

Indigenist Research Strategies and Best Practices

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Indigenist Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

Research is consistent with social justice and tribal sovereignty

- ▶ Learning is multi-directional with co-partnership every step of the way
- ▶ Build on historical strengths and traditional ways – what's working?
- ▶ Highlight community capacity building – always
- ▶ Work must be contextualized by the historical events that contribute to issues and the realities of discrimination and structural inequalities

Building the Foundation

DETERMINING PRIORITIES

- ▶ What are community priorities? Politics?
- ▶ Are a range of voices included? How do we know?
- ▶ Issues/Needs often interrelated

FEASIBILITY AND BALANCING EXPECTATIONS

- ▶ Realistic strengths of team and Institutions
 - ▶ Community readiness, timing, capacity
 - ▶ Defining Terms (e.g. data ownership)
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- ▶ Anticipate a healthy mistrust of research
 - ▶ Heed community calls for projects that focus on strengths

Building Partnerships

CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

- What is the process? Timeline?
- What are the parameters of the work?
- What are the possible benefits, the limitations?

BUILDING A BASE

- ▶ Establish Leadership Councils, Community Action Boards
- ▶ Develop tribal research capacity and hire from community
- ▶ Develop a plan for data sharing and dissemination right away!
- ▶ Work with tribal and/or regional Native IRBs
- ▶ Sufficient planning time is key – write it in!

Building Partnerships

BUILDING TRUST

- ▶ Get permission and buy in – tribal councils, elders and youth, urban advisory boards, organizations
- ▶ Naming the study and developing media materials in tribal language
- ▶ Community Kick Off Feast and announcement of proposal to community
- ▶ Partnership in publications, project materials, presentations
- ▶ Be seen and spend time in the community

CULTURALLY RELEVANT MEASURES

- ▶ Measures may need to be developed with community
- ▶ All measures must be reviewed

Decolonizing & Indigenizing Research

- To guide the development of research partnerships with indigenous communities, IWRI scholars identified eight principles for decolonizing and indigenizing research– The 8 Rs (see Walters, Stately, Evans-Campbell et. al)
- Note that many of these principles incorporate Tuhiwai Smith's (2006) work on building indigenous research capacity. These guidelines are a starting point in promoting best practices in research partnerships with indigenous communities

CBPR Principles: The 8 R's

- Reflection
- Respect
- Relevance
- Resilience
- Reciprocity
- Responsibility
- Retraditionalization
- Revolution



- **Reflection** is an ongoing process of self-awareness of positionality and privilege
- The principle of **respect** means that research partners must value and prioritize indigenous epistemologies, knowledge, cultural protocols, and healing practices
- For research partners to achieve **relevance**, they must actively engage the community from the earliest phases of the research endeavor - meetings with key community members, community forums, and extensive outreach to get input from diverse voices
- Relevance also extends to the methodology of the research. For example, many communities refuse to participate in trials with a control/no intervention group

- Acknowledge community **resilience** in the face of multiple assaults. Historically, research focused exclusively on pathologic conditions (e.g. alcohol addiction) without regard to historical factors that contributed. Also tended to ignore the majority of people who did not have these challenges
- **Reciprocity** is key in the research partnership, which should be collaborative and mutually respectful
- Research partners have the **responsibility** of disseminating research findings in culturally meaningful ways. In addition, they should anticipate the implications of their findings for community and outsiders
- **Retraditionalization** involves incorporating traditional knowledge and methods into the development, implementation, dissemination and evaluation of research projects

Principle 8: Revolution

- Truly indigenist research collaboration involves **revolution**. Partners, actively seeking to decolonize and indigenize the research process, can transform the structure and nature of knowledge production
- Decolonizing research practices include holding the researchers and institutions accountable. This might involve promoting indigenous science and knowledge within universities, as well greater awareness of the need to recognize tribal sovereignty
- Actively helping to build a cadre of Native researchers and scholars