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Background

The Stanford Housing Equity Project (SHEP; <https://housingequity.stanford.edu/>) was built to connect university resources and human capital with community partners working to address chronic homelessness in the Bay Area. At Stanford, work on homelessness is often isolated to short term analyses or service projects without longitudinal support. Many students across departments to whom we've spoken are unaware of opportunities at Stanford to serve the unhoused. SHEP is a student-driven initiative that was established to bridge this extant gap between community partner needs and university resources through the implementation of quality improvement projects, collaborate research efforts, and direct service provision.

Community Partner and Methods

We apply Brookeman-Frazer, Stahmer et al. (2012) model of Research-Community Partnership (RCP) to describe the tools and processes our team has leveraged to create the first community-university partnership at this institution centered around longitudinal capacity-building efforts and research related to homelessness. Specifically, we detail our collaboration with LifeMoves, a shelter network in the Bay Area. This framework specifies the formation phase (factors associated with successful partnership initiation), collaborative processes (the interpersonal and operational factors which support the collaboration), and outcomes of the partnership.

Results: Formation of RCP, Operational Drivers, Execution and Sustainability

Formation

- **Initiation:** Projects were majority jointly initiated – students' express interest through SHEP and partner mediation is connected to a meaningful project engagement which meets community partner need. Alternatively, partners express need and student volunteers are connected
- **Community Stakeholder Participants:** A majority of stakeholders were drawn from shelter administration who expressed challenges meeting client needs
- **Project aims:** A majority of project aims focused on examining implementation processes (e.g., how to build a novel case management approach), collaborating with partners to adapt or create new interventions, and/or examining the efficacy of interventions.

RCP Function: Interpersonal Processes

- **Establishing Relationships/Trust:** Initial SHEP partnerships are often initiated based on existing relationships. LifeMoves frequently interacts with the Stanford ecosystem via talks at the university and through this process became familiar to students and faculty. Drivers of success included time for appropriate communication, goal setting, and building a shared language with several meetings over 4 months taking place between students and administration.
- **Roles/Responsibilities:** Partners at various shelter sites and programs were intimately involved in shaping research process and outcomes. Community partners were less involved in more traditional research activities such as data analysis and literature review. Appropriate task delegation was critical

RCP Function: Operational Processes

- **Leadership and Administrative Support:** Both parties identified adequate leadership and resource access was critical to project's success. For students, community partner buy-in, appropriate communication through multiple channels including, but not limited to, regular meetings, emails, and in-person meetings allowed for trust-building and more rapid pivoting. For community partners, having a stable contact source for each project and assurances of faculty support were key.
- **Structure and Communication:** Regular meeting cadence – weekly or biweekly based on the project – as well as shared documents, and opportunities to share insights with case managers or front-line staff who often encountered challenges attending meetings.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Through the creation of the Stanford Housing Equity Project we demonstrate the potential of community-university partnerships to move resources towards complex, ill-structured issues such as homelessness. Such partnerships can be productive and fruitful endeavors to improve student learning, build capacity for community partners, and advance individual-level outcomes for underserved community members.

Results: Execution

Process Outcomes

- Development of Partnership Synergy
- Knowledge Exchange
- Development of a rich feedback loop

Tangible Outcomes

- Creation of quality improvement projects and interventions
- Development of new survey tools
- Research products

Distal Outcomes

- Improved systems-level capacity around intervention development
- Increased capacity for long-term collaborations between the university and partner
- Illustration of resource mobilization



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