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New Book Addresses “Lack of Guidance” for the Teaching And Practice of Community-Based Research

**Reviewed by Elizabeth Dunens
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Mary Beckman and Joyce F. Long, *Community-based Research: Teaching for Community Impact*.
Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2016, 360 pages. ISBN: 978-16203635

Community-based research, or CBR, is “a partnership of students, faculty, and community members who collaboratively engage in research with the purpose of solving a pressing community problem or effecting social change” (Strand, et al., 2003, p. 3). Although this branch of community engagement in higher education has increased over the last few decades, Beckman and Long (2016) note a “lack of guidance” in CBR literature, specifically related to its teaching and practice (p. 3). Their publication, *Community-based research: Teaching for community impact*, addresses this gap in the literature. In the introduction, the editors candidly share “we are writing for us” — the ‘us’ referring to themselves and other faculty members “who want to not only know how to incorporate CBR into their teaching, but also do it in a way that attends to student learning aims while attaining positive effects in communities” (p. 10). While oriented to a faculty audience, this book will also appeal to coordinators of community engagement, and many chapters are relevant to community and student audiences as well. In a single volume, Beckman and Long (2016) give readers an understanding not only of the background, methods, and best practices of CBR, but also its range of possibilities and positive impacts for students, faculty, institutions, and communities.

Beginning with a forward by engagement scholar Dr. Timothy K. Eatman and an introduction from the editors, the book is divided into three parts. The first section provides contextual grounding for readers. As both Holland (1999) and Giles (2008) observe, historically there has been a lack of clarity and consistency in the terms and rhetoric of community engagement. In Chapter One, Frabutt and Graves elucidate CBR for readers by providing helpful diagrams of the associated terms, historical origins, principles, and approaches of this method of community engagement. Chapter Two builds

on this foundation by moving from what CBR is to how it can result in community impact. In this chapter, Beckman and Wood frame the stages of CBR in terms of outputs, outcomes, and impact, and also provide a model for achieving community impact based on their own experiences with CBR. To guide faculty and practitioner use of this model, the authors present their CBR Diagnostic Table which, in tabular form, outlines important considerations for CBR researchers related to: participation, stakeholder groups, planning, goals, monitoring and revision. The tool is easy to understand and would be useful in both the planning and evaluation stages of CBR. Beckman and Wood also advocate for a focus on “longterm change” (p. 36) and consideration of partnership with existing coalitions and initiatives, referencing Kania and Kramer’s (2011) concept of collective impact. In Chapter Three, the perspective shifts to that of the community, and readers are prompted to reflect on important and challenging questions around the defining of community, as well as how motivations for engaging in CBR vary according to stakeholder identification (i.e., community member, student, faculty, etc.). In this chapter, Quaranto and Stanley advocate for understanding that (like most forms of community engagement) CBR is complex. Case studies and diagrams provide insight into the challenges of CBR partnership, as well as strategies for achieving synergy in relationship and collaboration. Part One closes with a chapter by Long, Schadewald, and Kiener which presents their findings from an empirical, theoretically-grounded study on faculty motivations for CBR. This study adds to extant research on faculty motivations for community engagement (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002; Colbeck & Michael, 2006; 2008; Darby & Newman, 2014; Hammond, 1994; McKay & Rozee, 2004; O’Meara, 2008) by homing in on faculty motivations specific to CBR. Long, Schadewald, and

Kiener's research suggests that intrinsic motivations and context influence faculty members' initial involvement in CBR; however, over time, their motivations can change and grow as they engage in CBR and experience its "transformational effects in their classrooms, communities, and vocational paths" (p. 81).

The chapters comprising Part Two—the largest section of the book—revolve around student learning and community outcomes of CBR. The first chapter presents the POWER model, a CBR counterpart to service-learning's OPERA model, which can be used by faculty members to design and actualize CBR. Pigza walks readers through each component of the framework's acronym (Partnerships, Objectives, Working, Evaluation, and Reflection). This model, which Pigza describes as a "solidly community-oriented approach" (p. 94), in combination with Beckman and Wood's CBR Diagnostic Table, is a valuable guide for both planning and assessing CBR that is authentically collaborative and community-based. In the following chapters of Part Two we see this model in action through nine case studies. The case studies presented are diverse and provide readers with a sense of the extensive possibilities for CBR. Disciplines represented range from mathematics to Spanish, undergraduate and graduate-level courses are included, and CBR initiatives take place in both local and global contexts. As a coordinator of university-community engagement, this section, in combination with Part One, will be especially helpful for introducing faculty members to CBR as together they prompt imagination of the options of CBR for research and teaching while also providing the guidance necessary for implementation and success.

Part Three represents ongoing, large-scale CBR initiatives that will be of particular interest to those considering how individual CBR projects can evolve into long-term collaborations spanning multiple courses, disciplines, and departments. In Chapter 15, Dailey and Dax illustrate CBR's potential to create generative impact with the example of a single CBR project conducted by students and faculty members in Rockbridge County, Virginia that resulted in the formation of a commission on poverty, policy change, and multiple CBR ventures. Chapter 16 by Kezar and Rousseau demonstrates the concept of collective impact with a case study of CBR at the University of Southern California completed in parallel with a larger community-organized effort to improve housing, education, employment, safety, and health in Los Angeles. In Chapter 17, Vinciguerra shares the example of an interdisciplinary, international CBR

partnership between the University of St. Thomas and community partners in the Diocese of Port-de-Paix, Haiti. While the outcomes and impacts of this partnership are impressive (fair-trade coffee/artisan projects and an energy initiative), perhaps equally impressive is the process by which the partnership was established and maintained. Prior to beginning CBR, the community and university spent two years meeting and discussing the partnership and potential focuses for CBR. This case study is a reminder of the centrality of relationship to community engagement, and the fact that relationships take time. The final case study comes from one of the editors, Joyce F. Long, and echoes this benefit of long-term partnership to CBR. In this instance, University of Notre Dame faculty members, staff members, and students completed six related CBR projects over the course of seven years to increase parent involvement in high-poverty schools. Each case study in Part Three is unique and highly contextual; however, collectively they represent guiding principles and a vision for institutions, faculty, and communities to aspire to, where CBR is "multidimensional, interdisciplinary, strategic, co-constructed, and focused on impact" (p. 266–267).

Beckman reminds readers of the primary aims of this book: to provide "examples, strategies, tools, and insights for incorporating community-based research (CBR) into...teaching, advising, mentoring, and...curricular decisions," and to "show ways this can be done to enhance the possibility that the research results will lead to outcomes and even long-term impact in [communities]" (p. 307). The editors and contributing authors of *Community-based research: Teaching for community impact* meet these goals with great success. The publication features key voices in CBR research, as well as community perspectives, and should prove an informative and enjoyable read for those seeking inspiration, understanding, and guidance on community-based research in higher education.

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