnerships in Housing: Enhancing Local Capacity to Rebuild Communities.

stand out as three categories of institutions that have a strong and explicit orientation to community involvement. Indeed, as we scanned the field to identify hospital partners, by and large, those that emerged were Catholic Hospitals.

During the late 1900s financial considerations and other pressures motivated a number of colleges and universities to become involved in local communities. For example, the University of Illinois, Champaign Urbana became involved with community groups in East St. Louis at the insistence of a state representative who threatened to withhold university funding until a commitment was made. On the other hand, grant funds established by the Federal government, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development and by foundations, such as the Fannie Mae, Kellogg, Ford, and DeWitt Wallace Foundations have provided incentives for colleges and universities to become involved with distressed neighborhoods.

Utility companies also recognize the potential financial benefits of partnerships with communities. By working with community-based organizations that facilitate the development of new businesses and the retention of existing businesses, they can potentially increase the market for their products. One utility company was instrumental in creating a community-based organization that has a heavy emphasis on economic development in a low-income community. Over the years, this partnership has generated job opportunities for local residents and increased the demand for the utilities' products. Utilities are also under increasing pressure to demonstrate a sense of corporate responsibility towards the communities they serve.

Self-interest is also a powerful incentive for communities to engage in productive working relationships with anchor institutions. CBOs recognize that anchor institutions have intellectual, human and financial resources that could benefit their residents. Establishing working relationships with anchor institutions can facilitate CBOs efforts to tap the technical expertise housed in universities or use them as a source for staffing specific projects. They are often interested in the research capabilities that colleges and universities provide. Students and faculty in professional schools have been a particularly rich source of assistance for communities.

Some CBOs have been able to identify and point out to their institutional partners areas of mutual self interest and use this information to establish mutually beneficial projects. For example, one CBO director described the "detective work" that he and his staff use to identify ways in which their CBO can save their institutional partner money at the same time that it is investing in the local community.

It is an enlightened self-interest, which means that as the staff of the organization, you have to go do your homework. For instance for us to convince our partner to sign a first-source hiring agreement, we had to figure out how we were providing a potential job-ready labor force to them, (how) we were going to save them money. What we found was, in three or four of their lower-level job categories, they had an 80% loss rate during the probationary period. So, the negotiating, the leverage that we were going to use was that we were going to provide people who had been through a job readiness program and we were going to cut their early labor costs.

We've been able to document over the last year that they're saving several hundred thousand dollars a year by using a first-source hire agreement. We're now getting 30% of their savings going back into job training, and they're still saving money.

Partnership arrangements also give communities a vehicle to express their views, gain access to decision-makers, and develop more knowledge of how the anchor institutions are structured and behave. A number of communities have a history of poor relationships with local institutions because they feel that the institutions have acted in ways that were detrimental to residents and ignored their interests and concerns. As one community partner noted:

...The community saw institutions as large bodies that destroy neighborhoods and displace residents and take away local jobs and gentrify the area. They knocked down homes to create businesses.

Engaging in a working relationship with institutions can put CBOs in a position to help control or shape the process of university or hospital expansion and other institutional practices that could be detrimental or helpful to their communities.

Finally, a number of community partners noted that it was important to expose students to the community environment because that involvement might encourage students to pursue a career in the community development field.

Range of Partnership Arrangements

The relationships between the communities and institutions that we examined appear to be aligned along a continuum that ranged from being short-term,

instrumental and project-oriented to having structures for shared decision making and goal setting over a long-term engagement.

Although our in-depth examination focused largely on the latter types of partnerships, during our initial scan we encountered the full gamut. For example, we found that some of the partnerships are “one-time” arrangements designed to implement a specific project or program. These partnerships had no structure for on-going planning but had some degree of ad hoc shared decision-making regarding one “deal” from which both entities had something to gain. For example, one CBO owned land that a regulated public utility wanted to purchase. When the utility company approached the CBO to inquire about the availability of the land, the CBO used this opportunity to negotiate an agreement to sell the land in exchange for the utility’s agreement to do first source hiring from the community. In another case, a university and community were able to come together to determine the best way to rehabilitate housing in the neighborhood without deliberately setting the stage for gentrification.

Our community contacts provided several examples of the ways in which they benefited from the involvement of students and faculty of professional schools such as law, management, architecture, and urban planning in specific projects. Architecture graduate students were instrumental in developing plans for homes and resolving zoning issues for one CBO. This CBO Executive Director noted that this contribution drove their costs down and provided them with a permanent development tool since the doctoral students left the designs on the CBO’s computer. Such relationships, although of limited duration, yield positive outcomes for the communities involved. Relationships that start as small, project-specific involvement can expand into more wide-ranging and intense partnerships over time.

We also found examples in which community representatives were included on advisory committees at the anchor institution. This arrangement appeared to be more prevalent in community partnerships with universities. In these cases, the advisory board functioned as a sounding board regarding the potential effect of anchor institution policies on a community. The community representatives could make suggestions for a course of action, but there were no mandates, mechanisms or processes to follow-up on or attempt to ensure that the institution would act on issues surfaced by the community.

Finally, at the stage of the continuum that we consider a true partnership, we found several examples of arrangements that were characterized by shared decision making and goal setting, a mandate or mission to address problems that the committee identified, and a formal structure for ongoing problem solving and action. Often, though not always, the CBO and the anchor institution each

had long standing representation on the others' board or advisory committee. The anchor institution made available to the CBO financial and human resources to help them carry out the plans that they developed. The anchor institution also used its networks and contacts to help the CBO leverage additional resources. As one CBO representative whose organization is in partnership with a medical center noted:

It's important to get them at our table. But more importantly, they got us at their tables – we met with their bankers. We met with the people in the communities they were giving a lot of business, who gave us more... and their employees, who have resources. Our donor database is now 60% medical center employees because we went to all their staff meetings.

This type of partnership has also been described as an empowerment/capacity building model. The emphasis is on building the capacity of CBOs while at the same time the anchor institution benefits from the collaboration relationship with the CBO. Nee and Schram cited this model as being the most successful in university-community partnerships and one that is most likely to succeed in the long run.⁴

The Partnership Process

Who needs to be at the table from the anchor institution?

With few exceptions, our interviews confirmed our hypothesis that the direct or indirect involvement of upper management from the participating anchor institutions was an important element in partnerships. In most cases, the president or chief executive officer was not directly involved in the partnership, although he or she may have been instrumental in committing the university to a partnership and publicizing the relationship. Often in college and university settings, day-to-day involvement came from an office that focused on community-institutional relationships. Among other institutions, upper-level involvement entailed senior level staff from the anchor institution as active participants on the board of directors of the community organization or on a steering committee of the board of the partnership. These types of arrangements were almost always found in partnerships that involved a broad scope of work and a significant investment of resources.

⁴ Nancy Nye and Richard Schramm, Building Higher Education Community Development Corporation Partnerships. (Nye, Nancy and Richard Schramm. *Building Higher Education/Community Development Corporation Partnerships*. (New York: Structured Employment Economic Development Corporation 1999).

Our examination indicated that while having the involvement of upper management was critical, it was not always sufficient for the success and sustainability of a partnership. Rather, the commitment to the partnership needs to be institutionalized and extend throughout the various levels of the anchor institution. When that depth of organizational commitment is absent, it is difficult for partnerships to survive the turnover in leadership that inevitably occurs.

Similarly, in a decentralized system the absence of a broad institutional commitment to a partnership can serve as an impediment to progress. For example one CBO director noted that while the president of the university with which the CBO is in a partnership relationship has expressed his interest in the partnership, that message has not filtered down to the deans. According to this CBO director, in general, the university's professors have little experience with community service. While there are a few professors and students involved in community service projects, the struggle is in maintaining their interest at a level that is helpful for them and the community. University deans, who are tenured and powerful, were viewed as being principally interested in fundraising while faculty received little or no support or incentives to partner with communities.

On the other hand, there are several examples of institutions in which the leadership has made community involvement a clear priority throughout all levels of an organization. In the case of one community-university partnership that had a long history of poor relationships with the surrounding community, a new president, in partnership with a community development corporation, fostered major cultural changes within the university. The importance of the partnership is now so ingrained in the university that the board is using this commitment as a selection criterion as it embarks on a search for a new president.

CBO directors also stressed the importance of having a direct relationship with the person who either controlled the anchor institution's financial resources or who had that person's ear. As one CBO director whose organization has a relationship with a large university noted:

We're not going to get the chancellor over to public housing to show her why we need the university's resources there. We're just not going to get her there. I mean, she might come through for five minutes on a PR deal, but that's all we're going to get. And so, when I'm looking at who needs to be at the table, from the university side, I need the folks who've got the chancellor's ear, be it who's in control of

the money or not. But if they've got her ear, she's going to do what it takes to get money released. So I want the person who's willing to come to the neighborhoods and see what's happening, and has the chancellor's ear, to come to the table.

Another community partner noted:

(Our university partner) just raised \$1.5 billion. If you look at the history of our effort, when it first started, the institutions threw at the effort social workers, and public relations flacks, community relations, government affairs people, and it really bombed. The presidents of those neighborhood associations, after two months of meetings, said to (the university), 'If you're not going to deliver the CFO or the COO to these meetings, then we're walking away. We're tired of dealing with the social workers, we're tired of dealing with community relations folks, we're tired of dealing with liberal professors. The fact of the matter is, liberal professors don't have access to the money, and that's what we need. We need your CFO, because the CFO is going to understand that if the community improves, the bottom line of the institution improves.

Involvement of community residents

The issue of community involvement in the partnership process appears to be a bit more complex. Some of the community partners with whom we spoke expressed a concern that getting legitimate community representation is a challenge. CBO respondents acknowledged that involving residents and other community leaders was an important and time consuming aspect of their work, and one that required deliberate planning to bring it about. Some emphasized the benefits of community organizing, citing its usefulness as a tool for keeping residents aware of important issues, and a vehicle for soliciting their input.

At least one CBO executive recommended turning down funding that did not allow sufficient space and time to engage the community in the process of the work. At the same time, most of the CBO directors expressed the opinion that it is unrealistic to expect to get every resident in a neighborhood involved in the process. Instead, they developed a range of mechanisms for residents to have access to information and input into decisions that affected their neighborhoods. Many CBOs included residents on their boards and on advisory committees.

Some spoke of holding regularly scheduled town meetings. Others described a strategy of going door-to-door on a regular basis.⁵

Developing and maintaining a productive partnership

While having the right people at the table is an important element in the partnership process, bringing together institutions that have very different cultures and resources can present challenges to the development and maintenance of productive partnerships.

Learning to communicate with each other was cited as an important skill for CBOs and institutional partners to develop. Often, large institutions are not used to working as partners with communities. Universities may approach the partnership from a “missionary” perspective in which they want to teach communities how to do things. This in turn breeds resentment from the community. In addition, the two sides often don’t speak the same language, so misunderstanding and distrust can result.

As noted, when large institutions and community groups come together they often have to deal with an unpleasant history characterized by confrontational and hostile relationships. Institutional partners find that long-term community residents may not have forgotten about this history, and moving forward on new initiatives requires a significant investment in trust-building before the “real work” can begin. Building trust has to happen on both sides. Our sources noted that developing community trust frequently hinged upon the anchor institutions’ willingness to commit significant and consistent resources to the partnership. At the same time, CBO directors felt that it was important for them to demonstrate that they had competent staff, solid fiscal capacity, strong organizational and management skills, flexibility, and could get the work done so that their institutional partners would develop trust in the CBO.

The fact that these partnerships typically involve a number of people, coupled with the fact that partners may not be on the same timetable, can add to the challenge of managing the partnership. For example, an academic schedule or a grant may drive a university’s timetable. It may therefore have a different view from the community about the time needed to plan and implement partnership projects. A community’s limited resources and community planning

⁵ One university’s efforts to help organize community residents rather than engage in implementing specific community improvement projects can be found in Kenneth Reardon. “Enhancing the Capacity of Community-Based Organizations in East St. Louis.” *Journal of Planning and Education and Research*. 17(4). 323-333. 1998.

processes can constrain its ability to operate on the same timetable as their institutional partners. As one CBO director noted:

Our organization's staffing is not adequate to utilize all that the university has to offer. It is important to have someone who can see the potential of the university, and can understand the dynamics of the community and the systemic activities in the community that are causing the ills, and can bring information, technical assistance to these community members. I don't have a basket big enough to catch it! It is difficult for me to utilize everything he's throwing into my community because the staffing is strained.

... There's a tendency to start dumping stuff on you that you can't really use right now, because groundwork needs to be done on an issue. When I say I don't have the capacity to manage it, it's because it needs to be managed and organized so it's useful. It's like someone just comes in and starts helping you, and they don't really understand the problem. They just have a compassion for your need and want to help. (You need) someone to kind of manage, organize, converse with them, explain.

I have to constantly go back to the university and explain, 'We can't move here yet,' and they're driven by this grant they have to report on, and they have to show their objectives which may or may not be consistent with help because it's academic. There needs to be a person to help them organize their project in the beginning when they get their money so that it's sensitive to the community, as well as understand the community and what needs to be done there.

On the other hand, the slow pace of moving programs through the bureaucracy of a major university can be at odds with a community's sense of urgency about getting projects underway.

In many cases, the CBOs found that participating in the partnerships required them to stretch their natural skill base to meet the demands of working with a larger institution. They found that the experience of working in partnership with a larger institution highlighted the types of skills their organizations needed to serve the needs of the community more competently.

Concomitantly, with the right amount of support these organizations were able to build lasting capacities. Anchor institutions often play a critical role

by providing financial resources for CBOs to hire technical assistance to help them build their capacity. They have also made their in-house professional staff available to their CBO partners to help fill gaps and build capacity.

For example, in one case, a medical center provided fiscal and personnel functions for its community partner until it was able to perform such functions. Another CBO director referred to the way in which his organization used a community school that was teaching leadership skills as way to develop such skills among his staff. Others talked about the usefulness of constructing a board with those who have technical skills that their organization can tap when needed.

In all cases, there was consensus about the importance of the community and the anchor institution being explicit about their expectations about the partnership, vigilant in managing those expectations, and skilled in conflict resolution and negotiation. One CBO director whose organization has a partnership with a medical center spoke about the need to specify the rules of engagement:

I think it's important to get the expectations of each partner down in writing, to have a clear action plan of what the community group is going to bring to the table, what the institution is going to bring to the table and that's something to hold each group accountable for, because I think often community groups overextend themselves and make promises they can't keep, because of staffing and size. That can be more time consuming than the average institution maybe has time to deal with. Institutions can be more bureaucratic than we're used to. You have to be able to make sure that both groups are clear about what's going to happen when, and how we're going to get there. It's simple, but it seems it doesn't happen often enough.

Power dynamics

Clearly when large, resource rich institutions sit at the table with smaller organizations that have more limited resources to form a partnership, the stage is potentially set for power plays. These dynamics can be further exacerbated when, as typically happens with universities, grants to foster partnerships between anchor institutions and communities are made to the former not the latter partner. One result of this arrangement is that the generally high overhead rates of academic institutions are viewed as simultaneously building the capacity of the anchor institution rather than the CBO and reducing the amount of money available for partnership work in the community.

Despite the inherent and in some cases (perhaps inadvertently) fostered inequity, CBO directors have developed strategies designed to equalize the power relationships. Several stressed the importance of instituting structures early on that formalized a role for community representatives in decision-making processes. For example, one CBO director put together an advisory council that is heavily loaded with residents and uses a formal Memorandum of Understanding to keep everyone focused and accountable. Directors also talked about the way that community organizing can help level the playing field. As a CBO director engaged in a partnership with a public utility noted:

Power is not only connected to dollar signs. It is also connected to how to organize a community and how informed each side is. We've had projects that have been stopped by residents because they were organized enough to press for another agenda even though they had no money to bring to the table. If you are organized enough to take a stand on what's going to take place, then you have power and it doesn't have to be determined by who has the dollars, and who doesn't have the dollars.

Similarly, our respondents noted that developing an association of community groups or institutions to represent the community in a partnership can help balance the power dynamics between an anchor institution and a community. The challenge here is to keep the group from being distracted by the promise of money.

Diversifying resources from sources other than the anchor institution partner may help CBOs maintain a degree of independence and power in a partnership arrangement. However, diverse sources of funds may create new challenges for these partnerships. Those who are engaged in a partnership that includes several institutions spoke about the diversionary effect that monetary resources can create. In their view, the availability of grants caused institutional partners to focus on application requirements and reporting deadlines rather than the timing of community needs. As one CBO director, whose organization is engaged in a partnership comprised of a consortium of hospitals noted:

You're starting to see the gap between the community and the consortium, because now the emphasis is on timelines, evaluation, reporting, conferencing, and not the original mission that the residents asked for. The more money you get, the more you distance yourself from the original vision...when we had no money, we were always in the trenches. Now that we have money, the focus becomes

on glamorizing the institution, as opposed to actually doing the real work. That determines who the partners are at the table.

Similarly another community partner who is involved in a partnership that involves several institutions described how increased resources and institutional involvement shifted the focus from the community to the institutions:

It doesn't feel very community-related anymore. It is very driven by institutions; it is very driven by the almighty dollar that has been brought in. You have community leaders who could articulate what their communities needed. They don't do that any more. There's no need to get a broad-based consensus from community leaders anymore. It's losing its purpose.

Types of Projects Undertaken

Respondents noted that to maintain the interests of the community and the anchor institution, partnerships must have a substantive plan and specific activities around which to build a relationship. Capacity building and community building are not typically viewed as stand alone goals of this process. Stressing the value of what the community has to offer the anchor institution is important in getting a project design that more closely represents its interests.

The partnerships we examined focused their work on a range of issues. In many cases, the partnership worked to improve the physical environment of the neighborhood surrounding the anchor institution. In such cases, efforts were made to improve the quality of the housing stock and to provide better streetscaping. One CBO worked closely with a utility company that was instrumental in implementing a low-income weatherization program.

Projects improved access to health care, increased educational opportunities, and addressed neighborhood safety issues. In one of the most exemplary partnerships between a CBO and a university that we encountered, the CBO partner described how the university president not only provided resources for the improvement of the deteriorated conditions of the surrounding community, but also pledged to provide free tuition to neighborhood residents who matriculated to the university. To increase the likelihood that residents would be academically qualified to take advantage of this offer, university administrators became involved in local school reform.

Though a number of community partners bemoaned the fact that they have had difficulty getting their medical center partners to change their health care provision to more accurately reflect the needs of residents in the surrounding community, some noted that they have been able to get providers to make some adjustments. For example, one CBO director noted that they held focus groups to find out why residents were not using health care services and used this information to make providers look at how they were providing health care. In turn, some of the providers added satellite centers in the community and play rooms in their waiting areas. In addition, a school of nursing changed its curriculum to mandate that students spend time working in high-risk neighborhoods. Another respondent, whose partnership involves a university that has a teaching hospital, negotiated with the university to bring in dental and eye care vans directly to the school in the neighborhood so that all of the students could get examinations.

Partnerships have also worked to improve neighborhood retail markets, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurial opportunities for community residents. One CBO director, whose organization is involved in a partnership with a regulated public utility, worked with the utility to simultaneously provide jobs for residents while reducing the turnover in entry level jobs. The CBO negotiated with the union that imposed stipulations about who had access to the meter reading and customer service jobs, getting it to drop the requirement that workers have drivers' licenses and access to cars. The CBO also got the utility to provide money for childcare and to administer practice tests in the community.

Another CBO director negotiated with his university partner to change the requirement that applicants for entry level jobs had to score among the top third of test takers in order to get an interview. The CBO got the university to agree to establish a temporary pool of workers so that residents could gain work experience. The university also gave the CBO a small grant to do civil service exam training to help interested residents qualify for the interviews.

In addition to providing support to increase job placement, community partnerships with anchor institutions have been able to promote economic development through the support of small businesses in the neighborhood. Medical centers and universities have provided CBOs with opportunities for business ventures, such as running a day care facility for university employees, a cafeteria for a hospital dining service, and developing a retail mall.

Limitations of Partnerships

Three limitations stand out most starkly, two of which are related to the sustainability of a partnership. All of the CBO executives raised concern about

the sustainability of a partnership when it is not institutionalized, but is instead dependent on the commitment of a high ranking official in the anchor institution.

Similarly, our community respondents expressed doubts about the ability to sustain a partnership without targeted, ongoing funding. It is important to note that communities engaged in partnerships with colleges and universities *whose participation is at least partially, if not totally, funded by time-limited outside grants* typically raised this concern.

Another key limitation mentioned by some of our community respondents has to do with the difficulty, if not inability, to get anchor institutions to alter their internal operational practices in ways that can benefit community development. While some respondents had success in this area as indicated above, many cited their inability to get anchor institutions to broaden their roster of procurement contractors or their hiring pool to include community members. In addition, some communities engaged in partnerships with medical centers noted their failed attempts to get the medical centers to make changes in their health service delivery systems that were responsive to residents' needs. More detailed data and analysis are needed to discern why some CBOs achieve some level of success in this area while others do not.

Conclusion

While partnerships between communities and anchor institutions are promising vehicles for neighborhood improvement, they can be challenging. However, if carefully structured and nurtured, partnerships can provide opportunities for anchor institutions and communities to repair damaged relationships, learn from each other, and improve problematic conditions that are of mutual concern to all involved.

Communities engaged in partnerships with anchor institutions have created affordable housing by building new homes and rehabilitating abandoned buildings. They have altered plans for physical development that were inconsistent with the community's vision and needs. They have created vehicles for communities to voice their concerns and have mobilized residents and anchor institutions to address them. They have implemented effective processes for immunizing children, created job opportunities for community residents, and increased the flow of human, physical and financial resources into low-income communities.

Benefits to communities also came in the form of access to technical skills and information. This typically happened when community organizations were in partnership with colleges and universities that provided graduate students and faculty from their professional schools to work with CBOs. Thus, the CBOs

had access to architectural, planning, and legal services. Finally, anchor institutions assisted CBOs by helping them gain access to influential people in government and other funding sources, and to build coalitions with other community groups.

We found consensus among our respondents that in order to participate fully, effectively and efficiently in partnerships with anchor institutions, CBOs need to have independent financial resources. Such resources are needed to enable them to develop their capacity internally or to access expertise in areas that our respondents identified as being critical: communication, negotiation, conflict management, and fiscal management. Such resources would also go a long way toward increasing CBO's leverage with anchor institutions, their ability to take advantage of the human resources that anchor institutions can provide, and potentially, toward solving at least some of a community's most vexing problems.

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