

Introduction and historical experiences of the community



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Introduction Community-based participatory research (CBPR) as an investigative approach is gaining prominence in the field of research. Allport (1947) defines CBPR as a collaborative approach on the social, structural and the physical environment whereby the community members, organizational representatives, and researchers are equitable partners in all aspects of the research process. Kahl (1953) emphasized that CBPR seeks to understand critical issues of a community by engaging the community in research directed to address their social concerns. This paper reviews the historical context of CBPR with a focus on the contributions of different researchers on the development of this problem-solving orientation.

Basic principles of CBPR In the works of Deshler & Selener (1991), the CBPR approach is founded on nine principles.

- It recognizes the community as a unit of identity: this principle emphasizes on the significance of a community as the identification mark for the people and the importance of this identification as a starting point of CBPR (Deshler & Selener, 1991).
- It builds on the strengths and resources of the community: this principle stipulates that members of communities have a wealth of knowledge and experiences from their cultural and historical lens Deshler & Selener (1991). Therefore, instead of trying to understand the community problems and challenges from a deficit mentality, understanding the cultural, local and historical experiences of the community can provide important insider information that is not attainable by a scientific researcher.
- It promotes co-learning among research partners: this principle emphasizes the importance of creating a reciprocating

relationship among partners in order to engage all parties in the exchange of knowledge, skills, and capacity.

This helps the partners to appreciate that each partner brings a wealth of information and experiences beneficial to the partnership

process. It focuses to achieve a balance between research and action that are of mutual benefit to science and community: this principle emphasizes on the need of establishing relationships that are of mutual benefit to all partners. It stresses the significance of contributions needed from all partners and integration of this knowledge for the benefit of all

partners. Facilitates a collaborative and equitable partnership in all phases of the research process: due to the inequalities between a research and the community partners, this principle stresses on the need for a shared accountability in decision-making process across all stages of a research process. It also echoes on the importance of addressing the imbalances through trustful and mutually respectful relationships focused on an empowering process that leads to information sharing and joint decision-making.

It puts emphasis on the relevance of community-defined problems: this principle focuses on a research approach to community problems with relevant, timely and inclusive data. It employs a cyclical and iterative process to develop and maintain community and research partnerships: this principle states that the partnerships should be iterative in nature and that there is need to review each stage of a research process where necessary.

This principle ensures that all engagements are captured and the action taken is appropriate for all partners involved. It disseminates the <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-and-historical-experiences-of-the-community/>

knowledge learned from the CBPR to all partners involved: this principle stresses the importance of sharing research findings in a respectful and accessible way with the community and other stakeholders. It requires a long-term commitment from all partners: this principle highlights the importance of keeping an eye on the sustainability and enforcement of the findings of the CBPR process.

Participants And Historical Achievements In Action Research

Kurt Lewin 1940s: Developed The Field Theory

In 1946, Lewin coined the term action research and created a field theory rule (Kahl, 1953). In his theory, Lewin focused on interpersonal conflict, individual personalities, and situational variables (Price, Lewin, & Cartwright, 1951).

Lewin & Cartwright (1975) further established that behavior is the result of individual interaction with the environment so the physical and social field people find themselves in influences their psychological state. In other words, a person's behavior is a function of the environment that exists at the time of occurrence (Lewin & Cartwright, 1975). Furthermore, the field theory also found that an analysis of a situation could only start when the situation is represented as a whole; this means that the entire situation must be considered for analysis (Lewin & Cartwright, 1975). This theory was furthered by Argyris (1997) arguing that a person's life consists of multiple distinct spaces including the total field, the goal and the forces that push the person towards the goal.

This theory also includes the idea that every person has a different experience for a situation which also means that the dynamic field is constantly changing. Nonetheless, Argyris (1997) emphasized that every part of the total field is important and must be accounted for no matter how

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pointless it may seem to be. Field theory defined action research as a process of creating knowledge about an organization while trying to change it (Allport, 1947). According to Price et al. (1951), the field theory advocated for workplace democracy where workers affected by the organizational problems were engaged in the decision-making process to find a practical solution.

The field theory found that involving workers in decision-making could increase productivity and the works of Price et al. (1951) who argued that involving the community in addressing their own problems could create a systematic and rigorous inquiry seconded this (Price et al., 1951).

Paulo Freire 1970-1980s: Developed The Problem-Solving Method Of Education According to Betz (1979), Freire's revolutionary pedagogy is founded on a deep love and humility before the poor and oppressed people and respect to their common sense. Freire education theme focused on the local people's knowledge (Dicker, 1990). Consequently, Hochheimer (1992) viewed education as a bridge between participants in a dialogue that features a reflexive, reciprocal and socially relevant exchange rather than a unilateral action of one individual for the benefit of the other. In an educational context, the educator should recede into the background as a mere facilitator (Dicker, 1990). Ball (1992) reviewed Freire's model and conceived teaching as enacting a clear authority rather than being authoritarian.

He also argued that a teacher is not neutral but should intervene in educational situations to help learners overcome the challenges and learn to think critically (Ball, 1992). Freire disputed the idea of reducing learners to the status of passive objects to be acted upon by teachers through banking form of education to community members participating in the inquiry.

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According to Dicker (1990), banking education is a means of domination by the capitalist class. A good education system involves creating the pedagogical conditions for genuine dialogue (Freire, 1997).

He, therefore, developed a 'Problem-posing Method' of education whereby educators become co-investigators of knowledge instead of imposing their views on learners (Freire, 1997). Day (1995) points that the problem-solving method invites the oppressed to explore their reality as a transformable situation rather than an inescapable stasis. This way, it is possible for learners to think of a new and different reality that can lead to social transformation (Day, 1995). Robert Chambers' 1980-1990s: Advocated For Rapid Rural Appraisal In 1983, Robert Chambers coined the term rapid rural appraisal (RRA) in attempt to describe the techniques that could reverse the learning methods to allow people to learn directly (Chambers, 1983). This approach owed much to the Freirean theme that argued that poor and oppressed people should be enabled to analyze their own reality (Parsons, 1984).

In 1985, the first international conference was held in Thailand to share experiences relating to rapid rural appraisal. This conference was followed by a rapid usage of methods that allowed rural people to examine their own problems, set their goals and monitor their own achievements (Reeve, 1995). According to Chambers (1983), participatory rural appraisal brought decentralization and empowerment. This paradigm devolved resources and discretion while at the same time turned back the inward and upward flows of resources and people (Chambers, 1994). Equally, the poor and oppressed were able to take control of their lives and secure a better livelihood. Because <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-and-historical-experiences-of-the-community/>

of decentralization and empowerment, the local communities were able to exploit diverse complexities of their own problems and adapt to the rapid change (Salas & Tillmann, 1998). By the mid-1990s, rapid rural appraisal (RRA) had been replaced by other terms like participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and participatory learning and action (PLA) all focusing on the local people's capabilities (Cantrell et al., 1993).

Conclusion Action research has gone through multiple revolutions from the time it was coined by Lewin in the mid-1940s. The first milestone by Lewin was the development of the field theory rule, which states that behavior is a function of the current field at the time of occurrence. It also states that analysis of a condition begins with the situation represented as a whole. In the mid-1970s, Freire developed the second milestone known as the problem-solving method of education. In this method, Freire pointed that educators should be co-investigators of knowledge and should not impose their views on learners. This model invites the oppressed to explore their reality as a transformable situation rather than an unthinkable situation.

Lastly, Robert Chambers developed rapid rural appraisal seeking to bring about decentralization and empowerment of the local communities. With a participatory rural appraisal, communities are able to exploit the diverse complexities of their own problems and adapt to the rapid change.