Example 1
San Francisco Community Vital Signs Program (SFCVS)

This case example illustrates how the effective use of information technology (IT) throughout the community led to the successful implementation of public health activities.

In the summer of 2009, the San Francisco Department of Public Health developed an IT-assisted approach to assessing their independently-developed Community Vital Signs Program (SFCVS). The program assesses the general health of the community, and the Department of Public Health wanted an efficient, effective way to evaluate both the program and the health of the community.

The SFCVS used web-based interfaces to implement different components of the program and to quickly and accurately obtain feedback from its users. SFCVS was based on the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships Model (MAPP). MAPP is a strategic approach aimed at improving community health. This model helps communities improve general health and quality of life through community-wide strategic planning. The process allows communities to achieve optimal health by identifying and utilizing resources wisely, recognizing unique assets and needs, and forming effective partnerships for strategic action. The final step of the MAPP process includes a built-in "plan, implement, and evaluate" cycle around any action step developed through the strategic process.

Using the MAPP framework (shown below), SFCVS incorporated community stakeholder input and an IT-based platform to create a process to leverage the implementation of public health activities.

Source: NACCHO and CDC, 2000

Example 2
Inclusion of Stakeholders and the Kamehameha Schools

As discussed in prior CER modules, engaging groups of stakeholders with different professions, backgrounds, languages, and cultures can create challenges and opportunities when working toward a specific research goal. This example shows the exploratory study of the views, needs, concerns, and issues surrounding violence-related behaviors among multi-ethnic students enrolled in an elementary school in Hawaii. The perceptions of relevant adult stakeholders were examined to understand youth violence in the school system and address ways of solving the problem.

In this case, outcomes were maximized by learning, respecting, and utilizing the culture of the stakeholders.

Two aspects of Hawaiian culture are especially relevant to focus group research methodology:
1) Working together in a group has special meaning for Hawaiians, reflected in the native values of Laulima, meaning cooperation, and Kuleana, which means taking responsibility <<Kawai'ae'a, 2002>>. Researchers set to incorporate these values into all relevant components of the study, such as bringing pot-luck style food to stakeholder meetings to promote group cohesion, cooperation, and shared responsibility.
2) Using the "talk-story," which uses the Hawaiian tradition of oral storytelling to instill values and pass along tradition from generation to generation <<Affonso, Mayberry, Inaba, Matsuno and Robinson, 1996>>. The talk-story is respected for imbuing important values and promoting responsible behaviors.

By incorporating these aspects of Hawaiian culture into methodologies, researchers learned and understood the culture of the relevant stakeholder group in order to answer the research question. This example shows the importance of knowing, appreciating, and tailoring research to the relevant audience to respect their values and build a cooperative and productive research environment.