

University of North Carolina – Injury Prevention Research Center activities as an Affiliate Safe Community Support Centre for evaluation of the Safe Communities Programme.

Overall purpose of collaboration:

The UNC Injury Prevention Research Center (IPRC) will conduct activities of evaluation of the global Safe Communities Program. These are useful for improving overall public health activities on safety promotion at a global scale. UNC IPRC will collaborate directly with the Karolinska Institutet as well as with any other member or affiliate centre of the Safe Communities network.

Activities are aimed at creating or strengthening the evidence base using sound scientific methodologies. UNC IPRC activities will be focused on the following two areas: 1) the actual evaluation of specific Safe Communities Programs throughout the world by means of creation of indicators; and 2) the establishment of evaluation criteria by defining short- medium- and long-term goals. The second activity is through the training of Safe Communities groups on the development and conduct of evaluation programs tailored to specific local needs. These training activities will be centred on the identification of program goals and the measurement of outcomes and program process over time. Specifically the IPRC and KI are developing the following concrete activities:

A. Training on evaluation:

The aim of the training and evaluation activities is to enable Safe Community program participants to explain how to prevent violence and injuries as well as how to plan and evaluate evidence based violence and injury prevention efforts over time. The training methodology focuses predominantly on primary prevention and utilizes an action-learning approach aimed at training individuals and teams on planning and evaluation principles. Many of these training activities will be conducted using similar methods that have been tested in the United States under the PREVENT (Preventing Violence through Education, Networking and Technical Assistance – www.prevent.unc.edu) programme, a capacity building initiative funded initially by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that to date has trained over 900 practitioners in 44 states from multiple disciplines and settings on leadership and evaluation of violence prevention efforts. The methodology of this program is adaptable to any injury topic and ideal for community-based injury prevention and safety promotion initiatives.

B. Evaluation of specific programs:

Two specific projects are currently under development.

Project 1 Safe Communities evaluation in the United States of America.

Participants: The National Safety Council (Safe Communities Affiliate Centre) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC).

Project goal: To improve the capacity of the state health departments to effectively evaluate the Safe Communities America program in their local communities.

This project aims to develop and pilot a set of measures for evaluating the effectiveness of local communities that are in the process of being certified as Safe Communities. The evaluation measure will be based on the six indicators established by the international WHO Safe Communities program, which include: 1) an infrastructure based on partnership and collaborations, governed by a cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in their community; 2) long-term, sustainable programs covering both genders, and all ages, environments and situations; 3) programs that target high-risk groups and environments, and programs that promote safety for vulnerable groups; 4) documentation of the frequency and causes of injuries; 5) evaluation of their programs, processes, and the effects of change; and 6) participation in national and international safe communities networks.

Project 2 International Collaborative Research Grant to develop core indicators for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Safe Community programmes in 4 Asian countries.

Participants: Safe Communities from Bangladesh, Thailand, China, Iran and Korean Centre for Injury Prevention and Community Safety Promotion (Safe Communities Affiliate and Support Centre), and Karolinska Institutet.

Project goal: To develop, implement, and evaluate the Safe Community programs in four Asian Program Countries – China, Bangladesh, Thailand and Iran – by creating core and country-specific indicators for safety promotion.

These indicators include the measurement of specifically defined injury prevention and safety promotion activities, process evaluation measures, and outcome evaluation measures designed to test program effectiveness. Initially, we will examine the information currently being collected; then, jointly develop and pilot test the feasibility and procedures for obtaining the core information, implement the specific systems developed, collect and analyze the data, and disseminate the results. This collaborative research grant will enable the development and the research to be undertaken, and will not only benefit the four participating Program Countries, but also the experience will be valuable for the worldwide Safe Community network. Consequently, results will be disseminated worldwide and thus have the potential for broad impact. These evaluation activities are an essential aspect of long-term capacity building in community intervention research that will sustain Safe Communities program locally, nationally and regionally in Asia and globally. This program will develop links for long-term research cooperation, produce new knowledge and enable practitioners to implement, evaluate and disseminate community-based injury and violence prevention projects with mentoring from the Karolinska Institutet and its Affiliate Support Centers in USA and Korea. This program could serve as a model for other regions.

New ideas:

Currently we are also exploring the possibility of receiving funds for capacity building and strengthening injury surveillance systems in Latin America to support the evaluation of Safe Community programs in Central and South America. This initiative is in line with programs supported by the Pan-American Health Organization, World Health Organization and in the U.S. by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Additional Safe Communities evaluation efforts:

Currently, the Cochrane Collaboration is conducting a new systematic review of the Safe Communities program to update one previously done in 2005. This systematic review, part of the Cochrane Injuries Group, will be headed by Dr. Anneliese Spinks of Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. Systematic reviews such as this one are crucial to addressing, summarising and critiquing different injury prevention and safety promotion activities. These reviews are very important tools to generate evidence about effectiveness of programs. It is for this reason that members of the Safe Communities network are encouraged to design their programmes with a permanent focus on how to evaluate them. To evaluate programs, key important indicators of effectiveness are necessary and training on evaluation is needed. This is specifically the task of the UNC IPRC. Contingent upon available funds we aim to develop concrete collaborations with interested Safe Communities programmes. The goal of these collaborations would ideally be to eventually agree upon key measures essential to every Safe Community Programme that would allow local leadership to adequately assess the effectiveness of their local programmes as well as compare results with peers in other regions or countries. Partnerships to seek funds and design evaluation projects are encouraged with every programme within the Safe Communities Network and UNC IPRC. It is through evidence-generating processes that effective interventions are identified and disseminated throughout the world.