

## CCNY College-wide Research Vision (CRV) Initiative Concept White Paper

### The “Beloved Community” Project

#### **Project Team:**

**Principal Investigator:** Drs. Terri N. Watson and Bao Vuong, Associate Professors  
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**Other Key Personnel:** Drs. Edwin Lamboy and Susan Perkins

#### **Project Concept Description: (Maximum 2 pages)**

**Keywords:** Community Health, COVID-19, K – 12 Education, Community-Based Learning

**Objective:** This Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) project will use an asset-based framework to explore Harlem’s response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and offer community-specific best practices and culturally responsive policies and programs to healthcare professionals, educational leaders, and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).

**Approach:** Our study is guided by theories of consequential learning, community health, social justice, and critical love. Too often research is conducted *on*, rather than *with*, communities of Color and researchers proffer findings void of racial consciousness and intended for institutions rather than the respective community. This is sometimes true even when the researcher is a person of Color. In contrast, this study utilizes CBPR. This approach intentionally partners community members and researchers to produce scholarship that is meaningful to the community. CBPR has been used to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities in vulnerable communities. Kurt Lewin, a German born social scientist, is considered a pioneer in CBPR. He developed this faction of action research to encourage researchers to use scholarship for social change. This CBPR project will partner Harlem’s residents with CCNY researchers and the faculty and staff at a Harlem high school, A. Philip Randolph Campus High School. Together, we will construct a series of workshops, programs, and events to better understand and enhance how Harlem’s residents, who live in Community District 9, address reduced public services and their children’s projected learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Outcomes:** Based on the scope of this initiative, we hope children and families who reside in Community District 9 benefit from this initiative through: a) Increase in health awareness that promotes prevention rather than intervention, b) Decrease in COVID-19 infection rates with increased vaccination, c) Increase in learning gains for K-12 students, d) Increase in family-school-community partnerships, and e) Improved community engagement with an understanding of the natural environment.

#### **Expected Products:**

Dr. Watson is working on a book project, “Creating Racially Just Schools: Lessons from Harlem’s Othermothers.” Research from this initiative will provide meaningful data for this book project. This book project will be supported, in part, by this initiative and will be completed by 2023.

**Merits:** This study will offer critical insights to reveal how Harlem engages in community building and organizes resources to assist vulnerable community members.

### *The ACTION Framework*

Brown and Stalker's (2018) Assess Connect Transform In Our Neighborhood (ACTION) framework will be used to facilitate the research process. Like CBPR, the ACTION framework centers collaboration and shared expertise among community partners and researchers. This tool consists of four components: Assess, Connect, Transform, and In Our Neighborhood. During the Assess phase, community partners and researchers collaborate to decide on the focus of the research project. In the Connect phase, relationships are utilized, and resources are gathered to conduct the agreed upon study. Importantly, community partners and researchers use their collective expertise to gather the agreed upon quantitative and / or qualitative data. During the Transform phase findings are shared with community members and interested parties for the benefit of the respective community. For instance, this project aims to use an asset-based framework to explore Harlem's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and offer racially conscious best practices to healthcare professionals, educational leaders, and CBOs. Hence, findings from this study will highlight community-specific best practices, and culturally responsive policies and programs will be disseminated.

### **Impact:**

The "Beloved Community" Project will increase CCNY's impact on Harlem and will use the college's assets to improve the life chances and educational experiences of residents who reside in Community District 9. Findings from this project may be replicated to strengthen family-community-school relationships in other marginalized communities.

### **Milestones:**

- Months 1-2:** Community District 9 residents will be encouraged to participate in a web-based survey (that will be embedded into the project's website (see <https://www.thebelovedcommunityproject.com>)).
- Months 3-4:** Up to 20 community members, who participated in the web-based survey, will be offered \$100 American Express gift cards to participate in one 90- minute focus group wherein they will share their triumphs and concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic in greater detail. Participants will also be invited to join the research team and will be given a stipend of \$1000 in the spring of 2022 and at the conclusion of the project, early summer 2023.
- Months 5-6:** Based on participant responses, between Monday, November 1, 2022, and Monday, January 3, 2023, the research team, consisting of at least 12 members, will develop at least 12 activities (workshops, programs, and events) designed to complement the triumphs and to address the concerns of Harlem's residents (i.e., Community Health Fair, Back to School Extravaganza, Technology Workshops, and Healthy Eating presentations).
- Months 7-11:** The workshops, programs, and events will occur (at least) monthly from January 3, 2023, to June 1, 2023. They will be held at either a public school in Community District 9 or The City College of New York and presenters will be offered a nominal stipend. Food and beverages will be made available to all participants and door prizes (Four \$100 gift cards, i.e., American Express, Target, Best Buy, and Whole Foods) will be randomly distributed at the conclusion of each gathering.
- Month 12:** The research team will meet as needed to share all data and write up the findings. If requested, an additional workshop, program, or event will be made available to residents of Community District 9 during this time. Last, findings will be shared with Community District 9 and then disseminated to healthcare professionals, educational and community leaders, and CBOs.

**Budget (Maximum Budget \$200K):**

Personnel Costs: (please list key positions and estimate budget required)

- Key Personnel (PI, Co-PI, senior personnel): PI Salaries: 70,000
- Research staff:
- Administration staff: 20,000
- Students:
  - PhD 40,000
  - MS
  - Undergrad

OTPS Costs: (major items, such as supplies, travel, etc. Subcontract and consultant costs are discouraged)

Participant Stipend Costs – 20,000

Supplies (Participant gift cards, door prizes, 40,000

Community Health Fair / Back to School Event 10,000

Note: There is no IDC, and no equipment costs are allowed. Necessary equipment will be considered as top priority from future GRTI allocations and/or other equipment grants.