Mobilizing Youth to Better their Community: Community-Based Participatory Research in the Bañado Sur Neighborhood of Asunción, Paraguay

Yvonne Hewitt³, Michael Olsen²,4, Amanda Stinger¹,2, Jenna Thomason¹,2, Karen Andes, PhD.²

¹Emory University School of Medicine, ²Rollins School of Public Health, Department of Epidemiology and the Hubert Department of Global Health, ³Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, ⁴Goizueta Business School

Project Partners
- This project builds on an existing collaboration between Emory and the National Institute of Health in Paraguay, which has been funded by the USAID mission through Higher Education for Development (HED) for the past 3 years (2009-2011).
- The project also supports a developing relationship between Emory University and Mil Solidarios, a youth-serving community-based organization whose vision is to support the development of the Bañado Sur neighborhood of Asunción.

Community Served
- The Bañado Sur includes seven neighborhoods along the flood plain of the River Paraguay that surrounds the city of Asunción, the capital. This area houses over 2,500 families. It is surrounded by the Cateura dump, which is the final dumping site for more than 1,500 tons of solid waste each day (UNICEF).

Project Goals
1. Establishing dialogue within the community to identify key community health and development issues for youth.
2. Conducting a set of community-based participatory research activities that provide local knowledge and serve as a baseline for future projects.
3. Engaging youth in prioritizing community health issues based on their assessment.
4. Encouraging academic counterparts in Paraguay to be active in local communities through collaborative research projects.

Outcomes
- We employed methods of community-based participatory research (CBPR), including the Ten Seed Technique, Worldview Analysis, Community Mapping, and Photovoice.
- The Ten Seed technique was used to identify youth assets, and in conjunction with Worldview Analysis, it was used to identify challenges of the youth and determine the extent to which combating each challenge was within their control.
- Community Mapping was carried out with the second year high school students. Photovoice was carried out with the third year high school students and the university students.
- Both Photovoice and community mapping provided a visual representation of how the youth view their community.
- The results of all sessions were displayed at a community forum at the end of the project period.

Project Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>CBPR Workshop by Jenny Foster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 Seed Workshop with Mil Solidarios staff and key informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Two 10 Seed Workshops with Mil Solidarios University Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>3-week projects as decided by University Student Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 Seed Workshops Community Assets Mapping Photovoice Participatory Mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissemination Workshops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Partners

Barrio San Cayetano Second-year high school students Community Mapping

“Las basuras que existen de aquí para allá en montones”
Translation: “The garbage that exists here and there in heaps”
By: Gabriela Naomi Adorno Cáceres First-year university student Photovoice

Progress to Date
- Completed twenty focus group discussions with students, staff, and health professionals.
- Ninety-three youth aged 15 to 22 years old participated in the activities in groups of 8-19 students.
- Five groups of high school students completed Community Mapping projects. These students emphasized the extremely substandard road conditions, locations where drugs were sold, and community resources in need, such as additional police stations and community green spaces.
- Thirteen students submitted photographs for the Photovoice project. The photos portrayed images of environmental contamination, precarious housing conditions, and the limited income-generating opportunities. Several students focused on the positive aspects of the community, such as a child rehabilitation facility and the recreational parks.
- Group discussion are in the process of being transcribed.

Next Steps
- Code and analyze focus group discussions.
- Recruit another Emory team for Summer 2012. This team will:
  - Develop funding proposals to conduct research in collaboration with academic partners in Paraguay, in conjunction with Mil Solidarios and the Bañado Sur community.
  - Collaborate with youth at Mil Solidarios to explore differences between outside portrayals of life Bañado Sur and youth’s actual experience.
  - Continue to develop the relationship between Emory University and Mil Solidarios

Acknowledgements
The project was funded by grants from the Emory Global Health Institute and the Emory University Institute for Developing Nations. Special thanks to Dr. Jenny Foster, Rosa Burgos, the staff of Mil Solidarios, the Instituto Nacional de Salud in Paraguay, and all the students who participated.

“No Dejemos que Se Roben Su Inocencia”
Translation: “Do not let them steal your innocence”
By: Guida Miralles Third-year high school student Photovoice

By: Esteban Fleitas Third-year high school student Photovoice

By: Erica Acosta Third-year high school student Photovoice

“Las basuras que existen de aquí para allá en montones”
Translation: “The garbage that exists here and there in heaps”
By: Gabriela Naomi Adorno Cáceres First-year university student Photovoice