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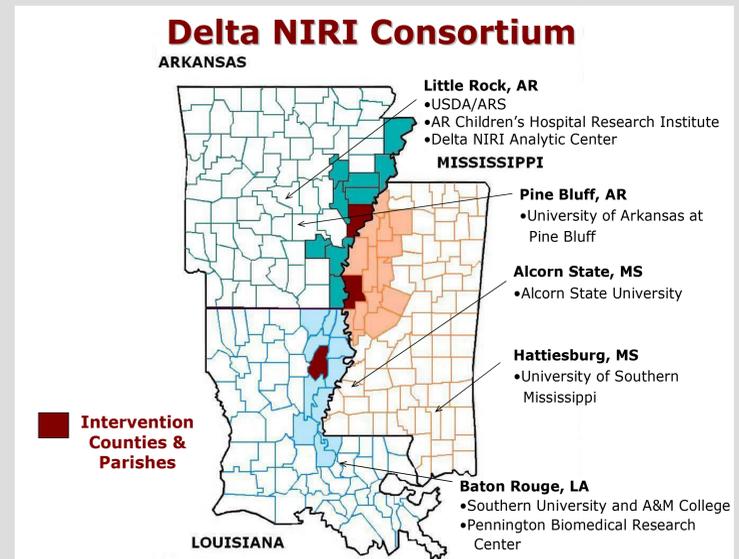
**Purpose:** To develop a model for building collaboration between rural communities and university scientists to affect nutritional and health behavioral changes.

**Background:** Community participation is critical to the implementation of successful nutrition interventions. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is an innovative process to involve communities as full partners with university scientists. It provides for community "buy-in" and empowerment, use of indigenous knowledge, university transfer of technical assistance, capacity building in both communities and universities, and sharing of resources, responsibilities, and authority.

**Methods:** The Lower Mississippi Delta Nutrition Intervention Research Initiative (Delta NIRI) is a consortium that involves six universities (two each in AR, LA, and MS), USDA/ARS, and one community in each of the three states. The Delta NIRI consortium has developed a model for conducting nutrition intervention research, which targets the community and has a goal of sustainability after the research is completed. All partners participate as equal members and contribute to all phases of the research process.

**Results:** Issues have been identified related to different levels of trust, cooperation, readiness, and participation within these rural communities and the universities. Our model shows how a nutrition intervention research plan is developed using community-based participatory research.

**Conclusions:** Utilizing the CBPR process a model was developed with communities and universities that improved collaborative behavior of both entities.



## DATA COLLECTION

Data from community leaders, representatives of sector groups such as health professions, educational institutions, religious organizations, business, public health and governmental agencies are needed to identify community nutritional health related problems and challenges. Therefore, data were collected to learn more about the Mississippi Delta communities through:

- **Key Informant Survey**—500 community leaders in 36 counties and parishes in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi were surveyed
- **Nutrition and Health Environmental Profile (NHEP)** for Mississippi Delta counties and parishes
- **Focus Group Study**—36 focus group sessions were conducted in nine counties and parishes

## COMMUNITY BASED PARTICIPATION

Delta NIRI believes that for intervention to be successful it must include a variety of approaches and utilize a systemic method for collaboration and cooperation among rural Delta communities. We further believe that this concept can be achieved by allowing the community to become actively involved in the planning and implementation of the intervention and research; and that the community has the greatest impact in solving local problems and achieving intervention sustainability. These principles led to the recognition of the need to employ the Community Based Participatory model that permits community partners to be involved in all phases of the intervention research process from problem definition to the dissemination of results.

## NINE KEY PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH (CBPR)

The Lower Mississippi Delta NIRI incorporates the Nine Key Principles of CBPR established by Barbara Israel (Israel et al. 1998) and others, as baseline foundation for intervention research. The principles include:

1. Recognizes community as a unit of identity.
2. Builds on strengths and resources within the community.
3. Facilitates collaborative, equitable involvement of all partners in all phases of the research.
4. Integrates knowledge and action for mutual benefit of all partners.
5. Promotes a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities.
6. Involves a cyclical and interactive process.
7. Addresses nutritional health from both positive and ecological perspectives.
8. Disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners.
9. Involves a long-term commitment by all partners.

Israel, B.A., Schulz, A.J., Parker, E.A., & Becker, A.B. (1998). Review of community-based research; Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 19:173-202.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development plays an important role in the community based participatory process. In order to gain full participation of citizens in the intervention communities Delta NIRI established the following principles of community development:

1. We will focus on capacities of communities (individual, groups, associations, etc.) and resources, not primarily on need.
2. We will recognize and respect the existing structures, form partnerships, and provide resources to develop a shared vision.
3. Empowering communities to implement sustainable interventions is the overarching goal/primary outcome of community development.
4. Community development strategies will be mutually acceptable to communities and Delta NIRI.

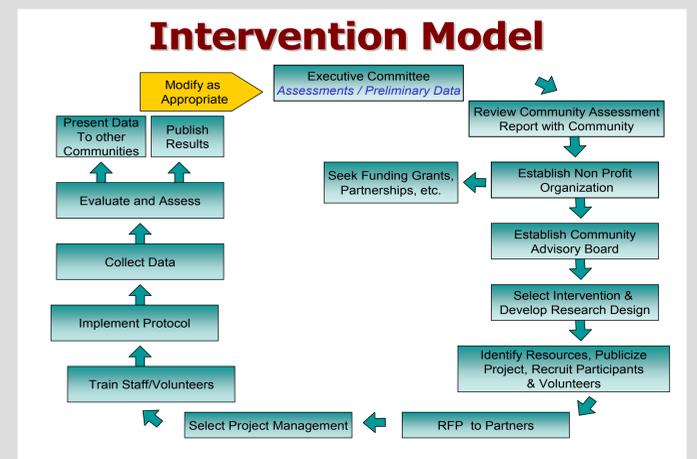


## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROCESS

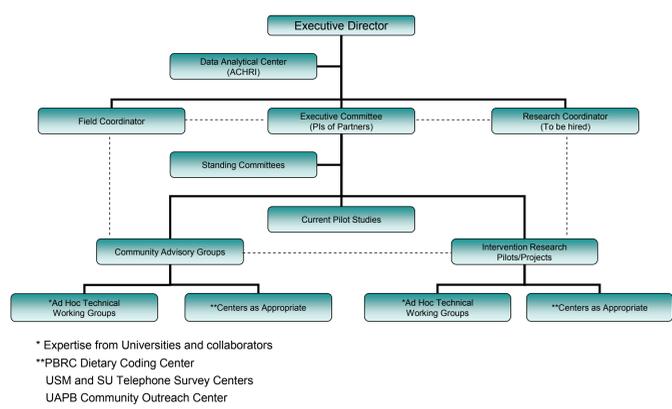
### Comprehensive Participatory Planning and Evaluation (CPPE)

- Phase 1. Assessing the Problem
- Phase 2. Identifying the Intervention
- Phase 3. Intervention Planning
- Phase 4. Monitoring and Data Management
- Phase 5. Evaluation

Lefevre, P., Kolsteren, P., DeWael, M., Byekwaso, F. and Beghin, I. 2001. Comprehensive participatory planning evaluation. IFAD/Belgian Survival Fund. Source: <http://www.ifad.org/gender/tools/gender/planning.htm>



## Delta NIRI Structure



## OPERATIONAL VALUES

- Collaboration within the Delta NIRI consortium
- Partners with communities
- Uniformity of planning, implementation and evaluation
- Capacity building within communities and university partners
- Communities may refuse to participate
- Interventions will be mutually acceptable (to communities and Delta NIRI)

## BUS TOURS OF THE LMD

### Tour 1: Windshield Observations

- Geography
- Economic and Living Conditions
- Nutrition/Health Resources
- Recreation and Educational Facilities

### Tour 2: Community Participation

- Presentations by grassroots and community leaders
- Soliciting community "buy-in" and participation
- Developing plan of entry into communities
- Sharing data collected

