

# Social Participation in Health: A Community-Based Participatory Research Approach to Capacity Building in Two Colombian Communities

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## What Is the Purpose of the Study?

- To use community-based participatory research methods to understand the local context and generate an intervention tailored to the needs of two Colombian communities through a partnership between social leaders, institutional representatives and researchers.
- To understand social participation in health in two Colombian communities from the perspective of community leaders and institutional representatives.
- To execute a participatory educational strategy to develop community capacities with inhabitants of two Colombian communities.

## What Is the Problem?

- In Colombia and other Latin American countries, community participation is subject to corrupt and self-serving interest. Citizens need arguments and tools to deal with situations that violate their right to health.
- The challenge is to develop the capacities that will enable communities to utilize their resources to solve their health problems.

## What Are the Findings?

- Participants agreed that social participation in health is affected because politicized positions take precedence over collective needs.
- Citizens know little about how the health system and the mechanisms of social participation work.
- This study proves that a participatory strategy adjusted to the context and needs of the community has effective results in qualifying social participation in health.
- The participants in the educational strategy stated that they acquired knowledge to help their communities and to confront the injustices they have historically suffered regarding the violation of their right to health.

## Who Should Care Most?

- Social leaders and community-based organizations.
- Universities that train human talent in health.
- Researchers interested in health promotion.
- Social sciences and health professionals working in public health and primary health care.

- Health and social service providers.
- State and local health policy advocates.

#### Recommendations for Action

- To strengthen intersectoral action for the promotion of social participation in health, leading communities to develop their capacities and empowerment.
- Universities should train health professionals in community work with an emphasis on participatory research methodologies.
- In local and departmental administrations, personnel in charge of working with communities should be selected based on their experience and expertise in this field, and not for political reasons.