

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

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Abstract Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as significant vehicles for addressing complex health challenges by leveraging resources and expertise from both public and private sectors. In the realm of health promotion and disease prevention, PPPs foster innovative approaches, enhance efficiency, and extend the reach of interventions. Until now, insufficient attention has often been paid to meaningfully involving affected local communities throughout project design and implementation. A growing body of research indicates that prioritizing community inclusion from the outset is vital to maximizing benefits while minimizing risks. This paper examines the critical role of community participation and empowerment in PPPs for health promotion and disease prevention. It highlights the numerous advantages of active community engagement, including ensuring alignment with local needs, facilitating access to services, fostering ownership and sustainability, strengthening social capital, and enhancing accountability. Challenges such as power imbalances, resource constraints, communication gaps, and limited capacity are also explored. Case studies illustrate positive impacts of community-driven approaches while revealing areas for improvement. Strategies are proposed for enhancing participation, such as capacity building, transparent communication, participatory monitoring and evaluation, and equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms.

Introduction: Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as significant vehicles for addressing complex health challenges by leveraging the resources and expertise of both the public and private sectors (World Health Organization, 2019). In the realm of health promotion, PPPs have gained prominence due to their potential to foster innovative approaches, enhance efficiency, and extend the

reach of interventions (Beaglehole et al., 2018). These partnerships encompass collaborations between governments, non-profit organizations, academia, and private corporations to design and implement initiatives aimed at improving population health outcomes (Sachs et al., 2019). By pooling diverse resources and expertise, PPPs have the capacity to tackle multifaceted health issues such as chronic diseases, infectious diseases, and health inequities (Kickbusch et al., 2018). Despite their potential benefits, PPPs also face challenges related to governance, accountability, and sustainability, highlighting the need for rigorous evaluation and ongoing refinement of partnership models (Tosey et al., 2020).

Public-private connections have become common in the health sector. Governments, multilateral institutions and industries are applying these arrangements to address diverse health related issues. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as a valuable approach in health promotion and disease prevention. These partnerships involve collaboration between public and private entities to address the complex challenges in healthcare systems. By leveraging the strengths and resources of both sectors. Goal 17 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 actively advocates for countries to Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

PPPs have increasingly been utilized to deliver critical infrastructure and social services globally (World Bank, 2019). However, insufficient attention has often been paid to meaningfully involving affected local communities throughout project design and implementation (OECD, 2021). Yet a growing body of research indicates that prioritizing community inclusion from the outset is vital to maximizing social and environmental benefits while minimizing risks (Doloi, 2021; Javernick-Will, 2021). Early and ongoing consultation helps ensure initiatives align with local needs and capacities, building social acceptance critical to success (Ameyaw & Chan, 2021). Empowering communities through skills development and employment opportunities also generates a sense of ownership integral to long-term sustainability (Gunningham, 2022).

Keywords:Public-private partnerships (PPPs), Health challenges, Health promotion,Collaboration,Efficiency ,Innovation.

Public Private Partnership

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a complex long-term contractual cooperation arrangement between public and private sectors to jointly deliver public services while sharing risks, costs, and resources. PPPs are founded on transferring risk from the public sector to the private sector, who best manages the risk, while offering a profit incentive in return. The PPP strategy offers flexibility and efficiency in the use of resources, not always evident in the public sector, and private financing to the local governments that reduces the financial burden on the public and assists them in budget deficiencies (Grimsey & Lewis, 2002; Hodge, 2010; Kwak et al., 2009; Reuschke, 2001; Sagalyn, 2007; Siemiatycki, 2009). Partnership is about involving society and private actors in dealing with problems rather than doing them alone or privatizing it to the market (Bovaird, 2010). Both theoretical and empirical research supports the idea that collaboration and participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process is critical for a successful development and project implementation. The interaction between the governance actors and civil society makes the community more likely to adopt meaningful policies critical to the success of planning programs. These interactions should be conducted through actively engaging community interests in a meaningful way and openly sharing information with stakeholders in an approach that satisfies multiple interest positions.

Community Participation and Empowerment

Despite the obvious advantages that PPP can bring to the public sector, community stakeholders can impact the success of any PPP projects positively or negatively. It is considered, by majority of the ordinary members of the community that the provision of infrastructure is a traditional role for government and as such, private sector participation (PSP) in infrastructure may be viewed with suspicion. Considering that governments around the world in recent times are partnering with the sector for the provision of infrastructure, it is imperative to consider the role of community stakeholder play in the success or otherwise of public-private partnership (PPP) Projects. Joint provision of public services has a long history but it was not until around the 1980s that it has been recognized as PPPs being practiced today (Hodge et al., 2010; Wettenhall, 2005).

Community participation in PPPs plays a crucial role in shaping the design, implementation, and sustainability of health promotion initiatives. Several benefits underscore the importance of community involvement in these partnerships:

- Community participation ensures that interventions are tailored to the specific needs, preferences, and cultural contexts of the target populations (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). By engaging communities in decision-making processes, PPPs can incorporate local knowledge and perspectives, thereby increasing the relevance and acceptability of interventions.
- Active participation of community members facilitates better access to healthcare services and resources, particularly among marginalized and underserved populations (Israel et al., 1998). Through community-driven approaches, PPPs can identify barriers to access and develop strategies to overcome them, leading to increased utilization of preventive services and interventions.
- Empowerment and Ownership Participation in PPPs empowers communities by providing opportunities for skill development, leadership roles, and decision-making authority (Wallerstein, 1992). By actively engaging in the planning and implementation of health initiatives, community members develop a sense of ownership and responsibility, which fosters sustainable behavior change and long-term impact.
- Social Capital and Networks Community participation strengthens social capital by fostering trust, solidarity, and cooperation among community members and between different stakeholders (Putnam, 2000). Through collaborative efforts within PPPs, communities can mobilize social networks and resources to address health challenges more effectively, leading to greater resilience and collective action.
- Involving communities in PPPs promotes accountability and transparency in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and program evaluation (Rifkin, 1986). By engaging in dialogue with community members, PPPs can enhance transparency, responsiveness, and accountability, thereby building trust and legitimacy within the community.

Challenges of Community Participation in Public Private Partnership

While community participation is essential for the success of PPPs in health promotion and prevention of diseases several challenges abound and addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that prioritizes community empowerment, capacity building, and inclusive decision-making processes within PPPs:

- Power imbalances within communities and between community members and external stakeholders can hinder meaningful participation (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). Certain groups,

such as marginalized populations or those with limited resources, may face barriers to participation, leading to unequal representation and decision-making influence.

- Limited financial resources and infrastructure can impede community members' ability to engage fully in PPPs (Israel et al., 1998). Communities facing socioeconomic challenges may prioritize immediate needs over participation in partnership activities, affecting the sustainability and effectiveness of interventions.
- Communication gaps and language barriers between stakeholders can hinder effective collaboration and understanding (Israel et al., 1998). Miscommunication or lack of clarity regarding roles, expectations, and goals may lead to conflicts, mistrust, and disengagement among participants.
- Building trust and rapport between community members and external partners requires sensitivity to cultural norms, values, and historical contexts (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). Lack of cultural competence or awareness can undermine trust and cooperation, limiting the effectiveness of partnership efforts.
- Building community capacity and empowering individuals to participate effectively in PPPs require investments in training, skill development, and leadership opportunities (Wallerstein, 1992). However, resource constraints and competing priorities may hinder efforts to enhance community capacity, limiting the depth and sustainability of participation.

Public-Private Partnerships in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as a crucial strategy in the field of health promotion and disease prevention. This collaborative approach brings together government entities, private organizations, and civil society to address pressing public health challenges. Public-private partnerships have transformed the landscape of health promotion and disease prevention. With a collaborative and inclusive approach, these partnerships can harness the strengths of both the public and private sectors to address complex health challenges effectively.

Over the years, public-private partnerships in health promotion and disease prevention have evolved significantly. Initially, the focus was primarily on providing financial support from the private sector to public health initiatives.

However, as the understanding of the complexities of health issues grew, so did the need for a more comprehensive and collaborative approach. PPPs now encompass a wide range of activities, including joint research and development, knowledge sharing, resource mobilization, capacity building, and program implementation. These partnerships have become instrumental in addressing various health challenges, such as communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health, and health inequalities. Several key factors contribute to the success of public-private partnerships in health promotion and disease prevention. Among such is effective communication and shared vision between partners because of the need to establish a common understanding of the goals, objectives, and expected outcomes of the partnership. A strong governance structure is vital to ensure accountability and transparency. This includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities, decision-making processes, and mechanisms for resolving conflicts.

Adequate and sustained funding is necessary to support the partnership's activities. Financial commitments from both public and private sectors should be aligned with the agreed-upon objectives and be provided in a timely manner. Also, the partnerships should prioritize evidence-based approaches and continuous evaluation. Regular monitoring and evaluation to help identify areas of improvement, measure progress, and ensure the effectiveness and impact of interventions. While public-private partnerships in health promotion and disease prevention offer immense potential, they also face certain

challenges. One major obstacle is the potential conflict of interest between public health goals and private sector interests. It is crucial to navigate this delicate balance and ensure that the partnership's primary focus remains on improving public health outcomes. The complexity of multi-sectoral collaboration poses a significant challenge, different stakeholders may have varying priorities, organizational cultures, and decision-making processes. Aligning these diverse perspectives can be time-consuming and requires effective coordination and negotiation.

Public Private Partnership in health promotion and disease prevention: Historical Context

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in health promotion and disease prevention have a long history, with roots in the early 20th century. Early examples include collaborations between the Rockefeller Foundation and the Chinese government to combat the spread of hookworm in China in the 1920s, and the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the early 2000s. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number and scope of PPPs, driven by factors such as the growing recognition of the social and economic impacts of poor health and the increasing cost of healthcare. The growth of PPPs has also been shaped by global developments such as the rise of public-private initiatives in global health governance, including the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and the increasing role of philanthropic foundations and non-governmental organizations in healthcare.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become increasingly common in the health promotion and disease prevention sectors, as policymakers and health professionals seek to leverage the resources and expertise of both public and private sectors to address complex health challenges. PPPs can take many forms, from strategic alliances between pharmaceutical companies and non-profit organizations to joint public-private funding arrangements for health programs. The success of PPPs in healthcare depends on several factors, including the alignment of goals and interests between partners, strong leadership and coordination, and clear and effective communication and accountability mechanisms. However, PPPs also face a range of challenges, including conflicts between the competing priorities of public and private partners. For instance, while public health organizations may prioritize equity and access for all, private partners may be more focused on profitability and return on investment. This can lead to divergent approaches to healthcare delivery, with PPPs sometimes failing to reach the most vulnerable populations. To overcome these challenges, it is essential that PPPs are carefully designed and managed, with clear objectives, expectations, and accountability mechanisms in place.

Public Private partnership in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: Success Factors and Challenges

Today, PPPs are a widespread feature of the global health landscape, with examples ranging from local partnerships to address specific health needs in specific communities to global initiatives such as the GAVI Alliance, a PPP that brings together governments, donor organizations, and private sector companies to increase access to vaccines in developing countries. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in health promotion and disease prevention can be successful when certain factors are present. These factors include:

- **Alignment of Goals:** Partners should share common objectives and priorities, ensuring that they are working towards the same end goal. For example, PPPs that aim to reduce the spread of infectious diseases will have more success if partners prioritize disease prevention over profit-making.
- **Strong Leadership and Coordination:** Effective PPPs require clear leadership structures and strong coordination mechanisms to ensure that all partners are working together efficiently.

- **Clear Communication and Accountability:** Regular and effective communication between partners is essential for a successful PPP. Partners should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms should be in place to ensure that partners are held to agreed-upon standards.
- **Shared Decision-Making:** Partners should be involved in decision-making and have opportunities to provide input on strategy and priorities. This helps to build trust and ensure that partners feel invested in the success of the PPP.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in health promotion and disease prevention also face a number of challenges, including:

- **Misaligned Incentives:** PPPs often involve partners with different priorities and incentives, which can create tension and lead to disagreements about how to allocate resources or prioritize different needs.
- **Power Imbalances:** PPPs can be susceptible to power imbalances, with larger or more influential partners exerting greater control over decision-making and direction.
- **Unintended Consequences:** PPPs can sometimes have unintended consequences, such as reducing competition in healthcare markets or leading to increased reliance on private sector actors for public health interventions.
- **Difficulty Measuring Impact:** Assessing the impact of PPPs can be challenging, as it is difficult to attribute specific outcomes to the PPP itself. This can make it difficult to determine whether a PPP is achieving its intended goals.
- **Lack of Trust:** Lack of trust between partners can undermine the success of a PPP. Partners may have different expectations or concerns about the behavior or motives of the other partners.

Case Studies of Public Private Intervention in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

In Lagos, the Lagos State AIDS Control Agency (LSACA) implemented the Lagos HIV Prevention Partnership (LHP), which involved community members in planning and implementing HIV prevention activities, leading to increased community buy-in and a reduction in the stigma associated with HIV. The Lagos State AIDS Control Agency (LSACA) works to achieve Fast-Track City objectives with a number of partners. It has engaged the private sector in initiatives to improve HIV sensitivity in workplaces and to fund the HIV response. It has also worked with teachers and youth-oriented service workers to improve education and services for adolescents and young people. LSACA is working in close collaboration with the Fast-Track City project and the private sector to improve the city's HIV response. The agency has established strong partnerships with 30 key private sector players in Lagos to promote the integration of Nigeria's National Workplace Policy on HIV/AIDS, which aims to protect people living with HIV and promote and ensure respect for their rights. Human resource (HR) managers at each of the 30 organizations received workplace policy documents for adoption and distribution, helping to entrench sensitivity to HIV issues into their operations. LSACA also provides training on the use and implementation of the workplace policy, covering basic facts about HIV; the rights of people living with HIV; countering stigma and discrimination in the workplace; and how to respond to rights abuses and refer cases to the appropriate authorities.

The Nigeria Business Coalition against HIV/AIDS (NiBUCAA) – a group of private-sector organizations – is also working very closely with the Fast-Track City programme to champion the adoption of the workplace policy among its members. The Coalition's corporate network, including extremely high-profile organizations such as Total Oil, Chevron, Shell, the Dangote Foundation and financial

institutions, also contributes funds to the city's HIV response. A meeting between high-profile stakeholders, including the Executive Governor of Lagos and the managing director of Access Bank Plc, one of Nigeria's leading financial institutions, was held to catalyse an increase in private contributions to the HIV response through the HIV Trust Fund of Nigeria (HTFN). This new private-sector initiative, promoted by NiBUCAA and Nigeria's National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) and supported by UNAIDS, will increase such contributions to around 10% of the national AIDS budget, up from 2% in 2016.

Strategies for Enhancing Community Participation and Empowerment in PPPs

Community participation and empowerment are key components of successful Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in health promotion and disease prevention, particularly in the Nigerian context. In Nigeria, community participation and empowerment in PPPs is often lacking, with communities often excluded from decision-making processes or left out of PPP activities altogether. Enhancing community participation and empowerment within these partnerships is crucial for ensuring their success and meeting the needs of the local populace. By actively engaging communities, PPPs can foster a sense of ownership, accountability, and sustainability, ultimately leading to more effective and inclusive outcomes. The following strategies can enhance community participation and empowerment in PPPs:

- Involve community members and stakeholders from the outset in the planning and decision-making processes of PPPs. This can be achieved through public consultations, focus group discussions, and community advisory boards. By incorporating diverse perspectives and local knowledge, PPPs can better align their objectives with community needs and priorities (Bryson et al., 2015).
- Invest in capacity-building initiatives to empower community members with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to actively participate in PPPs. This can include training programs, access to relevant information, and the provision of technical assistance (Brinkerhoff & Azfar, 2006).
- Maintain open and transparent communication channels between PPP stakeholders and the community. Regularly share project updates, progress reports, and decision-making processes to foster trust and accountability (Jamali, 2004).
- Establish participatory monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that involve community representatives. This ensures that PPP projects are continuously assessed and adjusted to meet the evolving needs of the community (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).
- Collaborate with and support local CBOs, which can serve as intermediaries between PPPs and the community. CBOs have a deep understanding of community dynamics and can facilitate effective engagement and mobilization (Miraftab, 2004).
- Develop equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms that ensure the fair distribution of project benefits to the community. This can include employment opportunities, revenue-sharing schemes, or investment in community development initiatives (Glasbergen, 2007).
- Implement robust conflict resolution and grievance mechanisms that allow community members to voice concerns and address grievances related to PPP projects in a timely and effective manner (Bingham et al., 2005).

By implementing these strategies, PPPs can foster a sense of community ownership, enhance trust and legitimacy, and ultimately contribute to more sustainable and inclusive development outcomes.

Implications and Recommendations

Encouraging community participation and empowerment in PPPs has significant implications for policy and practice. By actively involving communities in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of PPP projects, policymakers can ensure that these initiatives are tailored to local needs and priorities. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among community members, leading to more sustainable outcomes (Ismail, 2009). Furthermore, empowering communities through capacity-building initiatives and inclusive decision-making processes can enhance their ability to advocate for their rights and hold PPP stakeholders accountable (Brinkerhoff & Azfar, 2006). Policymakers should establish frameworks and incentives that encourage PPPs to adopt participatory approaches and prioritize community empowerment.

PPPs can play a vital role in addressing public health challenges, particularly in the areas of health promotion and disease prevention. By leveraging the resources, expertise, and reach of both public and private sector organizations, PPPs can develop and implement innovative strategies for promoting healthy behaviors, raising awareness, and improving access to preventive healthcare services (Buse & Waxman, 2001). Policymakers should recognize the potential of PPPs in this domain and create an enabling environment that facilitates collaboration between government agencies, private companies, civil society organizations, and local communities. This could involve providing incentives, streamlining regulatory processes, and fostering cross-sector partnerships (Kickbusch & Lister, 2006).

Recommendations for Action

To effectively enhance community participation and empowerment in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the promotion of health and disease prevention, it is crucial for all stakeholders, including the community, private sector, and government, to take proactive steps to address gaps and ensure all stakeholder are well and properly represented to cover for the interest of all parties. The following are some recommended action steps for each stakeholder group:

Community:

- **Organize and mobilize:** Establish or strengthen community-based organizations (CBOs) to serve as a unified voice and facilitate effective engagement with PPP stakeholders.
- **Participate actively:** Attend public consultations, forums, and meetings organized by PPP authorities to provide input, share local knowledge, and voice concerns.
- **Build capacity:** Seek opportunities for capacity-building through training programs, workshops, or partnerships with civil society organizations to gain the necessary skills and knowledge for meaningful participation.
- **Monitor and evaluate:** Participate in monitoring and evaluation processes to assess the impact of PPP projects on the community and ensure accountability.
- **Advocate for rights:** Utilize established grievance mechanisms and advocacy channels to address concerns and advocate for community rights and interests.

Private Sector:

- **Embrace inclusive practices:** Develop and implement strategies for actively engaging communities throughout the lifecycle of PPP projects, from planning to implementation and monitoring.

- **Allocate resources:** Dedicate financial and human resources to support community participation and empowerment initiatives, such as public consultations, capacity-building programs, and benefit-sharing mechanisms.
- **Foster transparency:** Maintain open and transparent communication channels with communities, sharing project information, progress updates, and decision-making processes.
- **Collaborate with CBOs:** Partner with local community-based organizations to leverage their expertise, networks, and deep understanding of community dynamics.
- **Prioritize community benefits:** Develop and implement equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms that ensure the fair distribution of project benefits to the community.

Government:

- **Establish enabling policies:** Develop and implement policies that mandate and incentivize community participation and empowerment in PPP projects.
- **Create frameworks:** Develop comprehensive frameworks and guidelines for community engagement, including mechanisms for inclusive decision-making, grievance redressal, and benefit-sharing.
- **Build institutional capacity:** Strengthen the capacity of government agencies and personnel to effectively facilitate and manage community participation processes in PPPs.
- **Provide oversight and accountability:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that PPPs adhere to community engagement principles and commitments.
- **Facilitate cross-sector collaboration:** Foster collaboration and partnerships between government agencies, private sector entities, civil society organizations, and community representatives to promote inclusive and participatory PPP approaches.

By taking these action steps, stakeholders can collectively create an enabling environment for effective community participation and empowerment in PPPs, leading to more sustainable, inclusive, and impactful development outcomes.

Recommendations for Future Research

Conduct a Comprehensive Evaluations of Community Participation in PPPs: While the importance of community participation in PPPs is widely acknowledged, there is a need for more comprehensive evaluations of its impacts and effectiveness. Future research should focus on developing robust methodologies to assess the extent to which communities are truly engaged and empowered throughout the lifecycle of PPP projects (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). Additionally, studies should examine the long-term outcomes of participatory approaches, including their effects on project sustainability, community well-being, and the achievement of development goals (Miraftab, 2004). Such research can inform best practices and provide valuable insights for policymakers and PPP practitioners.

Exploring innovative models and approaches for community engagement: As the landscape of PPPs continues to evolve, there is a need to explore innovative models and approaches for fostering effective community engagement. Future research should investigate the potential of emerging technologies, such as digital platforms and social media, to facilitate inclusive dialogue and collaboration between PPP stakeholders and communities (Glasbergen, 2007). Additionally, researchers can examine the role of alternative governance structures, such as community-based organizations or co-management arrangements, in enhancing community participation and empowerment within PPPs (Bingham et al.,

2005). By exploring these innovative models, researchers can contribute to the development of more inclusive and responsive PPP frameworks.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the critical role of community participation and empowerment in public-private partnerships (PPPs) for health promotion and disease prevention. The key findings highlight the numerous benefits of actively involving communities, including ensuring interventions align with local needs, facilitating access to services, fostering ownership and sustainability, strengthening social capital, and enhancing accountability. However, the paper also underscores the challenges of power imbalances, resource constraints, communication gaps, and limited capacity that can hinder meaningful participation. Case studies from Nigeria, such as the Lagos HIV Prevention Partnership, demonstrate the positive impact of community-driven approaches while also revealing areas for improvement.

This research contributes to both knowledge and practice in the field of public health by providing a comprehensive analysis of the facilitators and barriers to community participation within PPPs. The strategies outlined, such as capacity building, transparent communication, and equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, offer a roadmap for enhancing inclusivity and empowerment. While this study offers valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The scope was primarily theoretical, and further empirical research is needed to validate the proposed strategies across diverse contexts. Additionally, as PPPs continue to evolve, new challenges may arise, necessitating ongoing examination and adaptation of community engagement approaches.

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