A Community Participation Approach

Community based participatory research is based on the premise of co-learning between academic institutions and community groups. In our case, the collaboration between the university and community groups has been mutually beneficial. Whereas the university has provided access to research skills, theoretical frameworks, and evidence-based interventions; the community has provided the contextualization for the implementation of these skills and paradigms and a wealth of local grass-roots experience. Sustained contact with the communities has thus given the CRPH a more nuanced understanding of the issues and community concerns, stimulating the research to practice link.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have expanded their reach to a larger underserved population; they have also learned about new, non-biomedical interventions for health, and how to evaluate their effectiveness. This issue features the Youth Working Group (YWG) and the Choices and Challenges in Changing Childbirth (CCCC) team that have been working with the community to build more sustainable partnerships.

Youth: An academic-community partnership

The YWG and the community of Bourj Barajneh Camp (BBC), the Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut’s southern suburbs, have successfully built a partnership based on the principles of community-based participatory research. A Community Youth Committee (CYC) was formed with the primary goal of improving the lives of youth in the fall of 2005. The CYC includes NGO representatives, individuals living in the camp, and academics. Youth were also originally part of this committee, but chose to separate for now into their own committee. The CYC continued on page 2.
Choices and Challenges in Changing Childbirth Research Group

The Choices and Challenges in Changing Childbirth (CCCC) research program is a regional network cumulating evidence concerning childbirth practices in the Middle East region. Specific studies in the four participating countries to date – Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Egypt – have identified problems in the quality of maternity services and the lack of women’s involvement in the decision making process over the provision of care. With funding from the Wellcome Trust (UK), the research program aims to identify elements of care which are amenable for improvement and develop interventions whose effectiveness can be rigorously measured.

As the graphic below illustrates, the research being undertaken by the network addresses the spectrum of factors influencing childbirth practices, from providers and the policy context of the health system as a whole, to women’s perspectives and expectations.

Figure 1: Overall Research Framework

Ongoing Research of Country Teams

The CCCC Lebanon team is conducting several studies:

1. A cluster Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) to test the effect of involving women in the quality of maternity services. The intervention consists of providing women with information about evidence-based practices in childbirth as well as negotiating and communicating skills through group sessions, and testing whether this increases the likelihood of women articulating their preferences in relation to childbirth. This study involves 63 hospitals out of 116 with maternity units in Lebanon, and a substantial number of obstetricians. It is conducted with the collaboration of the Syndicate of Private Hospitals and the Lebanese Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (LSOG). Quality work is also being conducted to shed light on women’s perceptions of midwives’ roles in labor support.

2. The study on the use of cocoa butter for the prevention of stretch marks during pregnancy: A cross-sectional study on the Risk factors for the development of striae gravidarum was conducted as part of this study and the paper is in press.

3. A maternal mortality study is underway which has three components: the first measures maternal mortality in three hospitals: Bahman, Maqassed and AUB; the second evaluated the use of emergency obstetrical drills as a performance improvement tool in each of those hospitals; the third measures the socio-economic and psychological consequences of maternal mortality on the families of the deceased. The first two components have been completed and are currently in the writing phase. The third component is on-going.

4. The Lebanese CCCC team has received funding from UNFPA-Lebanon for a project on displacement of people (associated with the July 2006 Israeli Attack on Lebanon) and pregnancy. The purpose of the project will be to understand pregnant and postpartum women’s experience of displacement and the effects of displacement on the continuity of care and on desired fertility.

The CCCC Egypt team is in the preparatory stage for an RCT on the benefit or harm of routine early vs. selective use of amniotomy in normal labor. They are exchanging experience from the CCCC group in Palestine which has conducted similar work that has recently been published. The RCT of the Palestine team has been accepted for publication, investigating the difference in the duration of labor between a policy of routine amniotomy in active labor vs. a policy of leaving the membranes intact in a population of low risk women. They are preparing papers for publication on c-section trends in Palestine based on secondary analysis of Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data and hospital birth records. They have also published a study on the place of birth in Palestine based on analysis of DHS data, showing trends linked to political and historical events. The CCCC Syria team is developing a proposal to study the improvement of communication skills of maternity service providers.

Meetings and Conference Presentations

The CCCC group held a dissemination meeting “Strategizing for Maternal Health in Lebanon” on January 28, 2006 in Beirut. This meeting was attended by the head of the Lebanese Society of Ob/Gyn (LSOG), head of the Maternal Mortality Committee, Obstetricians/Gynecologists, midwives, the national CCCC team including the regional national coordinators, along with other stakeholders.

Three papers were presented by the team at the Third Research Conference on Normal Labor and Birth, June 7 – 9, 2006, Cumbria, UK, organized by the Department of Midwifery in the Faculty of Health at the University of Central Lancashire, as follows: “An intervention study to improve selected practices of normal labor in an Egyptian teaching hospitai” (Dr. Mohamed Cherine, Egypt); “The enabling environment for high c-section rates: Policy considerations” and “Birthing in the Arab region: How to translate research into policy” (both Rawan Shayboub, Lebanon); and “Encouraging women to demand labor support from midwives” (Rima Mountzad, PhD candidate).

Members of the CCCC group presented papers at the Reproductive Health Working Group annual meeting in Istanbul, July 8 – 11 2006 as follows: “Doctor- patient communication in maternity services: What do they mean in the Syrian context?” (Dr. Asma Abdulsalum and Mayada Khourif, Syria); “Ethical issues in maternity care in the Syrian example” (Dr. Aida Jabr, Syria); “Choosing how to approach a needs assessment of maternity care in Ramallah hospital” (Ms. Laura Wick and Ms. Sahar Hassan, Palestine) and “Mobilizing women to change maternity practices: A cluster randomized controlled trial” (Ms. Rawan Shayboub, Lebanon).

The CCCC regional group organized a panel entitled “Towards changing Childbirth: Experience from the Arab region” at the 18th World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, November 5-10, 2006, organized by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO). The panel included the following presentations: “Effectiveness of Early Amniotomy: a Randomized Controlled Trial” (Dr. Nahed Mikki, Palestine); “Mobilizing Women to Change Maternity Services: Preliminary Results” (Dr. Tamar Kabakian-Khasholian, Lebanon) and “Postpartum Home Care: Evidence from Syria” (Dr. Hyam Bashour, Syria); “Changing Physicians’ Behavior in an Egyptian Hospital Setting” (Dr. Karina Khalil, Egypt) and “Childbirth in the Arab Region” (Dr. Fayad Elk Kak, Lebanon), who also served as a discussant to the session.
**CRPH News**

**CRPH Affiliates**

Hyam Bashour (Professor, Chair of the Dept. of Family and Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Damascus University, hyah.bashour@pcis-net.org)

Dr. Bashour attended a Symposium on the World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics in Malaysia.

Monique Chaaya (Associate Professor, Dept. of Epidemiology & Population Health, mchaaya@aub.edu.lb)

During the peak of Israel’s war on Lebanon in July-August 2006, Chaaya conducted a survey in collaboration with students, on the internally displaced in Beirut to assess their psycho-social needs. Building on the above data, she prepared a study on the “Assessment of Psycho-social status of civilians in Lebanon after 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon”. This study included a cohort of previously surveyed Internally Displaced Populations as well as a new assessment of psychosocial needs of those who remained during the war. The study was partially funded by the International Medical Corps (IMC).

Jocelyn Deljoung (Associate Professor, Dept. of Epidemiology and Population Health, jdl16@aub.edu.lb)


Faysal El-Kak (Lecturer, Dept. of Health Behavior & Education, fk01@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. El-Kak participated in the 50th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting (women and HIV/AIDS) in the UN, New York, in March 2006, and was part of the Lebanese delegation to UNAGSS, at the UN in May 2006. Dr. El-Kak was consulted by UNFPA to conduct a rapid appraisal research (RAR) in reproductive health in Lebanon and currently coordinates women’s health and humanitarian relief for UNFPA.

Rima Habib (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Environmental Health, rima.habib@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. Habib presented a paper entitled “The Impact of requiring ILO conventions on occupational health and safety in Lebanon” at the 28th International Congress on Occupational Health (Milan-Italy, June 2006). In July and September 2006, she conducted a training workshop for the field staff working on data collection in a study entitled “Water use at the household level in the town of Bebina and its relation to health conditions”, funded by an IDRC Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health Training Award.

Mayada Karji (Instructor, Dept. of Health Behavior & Education, mkarji@aub.edu.lb)

Ms. Karji coordinated a Regional Project entitled “Follow up on FRESH Initiative” initiated by the UNESCO and coordinated a National Project, entitled “Bringing Media and Public Health”, funded by the Italian Embassy in Lebanon, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Public Health. Ms. Karji served as a trainer in the regional workshop on “Advances in Development Communication”, in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University.

Marwan Khawaja (Professor, Dept. of Epidemiology & Population Health, and CRPH Director, marwan.khawaja@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. Khawaja is a member of the newly established IUSPP Panel on Demography, Human Rights and Ethics. Participated in the workshop, Strengthening Social Science Research in the Arab, Diagnosis, Options, Strategies, sponsored by UNDP, Population Council, IDRC, and Social Science Research Council, Beirut, Lebanon, 11-12 April 2006.

Ziyad Mahfoud (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Epidemiology and Population Health, zm15@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. Mahfoud is a new affiliate at the CRPH. Dr. Mahfoud has joined two study groups - the Youth Group and the Women’s Health Group - as a co-investigator.

Judy Makkol (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Health Behavior & Education, jm04@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. Makkol reviewed and edited the resource document “Ethical Practice in Community Work” for the University of Balamand and Partners for Development. Supported by a joint grant from the Social Research Center, the American University of Cairo, and the Faculty of Health Sciences, AUB, Dr. Makkol produced a refined English draft of a Qualitative Research Manual for professionals and researchers in the Arab World.

Iman Nuwayhid (Professor, Dept. of Environmental Health, nuwayhid@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. Nuwayhid attended and presented papers at the 28th International Congress on Occupational Health (Milan-Italy, June 2006), Ecohealth One conference (Madison, WI, October 2006), and Global Forum for Health Research (Cairo, October 2006). During the Israeli war on Lebanon (July-August 2006), he actively participated in the joint Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS)-Faculty of Medicine (FM) health relief activities for about 7,000 displaced persons in Beirut.

Hibah Osman (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Health Behavior and Education, and Assistant Professor, Dept. of Family Medicine, ho02@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. Osman received the Hewlett Research Grant that she will use to develop a research proposal on support for first time mothers in the postpartum period, as well as to analyze and write up the results of the randomized controlled trial on use of cocoa butter for prevention of stretch marks (striae gravidarum) in pregnancy.

Abla Sibai (Associate Professor, Chair of the Dept. of Epidemiology and Population Health, asibai@aub.edu.lb)

Together with collaborators in Lebanon and the UK, Dr. Sibai received a grant of around $15,000 from the WHO, Geneva, to conduct a study on older adults in emergencies during the Israeli war on Lebanon in July-August 2006.

Rima Afifi-Soweid (Associate Professor, Dept. of Health Behavior & Education, ra15@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. Afifi was appointed President of the Association of Health Promotion Professionals in Lebanon (AHPPP). Dr. Afifi contributed with the World Health Organization as a consultant to the analysis and write-up of a report on the Lebanon 2005 Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS), a survey of health behaviors and protective factors among 13-15 year olds (http://www.cdc.gov/gshs/).

Tarak Kabakian (Assistant Professor Dept. of Health Behavior and Education, tk00@aub.edu.lb)

Dr. Kabakian received funding from UNFPA-Lebanon for a project on displacement of people (associated with the July 2006 Israeli Attack on Lebanon) and pregnancy. Dr. Kabakian presented a paper Mobilizing Women for Health Research (Cairo-Egypt, 29 October-2 November, 2006). Another joint paper Can we Count on a “Social vaccine” in War and in Peace? was presented by co-author Dr. Nuwayhid.

**Sponsored Research Publications in 2006**


**Publications in 2006**


**Publications in 2006**

Abla Sibai (Associate Professor, Chair of the Dept. of Epidemiology and Population Health, asibai@aub.edu.lb)
Regional Networking and Collaboration

The CRPH continues its drive to promote collaboration among researchers and practitioners with similar research interests in Lebanon, the region, and internationally. It increased its holding of relevant micro-data sets for various countries in the region to 49. Some of these data sets are being used both by affiliates for research and by graduate students working on their MSc theses. Additional four cross-national data sets from the UNDP, WHO and the World Bank have been obtained.

The CCCC successfully established partnerships with global networks such as: the Safe Motherhood Network Safe Mother/Child Network Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research and the Arab Federation of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. It also contributed towards the establishment of the National Maternal Mortality committee in Lebanon.

The CRPH Hosts the Network of Arab Demography (NAD)

On April 4, 2006, the CRPH held a one-day workshop to discuss the establishment of the Network of Arab Demography (NAD). Demographers from 11 regional countries participated and successfully drafted the NAD’s mission and objectives.

The NAD’s mission is to promote research; to build capacity in the area of population and development; and to serve as a forum for interaction among scholars interested in population issues in the Arab region.

Its objectives are: to compile and disseminate existing and new research findings and studies in population-related topics in the Arab region; and share it with researchers in the field; to encourage and promote collaboration among researchers with common interests in and outside the Arab region; to promote collaborative research with other organizations and networks of common interests in and outside the Arab region; to increase the presence and participation of Arab Demographers in international conferences; to improve the standard and quality of research; to raise awareness of population issues in the Arab region.

Upcoming Events

Urban Health Regional Workshop

An Urban Health Workshop, entitled “Urbanisation, Poverty and Health in Developing Countries” is planned for February 1-2, 2007, at the CRPH, AUB.

The aims of this workshop are: to share findings from urban health and/or urban poverty research in various countries of the region and beyond; to identify challenges and opportunities for conducting research on the urban health-poverty nexus; to discuss the possibility of developing future joint collaborations.

Researchers from various Arab countries, Turkey and Iran will present and discuss their specific case studies.

Visiting Fellows in 2006

Mazar Abul Gasim (June 2-23, 2006): Dr. Abul Gasim received her Master’s Degree in Obstetrics and Gynecology from the University of Khartoum, Sudan, in 1984. In 1998, she became a member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in London. Dr. Abul Gasim is a lecturer at Anad University for Women in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, in the University for Women’s School of Medicine, Sudan. During her fellowship, she joined Dr. Jocelyn Delong on a study about the social implications of poor reproductive health in Sudan.

Bothaina Aattal (May 20-July 15, 2006): Dr. Attal received her PhD from Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in 2004. Currently, she is a teaching assistant in the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at the Medical School in Sana’a University in Yemen. During her stay, she worked with Dr. Jocelyn Delong on the study “Capability and Functioning in Reproductive Health in Yemen” and on finalizing two papers on the quality of childbirth care in Sana’a hospitals in Yemen.

Mohammed Diaeldin Ahmed Omer (April 20-June 15, 2006): Reproductive Health Director at the Ministry of Health, West Darfur State, Sudan. Dr. Omer received his MD from Kordofan University, Sudan (1999) and his Masters degree in Public Health (Epidemiology and Biostatistics) from the AUB (2005). During his fellowship, he analyzed the data collected in IDP camps in the West Darfur region. He also provided the CRPH and several researchers with the micro data for further analysis.

Belgin Telke (March 31-May 5, 2006): With a Master of Arts in International Affairs from Columbia University (1966) and a Ph.D. in Sociology from Princeton University (1975), Dr. Telke is a Vice Dean in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and a Professor in the Department of Sociology, at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey. Her fellowship work focused on the analysis of data collected for a study on familial relationships, childbearing, and child rearing in Istanbul.

Hala Nawfal, (January 2- March 0, 2006): A Professor of Demography at the Social Sciences Institute, Lebanese University, she received her Master of Arts in Social Sciences Institute, Lebanese University, in 1977. She focused on a research paper on “Ageing in the Arab countries: Trends, challenges, policies.”

CRPH Hosts a Regional Networking and Collaboration
CRPH News is published bi-annually by the Center for Research on Population and Health (CRPH). The CRPH staff are:

- Marwan Khawaja, Ph.D.  Director
- Ruba Ismail, MPH  Program Administrator
- Loulou Kobeissi, Dr.P.H.  Research Associate
- Rima Nakkash  Research Associate
- Hala Dimechkie  Communications Coordinator
- Samah Rifai  IT Officer

About CRPH

Join Us as a Visiting Fellow

CRPH has been sponsoring a Visiting Fellows Program since January 2003. Selected fellows from the Arab region may visit CRPH for one to three months to collaborate with FHS faculty affiliates on ongoing research projects, or to use the Center’s facilities and data resources to undertake their own research. Candidates need to be affiliated with an academic university or research institution, to hold a postgraduate degree and to have good working knowledge of English. A fellowship application may be requested from Mrs. Ruba Ismail, Program Administrator, at crph@aub.edu.lb and should be submitted at least three months prior to the proposed starting date.

Contact Us

To learn more about CRPH research activities, to subscribe to CRPH News, or to request an application for the Visiting Fellows Program, contact us at:

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Fax: 00 961 1 744 470
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The MSc in Population Health

The graduate program is designed to provide training in Population Sciences, focusing on the impact of population change on health. It offers basic training in population theory and analysis as well as in quantitative research methods. Students will participate in collaborative research activities with FHS faculty through the Center to gain practical experience. Students will also have access to the Center’s data generated by the Urban Health Study and other studies for thesis research.

The university catalogue and graduate admission application form can be requested from the AUB admissions office via e-mail at admissions@aub.edu.lb, or downloaded from http://www.aub.edu.lb

Opportunities for qualified students to receive financial aid are available in the form of Graduate Assistantships, Graduate Scholarships, and other sources of funding, such as FHS administered research grants (when available). Information regarding financial assistance for FHS graduate programs can be obtained from Ms. Aline Germani at ag24@aub.edu.lb

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