Kujichagulia- Self Determination: A Brief History - Building AACHW, The American Association of CHWs

Durrell Fox
MA DPH Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund
Team Fox Solutions

Lisa Renee Holderby-Fox
Team Fox Solutions
Why Kujichagulia?
Many reasons…

- Kujichagulia – Self determination has been the theme & drum beat for the CHW led movement.
- AACHW Core value - **Self-determination**

Community Health Workers shall determine the direction of the field. We will make the decisions concerning training and education best practices, policy development and define the field of community health workers.
“A Journey Begins with a single step”
Kujichagulia – Self determination

- 6 years of meetings and conference calls to build a truly national, diverse CHW led association (2000-2006)
- Approx. 200 CHWs and 50 allies/partners from 38 states participated (every region)
- Input from these meetings helped develop a model and RWJF proposal for AACHW infrastructure development (2006-2009)
Still determined…

• Sept. 2006 in person meeting in Potomac, MD led to adopting AACHW name in Oct.
• Elected all CHW steering committee of 15 from 13 states (all regions represented)
• Developed subcommittees, advisory council and hosted regular meetings and conference calls through 2009
Determined yet challenged…

• Some steering committee members became inactive in AACHW (many reasons…)

• Constant pressures on active AACHW leadership to stay engaged while being active in local, state and regional CHW initiatives, policies, organizing activities…

• By the end of 2009 only a few active members … hiatus
And Still I rise…

Maya Angelou

- We developed AACHW interim and long term leadership structure models
STEERING COMMITTEE
- Determine committee duties, members, frequency of meetings
- Develop statement of expectations for Advisory Board
- Consider and implement subcommittees’ recommendations
- Choose a name for the organization

S U B C O M M I T T E E S
Membership/Outreach
- Define membership eligibility
- Identify ways to ensure diversity
- Determine membership requirements and benefits
- Develop communications model
- Identify outreach strategies/objectives and objectives

Vision/Bylaws
- Refine vision
- Draft initial bylaws

Policy
- Identify/prioritize issues
- Determine research needs

CHWs—the foundation of AACHW

Interim Leadership Structure
Advisory Board
Staff

CHWs only
CHWs/partners
Partners

Constant communication and outreach with CHWs

Prepared for AACHW by the Harrison Institute for Public Law at the Georgetown University Law Center.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Establish overall AACHW policy and oversee the direction of the association

DIRECTORS MAY FORM COMMITTEES WITH BOARD AUTHORITY:

- Executive Committee
- Governance Committee
- Audit Committee
- Finance Committee

Officers report to (and may be members of) the Board

Board may designate and monitor committees with non-Board members

OFFICERS

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

COMMITTEES

- Membership/Outreach
- Policy
- Development
- Others?

MEMBERS

- INDIVIDUALS
  - CHWs, Students, Retirees, Associates
- ORGANIZATIONS
  - Organizations and Affiliates
- CHAPTERS AND/OR AFFILIATES

COMMUNITY

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Lessons Learned

• Readiness assessment is very important!!!
• Need to identify more CHWs/CHW leaders who could step up as others step down.
• Communication is critical!
• Importance of maintaining grassroots organizing elements.
• Activate advisors, allies and supporters early in the process.
• Develop sustainability plan early.
• “There is no progress without struggle”.
AACHW developed some enduring materials
AACHW Documents That Live On

Documents in use today:

• Code of Ethics
• Core Values
• Code of Ethics toolkit
Access - ensure equal access to services...

Acceptance - remain open-minded and are accepting of others...

Advocacy - advocate for communities, individuals and the field of community health work...

Excellence - providing quality services and the most accurate information available to individuals and communities.

Learning - embrace learning Access as life long, including life experiences and traditional learning.

Partnership - partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of CHW programs...

Self-determination - CHWs shall determine the direction of the field.

Social Justice - CHWs are agents of change

Strength - assist families to acknowledge strengths and build upon them

Trust - CHWs have earned the trust of individuals and communities.

Unity - CHWs regardless of discipline, region of the country, job title, and work within or outside of traditional systems are unified in our work to reduce disparities.
Code of Ethics adopted by AACHW

Article 1.
Responsibilities in the Delivery of Care

Article 2.
Promotion of Equitable Relationships

Article 3:
Interactions with Other Service Providers

Article 4.
Professional Rights and Responsibilities
Community Health Worker Code of Ethics Toolkit

Designed by the Harrison Institute for Public Law @ Georgetown University Law Center on behalf of AACHW