



Community-Based Research Toolkit: Resources and Tools for Doing Research with Community for Social Change

**Developed by
Community-Based Research Team at Access Alliance**

In Collaboration with Sarah Switzer and Matthew Adams

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In line with CBR principles, we believe the tools and resources in this toolkit are common property. You do not need to get permission from us to use them. Of course, we would love to hear from you about your experience and relevance of these tools for your work.

Requests copies of this toolkit should be addressed to:
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About Access Alliance's Community Based Research Program

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services (Access Alliance) is a multi-service community health centre based in Toronto that works to promote health and well-being and improve access to services for immigrants and refugees in Toronto by addressing medical, social, economic and environmental issues. We envision a future in which diverse individuals, families and communities can achieve health with dignity.

Access Alliance established a community-based research (CBR) program in 2004 and has come to be recognized as a leader in community-based research. It has developed many participatory and collaborative tools and processes for doing research in partnership with marginalized communities geared at investigating and overcoming systemic barriers that marginalized communities face.

About this Community-Based Research Toolkit

The tools, templates and resources in this toolkit were compiled and developed by the CBR team at Access Alliance based on half a decade of implementing CBR projects. The CBR team at Access Alliance realized early on that having solid CBR training and tools was crucial to the success of its CBR projects. Thus, the team made it a priority to build CBR training and tools. In 2006, we created a part-time in-house researcher trainer position whose task was to develop innovative CBR training materials and tools and to deliver CBR training to peer researchers and other partners as per the need of our CBR projects. We also hired a consultant from the Catalyst Centre (Matthew Adams) to ground our CBR training and tools in a popular education framework.

Four pedagogical principles guided the development of our CBR trainings and tools:

1. Transformatively accessible: we tried to make the tools accessible not just in terms of language but 'transformatively accessible' in ways that **deconstructs research as something done by a privileged few to something that can be done by everyone to document and create critical knowledge for catalyzing progressive change**. In other words, the tools seek to bring research to the 'grassroots' and give a sense to stakeholders (particularly marginalized members) that they can become empowered researchers and knowledge producers. Further, the tools are geared to foster collaboration within and through knowledge production.
2. Equity: our goal was to create tools that can enable more marginalized stakeholders to participate equitably and actively at all steps of the research.
3. Fun and engaging: we wanted to make sure the tools were fun, creative, and innovative so as to make the research process more engaging and enjoyable.
4. Rigorous: in trying to make research accessible, equitable and fun, we made sure that tools did not compromise research rigour in any way; rather, the tools attempt to enhance research rigour by making research more accessible and collaborative.

We hired Sarah Switzer in 2009 to compile our tools into a toolkit. Her first task was to do a scan of available CBR toolkits and advise on the focus and content of our toolkit. While there are several CBR toolkits available, most of them are centred on principles and processes of CBR. Our toolkit is different in the way it offers many hands-on ready to use tools to actually put CBR principles into action. Links to other CBR toolkits and other CBR resources have been included throughout the toolkit and in the references section in the end.

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How to Use this Toolkit

This toolkit is designed for people and institutions interested in doing research using community-based research (CBR) principles. It contains over 70 ready to use tools and templates and numerous best practices recommendations that CBR practitioners can utilize to prepare for your Community-Based Research project, identify and build healthy partnerships, train and meaningfully engage marginalized community members in research as ‘peer researchers,’ and design and implement your research project using participatory, collaborative processes. The toolkit also contains information on how to disseminate your findings, connect these findings to policy change and evaluate your project. While different stakeholders may find this toolkit useful, the tools and resources in this toolkit are particularly geared at enabling grassroots community agencies to develop research infrastructure, design and implement effective CBR projects, secure resources and partnerships (including with academics), and involve marginalized communities as co-researchers in knowledge production and knowledge exchange for the purpose of promoting equity and social justice.

This toolkit includes resources for the whole ‘life-cycle’ of your Community-Based Research project from planning your Community-Based Research project, to building partnerships, to evaluation. While some steps such as dissemination and policy change are located in the end of this toolkit, these steps can happen at the beginning and throughout your project. Similarly, training and evaluation are iterative processes that can be implemented at various points of the CBR project to enhance quality of the project. Each of the sections can also be used independently; for example building partnerships can serve as a standalone toolkit on how to develop good partnerships for any project, including non-CBR projects.

Each chapter also includes different tools, templates and resources to help you and your agency in carrying out Community-Based Research. Descriptions of each resource are located under the “Tools and Templates” section at the end of each chapter. CBR practitioners can use and adapt the tools and templates as per the need of their CBR project.

In this toolkit, you will find four types of tools:

- I) **Information Handouts:** These documents contain useful plain-language information about specific research/CBR processes or methods that can be copied and shared with your partners and peer researchers.
- II) **Templates:** The toolkit contains a number of guidelines templates developed by Access Alliance including templates for partnership agreements, consent forms, confidentiality agreements, policy brief template, evaluation forms etc. These can be adapted to fit your project as needed.
- III) **Activities and Worksheets:** The toolkit contains a number of hands-on exercises and worksheets that can be used for training purposes or in doing things in collaboration at various stages of research. Some of the training activities may require an experienced facilitator with knowledge of research process.
- IV) **Checklists:** Checklists can aid in preparing for particular stages or project components and can be adapted for your specific purpose.

What this toolkit does not do:

This toolkit is not a comprehensive resource on all elements of Community-Based Research. It contains resources and tools that Access Alliance has found useful in designing and conducting its CBR projects. There are many approaches to doing Community-Based Research. This toolkit represents some of many approaches. References to other Community-Based Research are listed at the end of the toolkit. Most of the tools are geared at qualitative research. However, many of the tools for community-engagement and collaboration may be adapted for quantitative research.

Key Terms

The following terms are used throughout this toolkit. A glossary of additional Community-Based Research Terms can also be found at the back of the toolkit.

Community: Refers to a group of people sharing a similar background or experiences. These experiences may be linked to geography (a group of people living in the same neighborhood), profession (a group of people working as social service providers) or identity (people who share the same gender, race, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, language, ability, etc.). A community member is an individual who belongs to a particular community. At the same time, all definition of community is socially constructed and thus is dynamic and implicated with power relations. For more information on identifying and working community through a critical lens see [“Working with Communities.”](#)

Community Agency Partner: Refers to a group or agency affiliated with or serving the community you are researching. A community agency partner may be another agency, a religious group, a group of businesses, etc. For more information on community partners, see .

Peer or Peer Researcher: ‘Peer’ refers to an individual who is from the same community as the community of interest for the project. Peer Researchers are members of the community of interest who are involved not as ‘research participants/subjects’ but as co-researchers and collaborators in the CBR project. For a more comprehensive definition of Peer Researcher, including how Access Alliance has worked with these roles in the past, see chapter [“Working with Communities.”](#)

Co-Researcher: Refers to any member on the core research team. This could include Peer Researchers, the Research Coordinator, or a Co-Principal Investigator. For more information on roles and responsibilities of research team members, see [“Planning your Community-Based Research Project.”](#)

Toolkit Audience

While this toolkit is designed particularly for grassroots community agencies wishing to develop their Community-Based Research capacity, other stakeholders including academics, students and policy makers interested in doing research, consultation, knowledge production/exchange using participatory and collaborative process will find this toolkit beneficial. You may find this manual useful if:

- ✓ Your agency is considering leading a Community-Based Research project in the future, but do not know where to start.

- ✓ Your agency has received funding for a Community-Based Research project, and you must now plan your project.
- ✓ You are in the middle of conducting Community-Based Research and want to learn from another agency's model to troubleshoot.
- ✓ Your agency is conducting an assessment of client or service user's needs and/or experiences, and want to look to Community-Based Research as a model for carrying out some of your programming tasks.
- ✓ You are a community member or a peer researcher who has been invited to be a partner in a Community-Based Research project and want to learn more about research and how you can contribute.
- ✓ You are an academic or a student interested in doing research using Community-Based Research principles or has been invited to become a partner in a Community-Based Research project.
- ✓ You are a policy maker interested in doing community consultation or evidence based policy planning using participatory and community-based framework.

Chapter One

Introduction to Community-Based Research

Chapter One: Introduction to Community Based Research

What is Community-Based Research?



At Access Alliance, we define Community Based Research (CBR) as¹:

“a transformative model of research grounded on principles of community empowerment, collaboration, and social change in which the community of interest participates not as ‘research subjects’ but as research collaborators and agents of change. In CBR, research is a means for empowering community members as partners in knowledge production (along with academic, community agency partners, and other stakeholders) geared at generating evidence and mobilizing change on issues that are important to the community.”

An easy way to remember this is to refer to the three ‘C’s of CBR:

1. First C for Community Empowerment
2. Second C for Collaboration
3. Third C for Social Change

CBR follows on the historical tradition of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) “movement” from the 1970s. The terms Community-Based Research and Participatory Action Research are often used interchangeably. The 1970s saw the first wave of PAR/CBR led by critical academics from the education sector in Canada, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, and leaders from non-governmental sector in the Global South. Champions of PAR include Budd Hall, Ted Jackson, Deborah Brandt, Maria Liisa Swantz, Orlando Fals Borda, Rajesh Tandon, and Yusuf Kasam. In a retrospective paper titled *Coming in From the Cold: Reflections of Participatory Research from 1970 to 2005*, Budd Hall traces the roots of PAR as emerging from the democratic planning and social transformation movements within developing nations like Tanzania and influenced by critical thinkers like Paulo Freire’s work on “pedagogy of the oppressed.” Hall maps a historical “convergence” of several groups of academics in the different countries (Canada, US, India, UK, Sweden, etc.) during the 1970s and 1980s calling for research as an “engaged practice” and transformative exercise to **empower marginalized groups and mobilize positive social change.** These academics went on to form the International Network of Participatory Research. One of the original statements of this network stated that the “ultimate goal” of PAR is:

the radical transformation of social reality and the improvement of the lives of the people themselves. The beneficiaries of the research are the members in the community themselves.

The principles of PAR were revived in early 2000, particularly by researchers in the health field. Community Based Research (CBR) or Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) have become more commonly used terms since then. As envisioned by its pioneers, CBR/PAR constitutes a fundamental reconfiguration of the core tenets of research including how research is done, the value and purpose of research, who conducts the research, and what constitutes valuable research knowledge and evidence. In other words, CBR/PAR constitutes a paradigm shift away from

¹ Adapted from Israel et al (1998) and LOKA Institute (2002).

hierarchical models of research that mirror and reproduce hierarchies and dominating structures in society. To paraphrase Albert Einstein, the problems that we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created these problems in the first place. If the goal of research is to create a more equitable and just society, the process of research itself should embody that change. Gandhi's advice to "be the change you want to see in the world" resonates with the core principles of CBR.

Central to CBR, and unlike in conventional models of research, marginalized communities of community of interest (the community which the research is about) are viewed as "experts" on issues that affect them, and are enabled to take a leadership role in designing and conducting the research; academics, policy makers and other people in positions of power support the process as collaborators and mediators in this bottom-up transformative model of knowledge production. In CBR, research is not a neutral process to produce objective knowledge; rather, **research is a highly transformative and politically engaged process of building broad knowledge in order to expose and overcome inequalities and injustices.** In line with Paulo Freire's theories of "pedagogy of the oppressed," the fundamental principle of CBR thus is to build capacity for critical reflection among marginalized communities such that they can transform their knowledge from acceptance of their marginalization to exposing and overcoming the *causes* of their marginalization.

Aboriginal and First Nation activists have powerfully articulated against the imposing and patronizing approach of mainstream policy makers and researchers. The following call by Aboriginal Activists Group in Queensland made in the 1970s holds universal credence for CBR and advocacy work:

If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

It is the creation of *trusted relationship* with communities of interest and *involving communities of interest in leadership capacity as collaborators in knowledge production* that distinguishes CBR from top-down models of research. Unlike conventional top-down models of research, CBR projects invest a lot of effort and resources in creating these trusted relationships and leadership capacity within communities of interest. There is now growing evidence that in doing so, CBR can potentially produce *richer, more rigorous and more relevant evidence* compared to research projects that are not inclusive or collaborative. Conventional models of research assume that accuracy, rigor and richness in evidence can be achieved through internal mechanisms like having a control group of study participants, doing advanced statistical analysis to measure statistical significance, and having your academic publication 'peer reviewed' by a few other academics. However, a closer and critical look reveals that in failing to have trusted relationships and meaningful collaboration with 'communities of interest,' conventional research projects may have limited rigor and multiple data inaccuracies because of external factors including:

- (i) failure to identify the right target population;
- (ii) **inability to reach and recruit the appropriate study participants;**
- (iii) **failure to convince study participants to share accurate and reliable information;**
- (iv) **inability to accurately interpret, analyze, and validate data/findings;**
- (v) **failure to account for cultural, linguistic, and semantic nuances;**
- (vi) **failure to identify what kinds of data may be missing;**

Further, research projects that are not community-based or collaborative may suffer from reduced rigour and accuracy because these projects may be driven by individual gains or commercial profits and lack adequate levels of *social validation and accountability structures*. The academic validation

process alone is not a sufficient measure to ensure that researchers do not conduct bad research and analysis (“cherry picking”) for individual self-interest or commercial gain.

The principles of community empowerment, collaboration and social change are thus central to CBR/PAR. The **main purpose of a CBR/PAR project is to produce knowledge for promoting equity and social justice**. Stakeholders (academics, policy makers and agency staff) who have access to research funding and other resources act as collaborators and mediators in this transformative knowledge production process. They **ensure communities that face oppression and inequalities are empowered to take a leadership role in defining and conducting research that is important to them**. Different stakeholders then work together to generate evidence, public understanding, and policy changes in order to overcome root causes of inequalities and injustice faced by a community of interest (such that community of interest get equitable access to rights and resources, including research resources if needed).



The principles listed below, originally conceptualized by Israel et. al., (1998) have framed many Community-Based Research projects to date particularly within the health field:

- I. Recognizes community as a unit of identity
- II. Identifies and builds on strengths, relationships and resources within the community.
- III. Facilitates collaborative and equitable partnerships in all phases of the research. Partners share in decision-making processes.
- IV. Integrates knowledge and social action for the mutual benefit of all partners; research processes and findings should be integrated with social change efforts.
- V. Promotes co-learning and capacity building for all research partners.
- VI. Involves a cyclical and iterative process for all stages of the project, from partnership development, research design, implementation, and dissemination.
- VII. Addresses health from a model that emphasizes physical, mental, and social well-being. This model recognizes biomedical, social, economic, cultural, historical, and political factors as determinants of health.
- VIII. Consults all partners on dissemination of findings; share findings and knowledge gained to all stakeholders.

Our CBR experience highlights that with proper research training and opportunities, marginalized community members can become professional researchers and collaborate with interdisciplinary research teams to conduct high quality research that produce rigorous, rich, and relevant evidence capable of catalyzing progressive policy/social change. As Gail McDonald, former First Nations Centre Director at the National Aboriginal Health Organization, put it “research is not rocket science” that only privileged “experts” can take part in. Rather, we view research as a “process science” that anyone can develop capacity with proper training on methodological processes of research. We are all knowledge producers. The key capacity for becoming knowledge producers for formal research is to be make informed/planned decision about what specific methodological steps you are going to take to collect and analyze information, to know how even a slight change in your methodological steps can affect the nature and quality of your data (eg. who ends up participating, how you ask the questions, the flow of questions, who asks etc.), and so you can make informed analysis.

Second Wave of CBR in Toronto

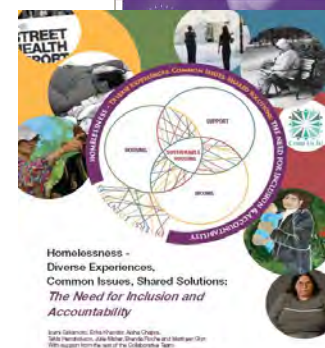
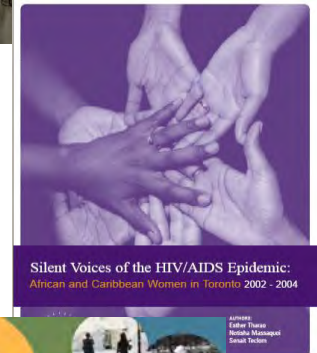
Until early 2000, the majority of CBR/PAR projects were led and managed by academics. Since mid-2000, a second wave of CBR has been unfolding, particularly in Toronto. This second wave is spearheaded primarily by grassroots community agencies. From 2004 onwards, many community agencies in Toronto have established their own research departments and/or research staffing and have begun to take a leadership role in defining and implementing research agendas that are important to communities they serve. Academics are invited as collaborators along with “community of interest” and other agency partners and policy partners. The list below includes some of the community agencies in Toronto that began engaging in CBR projects from mid-2000:

- Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services
- StreetHealth
- Women’s Health in Women’s Hands CHC
- Ontario Women’s Health Network
- Ontario HIV Treatment Network
- Sistering
- Planned Parenthood Toronto
- East Mississauga Community Health Centre
- Regent Park Community Health Centre
- Black Creek Community Health Centre
- Family Services Association of Toronto

In particular, several Community Health Centres (CHCs) have been incorporating CBR as an integral part of their mandates, recognizing that the principles and goals of CBR are very much in line with “health promotion” goals. At around the same period, First Nations communities across Canada also began actively organizing themselves to counter the “tenacious colonial approaches to research and information management” that had exploited, misrepresented and excluded them with detrimental consequences (Schnarch, 2004:1). Under the leadership of the National Aboriginal Health Organization, First nation communities developed the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) principles to foster more ethical and community-based models of First Nations research in which First Nations communities take leadership roles in research.

The reasons and principles that catalyzed this second wave of CBR are similar to those from the first wave of CBR. Crucially, the community agencies leading CBR projects from mid-2000 onwards have taken the key principles of CBR to deeper levels and have been able to overcome some of the limitations and challenges that academic-led CBR/PAR projects have faced. Community agency led CBR projects have deepened the principles of CBR in following ways:

1. **Stronger involvement of marginalized groups in leadership positions in research.** Grassroots community agencies are more closely in touch with marginalized communities they serve and thus are able to connect with and involve them much more actively and from early on. In many



of the community agency-led CBR projects, members of “community of interest” are involved in leadership positions (as ‘peer researchers’ or co-researchers) from the initial phase of the project in identifying issues of interest, developing research foci and methodologies, conducting research, analyzing data, writing research reports, disseminating findings and mobilizing policy change. To make this happen, many of the community agencies implementing CBR projects have developed and delivered exhaustive trainings to build research capacity among marginalized community members.²

- II. **Stronger focus on investigating systemic inequalities, discrimination and root factors that lead to marginalization of ‘community of interest.’** Grassroots community agencies tend to be much more in touch with pressing issues faced by marginalized communities and have organizational mandates to overcome factors that result in marginalization. Thus, community agencies leading CBR projects have not hesitated to focus on critical issues including homelessness, systemic discrimination, racism, inequalities and other sensitive topics that academic researchers (including those committed to CBR) have hesitated to tackle.
- III. **Taking Research Beyond Universities and Government Offices.** With growing number of community agencies taking leadership role in designing and doing research, this second wave of CBR has transformed research and knowledge production from something done exclusively by universities and research agencies within government to something that everyone can do, including marginalized community groups. It has helped to deconstruct and democratize research and in so doing is democratizing knowledge production, knowledge ownership and knowledge utilization.
- IV. **Wider knowledge exchange and dissemination.** Unlike for academics, community agencies do not have institutional pressures to produce journal articles; thus community agencies leading CBR projects have been able to produce multiple kinds of dissemination products including plain language and popular outputs that build broad public knowledge.
- V. **Stronger advocacy and social change commitments.** Since community agencies have stronger accountability to improve services and wellbeing of community they serve, community agency-led CBR projects often have strong policy change commitments in their research. Also, greater involvement of community members pushes CBR practitioners to not just adopt but also act on the policy and social change commitments in CBR.

In his retrospective review of PAR projects during the last three decades, Budd Hall has also identified some of the limitations in previous PAR/CBR projects and has called for stronger involvement of community members, more concerted efforts to overcome power inequalities within CBR/PAR projects, stronger focus on tackling inequalities and oppressions through an intersectional lens, and greater social/policy change commitments. A scan of CBR projects in Toronto by Beth Savan and Sarah Flicker found that those CBR projects that have the strongest community involvement were more likely to have policy change outcomes. The second wave of CBR projects in Toronto led by community agencies has proactively tried to overcome these limitations by deepening collaboration, community empowerment and social change principles in Community-Based Research.

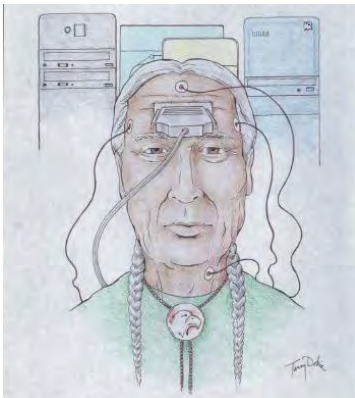
² This CBR Toolkit is an outcome of the numerous trainings that Access Alliance has had to develop and deliver to build research capacity of our peer/community researchers.

Why do Community-Based Research?

The limitations in conventional top-down models of research have been widely documented. The majority of research projects treats community members as “research subjects” and numbers (often in coercive and exploitive ways) and do not recognize the community as partners in knowledge production. Also, the main and often only outcome in conventional research is to produce journal publications with little mandate to use evidence for mobilizing positive social change. Some of the common problems with conventional models of research are illustrated in the notes below and accompanying images³. You may also wish to consult the handout, “Benefits and Challenges of Community-Based Research.”



- Research topic and findings does not reflect community needs or concerns
- Communities feel over researched
- Communities feel coerced and exploited
- Communities are lied to
- Insensitivity to cultural and local conditions
- Benefits to community are minimal
- No mandate for using evidence to make positive social and policy change
- Ethical issues are not properly addressed.



In addition to community empowerment, our experience has consistently shown that compared to conventional research, CBR also leads to (1) a more meaningful research process for all stakeholders; (2) more ethical research; and (3) generates richer and more rigorous evidence. This is largely because involving community members as partners encourages a research team to pay closer attention to ethical issues, capture voices from people that are not accessible by conventional recruitment and data collection processes, and leads to ongoing iterative community validation processes that enhances analysis and validity of the data collected.

It is important to note CBR is not a binary opposite of conventional top-down models of research, nor is it a specific “research method.” Rather, CBR is a set of guiding principles and practices that diverges from top-down models of research in a continuum based on levels of participation and collaboration in the project (See chapter, “[Working with Communities](#)” for more discussion on the continuum of community engagement).

³ Illustration from National Coordinating Group on Health Care Reform and Women, “Just the Facts Ma’am...A Women’s Guide for Understanding Evidence About Health and Health Care” and Schnarch (2004). Ownership, Access, Control and Possession (OCAP) or Self-determination Applied to Research. A Critical Analysis of Contemporary First Nations Research and Some Options for First Nations Communities. Ottawa: National Aboriginal Health Organization.

Lessons Learned from CBR

The three decades of PAR/CBR (first wave and second wave) has generated valuable lessons about potentials and challenges of CBR. These lessons are reflected throughout the content of this CBR Toolkit. Some of the key lessons are listed below:

- I. **Be realistic and transparent about community involvement in CBR.** Community members should be informed beforehand how they can be involved, what kinds of support, capacity building and remuneration will be available to them (based on available funding and resources), what are the implications when funding does run out, what are the interests of other stakeholders at the table, what are the risks of being involved. At Access Alliance, we have found community members understand and appreciate when agencies are transparent and realistic about the nature and limits of the community involvement that they can support in a CBR project. In this way community members can make informed decisions about their expectations from the project and how they want to be involved in the CBR project.
- II. **Community members need to be supported by adequate training and capacity building in order to fulfill their expected responsibilities in CBR.** Yes, anybody can do research but with appropriate training. The success of a CBR project lies in how you train and empower community members to take on a leadership role as co-researchers in the project. A large component of a CBR project includes training and mentoring community members in research, analysis, writing and dissemination. CBR practitioners should develop a training plan together with community members that incorporates training needs identified by the agency and by community members. It is good practice to deliver a core set of research training to community members in the beginning phase of the project to develop basic research literacy/skills. This way, community members are better able to participate on par with other partners when designing the research or during data collection. Ongoing training and mentoring should be offered in an equitable way throughout the project to ensure that different community members (from diverse background and varying previous research skills) can participate meaningfully in their expected role as co-researchers. Community members can be matched with academic and other agency partners to create a process of co-learning. CBR practitioners have been criticized for involving community members instrumentally in helping the project with outreach and recruitment and not in other important phases like research design, analysis and writing; such practice needs to be reversed.
- III. **Academic and other agency partners need to be properly oriented and trained in participatory and collaborative methods of doing research.** Do not assume that academic and other agency partners will naturally support and adjust themselves to participatory, collaborative ways of decision-making and doing research. In fact, assume the opposite and build in concrete steps to increase the capacity of academic and agency partners in participatory, collaborative processes. This goes for academic and agency partners who have done CBR and collaborative projects before. Building democratic and collaborative processes of doing things is a ‘lifelong learning process.’ Develop concrete terms of reference and frameworks for collaborative decision making and for designing and doing research together. We also recommend having experienced facilitators to help with large group meetings where collaborative decision-making process is essential (e.g. during the research design phase).
- IV. **Qualitative research methodologies are not intrinsically more participatory than quantitative methodologies.** Many CBR practitioners assume that qualitative research methodologies

(interviews, focus groups, photovoice etc.) are inherently more ethical, participatory and empowering than quantitative research methodologies (surveys etc.). This is an erroneous assumption. As with any methodology, qualitative methods have their own methodological strengths and limitations and produce particular types of evidence (See [“Designing your Community-Based Research Project.”](#)). Qualitative methods are not intrinsically participatory and empowering; a qualitative researcher is as likely to exploit a potential research participant, as would a quantitative researcher. Rather, all methodologies have to be made participatory and empowering. This can be done, for example, by incorporating a popular education framework in the design of an interview/focus group guide or by designing a survey in a collaborative, participatory framework.

- V. **Knowledge exchange and social/policy change should be an integral process in CBR and not a post-project process.** Though knowledge exchange and social/policy change are core goals of most CBR projects, CBR practitioners often leave these components until the end or something to do after the project is complete. Consequently, knowledge exchange and social/policy change activities end up getting little attention or not undertaken because funding ran out before this phase. To prevent this, CBR practitioners need to build knowledge exchange and social/policy change as an integral priority in a CBR project. Funding and resources for knowledge exchange should be clearly ear-marked within the project plan. We suggest building in an iterative and ongoing process of knowledge exchange so that it is not something you do only at the end of the project. Similarly, social/policy change activities should be adequately supported with funds and resources and concrete steps to mobilize policy change should be developed within the project plan. This can include involving policy makers as partners.
- VI. **Develop a realistic and thoughtful project plan since CBR is a complex, multi-component project/process with multiple outcomes.** In some ways a CBR project can seem like three or four projects combined into one (capacity building, research, policy development etc.). Compared to conventional research projects, CBR projects are much more resource and time intensive. Thus, effective project planning is crucial to the success of a CBR project. Agencies/stakeholders who are leading the CBR project should develop a thorough and thoughtful project plan that clearly identifies all the core activities and outcomes, the level and nature of community involvement, total costs and resources required, resources and support available, as well as potential risks and how they can be addressed. Some CBR practitioners may prefer to keep a CBR project ‘spontaneous’ and ‘organic’ and not have strong project planning. While this idealistic approach is attractive, it can expose the project and its partners to unwanted risks and repercussions including running out of project funds long before the project is complete. Project planning can be done in participatory, collaborative ways that enable all partners to have a realistic understanding of the scope and limits of the project while preventing any unwanted ‘surprises’ along the way.

Tools and Templates

Handout - Key Pillars of Community-Based Research

Looking for Community-Based Research materials to bring back to your team? If you would like to explain Community-Based Research at your next staff or board of directors meeting, you may wish to provide people with a copy these principles.

Handout- Values and Principles Guiding Community-Based Research at Access Alliance

In 2004, Access Alliance organized a symposium and a series of consultations to develop values and principles for guiding its CBR work. This handout lists these key principles. These values and principles can be adapted to reflect the needs of your agency/project.

Handout - Benefits and Challenges of Community-Based Research

There are many benefits and challenges to doing Community-Based Research. It is important to think through many of these issues before starting a CBR project. Similar to the handout above, you may wish to use this handout when discussing Community-Based Research at a staff or board of directors meeting.

Handout - What is Research?

This handout explains/deconstructs in plain-language what research is and important things to remember about research.

reSearch for Change: Key Pillars of Community-Based Research

The following schematic can be used to explain key principles of CBR in your next staff or board of directors meeting, or to potential stakeholders, peer researchers and students. As captured in this diagram, the key ingredients of CBR include equitable partnership, dedicated capacity building efforts (particularly research training/mentoring for non-academic partners), meaningful involvement of marginalized community members, sound ethical practices, effective processes for collaboration, shared ownership of research and research data, making research methods more accessible/friendly, and a genuine commitment to using research for positive social change.

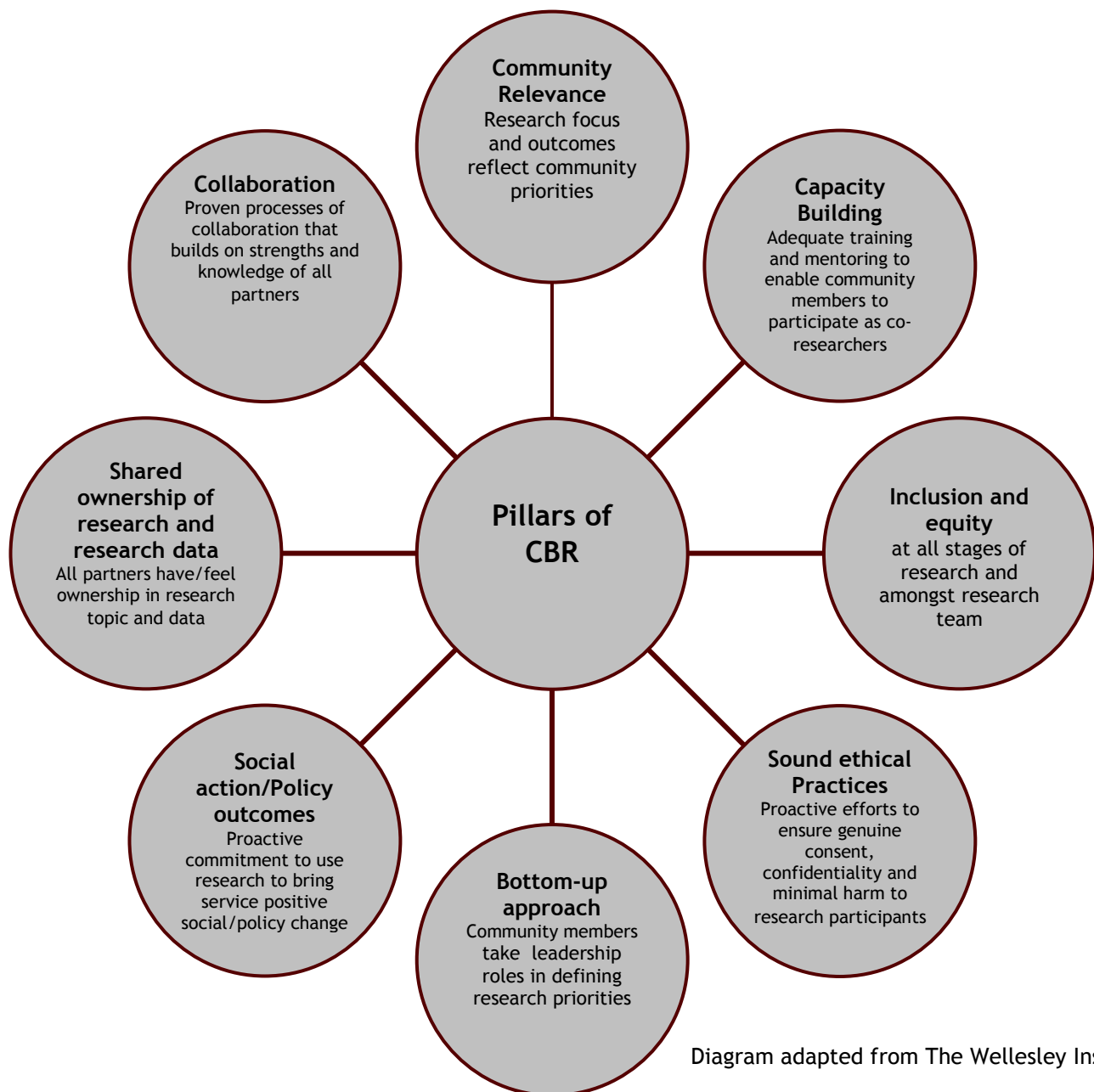


Diagram adapted from The Wellesley Institute

Values and Principles Guiding Community-Based Research at Access Alliance

Access Alliance established its CBR program in 2004 and has become recognized as a Centre for Excellence in Community-Based Research on Newcomer Urban Health. Drawing on general principles of CBR, Access Alliance has developed its own values and principles for guiding CBR. These values and principles are described below. Your agency might develop your own Community-Based Research values and principles that are reflective of your specific research priorities.

Community Benefit

Community-Based Research is research conducted by and for community members in order to bring about positive social change. At Access Alliance, we are particularly interested in Community-Based Research to address health disparities. Therefore, community benefits may include improvements in service delivery, policy changes and/or greater empowerment of individuals and communities to gain control over the factors that affect their health and to take action to address them.

To increase the likelihood that the results will be of use to communities, we believe that the people whom the research is intended to benefit should have opportunities to be meaningfully engaged in all phases of the research effort. We are also committed to ensuring that any findings are shared with and made accessible to participants as well as to service providers and policy-makers who can use the findings to inform their decision-making.

Capacity-Building

Through the Community-Based Research process, it is possible to build sustainable capacities within communities for inquiry and transformation. We are committed to the meaningful participation of both staff and community members in designing, conducting, interpreting and applying research so that in the process, participants may build their knowledge, skills and sense of agency. We also support and encourage critical reflection and the documentation of lessons learned.

Collaboration and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion enrich our communities and agencies and improve the quality and relevance of research. We value collaborative learning and believe that every participant in the research process, whether a community member, agency staff or academic, has something unique to contribute. We invite community participation as early as possible in the Community-Based Research process and are committed to identifying and addressing the barriers that prevent meaningful community participation in all phases of the research. The language and methods used in the conduct of research must be broadly accessible to a diverse range of participants.

Equity and Dignity

We believe that every individual has the right to be treated with respect and dignity and that all people should have equitable opportunities and access to the determinants of health. We prioritize research that aims to reduce health disparities by furthering the understanding of and addressing the social determinants of health affecting the vulnerable populations with whom we work. In addition, we strive for Community-Based Research processes that are themselves free from oppression and discrimination.



reSearch for Change: Benefits and Challenges of Community-Based Research

The following handout describes key benefits and challenges of Community-Based Research. This is not an exhaustive list but can be used to convince potential partners about the benefits of CBR and orient your team about some of the potential challenges of doing CBR.

Benefits of Community-Based Research:

- ✓ Research priorities and research questions are reflective of community needs and context.
- ✓ Positive trust and presence in the community. Community members and local agency partners can help to dismantle misconceptions about research and build trust between community and research team.
- ✓ Community partners can help to create sensitive outreach and recruitment strategies that can result in ethically sound and improved recruitment. Involving community can also enhance rate and quality of response, including from marginalized community members who would not participate in conventional research. This can lead to richer data.
- ✓ Collaborative framework leads to stronger research accountability processes (advisory committee, local partners, community leaders, verification process etc.). This can enhance quality of research and social change outcomes.
- ✓ Richer and more rigorous analysis due to insights and expertise that each community members and other partners bring to the project either individually or collectively.
- ✓ New skills and knowledge for community members involved in the project. Research, writing, knowledge exchange skills are valued skills in the job market both within and outside of academia. Meaningful involvement of community of interest as co-researchers, partners, and advisors can also lead to other important but less tangible benefits for community members including increased self-esteem, empowerment and good health.
- ✓ More likely that research findings are shared with community members; peer researchers have access to data and involved in generating these findings.
- ✓ In addition to writing about research findings, research teams can write about the CBR process. This can be an added incentive to academics who are required by their institutions to produce a large number of publications.
- ✓ New cross-sector collaboration and partnerships. Significant time and resources dedicated to building equitable and meaningful partnerships that may be sustained in the future beyond the project.
- ✓ Relevant research equals greater potential policy impact, which can lead to sustainable change. There is a growing track record of Community Agency-led research leading to positive improvements in services, programming and policies.

Challenges in Community-Based Research

It is important to understand the different challenges of doing CBR so you can develop strategies to address them. In general, Community-Based Research takes a lot more time, effort and resources than conventional research. Also, CBR practitioners may face many challenges in meaningfully involving community members co-researchers.

- ❖ Challenges in building partnership at community level because of research fatigue or previous negative experience with conventional research.
- ❖ Limited funding for Community-Based Research.
- ❖ The additional steps in CBR (partnership building, research training/mentoring, collaborative design etc) mean lots of extra work and time.
- ❖ CBR is often seen by conventional researchers and policy makers as not being rigorous.
- ❖ Community members (e.g. peer researchers) may not be able to participate equitably because of other pressing priorities and/or because of financial, linguistic and other barriers.
- ❖ Local community agency partners may not be able to contribute actively because of other pressing agency priorities and due to limited staffing.
- ❖ Academics may end up dominating the research design, analysis and writing process and leave recruitment and other administrative tasks to community agencies and community members.
- ❖ With more collaborators, there is more risk of tension between partners during the project.
- ❖ Collaborative research design and analysis processes may become stalled or excessively delayed if consensus cannot be reached.

These challenges can be overcome with good planning, transparency, and open communication. And as noted earlier, the benefits of CBR far outweigh the challenges.

What is Research?

This three page Q & A type explains/deconstructs in plain-language what research is and important things to remember in doing research. This snapshot can be used for introducing partners to the fundamentals of research and clarifying some basic aspects about research (particularly to people who have not conducted formal research before).

What is Research?

In simple terms, research is a systematic framework of answering questions that you have or testing whether assumptions are true or not.

How is formal research different from information I collect and make sense in my everyday life?

We are constantly collecting, processing and analyzing information (data) in our everyday lives to help us make our decisions or just make sense of the world around us. Whether it be in terms of finding the best childcare/school for your children, finding the best deals, understanding how and why having a good public transportation system can be beneficial for your city (even if you don't use it), making observations that the weather is getting hotter and more unstable every year, deciding which political party has the most progressive policy platform etc. In this sense, everyone has innate research skills. This is why we believe that anyone can do research. So, how is this everyday research we do different from formal research?

The thing that differentiates the everyday research we do and formal research is that in formal research you use a systematic framework of collecting, interpreting and understanding information in which you pay careful attention to the strengths and limitations of the steps and tools used to collect and understand information. In order to do this, you need to carefully document the steps and tools you use to collect and understand that information so that you can talk about how these steps may have affected the type and quality of the information produced by your research.

You also need to make sure that you are collecting, interpreting and sharing information in an ethical manner that respects the privacy, confidentiality and rights of the participants you are collecting information from or about.

So if I follow a systematic framework described above is my everyday research as valid as formal research?

Yes, if you follow this systematic framework (that is reflective of the process used in collecting and understanding information/data) then your everyday research is as good as any formal research that an experienced academic conducts. The quality and rigour of research is measured not by how large the study is but how systematic and thorough you are in designing and conducting the study. In fact, your research might involve an interview with a single individual; if you can justify why you decided to capture the experience of this single person (eg because his/her experience is very unique) and discuss implications of

how you went about doing it, then it is as valid a research project as a large scale study involving a survey with thousands of individuals. For example, some anthropologists have conducted research involving a single participant over many years (this is sometimes called a 'life history method').

If you follow systemic steps giving reasons for why you did what you did and what your results say and don't say, then no one can claim that your research is not a valid or not useful. They might say that it is limited in its implications (for example, it is not generalizable or does not capture different views), but they cannot refute your study as being not valid or not useful.

It may be hard for you to publish your report in an academic journal but here again publication in an academic journal is not necessarily the only measure of good research or useful knowledge. With the availability of new social media and social networking platforms, you can now disseminate your findings widely.

Case Example: Research on Schools in your Neighborhood

So, for example, if you conclude that a particular school is the best school in your neighborhood just because your daughter attends it and children of four other friends attend it (all of whom have very positive things to say about the school), then other people are going to question your conclusion because there are clear flaws and biases in the way you collected the information, the sources of your information, and the way you interpreted the information. You did not try and find out about the quality of other schools in the neighborhood and your conclusion was based primarily on what you and your friends perceive. However, if you discussed the steps you took to collect and interpret the information and presented your conclusion based on the potentials and limitations of these steps, then no one can say that your conclusion is invalid. In other words, if you indicated that your assessment of this particular school is based on experiences and views of yourself and four other friends whose children go to this particular school, then your assessment is valid and useful to the extent it is based on experiences of 5 families.

Notice that we avoided saying the best school in the neighborhood since you don't have information about quality of other schools. If you did collect information about other schools then you would discuss how and from whom you collected this information, how this information compares to the information you received from your friends (and based on your daughter's experience), and then base your conclusion with attention to strengths and limitations of your research steps. You could share this information on a blog and other parents can make an informed assessment of your information because you have discussed how you have come to your recommendation.

So what defines good, useful and valid research?

Each research method (ie steps and tools used to collect and make sense of information/data) has strengths and limitations and produces unique types of information. As noted above, good and valid research is not defined by the type of steps and tools you use to collect information or how large your study is but by how carefully you consider the ways in which the specific steps and tools you used affects the quality, relevance and implications of the information you collected.

Is quantitative research better research?

One research method is not better and more valid than another. They produce different types of information and knowledge and one is not necessarily better than the other. Some conventional researchers who use quantitative research methods (surveys, Census data) tend to be biased against studies that use qualitative methods (interviews and focus groups) and often argue that qualitative studies are less valid and are not useful because they are not generalizable. This is an inaccurate and problematic assumption. If a quantitative

researcher does not consider the limitations of his/her survey in terms of what type of information it can or cannot produce, or his/her biases in study design or interpretation, then the results from this study may be invalid and useless irrespective of how large scale the survey was. Along the same lines, if researcher analyzing Census data does not consider how marginalized people facing linguistic barriers may not participate in Census, then there may be errors in their analysis.

So what are the important steps to follow?

- ✓ **Learn about research methodologies.** It is important to learn about the different steps and tools (research methodologies) that can be used to collect information, what type of information each step/tool produces, and especially about the strengths and limitation of each step and tool.
- ✓ **Carefully consider strengths and limitations of research methodologies when designing your research.** Taking into consideration the potential and limitations of each methodology, carefully plan what specific steps and tools you are going to use to answer your question or test your assumption (this is what you do during ‘research design’). Reflect with you team on why you are using or not using each specific step/tool (for example, you might decide not to take one step because it is very expensive to do) and think ahead what type of information these steps and tools may produce or what information is not captured.
- ✓ **Collect information ethically.** Make sure you respect the privacy, confidentiality and rights of participants you collect information from or about.
- ✓ **Interpret and present study results in relation to your research methods/process and the type and quality of the information you have collected.** Interpret, analyze and discuss the information you have collected based on the strengths and limitations of the steps/tools you have used as well as the type and quality of the information that these steps/tools have generated. For example, you conducted a study on service access barriers faced by youth but ended up getting mostly males and older youth to participate in the study. You will need to interpret your information accordingly and also clearly state that the information you collected is mostly based on and thus limited to what older male youth said (though your original research design was to have equal number of male and female participants).
- ✓ **Keep notes and reflect about research process.** Keep detailed notes about steps and tools you used to collect data as well as how you interpreted the data (ie how you arrived at your findings and conclusions). Also keep notes about hurdles you faced along the way and its implications on the information collected. When writing about your findings, discuss process issues to explain why you got certain type of information and not other types, and what this means.
- ✓ **Discuss limitations of your research.** In addition to discussing the value of your research findings, a best practice in research is proactively discuss the limitations of your research and research findings. This helps people reading your report to make informed assessment about the implications of your research findings.

Chapter Two

Planning your

Community-Based Research Project



Chapter Two: Planning for your Community-Based Research Project

Planning for a Community-Based Research project is different than planning a conventional research project. Community-Based Research projects tend to have many components (capacity building, research, knowledge translation, policy advocacy etc), involve a lot of stakeholders and thus require a lot of resources, effort, and time. In contrast, a study conducted by a single academic with help from a graduate research assistant is considerably simpler and less resource intensive. Considering the scale and complexity of a Community-Based Research project, effective project planning is crucial to the success of the project. This chapter discusses important things to consider in planning your Community-Based Research project and contains useful project planning tools.

Effective CBR Project Planning

Community-Based Research has multiple components. It is like implementing a research project, capacity building project, and policy development project in a single project. Thus, in general, Community-Based Research projects are more expensive, take longer, and are more complex than conventional research projects. Overall, it is important to realize that Community-Based Research projects are a major undertaking. Like for any project, the success of a CBR project depends on how well you plan the project. Good project planning can enable CBR stakeholders to better understand what is involved in the CBR project, carefully calculate project costs and level of efforts, assess what potential resources and supports may be available, and what risks and challenges may be encountered and how to address them. You may want to create a 'project framework' that reflects these project plans. While project planning can be done collaboratively and transparently with partners (including members of community of interest), the agencies/stakeholders leading the Community-Based Research project need to realize that they are accountable for the project and thus need to take a lead in planning for a successful project.

Some Community-Based Research practitioners may prefer to keep a CBR project 'spontaneous' and 'organic' and not have strong project planning. While this idealistic approach is attractive, it can expose the project and its partners into unwanted risks and repercussions including running out of project funds long before the project is complete. Project planning can be still done in collaborative ways that enable all partners to have realistic understanding of the scope and limits of the project and prevent any unwanted 'surprises' along the way. We have found softwares such as Microsoft Project to be useful in project planning and management

A CBR project-planning framework should include the following:

- ✓ Objectives and scope of the project
- ✓ Current and potential partners, with their roles and in-kind contributions clearly identified
- ✓ Key project activities and their outputs/outcomes/deliverables (capacity building, research design and implementation, knowledge exchange, policy development and other activities)
- ✓ Project timeline
- ✓ Project budget
- ✓ Guiding principles for the project (including data sharing and ownership arrangements)
- ✓ Project evaluation plan

Suggested Steps in Community-Based Research Project Planning

- I. **Read up on Community-Based Research:** Read up on Community-Based Research practices to learn about best practices for operational processes, methodological innovations, and ways to address challenges and hurdles in CBR. This will enable you to get a good grasp of the full ‘life-cycle’ of the Community-Based Research project, understand its multi-dimensional structure and assess resource requirements. You may wish to check out the list of readings on CBR in the [External Resources](#) section.
- II. **Assess your agency capacity and resources for CBR:** As an agency leading the CBR project, you will be required to make some core internal investments to spearhead the project. For example, even applying for funding for CBR requires internal staff time and resources. Similarly, if funding runs out in the middle or if there are unforeseen delays and complications, the lead agency will need to address, buffer or overcome these situations. Thus, before applying for any funding, you need to carefully review your agency’s financial, community and human resources to assess your capacity to lead a CBR project. Identify the core amount of staff time and resources your agency will put to the project. Staff time may include time that internal staff members may spend in helping with training, recruitment, data collection, validation, dissemination etc. Most funders want to see a lead agency make a core amount of internal in-kind contributions to a project. Also, partners will be more forthcoming in contributing in-kind staff time and resources when they see that the lead agency has committed internal resources and staff time. You can convince the management team in your agency to commit internal resources by showing them how the outcomes of the CBR project fit well with your agency’s mandate or how some of the activities in the project are consistent with the work plan and work priorities of internal staff (e.g. showing that the capacity building activities in the CBR project fits with ‘health promotion’ goals of the agency and thus justifies for health promoter staff to help with the CBR project). By assessing your agency’s resources ahead of time, you can develop a more realistic scope of the Community-Based Research project, what your agency can and cannot do, and identify the external resources/funding required.
- III. **Plan and secure your project budget/resources.** In general, CBR can be three or four times more costly than conventional research projects. Thus, we recommend that you apply and secure as much funding as possible ahead of time. Our experience suggests that a Community-Based Research project requires at least 16 months of time and costs at least \$120,000 (external funds and in-kind equivalent). Further, a CBR project may have at least half a dozen staff involved and a dozen or more partners collaborating. There are different ideas about when to apply for funding for your CBR project. Some practitioners recommend that you should apply for funding only once you have collaboratively designed the research project with your partners. However, even building partnerships, recruiting and training peer researchers, and collaboratively designing a research project requires significant resources and effort. In general, we suggest that you apply for several types of funding. Since CBR involves a lot of capacity building activities, we recommend that you apply for capacity building grants in addition to research grants. Several foundations provide funding for institutional capacity building that can qualify for CBR (see Assessing Funding Leads checklist below). Some government research funding streams also provide ‘research development grants’ that can be used for project planning and the development of a research proposal.

As noted earlier, you will need at least \$120,000 for a 16 month CBR project. The cost may decrease or vary based on what types of internal and in-kind resources you have. Nonetheless, we recommend that you identify \$120,000 of external funds and internal/in-kind funds

altogether. **The key cost in CBR is human resources.** In a typical CBR project, human resources comprise about 70% of the cost while research costs make up 10-20% (honorarium for research participants, transcription, report printing costs etc.); the rest is administrative expenses. A high level cost breakdown of a CBR project may look like the following:

Human Resources/Professional Expenses

Research Coordinator (21 to 35 hrs/week) -- \$40,000 to \$60,000
Peer Researchers: 2 - 4 (10 to 35 hrs/week) -- \$20,000 to \$80,000
Graduate Research Assistants - if needed

Research Costs

Honorarium for research participants -- \$500 to \$2000
Transcription/Translation -- \$0 to \$10,000 (depending on project requirement and how much of this is done by internal staff)
Refreshments for focus groups and other research meetings -- \$300
Transportation, Childcare and other costs to overcome barriers to research participation -- \$ 300 -- \$600

Dissemination Costs

Printing of research reports and other KE materials -- \$2500 -- \$4000
Costs of organizing knowledge exchange events (e.g. seminars)-- \$500-\$1500

Administrative Costs

Payroll, Secretarial support, office space, supplies, job posting costs, security check costs, evaluation, training etc -- \$ 1000 to \$15,000

Since Community-Based Research is a complex and multidimensional project, you may need to hire a dedicated research coordinator for a minimum of 21hrs/week (full time if possible). This is the person who is responsible for the day-to-day coordination of all research activities. In line with CBR principles, your agency may also want to hire a number of community members to work as 'peer researchers' for the project. Whenever possible CBR practitioners should try and create full-time employment opportunities for peer researchers. At the same time, the more peer researchers you hire, the more costly your Community-Based Research project becomes.

Depending on the scale of the Community-Based Research project, you can reduce the amount of funding required by mobilizing more internal human resources in your agency. For example, you may not need to hire a research coordinator if an internal staff in your agency is able to take on this role. You may get a graduate student who is interested in doing an unpaid practicum placement as a research assistant in your project. Nonetheless, it is important to understand the full cost (including in-kind internal costs) of Community-Based Research.

Once you have identified internal resources and secured external funding, you will need to develop a detailed project plan and project budget based on what is doable with the total amount of resources you have. Thus if you only have funds to hire peer researchers for 10 hours a week, then their work plan and scope of involvement in the project will need to reflect this. We recommend that you create multiple project plan options such that you have potential options thought out in case expected amount of internal resources and external grants is not secured. For example, you can develop a contingency project plan ahead of time in the case that you only get say 70% of the expected funds.

You may also want to identify a minimum funding amount required before you commence your project. If you are not able to secure this minimum amount then you will need to meet with your team to make important decisions about the project. Decision options may include

postponing the project until additional funding is secured, aborting the project entirely, substantially scaling back the project, or implementing only one or two phases/components of the project that is doable within this smaller budget (eg literature review or research training phase). Failing to revisit and revise your project plan when your expected funding is not met can seriously jeopardize the success of the project, over burden staff, and fuel tensions between partners. For example, if you decide to go ahead and implement a \$60,000 project with just \$10,000 of funds, you may not only fail to complete the project but face numerous problems and hardships along the way.

- IV. **Define research priority for your agency.** As a lead agency you need to identify the research priorities for your agency. For example, at Access Alliance our key research priority is to generate evidence about social determinants of health for newcomer and racialized communities. Unlike research questions which have to be very specific, research priorities are general themes and critical issues that your agency is interested in building knowledge (eg domestic violence, barriers to mental health services, access to higher education). If your agency has not developed research priorities, you may first want to find funding or internal resources to create a process to develop these priorities. This may involve holding a series of meeting with staff and partners and/or conducting a small exploratory study or a community needs assessment to identify the critical issues. Partners with mutual interest may develop research priorities that meet the needs of all partners. A particular policy priority may also trigger interest in specific research priority.
- V. **Identify your ‘Community of Interest’:** Once you define your research priority, you can identify your ‘community of interest.’ For example, if your agency has a priority to conduct research on newcomer refugee youth mental health, then your community of interest is newly arrived refugee youth groups. Alternatively, if the priority is to understand the mental health impact of war on refugee communities then your community of interest includes refugees who come from war torn countries (and may exclude people who have become refugees due to environmental disasters). Depending on your research priority, community can be defined in many ways: by geography, by identity, by profession or by experience. However, it is important to remember that the people who fall within your ‘community of interest’ have fluid, multiple and interconnected identities. The goal of identifying ‘community of interest’ is not to pigeon hole people into static categories but rather to identify community members who are potentially affected by the issues at hand and may be interested in collaborating with you to investigate the issues that affect them. For more detail on this, see Chapter Four: Working with Communities
- VI. **Develop a sound and thoughtful community/peer researcher engagement plan:** It is important to develop a clear, transparent and thoughtful plan for how you want to involve your community of interest in the project and assess that you have the resources and capacity to facilitate this involvement. The community engagement plan needs to include the following:
 - ✓ How many community members will be involved?
 - ✓ How will they be recruited?
 - ✓ In what capacities and roles will they be involved (some community members may be involved in the project in an advisory capacity while others can be involved as co-researchers/peer researchers who are actively involved in the day to day planning and implementation of the CBR project)?
 - ✓ What kinds of trainings and supports you will offer to enable community members to take on the expected roles?
 - ✓ How will they be compensated?

- ✓ How they may benefit?
- ✓ How the project may benefit from their involvement?
- ✓ How will their contributions be acknowledged? (for example in the research reports)
- ✓ What potential challenges may be faced and how these challenges can be addressed?

Community Engagement is discussed in more detail in [“Working with Communities”](#). It is good practice within CBR to properly compensate community members for their time and contributions. If the expected funding for compensation is not confirmed, then always be transparent with community members about how much funding/resources you have and inform them that your capacity to involve them in a paid capacity is dependent on these resources.

VII. Develop partnership and collaboration plan. Community-Based Research projects tend to be multi-collaborative and involve a multi-disciplinary team of academics, community agencies, policy partners, media, and community of interest. It is important to have a well-defined partnership development plan that will guide which partners to recruit, identify roles and expectations, and specify how you are going to work together. Core partners can be recruited from the planning stage itself. Other partners can be recruited once the research design has been completed and you have a better idea of the specific focus of the research project. An important thing to remember is good equitable collaboration does not happen just because you have brought together stakeholder with mutual interest as project partners. Doing things collaboratively takes more effort and time compared to doing it alone, and thus it is actually better to assume that project stakeholders may intentionally or unknowingly try to be uncollaborative more often than not (particularly, stakeholders who hold more power or in situations when stakeholders are pressed for time). Some partners who are very collaborative at an earlier phase (eg design phase) may be the least collaborative in the analysis or writing phase either because of time pressure or because that stakeholder believes that peer researchers need not be involved in analysis and writing. Rather, it is important to proactively and constantly foster collaboration at all phases of the project through reminding partners about guidelines/commitment of collaboration and also through and concrete steps and tools that facilitate equitable and good collaboration between diverse partners. Ingredients that can lead to good partnership and collaboration include (i) clear and mutually agreed guidelines for collaboration; (ii) effective system of communication; (iii) equitable and transparent decision making process and control of resources/data; (iii) equitable division of labour; (iv) equitable benefits for all partners; and (v) proven system of addressing any tensions and challenges in partnership and collaboration. For more information, see [“Developing Partnerships in Community-Based Research.”](#)

VIII. Develop a sound Human Resource Management plan. Depending on the scale of your project, you may end up having many paid employees working on the project. In addition, there may be people working in an unpaid capacity (eg unpaid practicum students) and volunteer capacity. In consultation with the Human Resource Manager at your agency, develop a sound HR management plan for the project that ensures that you follow the required agency process in terms of hiring people, deciding wage and benefits, developing work plan, conducting performance evaluation for all your paid project staff. If you have people working in unpaid or volunteer capacity, make sure that you follow due process to ensure that it does not conflict with those working as paid employees. Usually agencies have specific policies regarding when and how you can involve practicum students and volunteers in unpaid capacity.

- IX. **Develop a risk management plan.** Identify the potential risks and challenges that the project may encounter and how you are going to address them. As a team, to the best of your knowledge and capacity, discuss potential worst case scenarios and what could go wrong so you can plan ahead about how to address them. Have a clear communication process in place for addressing any unforeseen complication and tensions within the project.
- X. **Develop a project evaluation and monitoring plan.** Identify the outcome and process indicators for your project and how you are going to monitor and evaluate them. Also, have a plan in place for how you will communicate and address feedback that you receive during these processes. For more information, see [“Evaluating your Community-Based Research Project.”](#)
- XI. **Have your templates and tools ready.** Make sure that you have all the important guiding principles, templates, forms and tools in place. This includes partnership and confidentiality agreement forms, data security and management protocol, publication and authorship policy etc. You can copy and adapt the templates included in this Community-Based Research Toolkit.

Project Staffing and Management Structure

As part of your project planning, it is vital to develop an effective project management structure. This is where you identify how decisions are made, and who is accountable for the project. This also includes identifying the staffing structure of the project. The following personnel may be involved in a Community-Based Research project:

- I. **Project Manager:** This person is responsible for making high-level decisions about the overall project scope, timeline, staffing, budget and project deliverables. This person ensures that the project is feasible, has adequate resources, funds and appropriate staffing, is running on time, and is able to meet its core deliverables. For example, the project manager may ask the research team to scale down the number of interviews if the project budget does not have enough money; alternately, the project manager may help to apply for additional funds if needed. If funding is available, you may hire a dedicated project manager for the CBR project; otherwise a manager or director may need to take on this role.
- II. **Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs):** Co-PIs are responsible for overseeing the research component of the project. They are responsible for ensuring quality and rigor in the way that the research is designed and carried out. They often take a leadership role in addressing ethical issues in research (e.g. applying for Research Ethics Board approval) and in analysis, writing, and dissemination. In Community-based Research projects, CO-PIs don't have to be limited to academics but can include partners who don't hold academic positions including peer researchers. The higher level of research responsibility and accountability is what differentiates Co-PI from another member of the research team who is not a Co-PI.
- III. **Core Project/Research Team:** This is the core decision-making body for the project. This can include Co-PIs, the project manager, the project coordinator, and peer researchers. The core research team needs to be able to meet on a regular basis to make decisions about project goals, research design, methodologies, training, recruitment plan, analysis process, dissemination activities and other aspects about the project. Usually, decisions of the core project team will need to be reviewed and approved by the project manager or relevant personnel within your agency.

- IV. **Advisory Committee:** In addition to the core project/research team, CBR projects may have an advisory committee. These stakeholders may not be able to commit as much time and effort as people in the core research team but whose expertise is valuable in providing guidance on project processes and outcomes. Advisory committee members might meet once every couple of months or during critical points in the project. Usually, an advisory committee is not a decision-making body but provides advice to the core project team to help make effective decisions.
- V. **Project/Research Coordinator:** This person is responsible for coordinating the day-to-day activities of the project. Responsibilities may include organizing core project team and advisory meetings, taking and circulating meeting minutes, recruiting partners, training/mentoring peer researchers, ensuring timely communication with all partners, assisting with the REB application, coordinating recruitment and data collection, security, and processing/cleaning, writing reports, organizing dissemination events etc. We strongly recommend budgeting for a full-time project/research coordinator.
- VI. **Peer Researchers:** Peer researchers are co-researchers who belong to the ‘community of interest.’ Depending on time and interest, peer researchers may be involved in the project as Co-PIs, research assistants, or peer advisors in the advisory committee. Their roles and responsibilities will vary based on the project.
- VII. **Other:** The project may decide to hire graduate research assistants to take on certain deliverables (e.g. a literature review, general assistance with data collection, etc.). We have found that pairing a graduate student and peer researcher can result in beneficial co-learning for both. We also strongly recommend that you budget for a half-time project administration secretary. There is a lot of administrative work involved in a CBR project. Even organizing a single meeting with all partners may take a lot of logistical coordination and supplies. Where possible, we also recommend having an experienced external facilitator to come and facilitate important meetings and decision making sessions (eg during collaborative research design); doing so can ensure more equitable and smooth decision making. Along the same lines, it is strongly recommended to have an external evaluator conduct and analyze important project evaluation component. Last, if you have resources, you may wish to hire consultants or project staff with certain expertise to assist with particular components of the project (e.g. editing, knowledge dissemination).

Tools and Templates

The tools in this section can help you to develop overall project plan and project management framework. See also specific chapters for particular tools that can be used in project planning (eg partnership templates, evaluation plan).

Handout: Life Cycle of a Community-Based Research Project

This handout provides an overview of key steps in a Community-Based Research project. CBR involves multiple components and steps. Unlike conventional research, a lot time and resources in CBR is dedicated to partnership development and training and engaging community of interest in the research design and implementation. These steps and their sequence in the project timeline may differ according to the type of the project, as well as the scope of your project. Usually, partnership development, capacity building, dissemination, and policy advocacy are ongoing and iterative processes within CBR.

Checklist: Planning for Accessibility

In order to reduce barriers to community participation, you may wish to provide support for community members to participate as a peer researcher or collaborators in meaningful ways and also for other community members to participate in data collection. These supports need to be built into your budget when applying for funding. The following checklist contains a selection of possible supports. Not all supports will apply to all communities.

Checklist: Assessing Funding Leads

Community-Based Research comes with a cost. More collaboration and capacity building activities equals more time, and more time means more money. The following checklist is useful in applying for CBR-specific funding. You may wish to use this checklist in conjunction with generic funding resources. At the same time, it is important to identify your internal resources as well as in-kind resources and supports that your partners are willing to provide so you can assess how much external funding you require and a better picture of all your in-kind/internal resources and external project funding.

Handout: Typical Research Costs

Often, the more participatory a project is, the longer it takes. Consequently, Community-Based Research requires a lot of financial resources and in-kind supports. You may use this handout for planning out the budget for your Community-Based Research Project. Please note: These costs are estimates and may change over time.

Handout: Planning your Project Components and Timeline

You can use a structured list format and/or a schematic format to identify all major components/steps in your project and map its timeline. Both are included in this handout. While general phases/components in your project can be identified during planning stage (eg capacity building phase, partnership development phase, research design, ethics application, data collection, writing, knowledge exchange etc), the detailed steps in terms of data collection, analysis, knowledge exchange will need to be developed after completing the research design.

Handout: Mapping your Knowledge Production and Knowledge Exchange Activities

This is a useful high-level schematic for identifying components and links between knowledge production and knowledge exchange. The content detail of this map is generated once you have finished research design.

Life Cycle of a Community Based Research Project

Capacity Building and Co-Learning

Work with community members and partners to identify key trainings

Provide ongoing research training and capacity building to build confidence, knowledge and skills with community members to fulfill their expected roles.

Build in process and supports to ensure equitable and meaningful participation of community members through all phase of the project

Provide ongoing training and orientation to other partners on CBR process

Plan your CBR Project

Assess internal capacity and resources
Identify research priority and community of interest
Define project scope, objectives, partners, timeline, budget, evaluation framework, human resource management, risk management framework.
Apply for and secure funding (if not already secured)
Hire and train project staff

Build your partnerships

Find potential partners with mutual interest;
Develop shared goals & principles for working together;
Build relationships based on trust and collaboration;
Identify expectations and roles; Identify in-kind resources that partners can provide; and supports that partners require

Build Relationship with 'Community of Interest'

Identify and build relationship and trust with members/leaders within your community of interest. Recruit and train interested members to become partners, advisors, peer researchers in the project starting from the planning phase.

Evaluate your CBR project

Jointly develop indicators and methods for monitoring and evaluation

Monitor and evaluate your project activities on an ongoing basis and at the end of the project (through formal and informal methods)

Build seamless and actionable feedback loop to constantly improve project process and outcomes based on results from ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities.

Design your Research/Project

Collaboratively develop research question(s) and relevant methodologies and research instruments
Revisit your project plan to reflect the decisions made from research design but also to make sure that the scope and scale of this design is doable.
You may recruit additional partners and peer researchers once you have a better idea about research focus and goals.
Identify potential ethical issues and how to address them
Apply for and secure REB approval

Implement your research

Recruit participants
Conduct data collection
Process your data; Collaboratively interpret and analyze the data
Write/Produce relevant knowledge exchange materials

Disseminate (share) your findings (ongoing)

Develop ongoing/integrated and end of project dissemination strategy to share findings to all relevant stakeholders
Implement dissemination activities.

Mobilize Policy Change (ongoing)

Build relationship with policy partners (from the planning stage if possible)
Identify policy priorities affecting your topic and develop strategies for influencing policy using your study findings
Develop and execute a media strategy to generate broad public awareness on the issue and to catalyze policy action



reSearch for Change: Planning for Accessibility

In order to reduce barriers to community participation, you may wish to provide supports for community members to participate as peer researcher or collaborators in meaningful ways and also for other community members to participate in data collection. These supports need to be built into your budget when applying for funding. The following checklist contains a selection of possible supports. Not all supports will apply to all communities.

- Funding to cover salaries/honorarium for peer researchers (depending on how involved you want peer researchers to be, this can be your largest project expense)
- Translation of recruitment materials, consent form, and data collection instruments (interview guide, surveys etc) in languages spoken by your community of interest; if people face literacy barriers and provide communications verbally or through peer researchers
- Conduct research in first language spoken by your community of interest
- Real-time interpreters during interviews or focus groups if research is not conducted in first language of participants
- Childcare during project team or advisory committee meetings
- Childcare for research participants
- Honorarium for research participants reflective of the time and effort involved in participating in the study
- Transportation support for research participants
- Healthy food/refreshments during project meetings or during data collection (interviews or focus groups) particularly if these are held during meal times. Providing healthy food/refreshments is not just a great incentive but also can result in productive meetings/outcomes.
- Hold meetings (data collection activities) in locations that community members find accessible and safe; also ensure accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Desk space, computer and Internet access for peer researchers
- Counseling support (or links to counseling services) to peer researchers and participants if required



reSearch for Change: Planning and Applying for Funding for CBR project

Community-Based Research can require a lot of money, resources, effort and time. More collaboration and capacity building activities equals more time, and more time means more money. The following checklist is useful for planning and securing CBR-specific funding. You may wish to use this checklist in conjunction with generic funding resources. At the same time, it is important to identify your internal resources as well as in-kind resources and supports that your partners are willing to provide so you can assess how much external funding you require and a better picture of all your in-kind/internal resources and external project funding.

- First step as always is to do some research about funding opportunities. What funding bodies have funded other CBR projects in your field, city or province? Keep an active and updated list of all potential funding sources. What kinds and how much funding can a project potentially get?
- Talk to other agencies who have been successful in getting funding for their CBR projects to learn and adopt successful strategies.
- Don't hesitate to look outside conventional research/CBR funders. If a foundation is new to Community-Based Research, become an advocate and try and convince them to begin funding Community-Based Research.
- Don't ask for too little or too much. Knowing how much funding to ask for is both a science and art. Create a comprehensive project budget that captures costs for all stages and activities in your CBR project. Remember to include curriculum development, training, food, honorarium, transcription, translation, administration, HR costs, salaries for coordinators, peer researchers, etc. Then, assess how much internal resources and in-kind support from partners can be available and then decide how much external funding you need. Since CBR can take longer and require many expected work, we recommend that you over budget by 10- 20%, particularly in terms of human resources. For example, if you were planning to hire a project staff for 300 hours of work, budget for 360 hours. At the same time, don't ask for too much such that funders will start questioning. Depending on the scale and scope, a CBR project can cost from \$80,000 to \$200,000. Of this, if you can get 25% covered through internal resources and in-kind support from partners, then your 'ask amount' may be between \$60,000 to \$150,000. Demonstrating that your agency is putting in internal resources and your partners are contributing in-kind resources is often viewed very positively by potential funders as evidence of strong agency commitment and partnerships. If you get more funding than you expected, you can always cut back on the internal and in-kind resource contributions.
- Secure minimum amount of funding before commencing the project. Stay away from grants for \$10,000 and under (there are many of them around). Unless, you have significant internal and in-kind resources, these grants do not provide enough money to implement a full CBR project. This amount is usually enough to cover project planning

phase or a small component of the CBR project (eg lit review, printing costs). If you did secure another larger grant, then small grants like these can complement the larger grant. In other words, you can apply for small grants as long as this is not the only grants you are applying for.

- Apply for and secure multiple grants. As noted above, it is a good idea to apply to many funding opportunities and try and secure multiple grants for your CBR project. If you get multiple grants, then the funds can complement each other. For example, you can get one grant to cover your capacity building activities and another one to fund your research activities. You can revisit your project budget to decide where you want to use your additional funds (this is easier task to do than deciding where you need to cut). For example, you may decide to hire additional peer researchers, translate the research report into additional languages etc. Be transparent and strategic in your communication to your funders about this. Funders will generally agree to these changes as long as you can show that these changes are still within your project goals and that they actually can enhance the quality of project deliverables. We have found that having multiple funders also gives you flexibility to negotiate more flexible timelines or extension of timelines for your project.
- Be clear about deliverables for funders. Funders have their own funding priorities. Balancing your CBR project priorities and expected outputs with those of your funders can be a tricky and sensitive process. In order to maximize the chance of being successful with grants, you may need to adjust some of your CBR goals and outputs to capture the priorities and expected deliverables identified by potential funders. For example, funder may require a number of academic publications as part of the deliverables or require that certain percentage of funds be used for a particular purpose (eg hiring graduate students). As a team, assess whether funder priorities and expected deliverables are doable and can be included in your project plan without creating excessive workload. In some cases, you can strategically negotiate with a funder about the deliverables so it is mutually beneficial. For example, you may be able to reduce the academic publication requirement from funder if you can demonstrate the value of your community, plain-language publications.
- Some funders do not fund administrative costs. This is usually the case of funding agencies that fund research as they agencies assume that these grants are for academics who usually have adequate administrative support from universities to manage the funds. As a community agency, you can try and negotiate with funder for administrative costs. Alternately, you can also absorb administrative costs within other budget lines. For example, you can include a budget line for a general research support staff but use this line to cover for administrative functions (secretarial, finance, human resources support etc).
- Budget adequate resources to complete reports and specific deliverables to funders. Writing reports to funders can take a long time. Make sure you budget adequate staff time and other supports/resources (eg editor to review the report; finance person in your agency to produce financial reports for funders) to write these reports and deliverables.

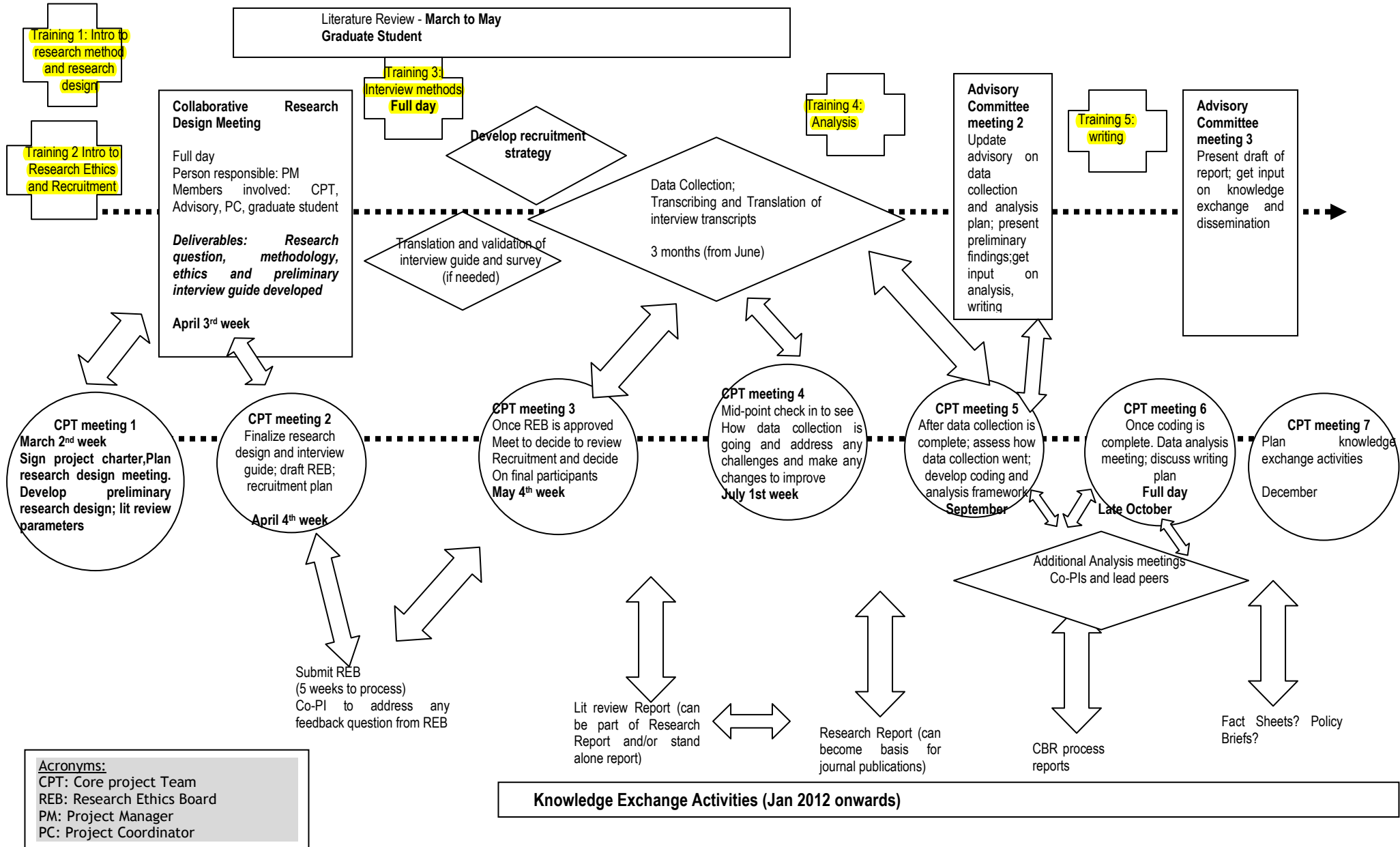
Typical Research Costs

(These cost estimates are based on 2009 cost of living estimates. Does not include core Human Resource Costs; Note that costs will vary by methodology and how much of the work is done 'in-house' or contracted out)

Survey	Interview	Focus Group	Lit Review	Arts-Based Methods	Other
<p>Basic Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design costs • Admin costs <p>a) Online surveys (cost less) OR b) Telephone surveys (more staff time) OR c) In-person surveys -recruitment/outreach; -travel time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff costs (varied) -E.g. staff time: 3 full time staff doing 2-3 surveys/day each would take 8 weeks to carry out 300 surveys total (approximately \$15,000) <p>• Data Entry and Analysis</p> <p>a) done by Research Team OR b) contracted out</p>	<p>Basic Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design costs • Admin costs • Staff costs <p>• Cost Per Participant \$20-\$30 Honorarium (depending on length of participation) \$5.20 for 2 TTC tokens each to cover transportation costs</p> <p>• Data Entry -little time required</p> <p>Coding Can be done by Research Team or contracted out</p> <p>• Analysis -more time required -could be done by Research Team</p>	<p>Basic Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design costs • Admin costs • Staff costs <p>• Cost Per Focus Group -E.g. \$20-\$45 each -E.g. Food: \$50-\$100 -E.g. TTC tokens (20): \$52 -E.g. Childcare: \$15/hr -E.g. Facilitator's fee: \$300 (if not research staff) TOTAL: E.g. ~\$500-\$2,000 per focus group</p> <p>Coding Can be done by Research Team or contracted out</p> <p>• Analysis -more time required -could be done by Research Team</p>	<p>Basic Costs Conducted by research staff then cost built in core budget/time. If contracted out can cost from \$4000-\$8,000 depending on scope and quality</p>	<p>-varies based on method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. Photovoice Supplies -camera (digital) ~\$2,000 for 10 cameras -camera (disposable) ~\$250 for 10 cameras • Printing costs/Enlargement \$1,500 • Cost Per Participant \$20-\$30 Honorarium per session \$5.20 for 2 TTC tokens each to cover transportation costs per session 10 people, 4-6 weeks=\$1,500 -\$2000 • Photo exhibition costs \$1,000 	<p>-e.g. buying census data: \$200-\$5,000</p>
<p>Other Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation and Back Translation: can be per word (15-25 cents/per word) or contract for entire document 	<p>Other Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation \$20-30/hr • Transcription \$35/hr or \$150-\$200 for a two hour transcript • Translation: can be per word (22-25 cents/per word) or contract for entire transcript (a 20 page transcript could cost about \$800) 	<p>Other Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation \$20-30/hr • Transcription \$35/hr or \$150-\$200 for a two hour transcript • Translation: can be per word (22-25 cents/per word) or contract for entire transcript (a 20 page transcript could cost about \$800) 	<p>Other Costs ✓ Printing</p>		
<p>Approximate Total Cost ✓ 300 surveys: \$16,000-\$18,000</p>	<p>Approximate Total Cost ✓ 30 interviews: \$1,500-\$6,000</p>	<p>Approximate Total Cost ✓ 10 focus groups: \$10,000-\$20,000</p>	<p>Approximate Total Cost ✓ 1 Lit Review: \$4000-8000</p>	<p>Approximate Total Cost ✓ 1 photovoice project with 10 participants: \$5,000-\$7,000</p>	<p>E.g. \$200-\$5,000</p>

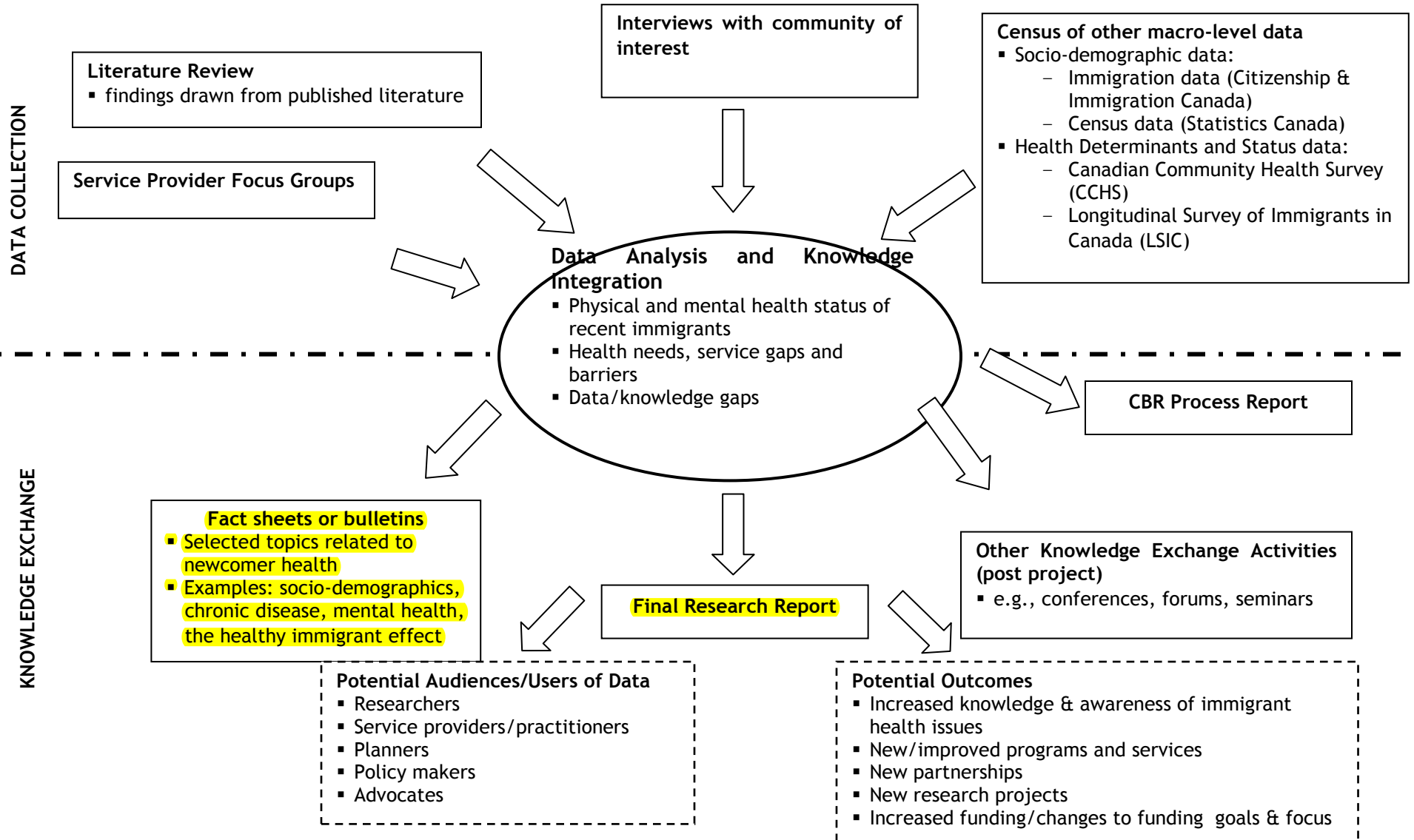
CBR Project Timeline and Activity Map

This schematic can be used to map out key phases and activities in your CBR project to give you an overall visual view of the project. The schematic below is from one of Access Alliance's CBR project which can be adapted to fit your project. Assign different shape box to each type of activity (eg training, core project team meetings, etc) and map them out over the timeline of your project. Within each shape box, include brief notes about the goal of that activity, who is responsible for implementing it, and other relevant info. Link each shape box by arrows to relevant outcomes and next steps. Project management softwares like Microsoft Project can also be used to create detailed schematic maps like this.



Knowledge production and Knowledge Exchange Map

This map is useful in presenting all your data collection activities/sources and their links to knowledge exchange activities/products.



Chapter Three

Building Partnerships and Collaboration for Community-Based Research



Chapter Three: Building Partnerships and Collaboration for Community-Based Research

Community-Based Research projects tend to be multi collaborative. They may involve partners that represent the ‘community of interest,’ academics, other community agencies or policy makers. Doing things collaboratively has a number of *instrumental benefits* (such as sharing of responsibilities, in-kind resources from partners, can tap into links from partners during recruitment, richer analysis due to multiple eyes and perspectives, ‘strength in numbers’ while doing advocacy work) and *intrinsic benefits* (make research more fun than doing it alone or with a few people, can lead to new links/friendships among collaborators that go beyond the project, shared experience). Of course, partnerships and collaborative processes come with challenges. These challenges can be overcome with proper planning and good communication. This chapter explores some of the benefits and challenges of partnership-building in Community-Based Research, while also providing some strategies to making your partnerships work.

Benefits of Partnerships in Community-Based Research

Conventional research is often conducted by a small group of researchers. In contrast, collaboration with multiple stakeholders is a fundamental principle in CBR. Advocates of Community-Based Research believe that doing research in collaboration produces richer, more rigorous and socially meaningful knowledge. Developing good partnerships and collaboration is therefore an important step in CBR. Partners are stakeholders who have mutual interest in working with you or supporting you on the issue at hand. The following list contains the multiple benefits of collaborating with partners:

- I. Partners can contribute in-kind resources and time to the project; partners can identify and help source external resources/funds for the project;
- II. The knowledge/expertise that each partner brings can enhance the quality of the CBR process, including research design and methodology, interpretation and validation of data, and dissemination;
- III. Partners may bring new connections and links that may be useful during recruitment, knowledge exchange and policy change work;
- IV. Roles and responsibilities can be shared among partners to decrease burden on a single agency;
- V. Some activities, particularly policy change work, are more effective when done in collaboration with partners (partners give the ‘strength in numbers’ required to do advocacy work);
- VI. Partners can help to buffer/share risks and find solutions to unexpected hurdles that may be encountered along the way;
- VII. Doing research in collaboration can make the research process more fun and engaging.

The stakeholders who partner in CBR projects may also benefit in many ways including:

- VIII. Partnering in a CBR process may enhance cross-sectoral partnerships that may have long-term benefits to the respective agencies/sector (e.g. between government and community; between academic and community; between agencies working in health sector with those working in settlement);
- IX. Stakeholders gain new knowledge from the research findings and from co-learning opportunities in the collaborative process;
- X. Gain new skills in CBR, collaborative decision-making, teamwork, and group communication.

Developing and Maintaining Partnerships

For partnerships to work in Community-Based Research, you need to develop a thoughtful partnership development and collaboration plan. This includes identifying who to partner with, why, what each partner brings to the project, what each partner expects from the project, and how to work together.

Identifying partners: There are no hard and fast rules for how to identify partners or how many partners you need. Many factors may influence who you partner with including familiarity and work history, resources and expertise, availability, and strategic positioning in championing your cause. The important thing to remember in identifying partners is that you should not recruit partners just for namesake. Rather, project partners are individuals or groups that are committed to supporting the project in some meaningful way. Effective partnership is measured not by the number of partners you have but the quality of your partnerships. Diversity and equity in representation is also another measure of effective partnership for a CBR project. If for example, your CBR project is focused on racialized female youth and all your project partners are older White males or that you have only one tokenist female youth partner, then the quality of your partnership is in question even if you have more than a dozen partners from all relevant sectors.

Key ingredients in identifying effective partnerships in CBR include:

- ✓ **Mutual interest:** your partners have mutual interest in the issue being explored
- ✓ **Commitment:** your partners are genuinely committed to the project objectives as well as to project principles of CBR
- ✓ **Contribution:** your partners are able to participate and contribute to achieving project objectives. Contribution type (eg in-kind time vs financial) and level may vary by partner based on their capacity. Thus, it is effort and equity in contribution that matters.
- ✓ **Equity:** your project includes adequate representation from your 'community of interest' and you make extra effort to involve important stakeholders that have tended to be excluded
- ✓ **Diversity:** Having partners from different sectors, decision making level, and demographics can enrich the quality of your CBR project associated with the benefits of having diverse perspectives, insights and resources. Bring together diverse partners can also result in collaboration across sectors/people that would usually not work together.

Project partners may include:

- ✓ Members of community of interest (community leaders, community groups involved in advocacy work, peer researchers)
- ✓ Academic partners
- ✓ Community agency partners
- ✓ Funders
- ✓ Policy Makers
- ✓ Private sector partners
- ✓ Media partners
- ✓ Students
- ✓ Governing boards (i.e. school boards)
- ✓ Faith groups or centres
- ✓ Unions

One best practice in Community-Based Research is to bring together a diverse group of partners, including smaller community agency partners who may not have opportunities to become partners in research. With smaller agencies or groups, you may need to provide some support (financial and other resources) to meaningfully partner on this project. Project partners do not necessarily need to have prior research experience to become a partner in a CBR project. Project partners can be given orientation and training in research to enable effective collaboration in the project.

If you aim to create policy change with your project, we strongly recommend recruiting relevant policy makers as partners in CBR project. Often CBR practitioners position themselves in antagonistic relationships with policy makers; doing so can make it difficult to use CBR evidence for influencing policy change. Instead, current track record shows that CBR projects that partner and collaborate with policy makers are more likely to lead to policy change. For more information on creating policy change with CBR, see [“Creating Policy Change”](#)

Define the Scope of Involvement: Partners may be involved in different ways and at different points in time depending on their interest and availability. Create different platforms and opportunities for participation for partners. They may be involved as members of the core research team, members of an advisory committee or strategic advisors. Alternatively, partners may not want to be associated with any formal body of the CBR project but willing to provide resources, space, supplies and other help to the project. For a list of possible roles partners might play in your CBR project, you may wish to consult [“Planning your Community-Based Research Project.”](#)

Identify Specific Roles and Contributions from Partners: It is very important to have open discussion with each potential partner to clearly identify their roles and contributions to the project. These should be written down in the partnership agreement. (See Partnership Agreement Template). A Partnership Agreement is a signed document between between the lead agency and partnering agency specifying the specific roles and responsibilities of each partner agency in the project. Be explicit about all terms of agreement when you meet. This agreement can be a living document; you may return to the agreement as your project grows to revise, adapt, or expand on items of concern.

It is common practice in CBR to create a Principles of Collaboration that all partners review, agree and sign together. This document is more comprehensive than a partnership agreement and has information about how all partners are going to collaborate. As long as partners agree and sign the Principles of Collaboration document, they don't necessarily have to create a separate partnership

agreement with your agency. However, some agencies might choose to do both. The Principles of Collaboration document includes shared understanding around:

- The key terms of the project, including timelines
- The scope and aim of the partnership (if not covered in the Partnership agreement)
- Guidelines for collaboration
- Members' roles and responsibilities
- Financial or in-kind contributions from all partners (if relevant)
- Decision-making processes (see below)
- What happens to the partnership when the project terminates
- Your teams' policies on data ownership
- Your teams' policies on dissemination;
- And any other important joint principle or agreement you want to include

Identify Expectations of Partners: It is also crucial that you discuss what your partners expect from the project. This may include a certain number of copies of the study results, invitation to present findings at the partner's agency, access to data, acknowledgement, etc. Partners may also ask that the research project include certain sub-groups of people that are of interest to the partner. Academic partners may have expectations about potential journal publications from the project while community partners may highlight the need for plain language versions of the study report. Core expectations of partners should be noted in the Partnership Agreement and/or Principles of Collaboration.

Develop Decision-making and Communication Processes: As in any collaborative project, a CBR project needs to develop effective group decision-making processes and ways of communicating with each other. Your Principles of Collaboration should outline how decisions are made and the frequency and types of communication. CBR practitioners often work on consensus-based decisions making. In certain processes, a mix of voting and consensus may be used (e.g. when making decision about which research question to focus on). It is important for all partners to know before-hand which individuals have decision-making roles in the project and the decision flow and accountability. For example, core project/research team members need to know that the decisions about overall scope of the project need to be reviewed and approved by the Project Manager.

Partners should also agree to communication processes in the project such as how often project updates are sent; who is responsible for writing and circulating meeting minutes; when partners should give their feedback by etc. Rotating meeting chair and minute taking functions may enhance collaborative process during meetings and group work. For important meetings (e.g. collaborative research design or analysis meetings) you may wish to bring in experienced facilitators to ensure that the meetings are run in an inclusive, democratic and engaging way.

Address Challenges and Tensions: Working from a collaborative framework has its challenges. You may encounter tensions and miscommunication between partners. Partners may be absent from many meetings or not contribute as they had originally committed. Alternatively, small community agencies may face barriers to participation due to resource or staffing constraints in their agencies while other partners may dominate decision-making. If not handled properly, disagreements among partners may spiral into difficult conflicts in ways that hinder project progress. Whatever the challenge or tension arising from partnership, it is important to address the issue in a timely manner with open communication. Challenges and tensions if handled professionally and collaboratively may in fact strengthen the relationship between partners.

Constantly Reflect and Build on Positive Outcomes of Partnerships: On a regular basis, evaluate and make time to jointly reflect on the positive outcomes and benefits of your partnerships you have and of working collaboratively. Doing so can reaffirm the value of working together and also help you further build on collaborative processes that appear to be effective. Working in partnership and collaboration does take more effort and time and sometimes you or some of your partners may start to wonder if it is worth it. So don't leave it to the end of the project to debrief about all the positive outcomes from your partnerships and collaboration. In fact, talk about the positive outcomes and milestones whenever you can.

Account for Future Institutional Costs of Partnerships: An important thing to remember is that partnerships are usually two way processes and thus can incur institutional costs. These costs may be incurred in future after the project is completed. In exchange for the collaboration and contribution, some or all the project partners may approach your agency in the future for collaboration and support for their projects/needs. Lead agencies and project partners need to be prepared to accommodate these potential future costs of partnership. Failure to reciprocate in a meaningful way can damage your future relationship and also reflect badly on the CBR project that you worked together on. There is also a potential of spillover effect for your partners when it comes to institutional costs of partnerships. For example, one of your partners may have sought the help of other agencies in their sector for help with recruitment or dissemination for your CBR project. Those agencies may then ask for help from your partner in the future. Conventional academic researchers who pressure small community agencies for recruitment help are often not mindful that these agencies may incur unnecessary and burdensome institutional costs. CBR practitioners need to account and discuss these in transparent ways.

Things to Avoid in Building and Maintaining Partnerships: Avoiding the following negative practices can prevent bad partnerships for your CBR project:

- ❖ **Avoid namesake partnerships:** Don't involve stakeholders as partners just because they are well known. They might end up being dominating and could derail and co-opt your project. Some reputed stakeholders may in good faith agree to using their names for 'namesake' to increase the profile of your project or let us say because it may increase the chance of getting research grants. If you strategically decide to go with this, make sure that it is a very trustworthy stakeholder and that you have clear agreement that can prevent negative consequences. Also, don't add stakeholders as partners just to show that your project has lots of partners. As noted earlier, the measure of good partnerships is not the number of partners but the quality of relationship with each partner.
- ❖ **Avoid tokenist partnerships:** Don't involve stakeholders, particularly marginalized stakeholders, in tokenist ways. In other words, don't recruit stakeholders for namesake if you do not have intentions of involving them in meaningful ways in the project. If you intend to involve them in meaningful ways but feel that you may not have the capacity, make sure you allocate time and resources to build such capacity (eg taking or providing necessary training, or hiring skilled project staff that can foster meaningful participation from marginalized partners).
- ❖ **Avoid exploitation of partners:** Don't recruit stakeholders as partners for purely instrumental reasons. Sadly, for example, it is common practice among conventional researchers to 'download' the burden of study participant recruitment to their community agency partners. These academics give false impression that community

agencies are key partners in the study but only call them up during study participant recruitment phase and once recruitment is completed there is no further interaction and little attempt to recognize the contributions of these community agencies. This is misuse of power that these researchers hold. Since study partnership recruitment is one of the most difficult and important component of any study, community agencies that can help with recruitment should be treated as the most valuable and integral partner in the project. Other exploitative and oppressive practices to avoid include coercing partners to do tasks that they don't want to, asking partners to do tasks that are high risk, failing to give due recognition for their contributions etc.

Fun and Food: Doing research in collaboration with partners of mutual interest can be a whole lot more fun than doing it all by yourself or with just one or two research assistants. Enjoy the intrinsic vitality and fun that comes from working together with people. And try and ensure that working together remains fun and enjoyable through-out the project. Ice breakers, team/partnership building exercises, and good sense of humor can help with this. The importance of providing good, health food during meetings can hardly be underestimated. Anyone who has worked with multiple partners know that providing good food is a powerful incentive for partners to regularly attend meetings, is always a great ice breaker (helps to create a friendly environment), and can inspire constructive thinking and collaboration during meetings. Partners may come for the food but will stay for the discussion. Thus, it is a good idea to budget adequately for food during meetings. Make sure you are not serving pizza all the time or fatty and junk food. Try out different cuisines (you can get partners to suggest options). Make sure you attend to dietary restrictions (health and religious/cultural reasons). Remember to always include some healthy options like fruit and vegetable platters. Also, it is a good idea to have empty containers available for partners to take home left over food to avoid waste.

How to Promote Equitable Collaboration

Equitable collaboration is the process in which partners participate in ways that reflect their actual as well as potential capacity. Equity in collaboration requires that your team members are critically reflective of power inequalities within your team members and proactively strive to create environment and supports to overcome these inequalities during the project process. In particular, it means that more marginalized members of your team receive equitable supports and opportunities to participate and receive more benefits from the process. Among other things, it requires team members in positions of power and privilege stepping back and supporting more marginalized members take leadership roles in the process. It also means that community members are not involved in tokenist ways in meetings but participate in meaningful and empowerment ways. Equitable collaboration is measured not necessarily by quantity of participation (eg how many meetings marginalized community members attend) but rather by quality of participation (eg whether marginalized community members are included in decision making roles; how the input from community members are heard and incorporated etc). Note that CBR is not inherently equitable but has to be made equitable through proactive steps.

CBR practitioners can use the following indicators and steps for promoting equitable collaboration in their project. It can be used at any phases of your CBR project, particularly those that involve

multiple partners working together (eg collaborative planning meetings, collaboration research design meetings, collaborative data analysis meetings, collaborative writing sessions) etc.

What are the indicators and dimensions of equitable collaboration?

Equitable collaboration is not just about inviting a number of community members to attend meetings. You need to also consider equity in terms of representation, participation, decision making, incorporation, and recognition.

Equity in representation: Adequate number of community members are involved (at least one third of your team); community members are reflective of the diversity of the community of interest; more marginalized community members are not necessarily excluded

Equity in participation: Community members on your team actively participate and contribute in your meetings and activities to their full potential; community members receive necessary training and support to contribute meaningfully; barriers to participation are removed; community members feel satisfied with their level of participation

Equity in decision making: community members are empowered and involved in decision making process on par with other team members

Equity in incorporation: input from community members are listened to and adequately incorporated

Equity in recognition: community members are given due recognition for their input and contributions including as co-authors in research reports.

Important Steps for Promoting Equitable Collaboration

The following steps and strategies can contribute in enhancing equitable collaboration in CBR.

✓ **Prioritize equitable collaboration as a central principle and goal for the project.**

Make equitable collaboration a key goal and principle that all project partners agree and aspire to. Develop a Principles of Collaboration document jointly with team members/partners that outlines how you are going to collaborate in equitable ways. Remind team members about this principle on an ongoing basis. Do not assume that just because your partners are strongly committed to social justice issues that they will naturally try and collaborate equitably. Get input from peer researchers and other people with proven knowledge on equitable collaboration on how to make things more equitable and overcome barriers to participation.

✓ **Build capacity for equitable participation/collaboration**

Provide adequate research and other relevant training to peer researchers and non-academic stakeholders so they feel empowered to participate in leadership capacity in the research process. Before any major research meetings (eg research design or analysis meeting), identify any training needs and deliver adequate training so peer researchers can participate in meaningful ways. At the same time, provide orientation and training to academic stakeholders and other partners in positions of power on how to be reflective about their power and privilege and how they can facilitate equitable collaboration. All team members should be prepared to be challenged in terms of inequities in the process and make joint effort to overcome them.

✓ **Create opportunities, environment and spaces for equitable collaboration**

Plan and budget adequately so that you are able to invite and involve community members in all important research and decision making meetings. Proactively identify and overcome barriers to participation, particularly for more marginalized members. Actively seek out new

opportunities for more marginalized members to be involved and contribute. Hold meetings in accessible and safe spaces. Make the topics of discussion accessible and plain language. Building strong relationships between different stakeholders (eg between academics and peer researchers) can also result in more equitable collaboration. In other words, the more people know each other, the more they are likely to collaborate in inclusive and respectful ways.

✓ **Develop and use tools that foster equitable collaboration**

Certain innovative tools, process flows, and facilitation methods can enhance equitable collaboration (in terms of participation, decision making, incorporation, and recognition). Take time to think about, seek out or develop such tools and process flows before important project meetings. It can include simple steps like engaging ice breakers, periodic ‘go arounds,’ limiting ‘air time’ for people who talk too long etc. If resources are available, we highly recommend inviting external people with strong facilitation skills to facilitate important meetings such as your collaborative research design meeting. Experienced facilitators can give lots of tips on overall process framing as well simple process tweaks that can enhance equitable collaboration. For example, they can advise on when to use voting and when to use consensus process in decision making or when to use group work vs individual input.

✓ **Evaluate and debrief on successes and address tensions and challenges**

Achieving equitable collaboration is a dynamic and iterative process. You can constantly keep making your project process more equitable as partners get to know each other more and learn to work together. On the other hand, your first phase of the project may be very equitable but the latter phases may start becoming less equitable due to time and resource pressures. Thus, it is important to have ongoing evaluation and debriefing built in the project so your team can regularly reflect on power relations and equity within project process so that you can identify successes to build on and challenges to overcome. In particular, challenges and tensions need to be discussed and addressed in timely manner and through open communication. As a project lead, you also need to be transparent about resource and time constraints that may have prevented you from providing equitable opportunities or resources.

Tools and Templates

Handout: Indicators for Identifying Partnerships

This handout lists key indicators you can use to identify relevant partners for your CBR project.

Activity: Stakeholder Analysis

Handout: Indicators for Equitable Collaboration

This handout lists key indicators for promoting equitable collaboration. It can be used for building overall equity in your project or promoting equitable collaboration at any phases of your CBR project, particularly those that involve multiple partners working together (eg

collaborative planning meetings, collaboration research design meetings, collaborative data analysis meetings, collaborative writing sessions).

Template: Partnership Agreement

Template: Principles of Collaboration

Template: Terms of Reference

Getting formal partnership agreements/understandings in paper is a very important step to solidify partnerships and to avoid confusions and misunderstandings later on. But what do these formal agreements look like? Use our templates to model your own agreements. Where appropriate, you may wish to make adaptations. Partnership Agreement template can be used when there are a small number of partners involved and/or when individual partners require separate agreements. Principles of Collaboration can be used when there are many partners involved and thus require finer details about how to collaborate; individual Partnership Agreement may be used in addition to Principles of Collaboration if needed. Terms of Reference template is for setting the terms for how an advisory committee or any committee within the project will function.

Handout: Decision Making Tool for Partnering with Academics

When academics approach your community/agency for partnership, this list of questions can help you make informed decision about whether to partner or not based on their goals (not just the ones stated in their proposal but also other goals), expectations, their approach to partnership and collaboration, their commitment to CBR, their previous experience working with community agencies, how they will contribute back to your community etc.

More Partnership Resources

Looking for more Partnership Resources? There are a number of useful resources specifically dedicated to building positive relationships with partners. For a list of resources consult our [External Resources](#) section.

“A Bridge Between Communities: The Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center” (June 2000). Video produced by Vivian Chávez. For information on how to obtain a copy of the video, please contact Robert McGranaghan, Detroit URC Project Manager, at rojomcg@umich.edu. Several excerpts from the video can be viewed throughout the URC web site: <http://www.sph.umich.edu/urc/>

Dukes EF, Pisolish M, Stephens S. (2000) Reaching for Higher Ground in Conflict Resolution: Tools for Powerful Groups and Communities. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Publishers.

The Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research Group. (2006). Developing and Sustaining Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships: A Skill-Building Curriculum. www.cbprcurriculum.info

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO (2006). Doing More In Partnership. Ottawa, Ontario. www.onthepoint.ca.

Activity: Partner Analysis Tools and Techniques

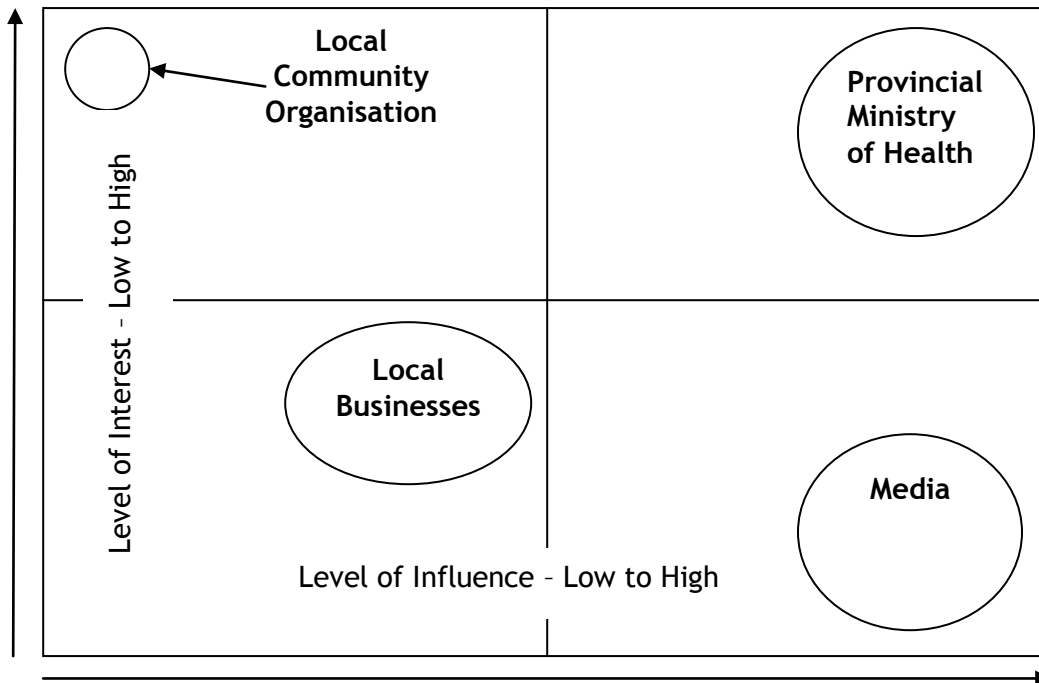
When working with numerous partners in a multi-collaborative approach it may be useful to spend some time analyzing various aspects of the partnership relationship to the issue and the organizations involved in developing the CBR project. This is often referred to as stakeholder analysis. If you already work closely with partners involved the project you may feel it is not necessary to conduct any analysis. However, if you are developing a project with a range of new partners from different sectors or assessing which organizations should be more involved in the project these suggested tools may prove to be a useful starting point.

Basic Stakeholder Analysis Technique

This method offers a quick and useful way of identifying stakeholders and their interests and influence over a specific issue. The exercise will need a large space (either a large table or clear space on a wall), masking tape and three sizes of circles cut from paper (small, medium and large).

Begin by asking the group to list all the possible organizations whose involvement in the CBR project will be important to ensure success. Note down every organization on a circle using a sliding scale - influential organizations on large circles and less influential organizations on smaller circles. If there are different branches of the same organization involved in the project note these down on a separate circle depending on their level of influence (this could refer to different departments within a Government Ministry for example).

Now using the grid (see below) start to analyze stakeholders based on two criteria - **interest** and **influence**. Organizations who have high levels of interest and influence will be crucial to project success, organizations with low levels of interest and influence will be less critical but may still need to be engaged in some way.



Once the group have discussed and agreed where they think each organization should be placed on the grid you can begin to discuss engagement strategies depending on the nature of each organization. In the example above, the media are highlighted as very influential but not interested in the issue, how can this be improved? Local businesses lack interest and influence – should they be ignored or would their involvement add value? The Provincial Ministry of Education are going to be critical to the success of this project, how can you engage them in a meaningful way? The project is very important to the local community organization but they have low levels of influence – how can you ensure the project includes them in a meaningful way to rectify this?

Participation Planning Matrix

Once you have identified and gathered support from the key stakeholders for your project, the next stage will be to begin planning partner participation. The levels of participation can range from a minimum of informing stakeholders to levels of empowerment that give partners final decision making authority. This will be dependent on the nature of the partnerships and CBR project. It builds on from the previous example of basic stakeholder techniques by specifying, for certain stages of the project, what commitment the lead organization and other partners will have to each other.

You may wish to do this activity before you begin planning the specific activities of your CBR project so each partner is clear on the expectations required from them. It may also be useful to help develop partnership agreements and principles of collaboration. Before you begin the exercise it may be useful to briefly discuss and agree on what key terms, such as empowerment, mean so everyone in the group is clear.

Careful consideration of partnership dynamics will be important in how you address this exercise. You may wish to consult partners separately first and agree on outlines of partner roles first and then bring the collective partners together for final agreement. If one organization is identified as the „lead“ organization for the CBR project they may well be best placed to facilitate this process and ensure a suitable outcome for everyone involved.

Using key project functions or specific activities you can begin to address how the lead partner or partnership collective (one or more organizations) will ensure other partners are involved (ranging from informing to empowering). It may also be useful to identify key organizations (based on the previous exercise) who may not be directly involved in the project but should be informed or consulted, to ensure maximum benefit for the project. Once the exercise is completed make sure each partner has a copy of the planning matrix for future reference. This can be re-visited throughout the project and modified, if necessary, depending on the changing circumstances of the project and partners involved.

Key Project Function or Activity	Method to Engage Stakeholders				
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
	We commit: to keep you informed	We commit: to keep you informed, listen to you, and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decision	We commit: to work with you to ensure your concerns are considered and reflected in the alternatives considered, and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decision	We commit: to incorporate your advice and recommendations to the maximum possible.	We commit: we will implement what you decide.
Capacity Building					
Research Design					
Data Collection					
Knowledge Exchange					



Handout: Indicators for Promoting Equitable Collaboration

This handout lists key indicators for promoting equitable collaboration. It can be used for building overall equity in your project or promoting equitable collaboration at any phases of your CBR project, particularly those that involve multiple partners working together (eg collaborative planning meetings, collaboration research design meetings, collaborative data analysis meetings, collaborative writing sessions).

Equity Indicator	Steps you are going to take to achieve this
Equity in representation: Adequate number of community members are involved (at least one third of your team); community members are reflective of the diversity of the community of interest; more marginalized community members are not necessarily excluded	
Equity in participation: Community members on your team actively participate and contribute in your meetings and activities to their full potential; community members receive necessary training and support to contribute meaningfully; barriers to participation are removed; community members feel satisfied with their level of participation;	
Equity in decision making: community members are empowered and involved in decision making process on par with other team members;	
Equity in incorporation: input from community members are listened to and adequately incorporated;	
Equity in recognition: community members are given due recognition for their input and contributions including as co-authors in research reports.	
Other equity indicators:	



Decision Making Tool for Partnering with Academics

When academics approach your community/agency for partnership, this list of questions can help you make informed decision about whether to partner or not based on their goals (not just the ones stated in their proposal but also other goals), expectations, their approach to partnership and collaboration, their commitment to CBR, their previous experience working with community agencies, how they will contribute back to your community etc.

Overall Rationale and Focus

- What is the focus of your proposed research?
- Who is the target population/community for your research?
- What is your research question or hypothesis? Ie what do you want to find out?
- Why is this important?
- What are the goals of the project?

Operational/Administrative

- What is the timeline for the project?
- What funding have you secured or are planning to apply? If you do not receive the expected funding, what are your plans?
- What other in-kind support and resources do you already have or are planning to secure?
- What is the human resource and staffing requirement/arrangement to successfully implement this study?
- What is the governance structure for the project? Who will make decisions and how will decisions be made?

Community Focus and Community Involvement

- Why did you decide to focus on this target population/community?
- Do you have previous experience working with this target community? What were your successes in these previous engagements? What challenges did you face and how did you resolve them?
- Do you have previous experience doing a research project using Community-based Research principles? What were the successes in this project? What challenges did you face and how did you resolve them?
- Are you going to involve some of the target community members as collaborators/co-researchers in the research process (in terms of research design, research question, research methodology, analysis, validation, dissemination etc)?
- If target community is not involved in research process, why not?
- If you plan to involve target community in research process, how will you make sure that they are involved in meaningful and empowered ways (and not in tokenist ways)?
 - What kinds of trainings and support will you be providing ?
 - What steps will you take to overcome barriers to participation?
 - How will you incorporate the input from the community?
 - Are you willing to modify your research focus/questions and methods based on input from community members?
 - What kinds of compensation will you providing?
 - How will you be recognizing community involvement?
 - What are other benefits for community members involved in the research process?
- What kinds of ethical issues do you foresee in your study? How are you going to address these issues? In particular, what extra steps will you take to ensure genuine informed consent and confidentiality for study participants? How are you going to make sure that vulnerable people are not being pressured to participate in the study in uninformed ways?
- How are you going to collaborate with community agencies/service providers that work closely with the target community?

Knowledge Exchange and Research Impacts

What are the expected outcomes/impacts from the project? What do you plan to do with the findings?
 How are you going share the findings with the target community? How will you make sure that findings are presented in accessible ways?
 How are going to share the findings to service providers to inform service planning?
 How are you going to share the findings with policy makers to influence policy change?
 How are you going to make sure that these stakeholders read your report and take action on your recommendations?

Expectations on partnership and collaboration

Why have you identified our agency/community as a partner in your project?
 What are the expected roles and contributions from our agency/community to your project?
 How much staff time will this take for our agency/community?
 How will you incorporate input from our agency/community?
 How will our input and contributions be recognized?
 If we become co-investigators in the project, how will you make sure that we are equitably included in decision making process and in all phases of the project including in research design, analysis, and writing?
 What kinds of supports and resources will be available to facilitate our involvement in your project? How will you help to overcome barriers to our participation (list some potential barriers)?
 If we are not able to meet some of mutually agreed roles and contributions, how will we address this?
 How will you share the study findings with our agency/community?
 What are other potential benefits for our agency/community from this project?
 What kind of formal partnership agreements will you have in place?

Decision Making Table

Decision Criteria	Assessment/Remarks
Proposed study focus and goals fit our mandate	
Proposed study has potentials for important policy impact and for filling critical research gaps	
Researcher has successful track record of working at community level	
Researcher has demonstrated genuine commitment to CBR principles and is dedicating relevant processes and supports to make this happen	
Researcher has demonstrated good understanding of ethical and other challenges of working with the target community	
Researcher has demonstrated commitment to doing broad knowledge exchange to target community , service providers and policy makers in ways that are accessible and usable to these stakeholders	
Expected roles and contributions from our agency is clearly identified; our requests for necessary supports have been met	
Our input and contributions will be appropriately incorporated and recognized	
Project timeline, funding, and other operational processes are well designed and match the scope and goals of the project	
The governance structure, decision making structure, and community structure are clear and well designed	
Other	



Partnership Agreement

Between

Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre

And

[INSERT NAME]

For

Income Security, Race and Health Community-Based Research Project

This document constitutes a Partnership Agreement between *[INSERT NAMES AND INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION]* and Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre with regards to the Income Security, Race and Health Community Based Research project. The general principles of collaboration are outlined in the Principles of Collaboration document of this project. This Partnership Agreement outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of each partner in the project.

This partnership agreement is effective from *[start date]* to *[finish date]*. If circumstances arise that necessitate altering the duration of this partnership agreement, the two parties will undergo negotiations that result in mutually agreeable terms.

Roles and Responsibilities

Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre agrees to:

- I. Provide overall coordination for research, dissemination and advocacy components of the project.
- II. Submit all deliverables and reports to Funders of the project.
- III. Organize Advisory Committee meetings and all other meetings related to the project.
- IV. Support partners in their participation in the project (provide meeting minutes; circulate relevant documents etc).
- V. Support and train community members involved in the project as 'peer researchers.'

[INSERT NAME OF PARTNER] agrees to (please list other roles and contributions to the project from you or your institution including in project design, recruitment/outreach, data collection, analysis and writing, dissemination and advocacy):

- I. Serve as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Project to assist with overall decision making on the design and implementation of the project
- II.
- III.
- IV.
- V.

Expectations

With respect to my participation in this project, I and/or my institution have the following expectations from the project (indicate copies of reports that may be required, a request for presentation of the final report etc):

- I. Receive a draft of the final report prior to submission (for review)
- II.
- III.

I, the undersigned, have read this agreement and agree to respect it. I have also read the *Principles of Collaboration* for this project and agree to respect it.

For [*Name of Partner*]:

For [*Access Alliance*]:

Signature - [*Name of Partner*]

Signature - [*Research Coordinator*]

Date

Date

Signature of Department Head (if required)

Date

Principles of Collaboration

[Name of Project]

This Principles of Collaboration is intended to guide the work of the community based research (CBR) project titled, “_____”. [This Principles of Collaboration document supplements the Partnership Agreement]. By signing this document, all partners agree to the principles outlined below. At the same time, it is understood that this document is considered a ‘living document’, one that can be revisited and revised in ways that improve collaboration and quality of the project.

1. Purpose of the CBR Project

- **Project Goal:** Using CBR methods, this project seeks to deepen our understanding of the *root causes and health impacts* of the growing poverty and income inequalities that racialized communities are facing in order to develop better services and policies to overcome these inequalities.
- Project objectives:
 - Build capacity of racialized groups in Black Creek in community based research;
 - Together with Black Creek community members, design and conduct CBR to deepen understanding about the growing poverty and income inequalities that racialized communities are facing and how it affects their health;
 - Drawing on study findings, mobilize dissemination and advocacy strategies directed at improving social/health services and policies in ways that help to overcome racialized income and health inequalities.

This is where you list the goals and objectives of your project. You may wish to return to this section when you design your project’s evaluation.

2. Guiding Principles for the CBR Project

This section outlines the working parameters for your partnership (e.g. your working relationship). These principles are very important to set-out at the beginning of a project. You may return to them if conflict arises.

- I. All project partners are responsible for *promoting a collaborative research partnership* that equitably draws upon the different skills/knowledge of each partner (academic, community agency, community resident) in ways that help to fulfill the project objectives.
- II. All project partners are responsible for promoting an *anti-racist/anti-oppressive working environment* in ways that proactively address power inequalities and promote equity in the research process and outcomes.
- III. All project partners are responsible for creating an *open and transparent process* where a collective vision of research goals and objectives is shared, and where the roles and expectations of team members are clearly understood.
- IV. All project partners are responsible for ensuring *open and respectful communication* and to hear and understand each other’s points of view.

- V. All project partners are responsible for promoting opportunities for *reciprocal (two-way) learning and capacity building* in ways that draw on the various skills and areas of knowledge of different partners.
- VI. All project partners are responsible for ensuring that the project engages in meaningful research, dissemination, and advocacy that leads to *community benefit and positive social change*.

3. General Roles and Responsibilities of Team Members

While project members are encouraged to work collaboratively at all stages of the project, the project recognizes that different members bring different skills/knowledge and may have specific roles and responsibilities.

I. **Principal Investigators:** The PIs will provide leadership in every aspect of the project with support from partners (Co-Investigators/Collaborators, Peer Researchers). The PIs' roles include overseeing the entire project, coordinating research activities, reporting to funders, and ensuring research findings are widely disseminated and put to community benefit.

This is where you list the roles and responsibilities of team members. While this may seem like a simple step, it is integral to creating a positive and productive working relationship. It will also help to reduce potential conflict amongst team members.

II. **Co-Investigators/Collaborators Responsibilities:** For this project, the term co-investigators and collaborators will be used interchangeably in recognition of the fact that community agency collaborators may also be actively involved in research design and implementation. Co-Investigators/Collaborators will sit on the Advisory Committee and will be involved in making decisions on all aspects of the project. Depending on interest and time availability, each Co-Investigator/Collaborator can be involved in the project in additional ways (data collection, analysis, report writing, dissemination, and advocacy). Each Co-investigator/Collaborator will specify their additional roles as well as their expectations in the Partnership Agreement.

III. **Project Coordinator:** The Project Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing the day to day operations of the project including organizing meetings, coordinating the research design, coordinating data collection, analysis and writing as well as overseeing the dissemination and advocacy work related to the project. The Project Coordinator will also be responsible for training and supporting community members (peer researchers) involved in the project.

IV. **Community Members/Peer Researchers:** About 4 - 6 community members/peer researchers will be recruited to sit on the advisory committee to bring a strong community perspective in the project. Additional community members may also be recruited to work on different components of the project. Community members/peer researchers will receive training in research, decision-making, dissemination and advocacy to enable them to participate more actively and meaningfully in the project.

V. **Student:** The project will be open to students with interest in the topic to be involved in the project. Students involved in the project will also have to sign a Partnership Agreement that outlines their roles and expectations (for e.g., how this project will relate to their thesis research if at all).

VI. **Consultants:** The project may hire consultants to work on specific components of the project.

4. Governance Structure

This is where you discuss your decision-making structures (e.g. consensus, by quorum, voting, advisory committee etc.). This will differ from project to project. In some projects, for example, you may have two level governance body with a small core project team performing decision making function and a Advisory Committee playing an advisory role. Or you may just have one body doing both. Either way, the roles and operating process need to be spelled out.

The Advisory Committee, under the joint leadership of the Principle Investigator and Project Manager/Coordinator, is responsible for overall decision-making and direction of the project as per agreed principles and goals in this Principles of Collaboration document. In addition to the Principle Investigator and Project Manager/Coordinator, the Advisory Committee will include key academic partners, agency partners

and community members involved in this project.

The workings of the Advisory Committee will be guided by a **Terms of Reference** for the Advisory Committee. The committee may have multiple research and associated components (e.g. photovoice, surveys, training). The Advisory Committee may delegate a specific 'subcommittee' or coordinator to oversee the activities of each of the different components of the project.

5. Access to/Dissemination of Data

Based upon the project's guiding principles, the PIs and the Co-Investigators share ownership and have access to the research data. Usage of the data will be in accordance with the advancement of the project goals and will adhere to all requirements of the Research Ethics Board.

Data will be used for:

- advancement of knowledge;
- identification of future research questions;
- making recommendations for policy and service provision; and
- supporting knowledge transfer, advocacy in relation to social justice and the social determinants of health

The data should not be used for:

- individual interests that are not related to the goals of the research.
- For commercial gains

In Community-Based Research, it is good practice to ensure joint control, ownership and access to data for key partners. But it is important to have open, transparent discussion with all your team members in the start of the project about this, what this means, and how it will operate. It is also important to discuss that data ownership and access comes with responsibilities in terms of ensuring safe and ethical use of data. Universities and large research agencies may have restrictions in terms of collaborative ownership and access to research data. These need to be clarified and resolved before hand.

In accordance with CBR principles, we are proposing a model of dissemination that encourages the active involvement of all research team members while taking into account their varying needs, responsibilities and capacities. Research findings will be disseminated in various ways possibly including community forums, conference presentations, agency workshops, newsletters, and journal articles. The PIs, the Co-Investigators, Project Coordinator, community members are all encouraged to engage in dissemination of the research findings, and are to share information about potential dissemination activities.

The team will establish analysis and writing groups for different articles and reports, with participants contributing different parts of the manuscript. We will offer capacity-building opportunities for team members who wish to expand their skills. Authorship will correspond with contribution to the research being reported, with the entire research team receiving acknowledgment. For example, a paper might be attributed to “A.B. Author, L.M. Writer, J.K. Researcher, for the Trans Health Research Project,” with an acknowledgement listing all members of the project. Order of authorship and mechanisms for feedback on manuscript drafts will be decided up front by writing group members. This understanding applies to conference presentations, community forums, and other dissemination activities.

6. Acknowledgements

In all publications, media strategies and other public activities related to the Project, all team members will be acknowledged as investigators or authors, as appropriate. The members of the investigators team understand that ‘authors’ are those who participate in writing/publishing activities in substantive ways. The names of investigators’/authors’ respective organizations will appear with acknowledgement, as appropriate.

7. List of Collaborators

- Principal investigators:
- Co-investigators/Collaborators:
- Project Coordinator:
- Community Members/Peer Researchers:

This Principles of Collaboration document was developed on [Insert Date].

I have carefully reviewed this Principles of Collaboration and agree to these principles:

Name	Signature
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This Principles of Collaboration template was adapted from The Wellesley Institute.

Terms of Reference
[Insert Name of Project Here]
Community Advisory Committee

Objective:

To provide overall guidance and direction for the Income Security, Race and Health CBR project.

Activities:

- Meet on a regular basis to provide sound direction and support for the project.
- Help generate strong participation and support from relevant agencies and community members.
- Assist with the research, dissemination and advocacy activities of the project whenever possible

Composition:

The CAC will comprise of 4 - 6 community residents (recruited for ethnoracial, socio-economic and geographical diversity); the Research Coordinator of Access Alliance CHC, a Health Promoter from Black Creek CHC, a staff from Toronto Public Health, as well as the 3-4 academic partners associated with the project will serve as facilitators in the CAC. Other relevant collaborating academic or agency staff may also join the committee as facilitators.

Term: For the length of the project (aprox 1 year)

Meetings: 1 -2 times a month; the CAC may decide to hold additional meetings as per the need of the project.

Structure: Rotating chair/minute taker.

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of one half of the membership of the committee plus one if the number of members is even or a majority when the number is odd.

Decision-Making: Decisions will be made in a participatory and consensus based framework.

Reporting:

Minutes will be recorded and distributed to everyone by the staff from Access Alliance.

Support for Community Members

Whenever funding is available, community members (particularly those who are not paid staff in any agency) on the CAC will receive an honorarium of \$15/hour in recognition of their time and contribution. If cases where funding is limited or finished, the CAC can decide to decrease or waive the honorarium (till additional funding is secured). When required, childcare will also be provided during the meeting. If the meetings fall during lunch or dinner time, then food will also be provided.

Chapter Four

Working with Communities



Chapter Four: Working with Communities

Meaningful involvement and collaboration with your ‘community of interest’ is the most important principle of Community-Based Research. The key goal of CBR is to conduct research on issues that are important to the community and in ways that make knowledge production an empowering, collaborative and transformative process geared at promoting policy/social change that benefit the community and broader society. In other words, in CBR, community members are not viewed merely as research subjects; rather, they are involved as co-researchers and decision makers in developing the goals and outcomes of the research. In CBR, community is the foundation of the research. The research begins with the community, engages the community in transformative ways, and ends with the community. This chapter explores various ways you can meaningfully involve community members in your Community-Based Research Project.

Identifying Community

The first step in working with community is to identify your ‘community of interest.’ A functional definition of community is a group of people that share certain features, characteristics or experiences. This may be the neighborhood where they live, their country of origin, ethnicity, race, gender, age group, sexual orientation, economic status, health issues faced etc. As a community agency, you may already have a target client/community group that you work with.

You can start with available parameters for identifying your community of interest, but always be ready to accept the fluidity in the boundaries articulated by community members. The individuals who make up a community have multiple intersecting identities; these complex identities are constantly in flux, and are often contested. Communities also contain internal inequalities, contradictions and confusions. For example, categories such as newcomer groups, Black community, Muslim-community, consumer-survivors, refugee groups are all very politically loaded categorizations. While you may categorize an individual as belonging to a particular community, they may not actually see themselves as belonging to that community or do so with hesitation or confusion because of political implications. Thus, it is important to avoid static definitions of community that pigeonhole people and communities into fixed categories.

In particular, CBR practitioners need to be critical of social categories that have been constructed by dominant groups to reproduce power inequalities. For example, anti-racism activists have exposed how terms such as ‘visible minorities’ or ‘ethno-racial groups’ that dominant groups use to categorize non-European and non-White people serves to mask and reproduce deeper problems of racialization and racialized inequalities; it also assumes that dominant groups are non-racial and non-ethnic. Non-European and non-White people (and institutions such as Ontario Human Rights Commission) prefer the term ‘racialized groups’ since this recognizes that race and racial categories are socially constructions that need to be challenged. As CBR practitioners, we need to strive for more progressive and dynamic conceptions of community.

A best practice is to start by engaging a few community members, build trust with them, and take their advice on how to identify and reach other community members. But when doing so, it is important to keep in mind the social position of these community members since they may intentionally or inadvertently act as “gatekeepers” to exclude certain groups. Be sure to ask community members about diversity, inequalities and power relations within their community and recruit community members who are able to offer critical and thoughtful insights on this. For example, a community member from the Hispanic community will be able to tell you about the tremendous diversity within the Hispanic community as well as about potential tensions within the subgroups that needs to be considered.

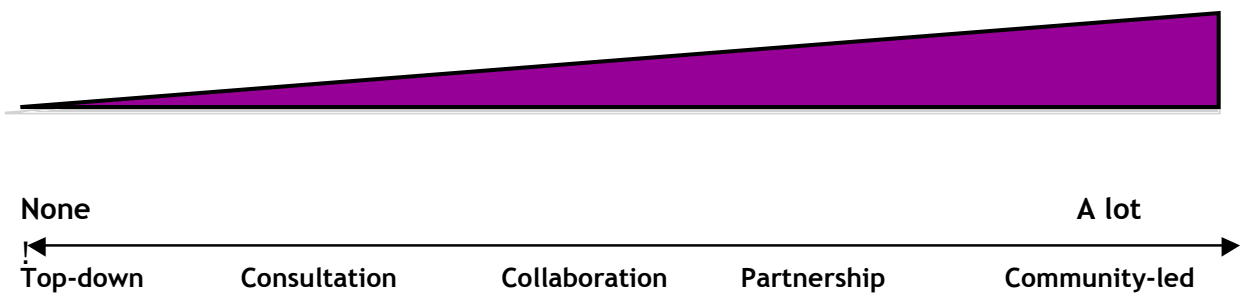
There are only a certain number of community members you can involve so it is important to be clear and transparent about who is being recruited, how and why. Similar to the process of ensuring equity and diversity within your partnerships (see Chapter 3), strive to achieve equitable representation of community members in your team in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, economic status, age and other important indicators. Make extra effort to involve community members whose voices have not been heard (‘hard to reach’ groups) and who face exclusions even within their community. But most importantly, as noted earlier, CBR practitioners need to realize and be prepared that identifying a ‘community of interest’ is a dynamic and critically engaged process that could be contested within and throughout the research. So if a community member questions how you have categorized him/her, don’t shun away or exclude this community member but rather engage in constructive dialogue with the person to jointly develop more inclusive and progressive definition of community.

Community Involvement in CBR

“The biggest compliment you can give someone is expecting a lot from them and helping them accomplish it” - Research Team Member, Access Alliance

There is no black and white distinction between conventional research and CBR in terms of how community members are involved. Rather, community involvement exists on a continuum from top-down approaches with no community involvement on one end or involvement only in limited consultation meetings to projects where community members are equitable partners or take a leadership role in leading the project. The following diagram adapted from Roger Hart’s ‘ladder of participation’ represents this continuum of involvement.

Community Involvement in Community-Based Research: A Continuum



Community members involved in a CBR project are often referred to as 'peer researchers.' As CBR practitioners, we need to strive towards the right end of the spectrum as much as possible and to engage community members/peer researchers throughout the 'life-cycle' of a CBR project (from conception to data collection to writing). Community involvement may vary based on a number of factors including project budget, timing, availability, and capacity of project leads to involve community members. The important thing to remember is that effective community involvement is not necessarily measured by quantitative indicators (such as number of community members involved or the time they put in) but rather by indicators such as quality of participation, equity in representation/collaboration, supports and trainings that they receive to be able to fulfill their expected responsibilities, how you incorporate input from community members and how you recognize their contributions, how it impacts their lives, the relationship and trust you build with them, transparency in how you communicate with them. See Chapter 3 on list of indicators for equitable collaboration.

There are many ways that community members can become involved in a CBR project. Some can serve as members of an advisory committee and take on an 'advisory' role. Others may be involved as partners or as co-researchers/co-Principal Investigators. Community members may also be hired as research assistants. Depending on community members availability and project budget, some community members may be involved full time while others may be involved couple of hours a week or at important periods in the project. It is important to develop a thoughtful community engagement plan that clearly outlines the different ways in which community members may be involved in the project. The community engagement plan can include the following information:

- The number of community members that can be involved
- Equity and diversity in representation of community members and how this will be achieved
- Different capacities/roles that community members can be involved (advisory committee members, co-investigator, research assistant etc)
- What specific functions and responsibilities will they be expected to fulfill
- How community members will be recruited (eg flyers, job postings)
- What kind of orientation and training they will receive
- What kind of remuneration/salary/benefits they will receive? And other Human Resource consideration particularly if they are paid employees
- How will barriers to participation be overcome
- How will their input be incorporated and recognized
- What will happen after the project is completed? What kinds of supports will they receive to find their next job or pursue post-project goals?

Five key things to consider in developing effective community engagement plan are:

- ✓ Be open and transparent about the level and nature of involvement based on project budget and other considerations. Don't give false hope about seamless, full involvement when there is not enough project funding to support that. Quality of involvement is what matters and not quantity.
- ✓ Make sure you involve community members in a meaningful, equitable, respectful way while valuing their knowledge about issues that affect them.
- ✓ Provide adequate training and support to enable community members to carry out the responsibilities that they are expected to take on. The next section discusses how you might build a capacity-building program to support community members and other partners.

- ✓ Provide adequate remuneration to community members (honorarium for advisory members; good wage for community members who are hired as paid staff); and overcome barriers to participation by covering transportation costs, childcare, holding meeting etc.
- ✓ Don't forget to build in supports for community members to pursue next steps after the project is completed. Eg revising their resume to reflect their training and achievements from your CBR project; help with applying for next job

Developing your Capacity Building and Research Training Program

Capacity Building refers to the process of equipping people with the skills, confidence and knowledge so they can achieve their potentials and participate as empowered members of society. Capacity building extends beyond training; it includes mentorship, confidence building, support and education. Capacity building also involves creating opportunities for people to use these skills. As informed by popular education framework, the overall capacity building goal of CBR is to develop critical capacity to better understand, question and overcome structures of marginalization, oppression and inequities.

Within the project scope, it is important to provide adequate training and capacity building to peer researchers so that they can successfully fulfill their roles and responsibilities. Our experience at Access Alliance consistently shows that by offering adequate and well-designed training, peer researchers can participate as professional researchers on par with academics and graduate students. Failure to offer adequate training and support on the other hand can result in diminished participation, patronizing treatment by other partners, unmet expectations, disappointments which in turn can disempower community members. Designing your capacity building program requires careful planning in terms of curriculum, training goals, training format, logistics, evaluation etc. Below are some things to consider when designing and implementing your capacity building and training activities. While most of the research training and capacity building is usually geared at peer researchers, your other partners may be interested in taking some of these trainings and/or might identify their own training needs. All partners need to be oriented to CBR principles and processes.

- I. **Begin by offering basic orientation to research and CBR.** The goal of this basic orientation (it can be called CBR 101) is to build basic research literacy so peer researchers have an idea about what research is, what are all the steps involved in research, how CBR is different from conventional research, what are some of the challenges in research and the overall picture. This will in turn enable peer researchers to make informed decision about what additional training and supports they require to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.
- II. **Plan training activities collaboratively by engaging community members in their own learning.** **Ask community members and stakeholders what training they need in order to meaningfully participate.** Offer a core introduction to research training so they can understand all the steps in a research project and make informed decisions about what kinds of additional trainings and supports they need. Assess previous knowledge and skills in research and develop training material reflective of this. Identify which trainings are essential for everyone to take and which ones are additional trainings for certain members in order to bring everyone at the same level. In some cases, you may need to give one-on-one training. As the project progresses, community members may identify additional trainings, refresher, and mentoring. Incorporate and address any feedback they have. Give community members a sense of ownership on the

training materials by showing that their feedback is regularly being incorporated to improve the quality of training. Also identify what people may learn from each other. At Access Alliance, we have found it useful to pair up community member with an academic or service provider partner to facilitate co-learning and co-mentorship.

- III. **Match your capacity building training with the size and scope of your project.** A large Community-Based Research involving a multi-method study may require many hours of training compared to a smaller project involving a few interviews. The general rule of thumb is to provide adequate training so community members can fulfill their expected responsibilities as per the scope of the project and their involvement.
- IV. **Use Participatory & Popular Education Models (Learning by Doing).** Popular Education and CBR go hand in hand. Popular education values the importance of accessibility, personal experience and experiential learning. Popular education also links individual and collective narratives of the group to a critical social analysis. Training sessions are also important sites where power relations within your team may be questioned and contested. As recommended by Paulo Friere, be open and ‘dialogical’ in designing and delivering training.
- V. **Fun and Engaging:** Research training can be very boring. Thus, it is also important to make your training engaging, interactive and fun so people don’t get bored and or get anxious about having to remember too many things. Be sure to incorporate enough hands-on exercises so they can practice what they learn. Also people learn more when things are more interactive, hands-on and fun.
- VI. **Include workplace integration training.** If community members are hired as paid employees for the project, provide necessary staff orientation as required by your agency. For marginalized community members who have experienced protracted employment barriers, take extra time to carefully explain human resource regulations, their rights as workers (eg union rights), workplace safety, and other workplace integration strategies.
- VII. **Invite guest speakers who are active and engaged in their field.** At Access Alliance, we have found it very useful to invite guest speakers at our training who have previous experience with CBR and can speak to challenges and as well effective strategies/solutions in CBR. Guest speaker may include peer researchers, academics or services providers from other CBR projects.
- VIII. **Celebrate success with recognition/certification.** Community members have used Community-Based Research training to apply for university, graduate school, and employment. By providing something tangible at the end, you not only recognize the hard work of participants but also provide them with something they can use in the future. Work with them to revise their resume so that their trainings and achievements from your project are reflected in their resume.
- IX. **Evaluation and feedback.** Build in regular evaluation and debriefing throughout your training program, so you can collect trainee feedback on improving the content of the training and also give feedback along the way about their progress. Give trainees a sense of ownership to the training material by showing how their feedback is being used to constantly improve the content and quality of training. See below for a standard workshop evaluation template, as well as a template to track participants’ personalized learning goals before and after the training.

Is your training program ... Engaging? Informative? Reflective? Hands-on?
Anti-Oppressive? Participatory? Skill-centered? Concept-oriented?
Relevant? Exciting? Practical?

Tools and Templates

Case Study Brief: Working with Peer Researchers - A Youth-Led Model

This case study brief provides an example of how Access Alliance developed and implemented a community engagement and capacity building plan for our Refugee Youth Health. In this project 5 refugee youth peer researchers and 8 peer research assistants were involved in leadership capacity supported by an interdisciplinary team of academics, agency partners and service providers.

Template/Activity: Guiding Questions for Developing a Community Engagement Plan

The following list of guiding questions/topics can be used to develop a Community Engagement Plan for your CBR project.

Template: Training/Workshop Design loom

This design loom consists of two components. In the first component, you brainstorm possible activities, energizers and timing of activities in line with your workshop/training principles or goals. After finalizing which activities to use, then you map out these activities in the second component chronologically as per the time limit of your workshop/training.

Template: Identifying Training and Learning Goals

This template can be used to develop training materials according to participants' needs/goals and to track whether these are being met.

Template: Workshop/Training Feedback Form

This template can be used in any standard workshop to evaluate a capacity-building training.

Template: Peer Researcher Sample Job Posting

If you choose to hire peer researchers as agency staff, you will need to create a job posting, as well as determine where to advertise the new position. You may use this template as a guide for hiring peer researchers. Note that each job posting is particular to a specific CBR project.

More Capacity-Building Resources?

Looking for more Capacity-Building Resources? There are a number of useful resources specifically dedicated to building positive relationships with communities.

Ontario Women's Health Network. (2009). *Inclusion Research Handbook*. Toronto: OWHN. <http://www.own.on.ca/inclusionhandbook.htm>

Van Wagner, Moody, R & Dumond, C. (2004). *Participatory Action Research with young people: A Leader's Manual*. HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development <http://www.heartwood.ns.ca/ourresources.html>

Community Tool Box. <http://ctb.ku.edu>

For a list of resources consult our [External Resources](#) section.



reSearch for Change: Working with Peer Researchers: A Youth-Led Model

The Refugee Youth Health Project (RYHP) is a community-based and collaborative youth-focused research project initiated by Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services. The project was led by 5 peer researchers and 8 peer research assistants; as co-researchers peers were supported by an interdisciplinary team of academics, agency partners and service providers.

The overarching goal for the project is to conduct research to inform more inclusive, proactive, and empowering models of mental health service and mental health promotion strategies for refugee youth. The project focuses on Sudanese, Afghan and Karen (Myanmar/Thailand) refugee communities. Peer Researchers and Peer Research assistants from these communities were recruited, hired, trained and mentored as co-researchers.

Throughout the project, Access Alliance sought to:



- build critical research, dissemination and advocacy capacity among refugee youth to collaboratively investigate the many exclusions and barriers that refugee youth face.
- develop and implement youth-centered, youth-friendly training curriculum designed for refugee youth.
- develop and implement a model for a Youth Peer Researcher-led community-based research project, with youth input on organizing principles.

Three frameworks for engagement guided these objectives: a commitment to following community based research principles; a rights-based approach to youth engagement; and a popular education framework of learning, action and reflection (see below). Refugee youth were jointly involved in decision-making throughout all phases of the project. In order to accomplish this, the Peer Researcher-led model was designed so that Peer Researchers and Peer Research Assistants played the following roles:

Refugee Youth Peer Researcher (PR): Sudanese, Afghan and Karen youth between 16-24 who arrived to Canada as refugees within the last five years, who were members of the core research team, and were trained to carry out a leadership role in all phases of the research. Each Refugee Youth Peer Researcher (PR) worked with the project community partners and as well as the additional Refugee Youth Peer Research Assistants (RAs) from their community through all phases of the research project.

Refugee Youth Peer Research Assistant (RA): Sudanese, Afghan and Karen youth between 16-24 who arrived to Canada as refugees within the last five years, who were trained to assist with specific functions such as data collection (facilitating focus groups, taking field notes, administering surveys), data management (validating transcriptions and translations), and knowledge exchange (presentations, advocacy meetings, launch event).

Refugee Youth Health Project Capacity Building Program

Access Alliance uses a popular education framework for planning and conducting capacity building training. This means shaping training activities in a way that honour and make space for the lived experiences and ideas of all participants. This also means creating activities that allow participants to connect their own experience to broader concepts. A popular education framework is complementary to the framework of youth engagement discussed above. Both frameworks recognize and legitimize the voices of participants.

Aligned to these principles, the research team developed and engaged in a youth-friendly research training curriculum in order to prepare peer researchers (PR) for collaborative research design, data collection, analysis and dissemination. The program included 54 hours of intensive popular education Community-Based Research training. Many training sessions were open to other community members working in other Community-Based Research. The training program unpacked the conceptual and methodological issues related to the project and provided participants with concrete research skills to design and implement Community-Based Research. During the training, PRs set personal learning objectives, identified potential workshop topics and source content for the training sessions in order to enhance their capacity, and include them as key decision makers in the process. The training curriculum involved popular education activities, such as arts-based methods to engage participants in a variety of ways. In every session, participants were invited to share their perspectives on research, partnerships, anti-oppression, refugee youth issues and issues in their communities. This training exemplified the ‘bottom up’ approach of Community-Based Research.

General Community-Based Research Trainings	Project Specific Trainings
Intro to CBR & Anti-Oppression	Refugee Youth Health Issues
Intro to CBR II: Partnerships & Ethics	Historical Timeline: Mapping Refugee Youth Histories (Open to Youth-Only)
Intro to Research Methods (General)	Social Determinants of (Mental) Health
Collaborative Research Design	Training on Arts-Based Methods (i.e. Photovoice, Digital Storytelling)
Recruitment & Outreach	*Trainings ranged from 1 to 3 hours depending on content. This capacity building program was extensive, and required training-specific funding (Laidlaw Foundation).
Collaborative Writing	
Focus Group Facilitation 101	
Facts for Change (How to use Census Data)	
Participatory Evaluation	
Working with the Media/Dissemination & CBR	
Advocacy & Policy Change	

Lessons Learned from a Youth-Led Peer Researcher Model

The outcomes of the study are very positive. Peer Researchers and Research Assistants shared about many positive impact of this project on their personal and professional development. As one Peer Research Assistant noted:

Youth took part in the [Refugee Youth Health] project, they were not manipulated nor tokenized. Unlike traditional research, this CBR project was built by community members for their communities. This means it can actually provide help to the community. The use of CBR has proven to be worthy. All the participants bring diversity to the projects, and create a collaborative project. Decision making processes can be long but worth it. I would highly encourage you to read our analysis of data in a few months. Refugee youth have extremely different challenges and experiences; they are not a homogenous group. When someone hears 'refugee youth', people think about incapable, or vulnerable youth. This is not the case. Refugee youth develop different strategies to deal with their challenges.

On a research level, the capacity building training was invaluable to the success of the Refugee Youth Health Project. The capacity building training equipped Peer Researchers with the confidence and expertise to play a meaningful and skilled role in both research design and implementation (data collection and analysis). Once hired, Peer Research Assistants were also trained to assist Peer Researchers in recruiting participants and facilitating focus groups. Last, as a result of this training, Peer Researchers were able to co-present with the Research Co-ordinator and Co-Principal Investigators at several academic and community forums. Towards to end of Phase 2 of the project, the PRs and RAs worked with a knowledge exchange facilitator to explore creative ways of sharing emerging findings with community members, partners, service providers and academics.

However, despite peer researchers' invaluable skills and strong efforts by the research team to create a youth-led project, the research team identified a few key challenges with this model. First, there was often a tension between wanting to position the project as youth-led with the limits of what peer researchers could or could not do without institutional support. For example, while placing peer researchers in charge of recruitment may be done in order to increase youth participation, this may place an unnecessary burden on PRs and RAs. In the future, how can agencies provide institutional supports for recruitment?

Second, because RYHP Peer Researchers and Research Assistants were both staff and community members, this challenged standard project management processes. Community-Based Research processes organically evolve, are resource heavy and time-intensive. For example, while the contribution of refugee youth as PRs and RAs was invaluable in this research project PRs and RAs faced multiple hurdles with juggling their studies and family commitments with employment and participation in this project. This often impacted their availability to participate in scheduled research activities; project timelines were often impacted as a result.

Third, Peer Researchers faced vulnerabilities themselves as newcomer refugee youth. Listening to and facilitating focus groups with their peers could be potentially triggering. How do you support community members to fulfill their role as co-researchers while also protecting their mental health?

Both the positive outcomes and key challenges of the Refugee Youth Health Project have been invaluable learning opportunities for Access Alliance. By mapping out our successes and challenges, we hope to pave the way for other community health centres to plan and implement agency-led Community-Based Research.

For more information about the Refugee Health Project, please visit:

<http://accessalliance.ca/research/activities/refugeeyouthhealth>

reSearch for Change: Guiding Questions for Developing a Community Engagement Plan

The following list of guiding questions/topics can be used to develop a Community Engagement Plan for your CBR project.

Identification, Trust Building, and Outreach

- How are you going to define your community? And who is included and not?
- How are you going to outreach to the community?
- Are there community leaders who you can consult about this?
- How are you going to build trust with community?
- How are you going to explain to them the goals of the project? How are you going to convince them to collaborate with your project?
- How are you going to address concerns they have about research in general or about your particular research project?
- How are you going to reach more marginalized, 'hard to reach' people within the community?

Composition, Recruitment and Hiring

- How many community members can be involved in your project?
- And in what capacities? (advisory members, paid research staff, research assistant etc)
- How are you going to outreach and recruit community members for each of the different categories/roles?
- For community members hired as paid staff for the project, what will the job description look like? Is the salary and benefits reflective of what they will be doing? How will you make sure it is in line with the human resource and hiring policy within your agency? If there are issues that go beyond your agency's human resource and hiring policy, how will you address them? How will you make sure it is written in accessible language?
- How are you going to circulate the job description?
- If there are many community members who show interest in being involved, how are you going to screen and select? How are you going to consider representation and equity in the selection process? Who will sit on the hiring committee? What will happen to community members who are not hired?
- How will community members who are not paid staff be compensated for their time? (eg honorarium for advisory committee members)
- How will you overcome barriers to being involved, particular for marginalized groups?

Orientation, Training and Capacity Building

- For community members who are hired as paid staff, what kinds of mandatory staff orientation will be required? How much time will this take? Will you need to support them in better understanding the HR, workers rights, workplace safety and other policies in your agency?
- What core trainings will everyone be required to take specific to your CBR project? How much time will this take?
- How will you assess and deliver additional research training and capacity building needs for your community members?

- How will you evaluate your training programs? How will you incorporate the feedback from community members about the training programs? How will you provide feedback to community members about how they are progressing?
- How will you overcome barriers to participating in the training sessions and barriers to learning? How will you address other challenges that may arise during training sessions?
- How will you make your training fun and engaging?

Responsibility/Workplan/Supervision

- What kinds of roles, responsibilities and work do you expect community members to do? How will this be decided?
- For community members who are hired as paid staff for the project, who will supervise and manage their work and performance (including doing performance evaluation etc)? What will happen if they don't meet the expected performance?
- For those who are not paid staff, how will you ensure quality and accountability in their contributions (this should be the same for all partners on the advisory committee)? In other words, if someone stops showing up for meetings, how will you address this?
- How will you ensure equitable participation of community members?

Other support

- How will you enable community members to deal with potential ethical dilemmas and conflict of interests in straddling their dual role as project team member and representative of the community of interest? How will you train them in making sense of the fuzzy boundaries between personal and professional in this dual role?
- How will you respond when marginalized community members ask for support in terms of dealing with personal/family issues including counseling support, help with family issues, help with addressing income insecurity issues, help with dealing with people in authority that are negatively impacting their lives (eg police)?

Recognition

- How will you incorporate the input from community members?
- How will community member participation and contributions be recognized?
- How will you make sure that you share findings as well as lessons learned from the project with community members?

Post-project support

- What kinds of training and support will community members receive to help them plan their next steps after the project ends or after their contract is terminated?
- How will you ensure that their CBR experience enhances their future career or educational goals?
- How will you keep community members updated about follow up activities from the project?
- If community members express interest in continuing with any future follow-up activities for the project in unpaid capacity, how will this be facilitated?
- If there are unforeseen negative impacts on community members from the project after the completion of the project, how will you address this?

TIME		OBJECTIVE	METHOD	DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS	SUPPLIES	WHO
1	00	-To practice interview skills	Interview role play	-Divide group into groups of 3 -One person is the interviewer and the other is a participant. In partners, participants role play an interview while the third person watches to give feedback -After the group role plays one interview, the group switches -Debrief as whole group	Interview role play handout; Art of Probing Handout ;paper and pens	Sheila
1	50	Break				
2	00	-to practice note taking in interview				

GLOSSARY

Time: Schedule a realistic estimate for the length of the activity. E.g. 1:30-2:00p.m.

Objective: This is what you are trying to achieve as a result of the exercise. You may wish to divide your objectives into learning objectives and experiential objectives. You may also use this objective to measure how successful you are at the end of the workshop. For evaluation purposes, this objective should be concrete and realistic.

Method: List how you will achieve your objective. e.g. Presentation, Activity type, Discussion, etc.

Description: Describe what you will do with the group.

Supplies: List what you will need for the particular activity. You may also want to create a master supply list for set-up.

Who: Identify who will facilitate what activity.

Peer Researcher Learning Goals and Personal Objectives

Please take a few minutes to answer some questions about your learning goals and personal objectives that you hope to gain from this project. All of the questions are optional. Your answers will remain confidential and will be used to develop training and capacity building activities that closely reflect your individual objectives and the objectives of other peer researchers. Please return the completed questionnaire to the project coordinator. The project coordinator will review this with you on a regular basis as well as at the end of the project to assess how we are doing in terms of meeting your learning goals and personal objectives.

Please print your name: _____

Please tell us how important each of the following objectives is to you personally (check one box for each statement):

	Very Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Learning about community-based research principles and processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning how to design a CBR project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning how to conduct focus groups and interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaining a deeper understanding of refugee youth issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning how to analyze data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing research reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contributing to research findings that can be used to improve policies and services for refugee communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting and getting to know other youth from different backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting work experience that can help me achieve my educational or career goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving my ability to communicate with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing my self-confidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the back of this form to describe any other personal goals. What else do you hope to accomplish during this project?

Workshop Feedback Form

1. How useful was this workshop for you?

Not useful	So-So	Useful	Very Useful
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Comments:

2. What 3 words would you use to describe the workshop?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

3. What suggestions do you have to make the workshop more useful?

4. What is one thing that you got from the workshop that you could use right away in this project?

5. What else would you like to know about this topic (that wasn't covered in the workshop)?



Training/Employment Opportunity:
Peer Research Assistant (Sample Peer Researcher Job Posting)
(Fluent in one of the following 4 languages: Arabic, Hindi-Urdu, Spanish, Vietnamese)
X month contract (\$X/hr, approximately X hr/week)

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services works to promote health and well-being and improve access to services for immigrants and refugees in Toronto by addressing medical, social, economic and environmental issues. We envision a future in which diverse individuals, families and communities can achieve **health with dignity**.

We are looking for 4 dynamic individuals to work as **Peer Researchers** on our Income Security, Race and Health Team. The purpose of this community-based research project is to investigate the root causes of the growing poverty and income inequalities that people of colour in Black Creek are facing, and assess how these conditions impact their overall health and well-being. In line with community-based research principles, we have been working closely with Black Creek residents in designing and implementing this project.

The Peer Researcher will be involved in overall design and implementation of the project. This includes:

- Participating in developing the research question and methodologies
- Conducting outreach to and recruiting Black Creek residents to participate in the study and other project related activities
- Participate in data collection (co-facilitating focus groups, conducting interviews)
- Assist with planning capacity building workshops
- Assist with data management (transcribing, data entry, maintaining databases)
- Participate in data analysis, writing and dissemination
- Assist with administrative tasks

We are looking for Peer Researchers who:

- Are living in the Black Creek area (Highway 400 to the east, Black Creek Drive to the west, Steeles Avenue to the north, and Finch Avenue to the south)
- Are interested in health, mental health, and social justice issues and in exploring discrimination and barriers that people of colour face in the labor market and the health sector
- Understand the strengths and challenges experienced by people of colour living in Black Creek
- Are committed to working with immigrants and racialized groups from an anti-racist/anti-oppression point of view
- Are able to work as part of a team
- Are available to work about XXX hours a week including evenings and weekends; flexible schedule to work as per need of the project
- Fluent in English and one of the following 4 languages: Arabic, Hindi-Urdu, Spanish, Vietnamese
- Are interested in learning about research and community development (previous experience in research an asset)

- Wants to make a difference

The Peer Researchers will receive on-going training and mentoring in:

- Community based research
- Community outreach and engagement
- Anti-oppressive facilitation skills
- Research methodologies such as focus groups and interviews
- Data Analysis, writing and dissemination
- Advocacy and public speaking

Application Deadline: January 5, 2009

Contract term: X month contract (with possibility of extension);

Rate and Hours: \$X/hr; approximately X hours/week (work schedule and hours may vary with project need)

With “Peer Researcher Assistant” in the subject heading, please send your resume and a cover letter by 5:00 pm on December 29, 2008 to:

-----@accessalliance.ca

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services
340 College Street, Suite 500 Toronto, ON M5T 3A9
Fax: 416-324-9074

Candidates please indicate your level of familiarity with Arabic, Hindi-Urdu, Spanish or Vietnamese and how you are connected to the Black Creek community (e.g. resident, former resident).

We thank all candidates in advance for their interest, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. **We encourage applications from individuals who reflect the broad diversity of communities we work with, including those from racialized and LGBTQ communities.**

Chapter Five

Designing the ‘Research Component’ in your Community-Based Research Project



Chapter Five: Designing the ‘Research Component’ in your Community-Based Research Project

You have developed your overall project plan, put in place your partnership agreements, recruited your core community members and given them basic research training, you are now ready to design the ‘research component’ of your Community-Based Research Project. Designing your research is the process where you identify/decide what you want to find out, why, who you are going to talk to (or how you are going to get the information), how you are going to reach them, what you are going to do with the information you collect, and how you are going to do all this in an ethical, respectful way. This chapter focuses on how to develop a good rigorous research design using collaborative and participatory processes. Along with information on how to design a research project and develop research instruments, this chapter has tools on how to train people in research design and research methods so your partners (particularly, community members) can participate in research design in informed and empowered ways.

Importance of Good Research Design

As we discussed earlier, the quality, rigour and usefulness of your research is not measured by how big your research project is or what method you use, but by how well designed it is. Thus it is important to put in extra effort and time to design your research so that it is systematic (ie, that every step has a purpose and contributes to meeting the goals of the study). Doing so can ensure:

- that your research fills important research gaps (and is not a repetition of what is already known)
- that your research question is properly crafted such that it generates lots of interest
- the data collection methods and steps you are using can actually generate enough information to answer your research question
- that you are not lying to or coercing people to take part in your study etc.

For example, if you want to find out about challenges faced by people without legal immigration status but do not identify concrete and feasible steps about how you are going to actually recruit people without legal status to talk to you, then you may fail to complete your research. Or if you do not consider the potential risks for people without legal status participate in your study, then you may end up harming them through your research.

It is important to remember that research is very ‘process sensitive’ and that even the slightest modification in research design can lead to very different data/outcomes. For example, study participants may respond very differently to questions about their ethnicity, gender, household income, and other demographic questions depending on whether you ask these questions in the beginning of the interview/survey or at the end. If your interview discussions touched on sensitive issues such as stigma or domestic violence, a study participant may choose not to disclose their ethnicity or neighborhood if demographic indicators were asked at the end of the interview/survey. Similarly, you will get very different types of answers about annual household income depending on whether you ask the question using a close-ended question or an open-ended question. Differences in gender, ethnicity/race, age etc between the interviewee and interviewer will also affect the types of responses you will get from the same set of questions. The kind of rapport you are able to build with interviewees can substantially affect the quality of responses. Conducting a study in

English vs in the first language of the participant will result in very different type and quality of responses. These are just some of ways that process and design can affect your research outcomes. You can enhance the quality, rigour and usefulness of your research by better understanding the potentials and limitations of each method/step in research process and how design and flow of these steps/methods will impact the type and quality of data you will generate. In doing so, you will be in a better position to make informed analysis about what your data says and does not say.

Key Ingredients of Cooking up a Good Research Design

Before you start conducting your research, you need to have a good research design in place. Below we have identified nine key ingredients/steps that you have to think about in designing your research. For each step we have included some guiding questions to consider during the design process. Most of the key steps are covered in more detail in following chapters:

1. Identify the Issue

This is where you identify the overall issue you want to examine.

- ✓ What are the concerns/problems? From the perspective of the community, from service providers, academics and other partners?
- ✓ Why is this a concern/problem?
- ✓ What do we need to find out more about this? Why will finding out this information be helpful?
- ✓ Why now?

2. Literature Review

In this next step, you try and find out whether there is already enough information/research to answer your questions and/or address the concerns you have. In order to do this, you will need to conduct a review of current research literature. This is called the Literature Review process. Note that what you find out in your literature review will also become useful during your data analysis and writing phase as you can make reference to your research findings in relation to what other researchers have found.

- ✓ What do we already know about these concerns/problems/issues?
- ✓ Is this enough information to answer/resolve our concerns?
- ✓ What other studies are examining similar issues? How are their approaches similar or dissimilar to ours?
- ✓ How will our proposed study lead to new or more accurate information on this?

3. Key Research Question (for qualitative studies) or Research Hypothesis (for Quantitative studies)

Once you have decided that there is a need for more information to address your issues/concerns, then, the next step is to develop an overall research question or hypothesis for your study that will shape the methods and remaining process of your study. In other words, you need to give an 'investigative framing' to your issue/concern by changing it into a research question or hypothesis. So if the concern you have is the low cervical cancer screening among immigrant women, you can change it to a research question by asking 'What are the systemic barriers that immigrant women face in cervical cancer screening?' This is if the goal of your project is to find out about systemic level barriers. If, let us say, your project is specifically focused on patient-provider communication, then your research question might be 'What is preventing healthcare providers from convincing

their immigrant women clients from taking cervical cancer screening in timely manner?’ Each issue/concern may have many components and thus many research questions/hypothesis that could be investigated. The framing and scope of your overall research question/hypothesis depends on the goals and scope of your overall project. You will need to consider criteria such as community relevance, policy relevance as well as feasibility when developing your research question/hypothesis or when choosing your research question/hypothesis from a larger list you may have generated. See also handout called Criteria for Good Research Question.

- ✓ What exactly do we want to know about these concerns?
- ✓ How does the question/hypothesis help to address the concern we have?
- ✓ Is the question framed so that it will generate a lot of interest?
- ✓ Of the different research questions/hypothesis our team has generated, which one is most important? Which one has the potential for the most policy impact? What about impact on the community? Which one is most doable within our project scope?

You can do this collaboratively using our Collaborative Research Design template. If you do it collaboratively, you will most likely end up generating many potential research questions. The next step then is to collaboratively screen/develop the questions and pick the one that fits best with the overall goal of your project. Other research questions may be explored in future phases of your project. You may also want to share the list of research questions your team has generated with others in case other researchers may be interested in examining them. In other words, generating a bank of good research questions will not necessarily go to waste just because you can only do one of them.

Note that your overall research question/hypothesis is different from the specific questions that you will be using in data collection instruments for your study (interviews, focus groups or surveys). The overall research question/hypothesis is the broader question/concern you want to answer and the questions in your data collection instruments are the follow-up questions to help you answer/test this overall research question/hypothesis.

4. Research Instruments (survey questionnaire, interview guide, focus group guide etc)

Once you have your research question/hypothesis selected, then the next step is to identify and develop the research instruments that will be used to collect data/information to answer/test the research question/hypothesis. This is where you decide whether you want to use quantitative methods (eg survey) or qualitative methods (eg interviews and focus groups) or arts-based method (eg photovoice) or a combination of these methods. In deciding which methods to use, it is important to understand the strengths and limitations of these methods and how different methods will generate very different types of data/information. See handout on Research Methods. Once you identify which methods and data collection instruments you want to use, then you have to develop the data collection instruments in more detail. Ie develop the specific questions and format for your survey or focus group. See handout on Creating Focus Group and Interview Questions.

- ✓ What methods/instruments do we need to be able to answer the research question? Why? What types of answers/data will each of these methods/instruments generate? What are the strengths and limitations in these methods/instruments and in the types of answers/data they will generate?
- ✓ What specific follow-up questions will enable us to answer the overall question we have?
- ✓ Is the combination of these questions generating enough information to answer this overall question?
- ✓ How should we format the flow of questions? How will this affect participant responses?
- ✓ How will we make sure participants understand the questions we are asking?

- ✓ Which questions are more sensitive or difficult to answer? What are culturally and contextually sensitive ways to ask these questions?
- ✓ What are probing questions/techniques that can help us find out more?
How can you ensure accessibility for all participants?

5. Sample size and Sampling Technique

A very important step is to identify who you are going to ask within your community of interest, why, how many and how you are going to select them. This is called the sampling technique. Depending on whether you select quantitative or qualitative method, your sampling technique and sample size will vary. See handout on Research Method and Introduction to Sampling.

- ✓ Who are we going to ask? Why them specifically?
- ✓ How many people are we going to ask? Why this number of people?
- ✓ Are there potential barriers in reaching this sample you have identified?

6. Recruitment Strategy

Once you have identified a sampling technique and sample size, you will need to identify how you are going to reach the people you want to talk to, how you are going to convince them to take part in the study, how you are going to screen them to make sure they fit the inclusion criteria for the study. This is called the Recruitment Strategy. See handout on Introduction to Recruitment.

- ✓ How are we going to reach the people we need to reach?
- ✓ Why might they want to participate in this project? How are you going to convince them to participate in the study?
- ✓ What kinds of information are you going to include in your recruitment flyer/information? How are you going to circulate this flyer/information?
- ✓ How are you going to reach 'hard to reach' people?
- ✓ Of the people who show interest in participating in the study, how are you going to screen people to make sure they fit the inclusion criteria for the study?

7. Research Logistics

It is important to carefully consider the following logistical issues related to your research. Each of these logistics will also affect the quality and rigour of your data.

- ✓ Who is going to collect the data (ie conduct the interview or survey)?
- ✓ How will the data be recorded (paper and pencil, on a computer, digitally recorded etc)?
- ✓ In what language will it be conducted? If conducted in first language, how will this information be translated and validated?
- ✓ What supports or training are needed?
- ✓ Where will we collect the data (at home of participant, or neutral location)?
- ✓ How will this data be collected (face to face interview, by telephone, online survey etc)?
- ✓ What kind of compensation will study participants receive in recognition of the time and effort involved in participating in the study?
- ✓ How will you overcome potential barriers to participating in the study?
- ✓ Who will coordinate the data collection process (eg setting up the interviews; arranging for honorarium for participants etc)? Who will oversee the process of securely storing the collected data and other confidential information?

8. Data Analysis, Writing and Dissemination Plan

Though the exact details of the data analysis, writing and dissemination plan will depend on the type of data you end up with, it is important to plan this ahead since this may affect the specific framing of your questions. You will also need to tell your study participants what you are going to do with the information you collect. See Chapter on Data Analysis for more information.

- ✓ Who will be involved in data analysis and writing? Do they have adequate capacity to analyze the data that will be generated? Who will have access to what types of data?
- ✓ What framework and steps will you take to analyze your data? And why? Will you be using any data analysis software?
- ✓ How will you ensure confidentiality of participants during data analysis and in the reports?
- ✓ What types of reports and dissemination products will you be producing?
- ✓ How will the findings be shared and to whom?

9. Research Ethics

One of the most important steps of designing good research is to identify how you are going to address all the potential ethical issues of doing the research. Doing so will not only ensure that people are participating in informed ways and feel comfortable about participating but can also encourage people to share with you information that they would not share if they did not feel safe and comfortable. It is best practice to apply and secure approval from a formal Research Ethics Board (REB) before proceeding to data collection. In the REB application, you will be asked to discuss the overall design of your research including the goals, your research question, your proposed data collection method, sampling and recruitment, data storage and security process, data analysis and dissemination plan along with ethical issues in each of these steps. See Chapter on Research Ethics for more detailed information on this.

- ✓ How are we going to make sure that people we want to talk to participate in an informed and voluntary way?
- ✓ Can people withdraw from the study in the middle of the interview? If so what are the implications on the participants or on the study?
- ✓ How are we going to ensure privacy and confidentiality?
- ✓ How are we going to ensure that people don't face negative impacts from participating in the study?
- ✓ How will you make sure that participants benefit from the study?

Collaborative Research Design

Collaborative research design is a process of designing research through meaningful collaboration with your partners (or a diverse group of stakeholders). In designing your research collaboratively, you can ensure that the interests and insights of your partners (including community members) are appropriately reflected in ways that lead to more thorough and rigorous research design.

Why do Collaborative Research Design?

Involving your partner meaningfully in the research design process has multiple benefits. Since good research design is a very 'process sensitive' exercise, the benefits of doing it in a group can be very advantageous to creating well thought out and rigorous design. In other words, having multiple brains and eyes can ensure that all the steps in the research are well thought out and make sense. Having people with different perspectives and experiences about research can help

“Part of the learning process for facilitators during collaborative research design with a large group was the need to keep reemphasizing that the goal of the day is not necessarily for any one individual’s preferred research question to be chosen, but for the group as a whole to come to synthesize, refine and democratically settle on a research question that all participants find they can at least live with and find important enough to commit to working on.” - Research Team Member, Access Alliance

to overcome biases about particular research method/step at the design stage itself. Here people who have never conducted research before can play a critical role in questioning the rationale of key research methods/steps to make sure that they make sense (ie, if more experienced researchers cannot explain properly why a certain step is being taken to partners who are new to research, then there is something wrong with that step).

Designing research collaboratively can also lead to collective sense of ownership of the project. Front line service provider partners will be more likely to help with outreach and recruitment of study participants if they feel sense of ownership of the research question/goals. It also means that you share the successes of the project but also the burdens and risks of project. At the same time, designing research collaboratively can take more effort and time (compared to doing it alone or with one or two people). It also means that you have to have in place an effective framework and decision making process in implementing collaborative research design that is capable of productively engaging with diverse perspectives/interests while forging consensus on decisions about the research question, methods etc.

Implementing Collaborative Research Design

So how do you implement a Collaboration Research Design process? This will vary for each project based on how collaborative you want to be, equity considerations, and other factors like resources, time etc. At Access Alliance we have developed an innovative Collaborative Research Design Model and have tried and tested it in 3 CBR projects with successful outcomes. Below are some tips and strategic steps for implementing a collaborative research design process. See Collaborative Research Design Model Flowchart and other research design tools in the tools section for this chapter. See also How to Promote Equitable Collaboration tool from Chapter 3. Note that Collaborative Research Design process can require minimum of 14 hours of collaborative meeting time (2 full days or broken down into equivalent half days).

- ✓ **Equitable representation:** Ensure equitable representation of partners, particularly non-academic partners and peer researchers. Non-academic partners may hesitate in participating in research design process, so you will need to give extra encouragement.
- ✓ **Research Literacy/Design Training:** Deliver relevant research literacy/design training to peer researchers and any other partners that require such training to participate meaningfully and equitably in the research design process; this can take 1 to 3 days of work depending on how much previous research capacity your peer researchers or non-academic stakeholders already have or how much core research literacy is needed for them to meaningfully take part in the collaborative research design process.
- ✓ **Training on Equity and Collaboration:** If you have not already, train your academic stakeholders and other partners in positions of power on how to work collaboratively and equitably. Don't assume that people who have done research on progressive topics are inherently collaborative and equitable when it comes to conducting research.
- ✓ **Leadership role for community:** Give leadership roles to peer researchers in the process. For example, before the research design meetings, you can ask peer researchers to start thinking about and jotting down what they perceive as key issues/concerns that the proposed study could focus on. Ask them to consult with other community members on this. They can then take a lead in presenting key issues/concerns to set the overall direction during the collaborative research design meeting. Peer researchers and community partners can also take a lead in (i) making sure that the proposed research question has high

community and policy relevance; (ii) ensuring that all proposed steps in the research methods/process are ethical and respectful; (iii) questioning and overcoming biases and esoteric language that is often used by academics.

- ✓ **Building trust and rapport among team members:** This is one of the most important ingredients for successful collaboration. If not already, try and have adequate opportunities ahead of the collaborative research design process for partners to meet and get to know each other. Informal meet and greet events with good food and lots of fun ice breakers work great for this. Also getting team members to prepare things ahead of time for the collaborative research design meetings can catalyze good working relationships to build on. Team members who have good ‘people skills’ can also champion this process.
- ✓ **The Beauty of paired team or small group work:** Create opportunities for different partners to work in pair or small groups to prepare for the research design meetings or during the meetings. For example, you can pair one or more of your peer researchers to work with an academic partner (or graduate student partner) to conduct the literature review that will be presented during the collaborative research design meeting. During the research design meetings, find relevant opportunities for different partners to work in pairs or create small working groups that have representatives from each sector (eg one peer researcher, one academic, one service provider, one policy maker). Working in pairs and small groups can lead to quality interactions and discussions and also help overcome potential anxiety of participating actively in large group meetings. Meeting facilitators should closely monitor power dynamics within these pairs or groups and juggle the pair/groups around as necessary to promote effective collaboration.
- ✓ **External facilitator.** We highly recommend having a professional facilitator to facilitate the collaborative research design process to enhance a fair and smooth process particularly in terms of decision making. For example, they can ensure that everyone has chance to contribute and can advise you about when to use voting (eg dotmocracy) vs consensus decision making or a mix of both. Professional facilitators can also make the process fun and engaging.
- ✓ **Hands on tools:** Have ready hands-on tools and resources that team members can use at the meetings to informed decisions about research design while working collaboratively. See tools and resources that Access Alliance has developed in the tools section of this chapter including
 - Research Question Generator Tool (this is just a blank sheet of paper with a big question mark already printed on it)
 - Refining Your Question Charts (see Tools section; these can help you select the research question from a list of questions based on criteria like community relevance, policy relevance, feasibility etc)
 - Handouts on Research Methods, Research Costs and other relevant handouts (you can hand these out to partners to help make informed decisions)
- ✓ **Proven processes and tools for promoting equitable collaboration:** Build in proven and concrete processes that facilitate equitable participation and decision making. Start with listing ‘group guidelines’ that everyone agrees to. Other processes include doing regular ‘go arounds,’ keeping a ‘speakers list,’ holding quick ‘check-ins’ to see how people are feeling about the process (this is always a good thing to do after a break), reminding people to ask questions and clarifications about things they don’t understand, getting facilitators to solicit input from people who have not had chance to speak without necessarily putting people on the spot etc. Don’t be afraid to impose ‘limits’ as a way to ensure equity. For example, in the Collaborative Research Design sessions at Access Alliance, we allow each member to propose a maximum of 2 potential research questions; this is make sure that academics are not the ones proposing most of the potential research questions. Similarly, you can impose

- limits on speaking time (eg 2 minutes per person) to prevent some people from dominating the discussions. Crucially, you need to create an environment where everyone is critically reflective about power dynamics and are working together to foster equitable collaboration.
- ✓ **Dialogues, Disagreements and Debates.** Get everyone mentally prepared to listen to diverse perspectives and have engaged dialogues/debates. List this as one of the ‘group guidelines’ and keep reminding the team about it. If you can constructively accommodate and encourage team members to share their different perspectives and be prepared to disagree, dialogues and debate, then it can lead to a lot of co-learning and enriched research design. Don’t try to hastily shut down disagreements and debates but make sure that it is done in respectful and constructive ways.
 - ✓ **Provide multiple platforms/modes of communication:** Different people have different preferred modes of communication. Some are very verbal while others like to give input by writing. Some people may be quiet types but are really good at expressing things in graphical, creative means. Some people like being up front while others like anonymity. Some people are great at instantaneous feedback while others need time to reflect before giving feedback. Thus, try and build in a combination of diverse platforms and modes of communication during the collaborative research design meetings so team members have different options available. Once people have their first chance at making a meaningful contribution to a collaborative process using their preferred mode of communication, then they can loosen up and start participating actively through all modes of communication.
 - ✓ **Respect and acknowledge:** One of the ‘group guidelines’ should be to respect and acknowledge team members contributions and insights. Team members should be expected to respect different perspectives even if they don’t agree with them. Moreover, try and acknowledge insights that different people bring no matter how small they seem. Also regularly acknowledge the progress you have made by working collaboratively. Even the most shy person who does not like group work may start participating very actively once they get their first acknowledgement that their contribution is leading to concrete progress.
 - ✓ **Equitable decision making:** Pay particular attention to decision making processes as this is crucial to creating an equitable collaborative research design experience. Your team will need to make a lot of decisions during this process. Be informed about when to use different kind of decision making tools/processes. Professional facilitators can advise on when to use voting vs consensus based decision making or some combination of this. For example, you may use voting to short list to 2 or 3 top research questions and then use consensus process to select the final research question; or the other way around. The key thing is to be transparent about the decision making process. You can even ask your team members what they feel would be the best mode of decision making for any particular process. Consensus building is of course an art on its own. To foster this, you need to keep reminding people to think about overall collective goals and project objectives over individual or small group interests. One best practice on this is to ask team members or groups to make a counter case for the very questions they are rooting for and highlight their limitations while making a case for the other questions. This can make people more aware about limitations in what they have selected and then they can consider whether to still root for this choice or consider alternatives. Such a process also makes for respectful dialogue.
 - **Collaborative research question streamlining and development process:** This is the important step where you are trying to screen and select one research question for the study from a list of potential research questions. We like to refer to it as the Streamlining and Development phase (instead of screening and shortlisting phase) because we found that in collaborative research design you generally don’t end up selecting one question from the list right away (which might happen) but rather the team collaboratively considers the types of questions (issues/concerns) that have been put forth and starts to streamline and develop a

research question that builds on and resonates well with the critical issues/concerns and the types of questions that were submitted. This is of course the beauty and art of collaborative process: you consciously or unconsciously consider the interests and insights of your team members and think about overall benefits for the team/project rather than just trying to advocate for your own interests or hastily jumping to one outcome. This is our favorite phase of the collaborative research design process. Enjoy and make the best out of this phase.

- **Flexibility and uncertainty:** While you can do all the best preparation for the collaborative research design process, you have to be ready for some degree of uncertainty. In other words, like most multi collaborative processes, it is hard to predict how things will progress. Certain steps may end up taking much longer than you expected, particularly if the team is not able to come to a decision. Or you may end up being positively surprised that a consensus decision on a very contentious issue was reached very rapidly saving you lots of time. When presenting the agenda for the collaborative research design process, let team members know that some things are unpredictable and ask everyone to be flexible in tweaking the agenda in response to how things unfold.
- **Logistics matter:** Logistics can also make a big difference. Make sure you book a safe, accessible, comfortable meeting space that lends well to doing collaborative group work. Order good healthy food at the meetings to feed the mind (your partners will get very very hungry from all the intensive thinking). Have all supplies ready (paper, pens, flip chart, stickies, AV for powerpoint and others as needed)
- **Debrief and evaluation:** Make sure you conduct an evaluation of the collaborative research design to find out if you met your goals/indicators and to gather feedback from team members about the process. Integrate ongoing debriefing process to constantly acknowledge and build on successes and address concerns and roadblocks.

A key indicator of success for a collaborative research design process is a good research question and corresponding research methodology/process that everyone feels a collective sense of ownership over (irrespective of who proposed the question in the first place). From our evaluation of collaborative research design processes at Access Alliance, we found that most team members felt that they had substantially contributed in developing the research question (and methods) that was selected for the study even though they did not suggest it in the first place. In fact, we realized that by the end of the collaborative research design process, no one actually knew who really came up with the research question since it had gone through many collaborative iterations and development.

Tools and Templates

Handout - Collaborative Research Design Model Flowchart

This handout provides a recommended flowchart of the collaborative research design process, as designed by Access Alliance.

Developing your Research Question

- **Handout: Criteria for a Good Research Question**

Use this handout to assist your team in creating a good research question. The handout includes criteria such as clarity, feasibility, and community relevance, as well as a short activity to practice developing solid research questions.

Activity: Research Design Scenarios

Use this activity to design mock research projects with your team. This is a good exercise to use with community members prior to a collaborative research design session to bring them up to speed. Working through the steps of research design ahead of time may provide community members with the confidence and skills to participate meaningfully in the research design process.

Worksheets: Developing and Streamlining Research Questions

Use these two worksheets to develop possible research questions. The first worksheet will help you answer the question, ‘What do we want to know and why?’ You may wish to print out a second worksheet for additional questions. The second worksheet will help you narrow your research questions to one or two salient options. This worksheet will help you work through the feasibility and potential policy change and service change impact of your particular question.

Worksheet: Refining your Research Question

Once you have selected your research question, you can use this worksheet to refine your question in terms of clarity, detail, sensitivity, quality, and inquisitiveness. You may wish to consult our handout below on Criteria for a Good Research Question.

Developing your Research Methodology

Handout: Overview of Research Methods

This handout provides a quick overview of qualitative and quantitative methods, and the strengths and weaknesses of each.

Handout: Research Instruments Chart

This handout presents common data collection instruments (survey, focus group, interviews, arts-based instruments) in a chart form and discusses strengths and limitations of each instrument.

Exercise: Comparing Research Methods/Instruments

This simple exercise can be used to train people on the strengths and limitations of different research methods/instruments.

Handout: Creating Focus Group Guide, Interview Guide, or Survey Instrument

Use this handout to create good focus group guide, interview guide or survey instrument that can help you answer your key research question.

Collaborative Research Design Evaluation

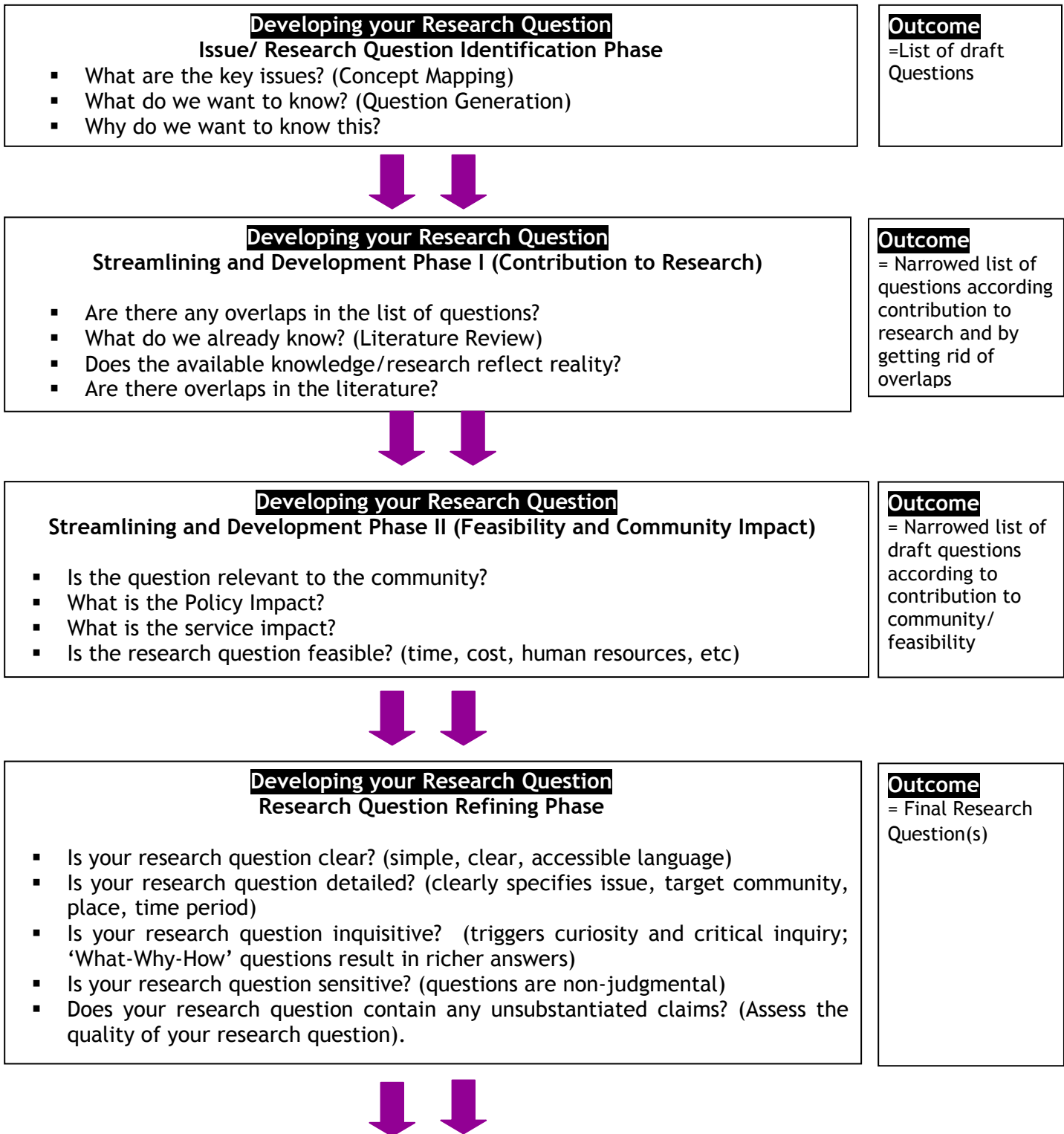
Template - Collaborative Research Design Evaluation Form

Similar to other phases of your project, it is useful to evaluate the successes and challenges of your collaborative research design sessions so that you can adapt and modify your Community-Based Research efforts. The following template can be used to evaluate your Collaborative Research Design sessions.

For more information on social research methods we suggest this useful website:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php>

Collaborative Research Design Model



Developing your Methodology

Identifying Data Collection Methods and Instruments

- Who do we ask? (identify data source/research participants; study sample)
- How do we ask? (select research method)
 - Survey, interview, focus groups etc?
 - Individually or in a group setting?
 - Verbal, written, non-language based medium (arts-based etc.)
- How can we reach our target participants? (Outreach and Recruitment Strategies including building additional partners)
- What specific questions do we ask? (development of questionnaire or interview/focus group guide)
- How are we going to analyze the data?

Outcome

= Identified Participants (or Data Source)
= Selected Research Method
= Draft Recruitment Strategy
= Draft Data Collection Tools (e.g. interview guide)



Developing your Methodology

Addressing Ethical Issues

- How can we ensure that research participants participate in informed ways?
- How can we make sure that any data that can identify
- Do research participants remain confidential? (Note: by law, researchers are required to report any information about abuse or harm to self or others)
- What negative impacts can the research have (particularly on marginalized groups) and how can we overcome/minimize them?

Outcome

= Conversation on ethical implications of research
= Draft ethics review application (optional)



Developing your Methodology

Research Logistics and Improving Data Quality Phase

- How can we get more accurate, reliable & richer answers? (peer researcher mediated?; trust building? Taking extra confidentiality measures?)
- How can barriers to research participation be removed? (language support; transportation; child care etc.)
- How can the questions be made more contextually and culturally sensitive?
- How can the data collection process be made more consistent? (e.g. if many people are involved in data collection)
- Who is going to coordinate the data collection process?
- Where is data going to be securely stored?

Outcome

= Final recruitment strategy with available supports
= Refined Data Collection Tools
= clear logistics

reSearch for Change: Criteria for a Good Research Question

The important initial step in designing a qualitative research project is to develop your Key Research Question for the study. The Key Research Question is the question you want to be able to answer throughout your study. It needs to clearly define what you want to know. The Key Research Question then influences all the other steps, including who you are going to ask, how you are going to ask, what specific set of questions you are going to ask your study participants. In most quantitative experimental studies, researchers start by developing a ‘hypothesis’ rather than a Key Research Question. Increasingly, many quantitative researchers are also beginning to use ‘Key Research Question’ rather than hypothesis testing.

A. What makes a good research question?

Good research questions clearly define the goals and parameters of your study, generate wide interest, lend themselves to good research methodologies and research process, and generate relevant findings that build public knowledge and leads to positive changes in policies and services.

Note that the Key Research Question for your study can be composite of several related questions.

- **Defines study goals and parameters of the study**
 - ✓ Core issues and relationships linked to the study are clearly included in the question
 - ✓ Key parameters like study population, location of study, time frame etc are noted in the question itself
- **Clarity: The questions should be clear.**
 - ✓ The research question is written in plain language.
 - ✓ The research question does *not* answer the question.
- **Richness and Rigor**
 - ✓ The research question is framed in a way that generates wide interest and inquisitiveness.
 - ✓ It is not too general not too narrow.
 - ✓ ‘Why,’ ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions lead to rich research process and research findings compared to ‘yes/no’ or ‘either/or’ questions; the latter type of questions need to be avoided since they can lead to oversimplified research process and findings.
 - ✓ The research question is not based on any unsubstantiated claims.
 - ✓ Avoid leading and loaded questions
- **Relevance and Outcome: The questions should be about issues that are important and relevant to community of interest and in terms of public policy.**

- ✓ It has potential to address a need or a problem that a community is facing.
- ✓ The research question seeks to create new knowledge, confirm something your group 'knows' based on anecdotal experiences/observations, or correct misinformation.
- ✓ The evidence generated by the research question has potential to influence positive changes in policy and services/programs.
- **Feasibility: The questions should be do-able.**
 - ✓ It is possible given your time, funding and material constraints.
 - ✓ It is researchable, meaning you are able to collect evidence that would answer the question.

B. Examples of Research Questions

1. What strategies are precariously employed racialized residents of Black Creek utilizing to find stable jobs in their field? What challenges do they face? And how do these strategies and challenges impact on their health?
2. What are opportunities and challenges within Ontario's current policy priorities to promote success in education for refugee youth, particularly for those who have experienced gaps in education before coming to Canada?
3. How does language barrier affect access to healthcare services for immigrant communities in Toronto?
4. How do CHCs involve their client communities in planning and improving their services?
5. What are the barriers that internationally trained professionals face in getting accreditation and jobs in their field in Canada?
6. How do experiences of racism impact health?

Activity

Look over the examples of research questions below. Using the information above, how might you critique each of the questions? How could you adapt each question to improve the question's quality, feasibility or clarity?

Topic: Immigrant Youth

Issue: Some parents from low-income immigrant communities living in Crescent Town neighborhood in Toronto have noticed that their children are getting lower grades in school than other children of the same age and would like to work with you to conduct research about this issue.

Possible research questions:

- Do low-income youth in Toronto face problems in school?

- What are the problems that low-income youth face in school?

- What are the factors that contribute to lower grades in school for immigrant youth aged 13-15 in the Crescent Town neighbourhood?



reSearch for Change: Research Design Scenarios

Use the following research problems to design mock research projects. Working through the steps of research design may better prepare you for creating a research project with your team. After all, practice makes perfect! You may work through the problems in large or small groups. If you have time, you may discuss which methods you would use to answer each research question.

Research Problem One:

You are concerned about how police in your neighborhood are targeting racialized youth and want to find out more about this in order to stop this. How would you design a research project to address this problem?

What do we want to know? What do we need to know?

Why do we want to know this?

What do we already know?

Where do we go to find out? Who do we ask?

How are we going to ask?

What are we going to do with this information?

Research Problem Two:

You are concerned that families who have disabled children are not getting enough support and services. How would you design this research to find out more?

What do we want to know? What do we need to know?

Why do we want to know this?

What do we already know?

Where do we go to find out? Who do we ask?

How are we going to ask?

What are we going to do with this information?

Worksheet: Developing and Streamlining your Research Questions

What do we want to know? (List all potential research questions)	Why?	What do we already know? (What does the existing research say?)	Does the existing research reflect reality?	Remaining Questions
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

Worksheet: Developing and Streamlining your Research Questions

Research Criteria- Relevance and Impact						
Potential research questions	Relevance/ Urgency to the community	Feasibility (Time, Cost, Human Resources)	Policy Change Impact	Service Change Impact		
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						

Worksheet: Refining Your Research Question

Research Criteria - Clarity and Quality						
Potential research questions	Clarity (simple, clear, accessible language)	Detail (includes issue, target community, place, time period)	Inquisitive (triggers curiosity; 'what-why-how' questions)	Quality and Sensitivity (non-judgmental; no unsubstantiated claims)		
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						

reSearch for Change: Overview of Research Methods

Research Methods generally refers to the type of research data you want to collect and the steps for collecting and analysing that type of research data. Recall that research data is the information or answers you need to answer your research question. This is a quick overview of research methods. The following chapters will go into more detail on research methods.

Overall, there are two types of research data or data collection method:

- ❖ **Primary research/data or primary data collection** involves collecting and analysing original information and answers directly from research participants. In other words, doing ‘**primary research**’ actually involves your team going out and asking people for information/answers. The information/answers that your team collect from this direct interaction is called ‘**primary research data.**’ If your team does primary research, then your team has control over the data collection process and can decide who to talk to and what to ask them. You also know about what went well and what did not go well when you were collecting the research data and so can make thoughtful analysis based on the quality of the research data you collected.
- ❖ **Secondary research/data or secondary data collection** involves collecting and analysing data that has already been collected by other researchers or organizations. For example, researchers at Statistics Canada collect Census data from Canadian households every five years. In doing so, Statistics Canada is doing primary research. Similarly, your school regularly collects data about students (eg about your grades or about graduation rates). If your research team requests and gets access to Census data or your school data and analyses that data, you are doing ‘**secondary research**’ since you are working with ‘**secondary research data.**’ Getting access to and working with secondary data can save you time since you don’t have to go out and collect that research data. However, when you are working with secondary research data, your team has no control over the quality of the data or may have little knowledge about how the data was collected and what happened during the data collection process. Also, it can be difficult to get permission to use primary data collected by schools or other researchers/organizations.

If you doing Primary Research, you can use three types of research methods:

- i. **Quantitative Research Method**
- ii. **Qualitative Research Method**
- iii. **Arts-based Research Method**

Each method collects different types of data and uses different research steps, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data analysis tools; also each method has unique ethical considerations.

One research method is *not* better than the other.

Each research method has its own set of strengths and limitations. Researchers need to choose the method that is best for their research project/question, be fully aware of the strength and limitations of that method, and analyse the collected data based on those strengths and limitations of the method used. Also, many researchers nowadays are starting to use a “**mixed-method**

approach” that combines more than one method so that you can benefit from the strengths that each method brings and minimize the limitations.

i. Quantitative Research Method

Quantitative research method focuses on collecting and analysing information/data that can be measured in numbers (or ‘quantity’).

Type of Data: In this method, you collect information about the world around you that already exists in numbers. For example:

- ❖ peoples’ age
- ❖ student graduation rate
- ❖ number of hours people watch TV every day

Or you convert information/answers into quantifiable categories by providing a fixed number of answer categories that research participants can choose from. For example:

- ❖ You want to find out what students do when bullied. For your question ‘What do you usually do when you are bullied?’ You may give your research participants the following pre-set answer categories to choose from:
 - A. ‘I talk to my teacher about it’
 - B. ‘I talk to my parents/guardians about it’
 - C. ‘I talk to my friends about it’
 - D. ‘I don’t do anything’

Results/Goal: By focusing on numbers or converting information/answers into quantifiable categories, the goal of quantitative research method is to try and get a quick snapshot or find general trends and patterns about the issues you are interested in. In the example above about response to bullying, your research may find that 45% of students chose ‘I don’t do anything’ category and 31% selected ‘I talk to my friends about it’ category. This means that based on your research, only a small percentage of students actually talk to teacher or parents/guardian about being bullied. Do you see how quantitative data/research gives you a quick snapshot or an overall pattern about the issue you are interested in?

Government agencies, schools, hospitals, large organizations and big companies in general collect and analyse quantitative data to learn about overall trends and patterns about the people they provide services to so that they can improve services.

Research Instruments Used:

- ❖ ‘**Survey**’ is the most common **research instrument** used in quantitative research. In a survey questionnaire, you either ask for number based information or ask ‘close-ended questions’ with pre-set answer categories for research participants to choose from (like the example above).
- ❖ **Scientific experiments** (eg. testing whether a medical drug works) is another example of a quantitative research instrument.

Research Scale and Sampling Techniques Used: Since the goal of quantitative research method is to understand trends and patterns, this type of research method usually tends to be relatively big in scale (compared to qualitative methods) in which a large number of people are invited to participate in the research. Research participants (or study sample) are selected so that they proportionally or in some ways represent the larger population you want to find out more about.

If the total population of the community you are interested in is small enough and you feel you can convince everyone or most of the people in that community to participate in your research, then you could do the survey with the whole population. For example, if the community you are interested in are the students in your class, and there are only 35 students in your class, you may decide to do the survey with all the 35 students (provided you can convince all of them or most of them to participate).

Usually the total population of the community you are interested in may be very large and so it may not be possible for you to do the survey with everyone. For example, if you are interested in the whole school and your school has 450 students, it is difficult to get all 450 students to participate in your research. In such cases, you do the survey with a 'sample' of the total population. In a 'random sampled survey,' your research participants are randomly selected from the total population (eg. put everyone's name in a hat and pick randomly) such that the research participant sample proportionally represents the larger population (eg. in terms of gender, age, school). If you are able to do random sampling, usually a sample of 12% to 15% is enough. In order to do random sampling, you have to know the total number and other details about the larger population. If you don't know this information and cannot do random sampling, then you may need to get as many people to participate in your research while making sure they roughly represent the composition of the total population.

Strengths:

- Good for capturing general patterns and trends; or getting a quick snapshot
- Because the data is in numbers or quantified numerical categories, you can do analysis quickly
- Government officials and people who manage large organizations like quantitative data

Weaknesses

- May not tell much about reasons and other details about the general pattern or trend
- Not good for capturing diversity and complexities of human experiences and opinions (can reduce people and peoples experiences into statistical numbers)
- Not good for understanding things or unique cases that do not fit the general pattern or trend
- Can exclude voices of minority groups (in random sampling, small groups can be excluded in the sample)

2. Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research method focuses on collecting and analysing research data that capture the rich, complex and diverse views, narratives and experiences that people have. In this method, the goal is to understand everyday complexities of peoples' perspectives, feelings, and experiences rather than trying to reduce these 'qualitative' aspects into numbers.

Type of Data: 'Qualitative' information about people and the world around us generated by asking 'open-ended questions' where people can answer in their own words. Data can include:

- ❖ Narratives and discussions from people about their views, feelings and experiences
- ❖ Detailed observations about everyday lives of people and the world around us

For example, in a quantitative survey, a student may have answered that they usually ‘don’t do anything’ when bullied. However, instead of pre-set answer categories to choose from, if you ask the same student to talk in an open free flowing way in a qualitative interview, you may get a 15 minute long answer about how his/her response to being bullied varies based on many factors including the type of bullying, who is doing the bullying, where etc. It is not that one method is better than the other since the answers from the quantitative survey and qualitative interview are both correct and useful. The main thing to remember is that you get very different types of information from each method.

Results/Goals: If quantitative methods can provide a quick snapshot or general pattern or trend about something, qualitative methods can help us understand in more detail the reasons behind these patterns and trends (the inside stories, the behind the scene details), and about complex ways that different people view, feel and respond to these trends or any particular issue. Often, the goal of qualitative research is to give a human face and voice to the general trends and patterns. Qualitative methods are also good for finding out more about unique cases that don’t fit the general patterns or for capturing the voices of people who are left out from quantitative research.

Research Instruments Used:

- ❖ **In-depth Interview** is a common qualitative research instrument. In this, researchers use open-ended questions to ask participants about their views, feelings, experiences, responses about issues related to the research. Interviews may be one-on-one or with a particular unit (eg. classroom or grade level).
- ❖ **Focus Groups** are becoming a popular qualitative research instrument. In a focus group, you bring together a group of people and ask open-ended questions to get group discussion about issues related to the research. Unlike in a one-on-one interview, the group dynamics in a focus group can affect what people say and don’t say. In some cases, what one person in a group says might remind another person in a group about things they may not have remembered if it was a one-on-one setting. You can also observe how different people in the group respond to other people’s views or about shared experiences. On the other hand, people may not feel comfortable talking about sensitive issues in a group setting.
- ❖ **Case Story/Life History Method** involves documenting in detail a particular case story about an event or person. Life history method is used by anthropologists where they do research about a person/family to understand as much as possible about the life of that person/family.

Research Scale and Sampling Techniques Used: Compared to quantitative research projects, qualitative research projects tend to be smaller in scale. This is partly because it takes a lot of time to process and analyse qualitative data (eg. people’s narratives). More importantly, since the goal of qualitative research method/project is not necessarily to capture overall patterns, it does not need to be large scale. As mentioned earlier, often the goal of qualitative research is to put a personal voice and face to the overall patterns and trends. To this extent, it may be enough to talk to a relatively small number of people but make sure that this group has enough time to tell their stories and feeling in detail.

Qualitative research methods do not need to use random sampling techniques. Instead, qualitative researchers may target specific people (‘experts’ or marginalized people whose voices have not been heard) or use non-random sampling techniques such as ‘**sampling for diversity**’ (to make sure that a very diverse group of people are included in the research) or ‘**snow ball sampling**’ (in which participants who belong to the target group help to recruit other people in the target group).

Strengths:

- Good for understanding the causes and complex reasons behind certain trends and issues.
- Good for understanding the motivations and behaviors of individuals or groups of individuals.
- Good for documenting the experiences and voices of minority/excluded groups (who tend to be excluded in random sampled surveys)
- Good for capturing unique cases and diversity of opinions.
- Good for identifying key issues and indicators in areas where there has not been previous research.
- Flexible approach allows researchers to capture new issues and/or to follow up on issues (that was not previously identified)

Weaknesses:

- The results are based on smaller sample sizes (usually non-random sampling) and are often not representative of the population
- Compared to quantitative data, qualitative data may take a long time to process and analyse
- The research process and results usually cannot be replicated (analysing people's opinions and feeling can be more subjective than analysing numbers).
- Governments and certain people might view qualitative results as not being very useful to policy making, and thus not take qualitative research seriously.

3. Arts-based Methods

During the last decade, 'arts-based research methods' are also becoming increasingly popular. It is called arts-based method because the research data includes one or more form of art. If it uses photography it is commonly called '**Photovoice**'. Research that uses film and other moving digital media is referred to as '**Digital Storytelling**'. Researchers have also used drawings, theatre and other forms of art. Arts-based method uses one or more art form with the goal that art can capture certain human emotions/expressions and experiences that may not be captured by verbal language or written text.

Type of Data: one or more arts-based expressions such as photography, film, drawings, theatre etc. Arts-based often combines art with some narratives and writing connected to that art. For example, in a photovoice project, participants may take photos and then write a paragraph about why they took that photograph and what they photograph means. In film-based research, the narratives may be embedded into the films. Because arts-based methods such as photovoice and digital storytelling include people's actual faces and voices, there are additional ethical issues to keep in mind.

Results/Goals: You may have heard the saying that a picture/photo captures a thousand words. It is for this exact reason that a growing number of researchers are starting to use arts-based methods like photography or drawings. The goal of arts-based method is to capture human emotions and social conditions that may be difficult if not impossible to capture by verbal communication or written text. There are certain things that are better said in pictures or on film. Another reason to do arts-based research is that it makes research fun. Also, it is easier to share arts-based results (photographs, films etc) compared to written reports.

Research Instruments Used: These are some common research instruments used in arts-based method

❖ **Photovoice** uses photography (plus narratives) as research data. Photos are taken by the research

team. Often research participants may also be trained in photovoice and take a double role of being both a research participant as well as a researcher or ‘photo-researcher’ in the project. Research participants or ‘photo-researchers’ take photos (and write narratives related to the photos) that help to answer the research question. The core research team then analyses the photos and narratives from all ‘photo-researchers’ to connect the dots and understand broader implications.

For example, an organization called **Streethealth** in Toronto did a photovoice project with homeless people in 2007. The photographic face portraits managed to capture their emotions with such intensity that it would be hard to write about.

Another example is the photovoice project called ‘eXposed’ implemented by Access Alliance in 2008, 14 ‘photo-researchers’ living in the Black Creek neighbourhood of Toronto used photography to capture the everyday impacts of poverty and racism when living in a low-income neighborhood. The images below visually capture how parks, playgrounds and public spaces are poorly maintained in their community.

The No Fun Park



"You can see the garbage everywhere on the road and school yard. Is not very good and they go outside and play that breathe and smell. Another corner there is a lot of papers. Luckily we have a person there that collect these things and hope to have more people do his job to improve the health in the community"

- Photo-researcher



No Where

This is a picture of trash. I took this picture because it shows all of the mess and build-up happening in Black Creek, and if we as a community do not stop adding to it rather than shrinking it, we have no where to call home. To me, this picture means the outcome of what could happen if we don't start taking care of our community

- Stanley

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For more information on the “eXposed” project please go to:

<http://accessalliance.ca/research/activities/exposedphotovoice>

❖ **Digital Storytelling:** Digital Storytelling uses video/film or some form of moving digital media to

conduct research. Just like in photovoice, the film can be made by the research team or by the research participants. Digital storytelling can be used to record interviews with people who want their story to be heard. This allows participants to tell their stories while you can hear their voices, see their facial expressions, and see their body language.

For example, in 2009, Access Alliance trained 8 refugee youth in filming and asked them to make a 5 minute film each about barriers and challenges they face in pursuing their educational goals in Canada. The films captured not just the challenges refugee youth face but also the high value and aspirations they have about studying and getting a good education. More importantly, the films gave a real life view into the lives of refugee youth as they try to learn and pursue higher education in Canada in spite of having faced many disruptions and gaps in education before coming to Canada. These films have been compiled into a DVD called ‘Youth Find Strength.’

Strengths:

- ❖ Arts-based media like photography and film can visually capture emotions and real life contexts much more realistically than written texts
- ❖ Arts-based method makes research fun to do
- ❖ Research participants can become co-researchers
- ❖ People are more likely to look at photos and films as opposed to written reports

Limitations

- ❖ Arts-based ‘data’ can be challenging to analyse
- ❖ Some people may not take arts-based data seriously.

Different Types of Inquiry

There are several different types of research/inquiry based on overall goals of your research and the way that your research question is framed.

- ❖ Exploratory research: If your research goal/question is to find out about an issue that people know very little about or which has not been researched very much, then your research is an exploratory research. Results from your exploratory research may capture initial information about that issue which then can become the basis for conducting many more in-depth research projects.
- ❖ Critical Inquiry: If your research goal/question is framed in a way to understand and resolve a problem, it is called a critical inquiry. Eg. ‘What prevents students from doing well in school?’ Or ‘Why does our school have so many disengaged students?’ (if you know for a fact that your school has a high drop-out rate compared to other schools)
- ❖ Appreciative Inquiry: If your research goal/question is about trying to raise awareness about what is working and/or what people are doing to make things better, then it is called appreciative inquiry. Eg. ‘What steps are teachers taking to stop bullying in school? (you may end up finding out in your research that the steps teachers are taking are not working but your research has an appreciative inquiry framing in that you want to find out what teachers are doing and can do).
- ❖ Need/Gap Assessment: If your research goal/question is specifically to find out what is missing or what is needed, then your research is about need/gap assessment. Eg. ‘What kinds of after school programs do students still want?’

ReSearch for Change: Research Instruments Chart

Instrument	How it works	Strengths:	Limitations and Challenges:
Focus Groups	<p>A group of people who come from the target research population(s) participate in a structured collective conversation about the issues being researched.</p> <p>Questions are 'open ended' (Who? Why? and How? Questions) and seek to capture complexities and nuances of peoples' experiences, responses and impacts.</p> <p>Participants respond individually but group setting can prompt interactive discussions that touch on shared concerns or differences.</p> <p>May include exercises and small group work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement: Engages small groups of people at once, or in multiple focus groups • Data type: Can generate in-depth information and rich narratives about individual and group experiences and interpretations • Group setting can prompt people to talk about things that they may not talk about in individual interviews or surveys. (Participants may also they may learn from other group members) • Group interaction becomes part of the data • Non-random sampling can mean that researcher can specifically include marginalized groups or select for diversity • Other: Can be creative (use visual aids and exercises etc.) • Can be economical and less time consuming (compared to doing interviews with the same number of participants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less control over the data. As a result, it may be more challenging to analyze data. • People may not be comfortable talking about certain issues (e.g. mental health issues) in group setting. • People may be emotionally triggered due to a story or experience another participant relays • Small and usually non-random sample so it cannot produce generalizable findings • Requires a strong design and a good facilitator • Assembling groups takes time and resources • Group dynamics may influence how participants respond to questions
Interviews	<p>Facilitated conversation conducted on a one-on-one basis. Questions are mostly open-ended questions. Interviews may be structured (a preset list of questions) or semi-structured (a preset list of questions but can add follow up or other questions based on responses). In some cases interviews may be open or non-structured (no preset list of questions).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement: Usually engages a small number of people, but through in-depth one-on-one conversations. • Data type: Can generate detailed and rich narratives about individual experiences and interpretations. • Can add follow-up questions in ways other methods can't. • Non-random sampling can mean that researcher can specifically include marginalized groups or select for diversity. • Other: Interaction between researcher and participant can be richer. Can be a better experience for participants compared to surveys (feel like their voices have been heard). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller sample size, difficult to get representative sample • Conducting large number of interviews and transcribing interviews can be time consuming and costly • Semi-structured and open interviews require interview skills. • Interaction between researcher and participant can influence how participant responds to questions

Method	How it works	Strengths:	Limitations and Challenges:
<p>Surveys</p>	<p>People are asked/selected to respond to specific questions. Questions are mostly ‘close-ended’ (yes or no question; select from a fixed number of choices; factual data etc). Either they respond on their own to written questions (on a sheet, on a computer, etc) or they answer pre-written questions read to them by an interviewer (over the phone, in person, etc).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement: Can reach a lot of individual people • Data type: Can generate broad generalizable data that policy makers and media tend to prefer • Other: Can be anonymous - People may be more candid about their experiences • Small type of surveys can be inexpensive - easy to facilitate and consolidate data (E.g. online survey) • Data can be standardized (same questions/answer choices) for all participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return rate of surveys is low (hard to get people to respond) and often slow. • Random-sampled survey can exclude minority groups (whose voices are already excluded) • Hard to confirm information • Hard to do individual follow-up (unless another method is also done, such as follow-up interviews) • Difficult to get a sample that is representative of the community • Answers are often fairly simplistic - it is difficult to get detailed complex answers. • Can be difficult to write an effective questionnaire
<p>Arts-based methods (e.g. photovoice, digital storytelling)</p>	<p>Use of art-based tools (e.g. photography, filmmaking, popular theatre, expressive arts) to examine issues individually or in groups. Often, interviews or focus groups will precede the art activity so that participants can discuss their experiences making the art, and what their artwork means in the context of the issue, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement: usually a group of people • Data type: can generate non-language based data (overcome linguistic barriers) and creative expressions • Can increase the diversity of stories shared. • Other: Photograph and films can be easier to disseminate (and more accessible) • Can make research process fun and educational • Can include a skill-building element (e.g. digital storytelling or photography) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative data may not be taken seriously by policy makers etc. • Need skilled artists and facilitator to run the projects • May need to deal with ethical issues such as representation, consent (e.g. photography, film), etc. • Less control over the data - May be difficult to analyze data. • Important to ground data collection and analysis in rigorous methods to avoid speculation

Note: This chart includes only a selection of data collection methods. There are many more methods available for your Community-Based Research project.



Exercise: Comparing Research Methods/Instruments

In groups of two or more, ask the same type of question using different data collection methods and note the responses. Discuss advantages and limitation of each data collection method/instrument depending on the type of responses.

Survey
A. Question How would you rate your current health status? Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor How has your health changed during the last 5 years? Improved Stayed the Same Deteriorated
B. Advantages
C. Limitations
D. Other Issues to Consider

Interview
B. Question How is current health? How has it changed during the last 5 years?
B. Advantages
C. Limitations
D. Other Issues to Consider

Focus Group
A. Question How is current health? How has it changed during the last 5 years?
B. Advantages
C. Limitations
D. Other Issues to Consider



reSearch for Change: Creating Your Data Collection Instruments (Interview Guide, Focus Group Guide, or Survey Instrument)

Once you have finalized your Key Research Question, the next step is to develop your data collection instrument. Data collection instruments are tools or guides you use to generate and collect data. If you are using qualitative methods like interviews or focus group then you will need to develop an Interview Guide or Focus Group Guide. For quantitative research, the next step is to develop a Survey Instrument or if you have an experimental random control trial (RCT) study (eg testing the effectiveness of a medical treatment) then an RCT protocol. For mixed method studies, it is good to develop your qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments together in order to clearly map out how they will link in your analysis. Even if your study does not use mixed-methods, often qualitative research will include a short demographic survey component and quantitative researchers will add a few open ended qualitative questions in the survey.

What is the link between the Key Research Question and the data collection instruments?

Your data collection instruments (Interview guide, Focus Group guide, survey instrument etc) contain a set of follow-up questions that can enable you to answer your Key Research Question. If, for example, your Key Research Question is ‘What are the barriers that internationally trained professionals face in getting accreditation and jobs in their field in Canada?’ your Interview/Focus Group Guide or Survey Instrument may include the following series of questions:

- How did you find out about how to get accreditation for your degree/experience?
- What steps did you take to get accreditation?
- What challenges did you face in applying for accreditation?
- How long did the accreditation application take to process?
- How much time, effort and money did it take?
- What was the outcome of your application for accreditation?
- (For those who accreditation was refused), what reasons were given to you for refusing the accreditation?
- What steps and strategies did you use to get jobs in your field?
- What barriers did you face? How did you try to overcome these barriers?
- What services and supports have you utilized to get jobs in your field?

What role can your peer researchers (community) play?

Similar to the process of developing your Key Research Question, **your peer researchers (community members) can play a leadership role in creating the data collection instruments.** This is because they are best placed in terms of providing insights on the framing and flow of questions so that the questions are contextually fitting and culturally sensitive to produce rich results. The sections that follow elaborate on how framing and flow of questions can make significant difference in the quality and nature of data that you produce. With adequate research training/mentoring on data collection instrument design, peer researchers can play a key role in making informed and thoughtful decisions about the framing, flow and content of the questions in the data collection instruments.

What things do I need to keep in mind when developing the data collection instruments?

The quality and nature of responses you get from research participants is directly related to how you frame your question as well as the flow of questions (or the overall structure of the types of questions you are asking) in your data collection instruments. Thus it is important to pay attention to type/framing of your question as well as the overall structure and flow. For example, if you ask a close-ended question you may only get a one word response while if you asked the same question in an open way you may get 20 minutes of rich response. Similarly, if you ask participants to talk just about negative impacts then you may only get data about negative impacts and not about the potential positive impacts or that some things can have mixed contradictory impacts. Sequence and flow of questions can also make a big difference. For example, you may get very different answers if you ask demographic questions in the beginning of the interview vs. at the end of the interview. Below are some important dimensions to keep in mind when developing your data collection instruments and the questions in these instruments. You don't have to memorize the exact names of these different typologies; the important thing is to understand that you need to pay careful attention to how questions are framed as this will shape the response you get or don't get. In general, 'leading' and 'loaded' questions should be avoided along with asking multiple questions at the same time.

1. Overall structure of data collection instrument

In terms of overall structure, data collection instruments can be:

- a. Structured - the set of questions have a fixed structure and flow that you need to follow. Quantitative instruments (surveys and RCTs) often have fixed structure.
- b. Semi-structured - the questions have some structure and flow but the person conducting data collection can use their discretion to change the flow of some of the questions or add additional probing questions on the topics being discussed. There may be a certain flow that you ask all people conducting data collection to maintain. For example, the flow instruction may indicate to ask mental health questions only towards the end (but it can be anywhere towards the end as long as it is not right at the beginning).
- c. Open (free flowing) - you don't have to follow any structure or flow in asking questions. Anthropologists who conduct ethnographic research may use very open ended structure (eg start by asking a very broad question like 'tell me about what it means to live in this neighborhood' and then start asking probing questions based on what study participants say).

2. Overall Flow and Sequence of questions

It is important to make informed decisions about the overall flow and sequence your questions are laid out in your data collection instrument. This can also make a big difference in the nature and quality of responses you get from your participants. It is always a good idea to start with easy and 'ice breaker' type questions (for example?). **You need to decide whether you want to use the earlier questions to build to more complex questions/issues later on or start with complex questions/issues and use latter questions to follow up more.** In particular, you need to be careful about when you want to ask sensitive questions (say about mental health issues, or experiences of abuse or discrimination etc). **In terms of demographic questions, the recommended best practice is to ask them in the end so participants can decide what personal identifiers they want to disclose based on what they have answered to previous questions.** Or you may decide to put some of the demographic questions in the beginning if you really need some personal identifiers for the study. Depending on the length of the survey, you may not want to leave important questions till

the end since participant may be likely to skip questions in the end. Consider your study goals carefully to make informed decisions about flow and sequence of questions in your data collection instruments.

3. Structure of questions

Questions in your data collection instruments can be open-ended or close-ended. Open-ended questions produce rich open narratives that capture complexities of everyday experiences and relationships and thus are preferred by qualitative researchers. In contrast, close-ended questions produce fixed numerical or categorical responses that lend well to quantitative and statistical analysis that can potentially capture overall patterns within the study population or generalizable to broader groups. You can use a mix of open-ended and close-ended questions.

- a. **open-ended questions:** broadly framed questions to elicit open and flowing response to particular topic/issue. Questions can be highly open-ended to generate a response flow that is participant driven (for eg, 'Tell me about things that are important to you.' 'Why are they important to you?'). Or they can be moderately open-ended where you set some specific focus for discussion (for eg., What are the challenges and barriers you have faced in finding a job in your field after arriving in Canada? Why do you think you are facing these challenges and barriers?).
- b. **closed-ended questions:** questions with restricted response options that is numerical or categorical. Response categories may be a pre-set list of numbers, scale or choices. You can also allow participants to give a 'blank space' to write the response and then categorize the responses later. For example, if you are asking about age you can give them a pre-set list or just leave a blank space for them to write down their age. The following is an example of a close-ended question with a pre-set cumulative scale for response choices:

What was your annual household income last year (Select one)?

- A. Less than \$10,000
- B. \$10,001 to \$20,000
- C. \$20,001 to \$40,000
- D. \$40,001 to \$60,000
- E. More than \$60,000

Questions with only two opposite choices (eg Yes or No; Agree or Disagree) are called bi-polar questions:

For example: Have you been injured at work (select one)?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Questions that include an ordered scale rating within a bi-polar spectrum are referred to as Likert Scale questions.

Example 1: How is your current health status (Select one)?

- A. excellent
- B. very good
- C. good
- D. fair
- E. poor

Example 2: I take a positive attitude toward myself (select one).

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Neither Agree or Disagree
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly Disagree

Depending on the goal of your study/question, you can restrict or open up response choices for your questions. For example, the above examples of the Likert scale based question have a 5 point scale rating. You could change it to a 4 point scale and take out 'Neither Agree or Disagree' as a response choice from Example 2 in order to 'force' participants to choose between 4 choices (strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree). Limiting responses generally makes analysis easier.

In contrast, you could include an open response category called 'Other (please specify)' to allow study participants to write down a response of their choice if none of the pre-set response choices fit. So for example, for your question on gender instead of just offering 'male' and 'female' as response choices you also include an 'Other (please specify)' response choice then you are more likely to have bisexual, transgendered or other LGBTQ participants disclose their actual gender/sexual orientation instead of being forced to select between male or female only. LGBTQ people may actually skip the question if only male and female response choices are offered, which decreases your response rate for the question. Similarly, if you offer a pre-set list of response choices for question on ethnicity (and ask them to only 'select one') then you may not get the actual answer about how people identify their ethnicity including the fact that some people may identify with multiple, hybrid ethnicity. Giving open response choices, however, can make your analysis process more complicated and lengthy since you will have to create new categories based on all possible responses.

It is best practice to include a 'Don't Know' response option so participants can select this option rather than leaving it blank or choosing an option that is not accurate. In some cases, data on how many participants answered 'Don't Know' can actually become a valuable research finding. For example, consider a question about when people last had a particular medical test. If many participants selected the 'Don't Know' response option then one of your findings is that many people don't tend to remember dates of their last medical tests. However, if you did not include a 'Don't Know' option, participants may have given you inaccurate response or skipped the question (and you would not know why they skipped the question).

These decisions about question structure and response choice options need to be based on the goals of your study. The key thing to realize is that even the slightest change in framing can lead to very different data.

Note that if you asked any of these questions (How is your current health status? What was your annual household income last year? What is your gender?) in an open-ended structure you may get a 20 minute response about the topic instead of a one word answer.

4. Avoiding leading and loaded questions

Leading or loaded types of questions should be avoided because they can undermine the quality of research data.

Leading questions are questions that are focused on limited topic that may lead to particular types of responses while avoiding the ‘other side of the coin’ or a richer discussion of the complexities of the issue. Leading questions may often be based on unsubstantiated assumptions. Example of leading question: ‘Why is volunteer work not leading to jobs?’ Here the question assumes that volunteer work does not lead to jobs. This may lead the participant to only talk about the negative aspects of volunteer work. A neutral way of framing this question would be ‘what are the implications of volunteer work on job search?’

Loaded questions are similar to leading questions but have a strong judgment within the framing of the question. Loaded questions can lead respondents to give ‘loaded’ responses. For example, a question like ‘Why are youth of color getting into all these criminal activities?’ is a very politically loaded question as it assumes that that all youth of color have propensity for criminal activities. This question can be reframed as ‘what systemic factors are pushing youth out of the formal labor market and into non-formal and illegal activities?’

5. Don’t forget the ‘clearing house’ question.

Including a clearing house question like ‘**Do you have anything else to add on any of the topics we have discussed today?**’ can sometimes generate the most interesting and rich responses.

6. Translation, Validation, and Pilot Testing

If you are conducting research in the first language of your community of interest, you may need to translate your data collection instrument into appropriate languages. Then, you will need to validate these translations to make sure they mean the same/equivalent thing in all the languages. There are many ways to do this. One way is to have one professional translator translate it from Language 1 to Language 2 (say from English to Arabic) and then have another professional translator to do ‘back translation’ of the translated version from Language 2 to Language 1 (from Arabic back to English) to see/address any discrepancies.

Instead of doing translation, you may decide to use professional interpreters to do real time interpretation during the interview or focus. Or you could co-conduct the interview or focus group with a peer researcher who is fluent in both languages. Either way, it is a good idea to validate the data collection instruments for content equivalence and cultural/contextual sensitivity. For example, many non-western cultures consider their extended family as ‘family’ so if you ask about family composition you may not get the answer you are looking for. In this case, a quick note reminding to ask about ‘immediate family’ can ensure that people are not including their extended family members in the response. Similarly, words like ‘coping’ may not have equivalent expressions/practices in other languages/cultures, so you may need to consult ahead of time with people (peer researchers) from that community to find equivalent expressions/practices.

It is highly recommended to pilot test your data collection instruments. Pilot testing is a process where you conduct data collection with a small number of participants to test and improve the content, framing, validity, flow of your data collection instruments. Feedback from pilot testing

can help you ensure that potential participants can understand the questions, can answer the questions, questions are framed in a way that leads to rich discussion (for qualitative questions), questions are framed sensitively, and other content feedback. Pilot testing can also give you feedback on logistical issues like the actual time it takes to complete the survey. Make sure you follow all ethical process requirements when doing pilot testing including letting participants know that it is a pilot test of the data collection instrument.



Evaluation Form - Collaborative Research Design Session

Please complete this form at the end of your research design meeting. We will use this feedback to plan future research meetings. You do not have to put your name on the form.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The objectives of the research design session were clear to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The structure and format was organized and easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The topics we discussed in this session were relevant and interesting to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My opinions were heard and respected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The facilitators were helpful and well-prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I learned something new today	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was satisfied with the meeting location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would participate in another session like this one again in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us 1 or 2 new things that you learned today.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about this session? (Please use the back of this sheet if necessary)

Chapter Six

Ethics and Community-Based Research



Chapter Six: Ethics and Community-Based Research

Ethical issues affect every level of your research, from preparing for your Community-Based Research project to designing research tools to dissemination. While ethical issues exist in all research, Community-Based Research complicates many of the ethical issues known to conventional research. For example, Community-Based Research challenges the idea that a researcher has “distance” from the community being researched. Working with community members brings particular ethical issues to the table: confidentiality in communities; informed consent; compensation and recruitment; and emotional support for community members. This section will build on some of these ethical issues as well as familiarize you with formal ethics structures, such as ethical review boards. Because CBR is grounded in ethical principals (e.g. a commitment to bottom-up and participatory approaches), ethical issues are addressed throughout the toolkit.

What are Research Ethics?

Research ethics are a set of principles, policies and practices that act as a guiding framework to ensure that research is carried out in a manner that “respects the dignity, safety and rights of research participants and that recognizes the responsibilities of researchers” (World Health Organization⁴). Many ethical principles directly connect with the principles of Community-Based Research defined in [“Introduction to Community-Based Research.”](#)

The Canadian tri-council highlights the following ethical principles as cornerstones of ethical practice.

I. Respect for Human Dignity

This includes the fundamental respect for all persons - regardless of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc. Within the context of Community-Based Research, this means ensuring that the voices of multiple stakeholders are heard and respected. It also means providing capacity-building opportunities and supports so that community members can participate meaningfully in all stages of the project.

II. Free and Informed Consent

Informed consent is an important ethical principle. Any participant engaging in a study must freely provide consent. *Informed* consent means that they must be made aware of the purpose of the study, any potential harms or risks as a result of participation, and how the data will be used. They must also be made aware of their right to not participate or withdraw from the study, and the process of doing so. In the context of Community-Based Research, this means attending to how consent processes may look different for different communities (e.g. ensuring translation supports).

⁴ Accessed November 22, 2010 from http://www.who.int/rpc/research_ethics/en/

III. Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality

When agreeing to participate in a study, participants must be made aware of how their information will be used. This includes who will have access to shared information. It is important that participants' information and experiences not be shared with anyone outside the research team. In order to protect participants, this means providing participants with a pseudonym in qualitative research, or sometimes a number in quantitative research. This may also include removing any unique identifiers linked to a participant. Respect for confidentiality also includes an agency's responsibility to securely store any research materials, including data.

IV. Respect for Vulnerable Persons

This principle was adopted as a reaction to biomedical research, historically carried out on marginalized populations, such as children, individuals who are incarcerated, or people with disabilities. It advocated that communities should not be exploited or taken advantage of. In Community-Based Research, this principle advocates for *including* communities who experience barriers - provided they are supported. Of course, many of these communities have been *over*-researched. As such, it is important that people who choose to participate in Community-Based Research projects are respected and compensated for their time. This not only includes participants, but the community members assisting with and implementing research.

V. Respect for Justice and Inclusiveness

This principle was also adapted as a reaction to biomedical research that historically privileged certain communities over others. (For example, a pharmaceutical study which researched the effects of drugs only on men and not on women). It advocated that all communities had a right to participate in research. In Community-Based Research, this follows the principle that those affected by the research should have a say in how the research is designed, implemented and shared. This principle may be applied by involving the affected community in the research process. Research tools should be sensitive to the needs and experiences of the community being researched.

VI. Minimizing Harms to the Community

VII. Maximizing Benefits to the Community

Research projects should ensure that physical, psychological and social harms to the individual and community are minimized, while benefits to the community and individual are maximized. Harms can be minimized by proper planning, advising community members at all stages, and by working through many of the ethical issues ahead of time. As will be discussed later, conventional ethics applications often centre on harms to the individual; Community-Based Research projects should be deeply invested in impacts on the community. This includes how the community may benefit (or harmed) by the dissemination of findings.

While many of the ethics principles such as informed consent and confidentiality apply to all research projects, Community-Based Research is particularly concerned with the impact of research on the larger community. Community-Based Research asks, what about the risk of harm on the community? How does a community consent to research? How is knowledge shared and accessed by

the wider community? How will a research team mitigate power relations? How was the community involved in the design and execution of the research?

Community-Based Research coming out of Aboriginal and First Nations communities has advocated for the use of “OCAP” principles when conducting research with marginalized communities. The OCAP principles stand for Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession of knowledge. These principles can be broadened to other communities as well, while acknowledging the role Aboriginal and First Nations communities have played in developing the groundwork for these principles.

What Agencies Oversee Research Ethics?

At the national level, in Canada, the Tri-Council Body representing Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) oversees research ethics. Any study funded by these institutions needs to abide by the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

You can access this policy statement here: <http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-epc/readtcps-lireepc/>

Universities, and some hospitals and school boards have departments whose job it is to oversee local implementation of research ethics.

Applying for Ethics Approval

Research ethics underline every stage of Community-Based Research, including design, implementation, analysis, and dissemination. However, you may hear researchers speak about “going through ethics” as if it is a specific phase of the research. Ethics often means two things: the formal process of applying for ethical permission to do research through a Research Ethics Board (REB) *and* the principles and values that guide research more generally. Sometimes these two forms of ethics are one and the same, however, as discussed below many REB’s do not ask about principles that matter most to Community-Based Research practitioners and communities.

Research Ethics Boards

You can apply for Ethics Approval through your local Research Ethics Board. This is where having academic partners is useful, as they can often help your agency navigate this process. Not every Community-Based Research project must apply for ethical permission. However, if you are working with an academic or with a larger institution, or are receiving federal/provincial funds, applying for ethics approval is usually mandatory. Applying for ethics may also increase the credibility of your project, and is a good exercise for thinking through the harms and benefits to the individuals and the communities you are working with.

Traditionally, Research Ethics Boards have been concerned about the following processes:

- Informed Consent
- Confidentiality
- The right to withdraw

Unfortunately, most REB's do not ask about many of the ethical issues central to Community Based Research. A study by Flicker et. al (2007)⁵ revealed that conventional ethics review boards are not always compatible with the aims of Community-Based Research. Research Ethics Boards often focus on harm to the "individual" rather than the community. They are also generally not concerned with the social impact of research. Of course, regardless of how your local ethics board views research ethics, larger conversations about community harm, benefit, power, and ownership of knowledge should remain central to all of your work. You may still use the formal REB process to begin discussing some of these key issues.

Typically, an ethics review application process involves the following:

- I. General Ethics Review Application
- I. Informed Consent Form
- II. Confidentiality Agreement
- III. Recruitment Script
- IV. Draft Guide for Interviews/Focus Groups/Surveys
- V. Close-out Form

Applying for ethics often takes several weeks, depending on the risk level of your project. (For example, projects working with minors or in schools may take longer to gain approval). Ensure that you budget adequate time for this. You cannot begin your project until after the REB grants you approval. After reviewing your application, the ethics review board may request revisions to your application. At this point, you complete or reflect on suggested revisions and re-submit. Note that any time your project changes, you will need to submit an amended version of your ethics application to the REB.

For more info on the REB process visit:

<http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/introduction.cfm>

Tools and Templates

Activity: Ethical Dilemmas in Community-Based Research

Working with community members brings many new (or different) ethical issues to the table. This activity focuses on ethical issues identified by some of the Peer Researchers at Access Alliance. Use this activity with your team to discuss ethical issues such as confidentiality, representation, and reflexivity. The ethical issues apply to many Community-Based Research projects, regardless of whether or not they use a peer researcher model.

Activity: Peer Researcher Ethics Activity

Use these scenarios with your research team to discuss the ethics behind recruitment, data collection, and research design when working with Peer Researchers. You may also want to use this activity with your Peer Researchers or Assistants as a capacity building exercise.

⁵ Flicker, S., Travers, R., Guta, A, McDonald, S., Meagher, A. (2007) Ethical Dilemmas in Community-Based Participatory Research: Recommendations for Institutional Review Boards. *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*. 84(4), 478-493.

Checklist: Informed Consent
Template: Consent Form

Getting informed consent from research participants is one of the most vital aspects of conducting ethical research. Informed consent means that the research participant is participating in the research voluntarily with full knowledge about the goals, processes and outcomes of the research including potential impact and risks on the participant. As a process to ensure voluntary ethical consent, it is standard requirement that participants read and sign an 'Informed Consent Form' before participating in the study. Use this checklist and template to think through some of the potential barriers in obtaining informed consent, as well as the key steps in designing an informed consent form.

Template: Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality is important in all research projects. It is important to train all research team members in issues of confidentiality. You may wish to use this confidentiality agreement template as a starting point to draw up your own agreement.

Template: Photograph Consent Form [General Purpose]

You may also need to think about obtaining consent at community advisory workshops or at knowledge exchange events where community members may be present. Asking permission before taking and using a photograph is important, especially when working with particular communities where identification may have unintended consequences (e.g. people without status, sex workers, or people living with HIV).

Template: Digital Storytelling Consent Form

Digital Storytelling is one form of arts-based research. Like many arts-based methods, digital storytelling contains many new and challenging ethical dilemmas. Consequently, the consent process for any arts-based CBR project must contain a thorough overview of all associated benefits and risks. Some ethical issues include redistribution of online images, a participant's decision to represent themselves on camera, the method and its' implication for confidentiality, etc.

Checklist: Research Ethics Board Application

Applying for an ethics review is a difficult process. Often the questions asked by review boards can seem strange or challenging to answer. You may wish to use this Ethics Application checklist to familiarize yourself or agency with the types of questions an REB is expecting and the materials required. You may also find it useful to review another project's approved Ethics Application for guidance.

More Ethics Resources?

Negotiating Ethical Agreements

For more information on the OCAP principles, consult Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (March 2006). *Negotiating Ethical Agreements*. Available for download here: <http://www.caan.ca/english/factsheets.htm> These guidelines are also discussed on the Canadian Institute of Health Research's website: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29134.html>
Ethical Issues in Community-Based Research

Looking for more information on research ethics? The Wellesley Institute has a learning e-module on ethical issues in Community-Based Research (CBR 102). This module also contains ethical scenarios you may wish to work through as a team. You may access the module here: http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/presentations/cbr_100_series/

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

<http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/>

Introductory Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Tutorial

<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/tutorial>



reSearch for Change: Ethical Dilemmas in Community Based Research

Working with community members brings many new (or different) ethical issues to the table. The following ethical dilemmas have been identified by Peer Researchers at Access Alliance. Use this activity with your team to discuss ethical issues such as confidentiality, representation, and reflexivity. Thinking through potential outcomes will help you build sound ethical measures into your own project. After all, for many ethical issues there is no single 'right' answer. You may wish to divide people into groups or discuss all dilemmas as a larger team. After each group has discussed, re-group and debrief using the closing questions provided.

Dilemma #1: Community-Based Research and Reflexivity

Community members play the role of community member and researcher at the same time. Unlike conventional research where researchers enter into a community, in Community-Based Research community members often belong to the same community as the participants (i.e. same identity, neighbourhood, etc.). In a presentation conducted on behalf of Access Alliance, Peer Researchers explained that being a peer researcher is like being a coin with two sides.

On one side of the coin:

Peer Researchers can:

- Ask questions during focus groups that are informed by their experience.
- Reframe the questions based on their experience to help generate sharing and discussion.

On the other side of the coin:

Peer researchers must:

- Separate their own experience from participants' experiences.
- Remain open to hearing other people's stories. If Peer Researchers make assumptions based on their experience, they might shut people down, or lead the discussion in a certain way.
- Find a balance between wanting their story heard (their experience is important!) and making room for others' stories.

Being a Peer Researcher is different from being an educator, facilitator or advocate for a community. A focus group is different from a support group, where support is mutual. Here, the role of a peer researcher is to be neutral.

Ethical Scenarios:

- I. You are working on a Community-Based Research project that explores young women's experiences of gender-based violence. During the data collection period, one of the peer researchers discloses that she has recently been sexually assaulted. She tells the team that she wants to continue on the project, however, the team is concerned that she may have to listen to potentially re-triggering stories during upcoming focus groups. She assures you that she is fine, and that she can separate her experiences, but the team is still concerned for her well-being and the impact on the project. What do you do?

- II. You are a peer researcher facilitating a focus group with members of your community on access to health care. During a focus group, a participant makes reference to a very recent conflict within the community. You are aware of this conflict as it involves a close family member. You are doing your best to remain neutral, but as the conversation grows heated, a participant makes a comment that you believe does not fairly represent the conflict. What do you do?

Dilemma #2: Confidentiality and Community-Based Research

Working with community members allows the larger research team to access specific communities. Because community members are already connected to the community, they can often execute better outreach and recruitment. However, this familiarity comes at an ethical cost.

In many cases, Peer Researchers or Research Assistants already know the community members who become research participants. This may create a conflict of interest for the research process. Even when team members are trained in confidentiality and sign agreements, when people already know each other and there are pre-existing relationships in the community, to what extent can community members abide by their confidentiality agreement?

Ethical Scenarios:

- III. A Peer Researcher recruits a member of their family as a focus group participant for your Community-Based Research project. This peer researcher is the only researcher available to facilitate the focus group, as focus groups are language specific. What are the ethical implications of this dilemma? What does this mean for confidentiality?
- IV. You are a service provider participating as a co-researcher with a Community-Based Research project. During a data analysis session, you recognize one of your clients from a focus group transcript. The client is not identified, but they have told you that they participated in a focus group, and you are familiar with one of the stories they are sharing. You have worked closely with this client for several years as their caseworker. In one particular moment, you know that your client (a research participant) is not telling the truth. What do you do?

Dilemma #3 Dealing with Trauma

In Community-Based Research, peer researchers are hired due to their experience with an issue, or within a community. Peer Researchers must be emotionally equipped to listen to very powerful stories. Given the potential overlap between participants' experiences and peer researchers, some of these stories may be triggering. After the project ends, they will continue to see community members who have disclosed these potentially powerful stories.

Additionally, Community-Based Research projects often work with communities who have experienced a lot of individual and collective trauma. Talking about personal experiences in focus groups and interviews or filling out surveys can be a potentially triggering or difficult experience for research participants.

Ethical Scenarios:

- V. You are facilitating a focus group on income security and housing with community members from a specific neighbourhood. Many of the community members have pre-existing relationships. During the focus group, someone makes a comment that leads to a large argument. You find yourself being heavily triggered. What do you do?

- VI. As community members, peer researchers and peer research assistants have relationships in the community that are different from relationships that academics or service providers may have. As a result, professional and personal risks differ significantly from other team members (e.g. reputation, connection, trust, personal support networks, employment, etc.). Hearing difficult stories may also be triggering for peer researchers. How can your team support community members during and after the completion of the project?

Dilemma #4: “Representing” Community

The groups that community members often “represent” are incredibly diverse. Communities are never homogenous. And yet, as Peer Researchers, Research Assistants, and members of Community Advisory Committee, community members are expected to speak to or “represent” the community. There is a tension here. Community members are brought on board to represent community interests and needs, and to ensure that the research maintains committed to serving those needs. However, given the diversity within communities, no one person can represent an entire community. Furthermore, pre-existing community conflicts may mean that individuals may be reluctant about “representing” their community.

Ethical Scenarios:

- VII. Community-Based Research should lead to concrete social change for a community. What happens if the data gathered is not flattering to the community of interest? Researchers may want to “stay true” to the data, while communities may be reluctant about releasing information, which may further stigmatize communities.
- VIII. Your team is discussing the findings from a survey you have recently conducted with LGBTQ newcomer youth. In response to a question regarding homophobia in the classroom, half of the peer researchers voice concern that they do not feel the study responses are accurate. However, the other peer researchers feel the response is quite plausible. What do you do?

Dilemma #5: Informed Consent

The process of obtaining informed consent is an important element of any research project. Informed Consent means that participants not only understand what the research project is about, but how their information will be used, the potential risks of the research, and how they can withdraw from the study. When working with communities who may experience literacy barriers, or where English is not a first language, informed consent is particularly important. It’s not as simple as handing out a consent form, and expecting to obtain informed consent. Cultural dimensions and systemic forms of power may also impact informed consent.

Ethical Scenarios:

- IX. You have just finished facilitating a two-hour focus group with 8 Refugee Youth. After the focus group, you are chatting with two of the participants. During your conversation, both participants refer to the focus group as a workshop. Further conversation with the participants reveals that there was miscommunication during the consent process. All other participants have left. You are concerned that the other participants may have also thought the focus group was a workshop. What do you do?

- X. You have obtained written consent from a participant to participate in your Community-Based Research project by way of a written consent form. The participant tells you they understand, but a comment from them raises a question as to whether they fully understand what they have consented to. What do you do?

Debrief Questions

Once you have discussed the scenarios, use the following debrief questions to review key learnings and strategize how your project might proactively respond to these issues through policies, procedures and trainings.

Recap:

- What are the ethical issues framing these four dilemmas?

Associate:

- Have we heard of these ethical issues before?
- What do we think of when we read the dilemmas?

Implications:

- How do we see these dilemmas or associated issues playing out in our project?
- What are some organizational or structural factors behind these three dilemmas?

So What?:

- How might our agency or Community-Based Research project respond to these issues?
- What external policies or supports could be created in order to rectify or acknowledge these issues?



reSearch for Change: Peer Researcher Scenarios

Ethics can be challenging in any project. However, in Community-Based Research there are some added ethical issues. Use these scenarios with your research team to discuss the ethics behind recruitment, data collection, and research design when working with Peer Researchers. You may also wish to use some of these scenarios with your team as a capacity building activity.

Scenario # 1

You have an income security, race and health research project and you need to recruit community members. They all end up being from the same housing project.

What are some things that might have gotten you into this situation? What are some ways to get out of it?

Scenario # 2

You have a research project about mental health in three different refugee communities. You want to run the focus groups in a participatory way, so you hire peer researchers from each community and train them in research methods. The focus group is about their understanding of mental health, and is in their language (which no one else in the office speaks). You realize in the training that the peer researchers (who are also refugees, and who have been through traumatic experiences) act as translators in doctor's offices and that the community members have their phone numbers. Community members begin calling the peer researchers at home.

What are some things that might have gotten you into this situation? What are some ways to get out of it?

Scenario # 3

You have only three community members involved in your project. Each community member sits on the advisory committee, which makes decisions about research design and methodology. These are the same peer researchers who will be getting trained in those same methodologies and getting paid to carry them out.

Is this a conflict of interest? What are some things that might have gotten you into this situation? What are some ways to get out of it?

reSearch for Change: Checklist for Informed Consent

Getting informed consent from research participants is one of the most vital aspects of conducting ethical research. Informed consent means that the research participant is participating in the research voluntarily with full knowledge about the goals, processes and outcomes of the research including potential impact and risks on the participant. There may be many barriers to getting informed consent such as language or literacy barriers, ability to give consent, research literacy barriers, varied cultural perceptions about what 'consent' means, or indirect coercions or pressures. As a process to ensure voluntary ethical consent, it is standard requirement that participants read and sign an 'Informed Consent Form' before participating in the study. An informed consent form lists all the important details about the goals and outcomes of the study, the nature of participation in the study and its potential benefits and risks, confidentiality measures etc. Below is a checklist to use in designing an informed consent form:

- **Administrative Information about the Research Project**
 - Name of Research Project
 - Name(s) of all the Researchers
 - Name(s) of funding agency
 - Name (s) of agency implementing the research

- **Purpose/Background of the Study**
 - Goals of the study
 - Target group for the study
 - Target number of participants for the study
 - Methodology (focus group, survey, interview etc)
 - What will be done with the findings

- **Nature of Participation in the Study**
 - What participant is being asked to do (e.g. interview, take part in the focus group; might need to explain what focus group or interview is)
 - How long participation will take
 - What will happen in the process

- **Potential Impact/Risk on Participant from the study**
 - Potential positive and negative outcomes (e.g. increase in knowledge, opportunity to share your views, become emotionally upset if you recall sad experiences).

- Participating in the study will not have negative impact on services or programs they access (see Confidentiality section).

- **Compensation**
 - All the compensation for participation is clearly mentioned (e.g. honorarium, TTC tokens).
 - Compensation is high enough to merit participation, but not so high as to act as an incentive for participation (e.g. participants feel like they have to participate because they need the money).

- **Contact info if participant wants more information about the study or about the ethical issues and participant rights related to the study**
 - Contact information of designated person for the study.
 - Contact information for the designated person from the Research Ethics Board (where the study obtained ethics approval from).

- **Voluntary Participation**
 - Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participant has the right to respond to only those questions that he/she wants to (including not responding to any questions).
 - Participant can withdraw from the study at any time during the interview, focus group or survey.
 - Participant can ask to withdraw from the study even after the data has been collected (e.g. after the interview). You may need to note a period of time when withdrawal is no longer possible (e.g. after the report has been published).

- **Confidentiality**
 - Clearly explain that the decision to participate or not participate will be kept confidential and will not affect services/programs they access (e.g. service providers will not find out about this).
 - Clearly explain researchers will take every measure to ensure that participants personal name or any information that can identify the participant will not be used in study reports.
 - Clearly explain all the steps researchers will take to keep all the data collected confidential so that only researchers can access this information. (e.g. data storage, confidentiality policies, etc.).
 - If it is focus group, explain that while researchers will encourage all focus groups participants to keep the focus group discussion confidential, researchers do not have control over what other participants say or do with shared information after the focus group. Remind that participants should keep this in mind and only share things that they are comfortable sharing with the group.

- **Opportunity to ask questions**
 - Make sure that participants have opportunities to ask questions about nature of participation and its implications etc; all questions are clearly answered to the satisfaction of applicants.
- **Copies of signed consent form and report**
 - Statement that they have read and understood the study and that all their questions have been satisfactorily answered.
 - Signature (signature of guardian if they are not able to give consent).
 - Give a copy of the signed consent form to participant

Important Reminder

Getting genuine, ethical informed consent requires more than getting participants to sign an informed consent form. Researchers need to take proactive measures at every step of recruitment and data collection for this including:

- ✓ Making sure that outreach/recruitment flyers for the study has relevant information about the study in a clear and accurate way; flyers are accurately translated where appropriate; contact info is listed for people to inquire more about the study
- ✓ Potential participants have opportunities to ask researchers questions (by phone, in person or by email) about the study before committing to participate
- ✓ Researchers use their discretion to screen participants such that only participants who fully understand the goals and implications of the study and can give informed consent is invited to participate in the study
- ✓ All barriers to giving informed consent are overcome. Where language is a barrier, the informed consent form is translated and/or interpreted accurately in ways that participants can understand. If literacy is a barrier then take extra measures to read it out loud more carefully and get recorded verbal consent if necessary.
- ✓ Cultural sensitivity and context around giving 'informed consent' is properly addressed.
- ✓ During data collection, remind participants regularly that they don't have to answer questions they don't want to.
- ✓ After data collection is complete, remind them one more time that everything will be kept confidential and that they can withdraw from the study (so what they said won't be included in the analysis and reports).



Consent Form for Focus Group

[Insert Agency or Project Logo]

***Mental health services for newcomer youth and their families:
Exploring needs and enhancing access***

Principal Investigator: [Insert name(s) and affiliations here]

Co-Principal Investigator: [Insert name(s) and affiliations here]

Funding Agency: Provincial Centre for Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO

Purpose of Study:

You have been invited to participate in a study to explore the mental health service needs of newcomer youth and their families. The purpose of this study is to examine the access to community-based mental health services for newcomer youth and explore the existing barriers to accessing these services from the diverse perspectives of newcomer youth, their parents, and service providers. A total of 80 newcomer youth, between 14 to 18 years of age, will be invited to participate in this study. Findings of this study will help in developing appropriate mental health services for newcomer youth in Toronto. This study is funded by the Provincial Centre for Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO.

Participation in the Study:

Your participation in the study consists of attending one focus group meeting. The focus group is a group meeting and will be about 1.5 hours long. Each focus group will have 7 to 10 participants. At the beginning of the focus group you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire.

Through your participation you may gain a better understanding about the access to mental health services for newcomer youth in Toronto. The possible risks of your participation are minimal and may include slight emotional upset, such as recalling influences that do not make you feel good about yourself. You will receive a list of community resources and supports for newcomer youth in Toronto.

Compensation:

For the focus group session, you will receive a small compensation of your choice, either \$20 or a book certificate, for your participation. You will also receive T.T.C. tickets to cover your transportation costs for participating in this study.

Contact for the Study:

If you have any questions regarding the study, you can contact Research Coordinator at XXXXX, University of Toronto at (416) ---- ----. or by email at -----@-----

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact [Insert Name], Health Sciences Ethics Review Office, University of Toronto, at (416) --- ---- or by email at ----- @ -- ----- .ca

You understand that:

1. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences.
2. You have the right not to respond to any question.
3. Your decision to participate or not to participate will be kept completely confidential.
4. The focus group sessions will be audio-taped. The audio-tapes will help the researchers to keep a consistent account of the issues identified by you throughout the sessions and to record these on an accurate basis. The tapes will be transcribed into written format. Both the tapes and the transcriptions will be kept at the -----, under lock and key. Except for the investigators and the transcriber, no other individual will have access to the tapes. The tapes and the transcriptions will be destroyed (compressed and shredded) within two years after the end of the study.
5. All of your responses will be kept confidential. Your name and family information will be kept secret and will not be used in any report or discussion about the study but some of your comments might be included in the study reports and publications under a pretend name (alias name) or no name at all. You will not be individually identifiable.
6. You will keep the terms and the discussions of this study confidential. However, researchers do not have control over what other people say or do with shared information during focus group sessions.
7. You can request a copy of the study findings and final report.

I consent to participate in the study:

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am being given a copy of this consent form to keep for my own records.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR PARTICIPANTS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE ALSO YOUR:

Parent's signature: _____ Date: _____

OR

Legal guardian's signature: _____

Date: _____



Confidentiality Agreement

[Insert Agency or Project Logo]

with Project Notetakers/Interpreters/Transcribers/Translators/ Coders/Research Assistants

I, _____, have been hired to do coding using NVIVO for the [INSERT PROJECT NAME] research project at [INSERT AGENCY NAME].

I understand that research data I will be working with contains private and confidential information about participants. Therefore, I will exercise full confidentiality in my work while entering, storing and using the data. I will ensure that all soft copies of the data are password protected and all hard copies are stored in locked cabinets. I will not share or disclose any data or information to anyone else but the designated research team members of the project. Once my work is completed, I will return all hard and soft copies of data to ----- at [AGENCY NAME] and destroy any notes related to the project.

Signature of Coder

Date

Signature of Research Operations Manager*

Date

* Individual responsible for managing the data. E.g. Research Coordinator, Operations Manager, etc.



Photograph Consent Form

[General Purpose]

[Insert agency or project logo]

[Insert contact information for agency]

I, _____, authorise [INSERT AGENCY NAME] to take pictures of me to document the community-based research process. The photos may be used for publications and promotional material within or outside of the centre. This includes, but is not limited to reports, brochures, pamphlets, internet website, etc.

Signature

Date

Staff Signature



Digital Storytelling Consent Form

Consent Form for Participation in Refugee Youth Health Video Project

Title of Research Study: Educational Challenges and Strategies of Afghan, Karen and Sudanese Refugee Youth in Toronto within 5 Years of Migration

Principal Investigators:

Peer Researchers:

Digital Story-Telling Consultant:

Study Sponsor:

Purpose of Study:

This research initiative uses a community based participatory research approach and is a collaborative effort between Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services, Ryerson University, York University, and refugee youth peer researchers from three communities: Afghan, Karen and Sudanese. This project methodology involves video workshops with Sudanese, Afghan and Karen youth participants within five years of arrival as refugees, as well as interviews with participants about their stories and the experience of making them. The videos and interviews will help us gain understanding of the educational experiences of Toronto-based refugee youth.

Participation in the Study:

Your participation in the study consists of making a video based on your personal perspectives. You will be trained in elements of storytelling, scripting, filming, digital video editing software, and media ethics. In these videos you can choose to tell your story, other peoples' story with their consent, a combination, or they can be expressions about issues that concern you as they relate to education and refugee youth. Based on the media ethics training you will gather individual or institutional consent from film subjects or relevant organizations prior to any media documentation. You will work with a media artist to edit and assemble your video. Finally you will be invited for one-on-one interviews following the completion of your video to explore in depth issues that emerge from the videos produced.

Risks:

You may feel mildly uncomfortable talking about difficult educational challenges but you can control which roles and relationships you discuss in the group. You may also feel somewhat uncomfortable discussing these issues in front of peers from your community, but you have the right to not answer or withdraw. We emphasize the importance of respecting the confidentiality of whatever is discussed in the group. It is very important to respect your film subjects' confidentiality and only film if you have asked permission first and obtained consent. Your confidentiality will be respected to the fullest extent possible by the law. As well, we encourage

you not to share anything that would put your legal status in legal jeopardy if recorded. Your status is your own personal matter, and there is no pressure to share that if it puts you at risk.

You should also be versed with the risk of your images being copied online and redistributed through other networks. Once a piece of media is released online it is easily replicable. You will receive information about the risks of online media creation and will be able to choose the type of media to be documented with. You have the right to withdraw from the project at any point, without penalty, financial or otherwise, but once the videos are released online it is impossible to withdraw participation. Withdrawal from the project will not affect your relationship with Access Alliance, York University, or Ryerson University in any way. You should consent based on what you feel comfortable doing after gaining a solid understanding of the risks involved.

Benefits:

You will be trained in a variety of digital media and storymaking skills to tell your stories, gaining valuable media skills that may contribute positively to future employment. You may also learn more about the educational system in Canada and about the range of coping strategies and services used by your peers. You will have the option of disseminating your digital stories broadly to help advocate for positive change.

Right to refuse or withdraw:

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. Withdrawal from the project will not affect your relationship with Access Alliance, York University, or Ryerson University in any way. You have the right to withdraw from the project at any point, without penalty, financial or otherwise, but once the videos are released online it is impossible to withdraw participation. You should consent based on what you feel comfortable doing after gaining a solid understanding of the risks involved.

In the following consent form participants can choose whether or not to have their films distributed through DVD, film festivals, community centres and/or through online video. Once the media is distributed, it cannot be withdrawn. Participants are advised to keep their audience in mind when creating their films, with the awareness that it can be viewed by anyone over the medium of the internet.

Reimbursement:

You will each receive \$200 for your participation in the project. You will also receive TTC tokens to cover your transportation costs for participating in this study.

Request for more information:

If you have any questions regarding the study, you can contact Research Coordinator _____ at (416) XXX-XXXX ext XXX, or by email at XXXXXXXX@accessalliance.ca.

This research project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through York University's Human Participants Review ("Ethics") Sub-committee for compliance with senate ethics policy. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact _____ Manager, Research Ethics, 309 York Lanes, York University (telephone 416 XXX-XXXX or e-mail XXXX@yorku.ca).



Access Alliance
Multicultural Community Health Centre

reSearch for Change: Research Ethics Board Application Checklist

Applying for ethics review is a difficult process. Often the questions asked by review boards can seem strange or challenging to answer. You may wish to use this Ethics Application checklist to familiarize yourself or agency with the types of questions an REB is expecting and the materials required.

Administrative Information

- Name of Principal Investigator
- Names of Co-investigators (everyone doing data collection)
- Title of Research Project
- Other REB approval (If study has received REB approval from one institution then attach approval letter. This will expedite REB approval in other institutions).
- Funding for the study
- Project start and end date including proposed timelines.

Research Information

- Study Goals/Rationale
- Methodology
- Background about Participants (sample size, demographic information, inclusion/exclusion criteria etc.)
- Recruitment techniques and materials
- Compensation for study participants

Ethical Issues

- Potential Risks and Harm
- Potential Benefits
- How informed consent will be obtained
- Implications for withdrawal from study
- How anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured
- How will data be securely stored
- How will the results be shared
- Conflicts of interest (e.g. commercial interests of researchers)

Attachments

- Recruitment flyer or other materials
- Informed consent form
- Research instruments (Questionnaire, Interview/Focus Group guide etc.)

Chapter Seven

**Implementing your Community-Based
Research Project**



Chapter Seven: Implementing Your Community-Based Research Project: Data Collection

After weeks or months of planning, you are finally ready to implement your Community-Based Research project. This section provides a brief overview of how to actually *do* the research: how to collect the data. However, because implementing your research is dependent on the method you select, it is beyond the scope of this toolkit to focus on the details of every method. Consequently, this section focuses on implementing your research within the context of Community-Based Research. If you are looking for more information on specific methods, use the academics on your team as a resource; they may have articles and other resources to bring you up to speed. You may also wish to consult some of the highlighted resources listed in the [resource section](#).

Data Collection in Community-Based Research

In research, data collection is when you go into the community and collect information to answer your research question. While data collection is dependent on the design of your project, there are a few steps that cut across all Community-Based Research projects.

I. Sampling

The first step to sampling is to define your ‘population of interest’ for the study. This is done by setting your ‘inclusion/exclusion criteria’ that identify your ‘population of interest.’ This refers to various socio-economic identifying factors like age, gender, ethnicity, place of residence, types of occupation, income level, etc.

For example, if you are conducting a study about adult working age newcomer women in Toronto, your inclusion criteria may include the following: women, ages 18-65, have been in Canada 10 years or less, currently working in a paid job etc. You may also add some ‘exclusion criteria’ to make sure that certain people within the ‘population of interest’ who otherwise meet the ‘inclusion criteria’ are not included in the study. For example, exclusion criteria for the above study may include the following: people who have lived in Canada for less than 6 months.

Once you have identified your ‘population of interest’ through inclusion/exclusion criteria, the next step is to identify your sample within the population of interest. In research, sampling refers to the process of identifying and selecting who to conduct research with. Usually, it is not possible to conduct research with every member in a particular population of interest. Thus researchers will identify a ‘sample’ of participants (a smaller group of people) from the larger population with whom they will recruit for the study.

II. Recruitment

The second step in data collection is recruitment. If your project applied for ethics approval, you may have already created many of your recruitment materials. You may wish to review or update these materials if anything has changed since applying for ethical approval. Recruitment of study participants is often the most difficult and time-consuming process in research. One strategy is to train peer researchers to recruit participants. Peer Researchers can help you connect with hard to reach communities, bridge language barriers and identify potential gaps or

issues in the research. You may want to consider the barriers (linguistic, literacy, economic, logistic etc.) that may prevent your project from reaching your targeted sample group.

III. Conduct Reflexive Research

Community-Based Research is driven by a strong commitment to social change. We often enter into this work because of injustices experienced by ourselves or by our loved ones. When conducting research, it is important to remember that our personal experiences influence the way we collect and analyze the data. While we can never be 100% objective, we can work to acknowledge and account for the way our past and present experiences and feelings may shape our interpretations. For example, your own experience with the immigration system may lead you to hear stories that resonate with our own experience, rather than stories that contrast or provide a different understanding. You may want to think about ways to integrate reflexive practices into your data collection. For example, journaling before and after an interview can be a powerful way to capture and process personal thoughts. Later, you may return to these journal entries when analyzing your data.

IV. Addressing Challenges in Data Collection

The way you collect data will depend on the particular methods you select. Whether you are facilitating a focus group or administering an online survey, each method will have its own set of advantages and unexpected challenges. During recruitment or data collection you may want to meet with your team to assess the project. Often, research design makes sense on paper but not in reality. What's working? What needs to be changed or adapted? You may need to reassess your data collection tools (e.g. survey questions), or sample groups if you are facing recruitment challenges. This might also be a time to identify new partners on the team. You may wish to consult the tools and templates section below for a list of different method-specific tools.

Remember, no matter how well you design your project, you will encounter challenges along the way. Remaining flexible, reflexive and responsive will help you respond to these challenges in productive ways.

Working with Peer Researchers

Access Alliance often uses a Peer Researcher model to facilitate this stage of Community-Based Research. In addition to assisting with research design, Peer Researchers and Peer Research Assistants recruit participants and collect data through selected methods (i.e. interviews, surveys, etc). Of course, not every Community-Based Research project utilizes peer researchers or peer research assistants during data collection. If your Community-Based Research project is small you may not have the resources to support peer researchers. For help deciding whether peer researchers are right for you project, check out many of the tools and templates in the chapter, [“Working with Communities.”](#)

Nonetheless, working with Peer Researchers or Peer Research Assistants has many benefits for the research, especially if you are looking to reach community members who may be difficult to access with conventional recruitment methods. If you choose to work with Peer Researchers during data collection, peers can act as a bridge between the research team and the community. After all, for

communities who face multiple barriers, attending a focus group for a research project may not be a top priority. Peer Researchers can also communicate the goals and aims of the research in different languages, ease mistrust between the community and the research team, and explain interview or survey questions in ways that are understandable to participants.

Of course, as addressed in [“Ethics and Community-Based Research,”](#) working with Peer Researchers adds ethical complexities as Peer Researchers must play two roles during recruitment and data collection: community member and research. You may wish to consult this chapter for useful role plays and activities when working with community members.

Tools and Templates

Checklist - Introduction to Recruitment

This checklist contains some key steps in developing and later implementing your plan for recruitment. It includes recruitment tools, outreach strategies, things to consider, ethical issues and screening processes.

Activity - Recruitment Ethics Role Play

During training sessions at Access Alliance, community members have expressed the value of on recruitment training for peer researchers. The purpose of this role-play is to model and practice recruiting participants in an ethical way. This allows peer researchers to work through ethical issues and practice recruitment prior to going out into the community.

Handout - Elements of a Good Focus Group

How you plan and facilitate a focus group will impact the quality of engagement with participants and the data produced. Although good facilitation takes practice, facilitation is a very learnable skill. Use this handout to review elements of a good focus group including set-up, design, and facilitation.

Handout - Tips on Note Taking for Focus Groups

When facilitating focus groups or interviews, note-taking can help you catch observational details that are not picked up by audio recordings. Use this handout to review note-taking techniques for facilitators or note takers.

Activity - Working with a Co-Facilitator

Focus groups don't have to be facilitated with only one facilitator. Use this handout with your Peer Researchers to train them in co-facilitation. Working with a co-facilitator in focus groups has many advantages such as skill building, increased comfort, and greater attention to detail. You may wish to organize your focus group so that one peer researcher facilitates and the other takes notes; half way through the focus groups, the team switches.

Handout - Conducting the Interview

Interview skills require practice and skill. However, interview skills are easy to learn and once learned, they can be widely applied in many areas. Use this handout to assist members of your

team in preparing for and conducting your interview. This handout should be used in conjunction with the handouts on designing interview and focus group questions in “Designing your Community-Based Research Project.”

Handout - The Art of Probing.

Sometimes in an interview we do not receive the type of information we are looking for. Probing is a technique where you ask follow-up questions that help to increase clarity, depth and richness in responses from participants. This handout details the types of prompts you may wish to use in interviews. Examples are provided for research projects at Access Alliance.

Activity: Troubleshooting for Focus Groups and Interviews

To prepare for your focus groups or interviews, it is useful to troubleshoot potential challenges ahead of time. This activity includes a list of potential scenarios and complications that might occur while conducting a focus group or interview. A researcher needs to use thoughtful discretion in proactively responding to these situations in a professional manner. This activity may require a facilitator with basic research training in order to assess participants’ responses.

More Resources on Data Collection

For more assistance on conducting interviews and focus groups, check out the Wellesley Institute’s Training Resources, available here:
http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/presentations/cbr_100_series/

- CBR 104: How to Run a Focus Group;
- CBR 105: How to Conduct an Interview;
- CBR 106 Developing a Client Satisfaction Survey;

Reid, C., E. Brief, and R. LeDrew. (2009). *Our Common Ground: Cultivating Women’s Health Through Community Based Research*. Vancouver: Women’s Health Research Network.
<http://www.whrn.ca>

Ontario Women’s Health Network. (2009). *Guide to Focus Groups*. Toronto: OWHN.
<http://www.own.on.ca/focusgroupguide.htm>



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reSearch for Change: Introduction to Recruitment

Recruitment can be one of the most challenging stages in data collection. Developing a thoughtful and strategic recruitment plan may assist your team in finding the right participants for your project.

Developing a Recruitment plan

- Identify target population, sample size, sampling technique
- Identify Inclusion and exclusion criteria
- Develop recruitment tools
- Identify recruitment strategies

Information to include in recruitment tools/flyers

- Name of project
- Sponsor/lead agencies and partners
- Goal of study
- Who can participate
- What the participation involves
- Compensation and other support
- Contact info if interested in participating

Recruitment tools/medium

- Recruitment flyer/poster
- Information session/presentation
- Email/mail invitations
- Referrals
- Telephone
- Website
- Word of mouth

Strategies/Steps to consider for recruitment

- Types of recruitment
- Open or Targeted?
- Effective location/places to recruit
- Timing of recruitment
- Creativity
- Safety issues

Ethical practices in recruitment

- Non-coercion (avoid peer pressure) particularly when working with marginalized groups
- Non-deception
- Ensure that participants understand their decision to participate or not participate will not affect the services they receive
- Provide as much information as possible so the decision to participate is informed
- Do not use compensation as a key strategy for recruitment
- Ensure that participants are capable of giving consent

Screening and selection of participants

- Select participants who fit inclusion criteria
- Select participants who fully understand what they are participating in
- Select participants who is capable of giving informed consent

Challenges in recruitment

- Reaching 'hard to reach' populations
- Overcoming potential barriers to participation
- 'No shows' or people dropping out



ReSearch for Change: Recruitment Ethics Role-play

During training sessions at Access Alliance, community members have expressed the value of recruitment training for peer researchers. The purpose of this role-play is to model and practice recruiting participants in an ethical way. This allows peer researchers to work through ethical issues and practice recruitment prior to going out into the community.

The first role-play models what *not* to do during recruitment. It is designed to be a bit over-the-top. The second set of role-play questions are based on questions that peer researchers may encounter. You may wish to invite two volunteers to read the first role-play in front of the group. Afterwards, you may divide the group into pairs and practice role-playing with the second (more realistic) set of questions.

Role-play One

The scene: a high traffic shopping area. Characters are a peer researcher (PR) and potential participant (P).

PR: Excuse me can I talk to you about participating in a research project?

P: What do you mean a research project?

PR: It's a thing that some university guys are doing - you can get paid.

P: paid? For doing what? What's it about?

PR: All you have to do is go to one meeting for 3 hours and talk about stuff in the neighborhood, then you get \$30 cash.

P: What's it for? Who is paying?

PR: York I think. It's research on the community and they are paying people give their opinions.

P: Do I have to give my name?

PR: No, the whole thing is confidential ... no one will know what you said.

P: But what kind of questions will they ask?

PR: Jobs and finding work.

P: I have to talk about being unemployed?

PR: If you want the money.

P: I don't think it's worth it.

PR: Sure it is! It's a great deal.

Role-Play Two

This role-play allows more room for improvisation. One person should play the researcher and the other the potential participant. Once people feel comfortable, the participant can make up additional questions. After the partners have moved through the dialogue once, they should switch.

Possible Questions from Participants	Possible Responses
What do I have to do?	We are looking for participants for a focus group - a group of people from the area who have faced employment challenges or have had troubles making ends meet. The group will meet and answer questions together about their experiences. You would attend a 3 hour meeting and get paid \$30 for participating.
So people will know my business if I do this?	All the research reports will be anonymous - not using names. The information will also be protected. But the focus groups do involve other people from the community who may not keep things confidential, though we will ask them to.
Why would I want to do this?	Different people will have different reasons, and that is okay. We are doing the research in hopes of supporting the community and we value your opinion and time so we are providing an honorarium of \$30 for the 3 hour workshop. Your participation will help us with the research.
Who is doing this?	A group of community members, academics and social service agencies including [INSERT NAMES].
What's it for? Why are you doing it?	We want to raise awareness around issues of employment and racism in Black Creek. We are looking at employment and income challenges people face, especially immigrants and refugees in the Black creek area. We are interested in what people do to make ends meet. We will take about a year talking to different people and then see if there are recommendations we can make to service providers and the government to improve the employment situation in Black Creek.
Are you getting paid to do this?	Yes, I am part of the research team. I conduct outreach for the focus groups. I will also be helping to conduct some of the focus groups.
What if I go and don't like it, can I still get paid?	Your participation is completely voluntary - you don't have to stay, but we only pay if you participate for the full focus group - 3 hours.
What's it going to be like?	You will be with a group of [X number of people] and you will be asked questions. [describe process and make-up of groups, number of facilitators, etc.].
What if I change my mind after the focus group about you using my opinion?	Participation is voluntary in the study. You can leave the focus group if you are not comfortable. However after the focus group is completed the research team keeps the data that came out of the focus group, but does not identify the individuals in any way.
What happens if I sign up to come and don't show up?	Your participation is completely voluntary; you can change your mind at anytime and decide not to come, or even to leave in the middle. If you know you aren't coming we would really appreciate you letting us know so we can find a replacement.
Can I bring a friend along?	No, please don't. But you can recommend someone in advance. Each person that participates has to meet certain criteria that we need to confirm - such

	as living in Black Creek or being from a certain community (such as Vietnamese speaking). You can suggest a friend to us in advance - we need at least a week before the focus group.
Can I tell people about it?	You can tell people that we are doing research but we ask that anyone that participates in a focus group keep the discussion confidential. We will keep everyone's information confidential.
Who gets to control the research - who owns it?	There is a research committee made up of community members, academics, and community agencies who will have the raw data and will write a report. They are the ones that make sure your identity is protected, including your name or any information that might give away who you are (e.g. volunteer position at a local centre, etc.) The report will be released to the public who can use it for free.
How will I know about the research being done? Will you contact focus group members?	If you are interested in receiving a copy of the final report, there will be a sheet at each focus group where you can submit your contact information. The list will only be used to contact you when the final report is complete and to invite you to a presentation the research findings. Hard copies of the report will be available at any of our partner agencies and electronic copies of the final report will also be available on our website.



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reSearch for Change: Elements of a Good Focus Group.

An Overview

I. Group size: Keep it small

Focus groups are usually fairly small to allow participation from all members. The recommended number of people per group is usually six to ten, however, some focus groups can include up to fifteen participants (Gibbs, 1997).

II. Time: Keep it short.

Researchers generally agree on fixing a period of 1 ½ to 2 hours per focus group. (Flores & Alonso 1995; Kreuger & Casey 2003). This time allows for discussion without worrying about potential fatigue that can set in with longer sessions.

III. Location & Set-up

While it is important to select a location that is accessible and safe, the space itself has few requirements. A quiet space with a table and comfortable chairs should be sufficient. Participants should be arranged around the table so that they may keep visual contact with one another (Flores & Alonso, 1995). To avoid negative or positive associations with a particular site, building or location, neutral locations can be helpful (Powell & Single, 1993). Sitting in a circle also helps to create a positive dynamic.

IV. Group Composition.

It is important that focus group participants have the defined characteristics or experiences that the research requires (Bromley & Fisher 2000; Flores & Alonso, 1995). While the group may be homogenous in one form (i.e. all living in the same neighbourhood), they should be diverse in other ways, as homogenous groups may produce redundant discussion (Bromley & Fisher, 2000). Usually focus group organizers avoid using participants that know each other or the moderator (Flores & Alonso, 1995), however this can be more challenging in Community-Based Research.

V. Design: Good Planning Required.

Good focus group design will not only include question development but also solid strategies and tools for prompting rich discussion, such as using scenarios, case histories, visualization exercises and other methods. The design should allow for time for check-ins, ground rules, possible breaks, as well as time for the consent forms and other logistics. The design phase will also consider issues such as childcare and food. If there are focus groups conducted in multiple languages or if there will be translation, these issues will need to be addressed prior to running your focus group(s).

VI. Facilitation Process.

Focus group moderating requires skills and knowledge of the topic. Processes in the planning and design can also aid facilitation; a good facilitator should be able to create and sustain a supportive and safe atmosphere where people feel free to speak their mind (Bromley & Fisher, 2000).

VII. Recording data

Focus groups are recorded in some way as interviews. Here, audio recording is preferred, as it is perceived as less intrusive than video recording or another person doing direct observation or note-taking (Flores & Alonso, 1995).

VIII. Ethics.

As a research method, focus groups face many of the same ethical issues as other social science methods. All participants must sign a consent form that includes clear information about the scope and intent of the project, as well as the right of participants to withdraw. During the focus group only first names should be used. After all, while confidentiality by the research team should be assured, *there is no way to control confidentiality by the participants*. While participants should be encouraged to keep the content of the focus group confidential there is no way to enforce this practice. It must be clear that participants cannot be guaranteed to have “absolute” confidentiality.

IX. Label and store your data.

Data should be labeled with the time, date and location of the focus group and compiled consistently according to the research design. Depending on the ethical protocol established, it may need to be stored in a locked cabinet.

X. Note-taking.

During the focus group, the facilitator may want to take notes to capture things that may not be picked up by the audio recording. For example, the facilitator may want to remark that a participant seems distant, that a participant leaves for a break, or if someone refers to something visual (e.g. an image on the wall). Since it is difficult to write complete notes, jot notes can be taken during the focus group and filled in immediately after the focus group’s completion.

Facilitation Tips for Focus Groups

A facilitator is many things: a coordinator, a supporter, a summarizer, a mediator, an organizer, and even a performer. Although good facilitation takes practice, facilitation is a very learnable skill. Depending on the design of the day, the moderator may be facilitating a conversation on a number of questions or may also be implementing some techniques and tools to prompt people to reflect on their experiences, opinions, etc.

The facilitator is there to promote dialogue and to learn what people think—not to share her or his opinion. In the context of a focus group a facilitator needs to be as “neutral” as possible on the issues being discussed. You do not need to be neutral about the process—ensuring that people have a chance to speak and promoting a safe environment are important tasks. Be warm, be engaging, and encourage participants to speak.

- I. **Be your own facilitator.** There are many different styles of facilitation, even by the same facilitator. While there is often an element of performance (you usually need to be “up”), be yourself and the whole thing will go better. Being your own facilitator though doesn’t always apply to clothes. It is best not wear anything too formal or informal—you don’t want the session to appear like a job interview or an unfocused chat.
- II. **Use notes.** There is nothing wrong with being transparent about the use of facilitator notes.
- III. **Pay attention to your personal presentation (body language & tone).** A facilitator spends a lot of time being the focus of attention. How you present yourself is very important. Make sure people know you are listening - nod and affirm that you have heard them. Appear relaxed and calm (not the same as being calm!). Use a positive tone and use humour (never at the expense of the group or an individual).

- IV. **Name issues of tension.** One of the most anxiety inducing acts a facilitator can do is not to name or bring out an obvious tension. “We are hearing a lot of passionate opinions right now. Lets remember to keep it focused on the issues and not each other.” If there is an emerging conflict, name it. “There seems to be some disagreement here.” If you do not name an issue participants may fear that you do not see the issue, which adds to the problem. Once the issue is named it can be dealt with such as taking a set amount of time to deal with it (“Lets give this 5 more minutes and then move on”).
- V. **Use the process to help address conflict.** You should have guidelines to participation - draw on them if people are being destructive such as loud cross talking or being disrespectful. “I’d like to remind people of our guidelines.” If emotions and conflict are beginning to run high you can use the guidelines to bring things down. In a conflict issue the facilitator may have to be a referee so that each party gets to speak and listen in a given structure.
- VI. **Do not take concern with process personally.** If participants are expressing concern that the process has not been explained well or it is not meeting their needs and desires, do not take it personally. If your explanation has not been clear, just apologize and clarify.
- VII. **Do not be afraid of silence.** If you do not get a response right away from a question, resist re-asking the question or moving on right away. Let people think for a moment. Silence can mean many different things and may be reflective of a number of factors, including cultural factors. One advantage of moderators reflecting the target focus group population may be an enhanced ability to interpret group dynamics, such as “reading” silence.
- VIII. **Encourage participation by everyone.** Sometimes a participant may be hesitant to speak or there may be a participant or two who is dominating the discussion. The moderator can say “I’d like to hear from some folks who haven’t spoken in a while” or ask for a go around and get everyone’s opinion on a question. If the problem seems difficult to overcome you can establish a rule that no one speaks twice until everyone has spoken once or “passed”.
- IX. **Use probing questions.** Find your inner two year old and ask questions. One of the best things a facilitator can do is ask the right questions (at the right time).

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reSearch for Change: Tips on Note Taking for Interviews and Focus Groups

Effective note taking is an important component of conducting a focus group. Good note taking means documenting important data from the focus groups, such as observational data. Also, note taking can complement voice recorders in ways that enhance consistency, detail and comprehensiveness of the data being collected. Note taking can be done by the facilitator or by a separate note taker. Note-takers can assist focus group facilitators in a number of ways including reminding them of questions that might have been missed, important side discussions that may be taking place, or making the facilitator aware of non-verbal signs of discomfort/tensions among participants. Here are some tips on effective note taking for focus groups:

What to Take Notes About

- I. **Observational notes:** In addition to taking notes about *what* participants are saying, note takers need to take notes of *how* participants are saying it. Note takers may also want to take observational notes on how other participants are reacting, the nature of the discussion, etc. Note takers may want to take notes on the following:
 - i. Non-verbal signs, cues and body language when participants are speaking
 - ii. Tone, voice level, ‘feelings’ of what is being said
 - iii. Responses from other participants (non-verbal or verbal)
 - iv. Nature and levels of participation from each participant
- II. **Capturing ‘soft’ voices and ‘crowded’ discussions:** Note takers have an important responsibility of capturing ‘soft’ voices, and ‘crowded’ discussions where multiple people are talking at once. They may also want to take notes on side discussions (voice recorders may not necessarily capture these).
- III. **Taking notes on content:** Note takers also need to take detailed, accurate notes on content - *what* is being said. Note takers may decide to take verbatim notes (if they can), summarize key points or a combination of the two. If doing a combined approach, note-takers should remember to put verbatim notes in “quotations.”
- IV. **Identifying important/relevant discussions:** While taking notes, note takers can use their discretion to identify discussions that they feel are important and relevant to the study. You can develop symbols to identify important discussion points. This can help researchers in the transcription/translation and analysis process.
- V. **Keeping track of flows and connections:** By linking which participant said what throughout the focus group, note takers can help to keep track of flows and connections in the focus group discussion.

Things to keep in mind

- ✓ Laptop or Notebooks? Is one form more intrusive?
- ✓ Verbatim notes or key points?
- ✓ Visibility/Invisibility of note taking process
- ✓ Accuracy and clarity of note taking



ReSearch for Change: Working with a Co-Facilitator

As a Peer Research Assistant you will be working with a partner to co-facilitate a focus group of your peers. This is a very important role in the research process.

Think of the phrase: “two heads are better than one.” Co-facilitation applies this idea by creating a team of two or more people to facilitate a focus group. Co-facilitation offers numerous benefits by providing the following: more ideas during the preparation for a group; more practical experience for a beginner, while being supported by a more experienced facilitator; more energy during tense moments or in a conflict; more support for a lead facilitator in the event they become too personally involved in the discussion; and, most importantly, more than one person to help make the idea of facilitation less intimidating and exhausting.

Good communication is essential when working with a co-facilitator. It is important that you meet with your co-facilitator before the focus group to divide up the tasks for the focus group. Each individual has their own style of facilitation and handles situations differently. It is important to get to know your co-facilitator and understand his or her style of facilitating.

CO-FACILITATOR PROFILE⁶

Think about, record and share your answers with your co-facilitator and coordinate your styles before your focus group. It will make your joint efforts more successful. After completing the profile, take the time to discuss how you will handle different scenarios that may come up in your focus group.

I feel most comfortable in group when...

When someone talks too much, I usually ...

When the group is silent I usually ...

⁶ Excised from: Brennan, S. (N.D.) COFACILITATION: A Two header. *Self Help Resource Centre of Greater Toronto*. Accessed May 22, 2009 from <http://www.selfhelp.on.ca/resource/Cofacilitation.pdf>

When someone cries, I generally...

When someone comes late, I usually ...

When there is conflict in the group, I tend to ...

If I forget something or you have a great idea to share while I'm talking, please...

I feel well prepared when ...

I enjoy and feel competent in ...

My signal to ask for my co-facilitator's help is ...



Access Alliance
Multicultural Community Health Centre

reSearch for Change: Conducting the Interview

What is an interview?

In research, interviews refer to data collection techniques that involve “**interactive inquiry**” (vs non-interactive inquiry) with research participant(s) to systemically generate data that fit the investigative goals of the research project. Interviews can be used in both qualitative and quantitative research (eg survey interview). In quantitative research, interviews use structured and close-ended questions to generate categorical responses to particular questions while qualitative interviews use unstructured or semi-structured formats with more open-ended questions to capture opinions, experiences, values, feelings, and critical reflections about particular issues or questions. Doing good qualitative interviews is both a science and an art; there are some systematic steps that you can follow that can help to increase quality of responses (example knowing how to frame good questions), but the art of probing and interview also comes with practice and can benefit from creative communication strategies.

Interview skills require practice and skill. However, interview skills are easy to learn and once learned can be widely applied in many areas. Use the following points to assist you in preparing for and conducting your interview.

I. Interview Set-Up

- ✓ Where are you are conducting the interview? Will you have privacy and quiet?
- ✓ What is the occasion on which you are conducting the interview?
- ✓ What is the atmosphere in which you are interviewing (e.g. calm, anxious, etc.)?

II. Opening the Interview:

The interview opening usually sets the tone for the remainder of the interview. Your goal is to establish a productive climate so both you and your interviewee will participate freely and communicate openly.

Are you being formal or informal? This may depend on the interview and whom you are interviewing (e.g. interviewing a member of your community vs. a policy maker with a lot of decision making power). This can also change during the interview process.

- Nonverbal indicators of formality include dress, proximity, location of interview
- Verbal indicators of formality level include how participants address each other (titles or first names), how much “small talk” participants engage in, use of slang, etc.

Do you have rapport with the interviewee? Building rapport is the process of creating goodwill and trust between interviewer and interviewee. The interview's formality level influences how rapport is established. For example, in more informal information interviews, there is more “small talk” at the beginning, while in more formal interviews the interviewer will tend to take a more direct approach.

- First impressions greatly influence how rapport is established; avoid jumping to conclusions about others based on little information.

- When you and the interviewee share a similar frame of reference or worldview, it is easier to establish rapport.

Have you set-up the interview properly? This sets the groundwork for the body of interview.

At minimum, the orientation statement should include:

- Description of the interview's purpose and topics to be covered
- Projected length of time
- How the information will be used/confidentiality statement

The orientation may also include:

- Request for the interviewee's cooperation
- Mention of any financial reward or other benefit to the interviewee
- Explanation of how interviewees were selected
- Information on the organization/individual conducting the interview

III. The Interviewer

Conduct: Is your expression and body language calm, friendly and receptive or stressed, judgmental and impatient?

Manner of Questioning: How are you framing the questions?

IV. The Body of the Interview (Asking the Questions)

Important Skills and Attributes for the Interviewer⁷

- An active listener
- Able to notice and react to non-verbal cues
- Patient
- Flexible
- Open-minded
- Willing to release power and control

What to Look For When Conducting an Interview

- Behavior: What the person has been doing while talking (body language).
- Opinions or Values: What the person thinks about the topic.
- Feelings: What the person feels, rather than what the person thinks.
- Knowledge: What does the person know about the topic (facts, etc.).
- Sensory: What has the person seen, tasted, touched, and smelled.
- Background demographics: Standard information about their age, gender, education, etc.

V. Closing the Interview (Wrap Up)

The closing brings the interview full circle. Your goal is to leave the interviewee feeling positive and satisfied with the interview. Closing is often neglected in preparing for interviews.

Stages

- Conclusion: The interviewer is responsible for signaling upcoming conclusion, as with, "My final question. . ."
- Final summary: Conduct a consolidation of entire interview. It requires use of your listening and note taking skills.

⁷ Excised from Guion, L. (January 2006). Conducting an In-Depth Interview. University of Florida IFAS Extension. Retrieved March 20, 2008 from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FY/FY39300.pdf>

- Highlight key aspects and overall conclusions.
- Ask the interviewee about the accuracy of your summary.
- Ask the interviewee if they would like to add anything else.

Post-interview discussion: This discussion is informal and not part of the formal interview. The interviewer and interviewee engage in "chit-chat."

- This is signaled when you close your notebook and turn off the tape recorder. You should not introduce any new information at this point.
- If necessary, you can reassure the interviewee, restate confidential nature of interview, purpose and use of information.
- The interviewee often relaxes and may relay important information.
- The farewell marks end of post-interview discussion.

Tips and Best Practices in Interviewing

- ✓ Explain ethical issues clearly (informed consent, voluntary, don't have to answer questions they don't want to, confidentiality, potential harm, consent for tape recording etc); get genuine informed consent before starting.
- ✓ Build rapport and make participants feel comfortable in the beginning and through out the interview (the more comfortable they feel the more openly they will be willing to share with you)
- ✓ Make sure participants feel comfortable about the location of the interview.
- ✓ Tell them when you are starting the tape recording and when you are turning it off; respect any requests for not including or not recording any parts of the interview
- ✓ Treat participant as the 'expert' about the discussion topic; respect their intrinsic knowledge.
- ✓ Practice the art of 'active listening' (make participants feel that their responses are valuable; you can make nudging probes/comments like 'that is very interesting,' 'tell us more,' 'policy makers need to hear this' etc)
- ✓ Avoid making any judgmental comments/questions (eg 'that does not make sense' 'why didn't you apply for jobs right away?' etc). Please pay attention to the tone of your questions/probes.
- ✓ Use probes to explore issues in more detail while trying to stay focused on the key questions. Use your discretion to keep focused on the interview guide while exploring important tangents. Learn how to respectfully close a side discussion in order to bring the discussion back on track.
- ✓ Remember that how you frame the question shapes the response you get. Try and ask 'why' and 'how' questions as they lead to rich responses. Avoid using leading and loaded questions. Avoid using 'yes or no' and other close-ended questions. You can sometimes use close-ended questions to confirm something as long as you follow up with open ended questions.
- ✓ Systematically document non-verbal responses and cues (often they are as important as verbal responses). Participants can become uncomfortable when they see someone taking notes and observations. Notetakers should balance 'active listening' with being somewhat 'invisible.'
- ✓ Pay attention to cultural sensitivity/context in terms of eye contact and observing body language during the interview. Consult with peer researchers and community members about cultural contexts and sensitivity (in some cultures, for example, direct eye contact may be seen as disrespectful; body language have very specific cultural expressions).
- ✓ Proactively trouble shoot any challenge (see handout on Trouble Shooting)

What is Probing?

Sometimes in an interview, we do not receive the type of information we are looking for. **Probing is a technique where you ask follow-up questions that help to increase clarity, depth and richness in responses from participants.** Probing is an important element in qualitative interview methods that helps to enable quality interviews to generate rich, in-depth data from participants about their perspectives and experiences.

Types of Probing

- I. **Nudging probes:** These "questions" encourage interviewees to keep talking, but don't suggest a particular direction.
 - ✓ Yes, tell us more about that
 - ✓ Yes, go on
 - ✓ Yes, I would like to hear more about that
- II. **Clearinghouse probes:** These probes can be used to close an interview topic while ensuring that you have elicited all the information an interviewee wants to provide.
 - ✓ Is there anything else you would like to add?
 - ✓ Are there any questions I should have asked, but didn't?
 - ✓ Was there anything more you wanted to cover?
- III. **Probes to increase depth of content:** These probes encourage interviewees to provide more information about a particular topic.
 - ✓ Can you tell me, in detail, all the steps you had to take to get your degree accredited in Canada?
 - ✓ Please elaborate on how you juggle so many jobs and your family responsibilities.
- IV. **Probes to increase clarity:** These questions focus on clarifying particular words or phrases the interviewees uses during an interview.
 - ✓ I'm not sure I understand what you mean by "incompetent." Could you explain?
 - ✓ What is a 'hijab'?
- V. **Probes to capture feelings, perspectives and opinions:** These questions are designed to ask the interviewee to explore the feelings or thoughts underlying a particular statement.
 - ✓ How did that experience of discrimination make you feel?
- VI. **Probes to find out reasons, causes, and links:** These questions prompt interviewees to make connections between their experiences and larger issues. They follow a statement made by an interviewee.
 - ✓ What are the systemic barriers that are prevent you from getting a job in your field?
 - ✓ Why is it more difficult for women to find jobs in their field?
 - ✓ In your opinion, what should the government be doing to enable people of colour to find good jobs in their field?

- VII. **Probes to find more information on impacts.** These questions ask participants to elaborate on a statement. These statements are often directly linked to the research question.
- ✓ **How did that negative experience impact you?**
 - ✓ What are the direct and indirect health impacts on you and your family from not having a good job?
- VIII. **Hypothetical probes:** These questions pose a hypothetical situation and ask interviewees to respond.
- ✓ **Suppose the government introduced affordable childcare program in Ontario. How would that impact you?**
 - ✓ **Imagine that you could** go back in time. What is one thing that you would do differently?
 - ✓ If you were the prime minister of Canada, what steps would you take to overcome the challenges that you have identified?
- IX. **Probes to get the interviewee back on track:** Use these questions when the interviewee veers far away from the topic or doesn't answer the question you asked.
- ✓ **Let's return to your first job after coming to Canada. Please tell us...**
 - ✓ We were talking about how not having good job impacts your children. Can you tell us more about that?
- X. **Case scenario or vignette based probes:** Like the hypothetical probe, these probes pose a case scenario or a vignette, and conclude with follow up questions. These probes are useful for generating discussion on sensitive topics like mental health.

Case scenario: Mohammad and his family came to Canada three years ago. They are originally from Afghanistan but due to the war there, they had to flee and live in refugee camps in Pakistan for 7 years. The oldest son was killed during the war. Mohammad and his wife were both teachers in Afghanistan but neither one has been able to find a job in their field until now. Mohammad has recurring nightmares at night and cannot sleep. Both children have recently dropped out of school.

- ✓ To what extent do Mohammad's experiences reflect the experiences of immigrants from Afghanistan? Why? In what ways?
- ✓ What kinds of services and supports will be useful for Mohammed and his family?



Exercise: Avoiding Leading and Loaded Questions

Below are some leading and loaded questions. Change the framing of these questions so that they are not leading or loaded.

1. What are the great things that George Bush did for the USA during his presidency?

2. Why are youth of color always getting into criminal activities?

3. Why are refugee families so dependent on social assistance?



reSearch for Change: Trouble Shooting for Focus Groups and Interviews

Below is a list of potential scenarios and complications that might occur while conducting a focus group or interview. A researcher needs to use thoughtful discretion in *proactively* responding to these situations in a *professional manner*. The following 'Three A's' framework can be useful in trouble shooting:

Acknowledge: It is important to first acknowledge (verbally or indirectly) the situation. For example, if someone starts crying during a focus group, do not just ignore that participant and continue with the focus group discussion.

Ask: The next step is to ask the participant about the situation and if they want to continue with the focus group or interview. For example, if a participant starts crying ask the participant how they are feeling and whether they want to continue with the discussion or take a break. If there is a co-facilitator with you, one of you can take the person aside to follow up.

Action: After you acknowledge the situation and ask the participant what they would like to do, you take a professional action. Remember that you are a researcher and not a counselor; your professional role is to investigate and document and not to engage in therapy or other interventions. You can help to connect or refer participant to professional help after the focus group or interview.

Scenario 1: One or more participants appear to feel emotionally distressed as the discussion unfolds.

Response:

Scenario 2: A participant begins to cry in the middle of the discussion.

Response:

Scenario 3: Two participants begin to argue aggressively.

Response:

Scenario 4: A participant dominates the focus group discussion. He/She does not allow other people to speak or speaks over other people.

Response:

Scenario 5: A participant makes discriminatory comments about someone.

Response:

Scenario 6: A participant says he/she sometimes feels like dying (but then laughs and then everyone laughs).

Response:

Scenario 7: A participant mentions that he/she is being bullied and harassed and does not know what to do.

Response:

Scenario 8: Participant says he/she wants to say something but asks you to turn off the digital recorder.

Response:

Chapter Eight

Data Analysis in

Community-Based Research



Chapter Eight: Data Analysis in Community-Based Research

What is Data Analysis?

After you have collected your data, you need to organize, process and analyze it. Data Analysis is the process of ‘making sense’ of your collected data. In other terms, data analysis is the process of reviewing, organizing, and connecting the dots in the “raw” data or research results to link what participants have said to answer the larger research question. Data analysis is also about linking and categorizing data (e.g. finding patterns or exceptions) to develop, support or question theories and explanations about a particular issue. Analyzed data become evidence, facts, and knowledge.

Many CBR projects have been criticized for not involving community members/peer researchers in the analysis process. Even some avid proponents of CBR have argued that analysis is a difficult task and so should be left to the academics. In contrast, we recommend that community members/peer researchers should be most actively involved in the analysis process. Our experience shows that doing so can substantially enrich the quality and rigour of analysis. The tools in this section are geared at making data analysis more accessible and easy to teach/understand so CBR practitioners can actively involve community members in the data analysis process.

About Power, Subjectivity, Rigour in Data Analysis

Data analysis, like all other steps in research, is a subjective process meaning that how one connects the dots and makes sense of the data depends on each researcher’s views, beliefs, biases, and social position. Also, similar to all steps in research, data analysis is also a very political process meaning that there is a lot of power involved in interpreting and analyzing data to turn it into evidence, facts or knowledge and then into explanations and theories. While some traditional scientists believe that it is possible to generate evidence that is completely objective (meaning evidence that is free from any bias), there is now plenty of ‘evidence’ to show that complete objectivity is not possible. In fact, the very scientists who claim their research and analysis to be completely objective have been shown to be the most bias, including their research agendas being influenced by the powerful institutions that funded their research in the first place. While it is important to make sure that your analysis is rigorous, a best practice in research is to discuss potential limitations, biases, and subjectivity in your research rather than try to show that your research is completely objective. This practice is also referred to as ‘self-reflexivity.’

Doing rigorous analysis simply means doing analysis in a systematic way such that you are developing evidence and explanations that is most representative of what the data you collected actually holds. It means that you are not developing explanations and arguments that you do not actually have data to support with. It also means that, instead of doing comprehensive review and analysis of your data, you are not ‘cherry picking’ from your data or forcing your data to create arguments that is of special interest to you or your funder (rather than what the data all together actually says).

There are lots of checks and balances you can incorporate in your analysis to increase the ‘rigour’ and ‘validity’ of your analysis. Also, rigour and validity means different things in quantitative and qualitative research with different kinds of checks and balances in each method. For example, in quantitative research, rigour and validity has more to do with research results being replicable, meaning that if other researchers did the same research they should most likely end up with the same results and analysis. And if not, then researchers should explain why not. There are advanced statistical tools to measure and ensure rigour and validity in quantitative research. In qualitative research, rigour and validity has little to do with research being replicable since participant’s views and narratives collected in interviews or focus groups can vary widely (much more than in quantitative research) depending on many things including who is conducting the research, the timing, the place, the participants mood etc. Thus rigour and validity in qualitative research is measured more by richness in interpretation that is capable of capturing the everyday complexities and nuances of not just what people are saying but how and why they are saying them. In other words, the goal of qualitative researchers is to try their best to understand and present issues through participants’ voices and experiences.

Irrespective of the research method, a best practice in enhancing rigour and validity is to have different team members check and validate the analysis done by each member of the team.

Questions team members can ask include:

- Do we have enough data to support this finding/argument?
- How did you arrive at this explanation?
- Are there other potential explanations/interpretations of the data?
- Do you think you may have missed, overlooked or misinterpreted some data?
- How did your biases affect your analysis?
- What are limitations in the data and in the analysis?

Doing analysis collaboratively in teams can lead to richer and more comprehensive interpretation since different team members may notice different aspects in the data and offer varied explanations that might add to the richness of the overall interpretation. In particular, meaningfully involving community members/peer researchers in the analysis process can help to add insights and interpretations of data that only come from people with lived experiences of the issues of concern.

It is also good practice to have external people review and check your analysis. External reviewers does not need to be limited to other academics and can include a range of stakeholders including service providers and of course community of interest. When you have members of your ‘community of interest’ review and check your research analysis and findings, this process is also called a ‘community validation’ process (in CBR, this is in addition to having peer researchers involved in all phases of the research including in analysis). A ‘community validation’ meeting may include members who participated in the research as well as other members. Questions that can be asked in a community validation meeting include:

- Do these research findings resonate and reflect the everyday experiences that you face? If yes, how? If not, why not and how is it different?
- Have we represented and analyzed what you said in an accurate way?
- What have we overlooked or mis-interpreted?
- What is missing?
- What kind of contextual/local information help us understand this better?
- What do you feel are the most important findings? What struck you most? What confirmed what you already know? What did you find surprising?

As highlighted throughout this toolkit, a best practice in research is to carefully document and critically reflect on specific steps you have taken to do your research and do the analysis so that you can proactively discuss the strengths as well as the limitations in your research design, methods, analysis and study findings. It is during data analysis that you need to be particularly reflective of the strengths and limitations of your research design and research data.

Overview of Data Analysis Methods

While there are *many* approaches to conducting data analysis, these approaches generally fall under two umbrellas: Deductive or Inductive analysis.

- **Deductive analysis:** In this approach, you start with your theories, arguments or hypothesis and try and see whether your data supports or counters your arguments and hypothesis. For example, your starting argument may be that immigrants who have been in Canada for more than 10 years do (or do not) face barriers in finding stable jobs. In deductive analysis, you examine your data to see if it proves or disproves your proposed argument.
- **Inductive analysis:** In this approach, you develop your analysis, arguments and theories from the data that you have collected. In contrast to deductive analysis, you do not start with theories and arguments but rather, let the arguments and theories emerge from the data you have collected. For example, you examine your data about barriers to employment without any explicit assumptions about whether number of years in Canada might affect employment.

The particular approach you decide on can significantly affect your interpretations and your end results. Thus it is important to document and mention which analytical approach you are using. In reality, the analysis process tends to be more of a continuum. Though researchers may ground their analysis in a particular method, they may end up using both methods in varying degrees depending on the data set or go back and forth during the analysis process. Here again, **the important thing is to be reflective of your analytical process and to document it carefully as you go while trying to grasp strengths and limitations in what you are doing.**

Analysis of quantitative data (numbers and close-ended responses) and qualitative data (open-ended narratives) is quite different since the nature of these two types of data and the research method that generated them are very dissimilar. Quantitative analysis or analysis of quantitative data starts with data that is generally numerical or is converted into numerical data and is focused on doing numerical statistical analysis to capture generalizable patterns and trends for the community/population of interest. As noted earlier, in quantitative studies, rigour is measured by how replicable and how generalizable the results and analysis are. In contrast, qualitative analysis or analysis of qualitative data works with data that is open, flowing responses and narratives that may not necessarily be converted to numerical data. **The focus of qualitative data analysis is to try and understand the complexities and nuances in what participants are saying, how they are saying it, as well as the specific contexts and histories that help to explain why they are saying it. Rather than trying to document generalizable patterns, the goal in qualitative analysis is to capture diverse perspectives and experiences with attention to how these varying perspectives and experiences are produced. Qualitative analysis can also help to highlight the everyday nuances and ambivalences within human experiences and perspectives.**

Take for example, data about average annual household income generated by quantitative vs qualitative methods. In quantitative method (like in a survey or in Census), a question that asks ‘what is your average annual household income?’ would generate responses in numbers (eg \$35,000 per year). Asking the same question using qualitative method (open ended question) may generate 20 minute discussion about all the formal and informal sources of household income and how it varies over the course of the year and across years and how therefore it is very difficult to give a fixed amount.

Interpreting your Data

There are many ways in which your research team might conduct data analysis. While data analysis is dependent on your particular project and methodology, there are a few phases that cut across all research projects. The phases are reviewed briefly below.

Phase One: Organizing and Managing your Data

Data analysis begins as soon as you begin **organizing and managing your data**. The way you organize and manage your data will impact the way you interpret it.

- ✓ Will you organize the interviews by community?
- ✓ Will you organize them across participant demographics?
- ✓ How will you label or differentiate between transcripts or survey sets?

Data management is also guided by ethical considerations.

- ✓ How do you make sure your data is safe and secure?
- ✓ Do you store the data in a locked cabinet?
- ✓ Do you use a password on electronic files?

During this phase, you may also want to consider what software you will use (if any) to organize and later code your data. The type of software you use will influence how you organize and manage your data. If you are working with a team of academics, they may have access to specific data analysis software (see below for more info). Once you have determined the type of software, how will you input your data into the program?

Phase Two: Preliminary Analysis

The second phase of data analysis is often referred to as “**preliminary analysis**.” This refers to the process of getting to know your data. In qualitative research, this may mean sorting through interview or focus group transcripts to organize data into themes, issues, etc. In quantitative research, this will mean examining obvious trends in the data, through using simple statistical methods such as calculating percentages or frequencies.

This stage will look different depending on what methods you are using. As reviewed in [“Designing your Community-Based Research Project”](#) there are types of data: Qualitative data and Quantitative data. Qualitative data analysis generally follows these three stages: Description of phenomenon under study; Classification of data; Making connections with the data (e.g. within or between data sets) and to larger theories. These stages can all be conducted collaboratively.

The first stage is description. During the description phase, you strip away unnecessary detail in your data. What general themes emerge from the data? What are the central characteristics? When reading the transcripts, what do you notice in response to your research question(s)? During the classification stage, if you are using interviews or focus groups, you may read the transcripts and begin to generate a list of possible themes or codes amongst your team. Codes are used to mark the processes that arise in your interview or focus group transcripts. Codes can be used to categorize the data both within and/or across transcripts. For example, a code entitled “barriers to health care” may represent the way youth speak to barriers in accessing health care services within one interview transcript or across many. These codes should be developed in relationship to the research questions. Once you have a good understanding of the codes in your data, you may want to develop a coding framework. This is a complete list of codes from your data. The codes are grouped thematically and include associated definitions. You may find an example of a coding framework in the tools and templates section below.

Phase Three: In-Depth Analysis

After you have done your preliminary analysis, you may move onto conducting “**in-depth analysis**”. This is where you begin the third phase of analysis - making connections. Similar to preliminary analysis, the details of this stage depend on what method you are using. In qualitative analysis this is often when you “code” data - otherwise known as organizing data according to pre-identified themes and processes as identified above. Making connections can also be done through graphical representations - e.g. concept maps, graphs, diagrams. You may wish to physically cut up interview transcripts to as a way of organizing themes across transcripts and identifying patterns and variations in the data. In quantitative analysis, this is when you use statistics to examine trends, determine the significance of these results, and produce figures or tables to display this information.

In-Depth Analysis is often done with the use of **data analysis software** such as NVIVO, Atlas Ti, or SPSS. This software assists a research project in managing, organizing and analyzing data. Some software, such as Atlas can also code images and allows for multiple users to analyze the same set of data (i.e. the same focus group).

Data analysis software can be very costly and often requires a lot of training to use efficiently. For this reason, you may choose to identify one or two people to conduct the heavy-duty work after the full team has reviewed the preliminary analysis. The identified coder creates summary reports to share with the larger team. You may also wish to speak to the academics on your team, as they may have access to software and graduate students who can provide in-kind training. You may also choose to organize and analyze your interviews in programs like Microsoft Word or Excel.

Phase Four: Beginning the Writing Process

You have coded your data, created some concept maps and have begun thinking about the writing process. Writing does not come after analysis. Rather, it is through the process of writing that you crystallize many of your thoughts and arguments. Writing can help you clarify the differences between categories, and the relationships mapped out in visual diagrams and group discussions.

Starting the writing process is often a challenging step. One strategy to overcome this challenge is to jump right in. Get all your ideas down on paper; don't put pressure on yourself to create the perfect first draft. The process of writing itself may spark new ideas or pose new questions. For this reason, it's not necessarily important to write in a linear order. You may want to begin with how

you have done your analysis, and follow through with an outline of key arguments explaining how and why you have made the connections you did. Alternatively, you may begin in the middle, and fill in the gaps at the end. Another strategy may be to create data analysis summaries to share with your team. This process will help you refine your ideas, as well as provide a platform for dialogue between team members. No matter how you organize your writing process, it is important to leave time to reflect:

- ✓ Is your idea clear?
- ✓ Have you described *what* you are writing about before analyzing it?
- ✓ Is there a balance between analysis and description?
- ✓ Have you accounted for your own thoughts and feelings in the writing process?

Data analysis is often an iterative process. You may need to step back from the data in order to gain new insights.

Engaging Community Members in Data Analysis

In some Community-Based Research projects, it is assumed that academics will do the majority of data analysis. This is one approach to data analysis in CBR. While academics' training and experience in data analysis is certainly an integral asset to the research team, you may also want to consider including community members in this process.

Community members' reflection and insight on data can be incredibly valuable. Their lived experience lens on the data provides an added level of analysis, while their presence during data collection provides knowledge or clarification on data collection events. Last, collaborative data analysis is one way of building validity into the research process by having multiple eyes on the data and analysis while including community members' voices increases ownership over knowledge production. (The term "validity" refers to having the evidence or "proof" to back up your findings).

Not every Community-Based Research project engages community members in data analysis. In some cases, community members may not be interested in in-depth data analysis and may prefer to give feedback at various stages, such as during preliminary analysis and at the end. You may wish to ask community members where their interest lies; what if community members have no interest in data analysis? Alternatively, what if community members show interest in analysis, but have differing literacy or numeracy levels? How might you work around these challenges? This decision must also be made in tandem with what resources and supports your agency and Community-Based Research project has access to.

Tools and Templates

Handout: Storing your Data - Steps to Ensure Privacy and Confidentiality

Data management is guided by ethical considerations. How do you make sure your data is safe and secure? Do you store the data in a locked cabinet? Do you use a password on electronic files? Use this handout to think through how you will manage and store the raw data during and after analysis. You may wish to develop an agency policy on storing and transferring confidential information.

Handout: Building your Analytic Framework.

There are three levels of analysis: Descriptive, Interpretive and Critical. These levels of analysis are not fixed categories but rather are dynamic and like a spectrum. You may wish to use this handout to train community members in the basics of data analysis. As you move through the handout, you may wish to use your own data to begin the data analysis process. This might include printing quotes or using sticky notes to group and categorize the data.

Handout: Reading, Memoing, and Coding.

Reading, memoing and coding are important processes in qualitative data analysis. This handout describes each of these processes, reviews some key techniques and provides some examples from our work.

Template: Coding Framework

Once you have a solid understanding of the codes in your data, you may want to develop a coding framework. This is a complete list of codes from your data, and will help you in categorizing your data. In a coding framework, the codes are grouped thematically and include associated definitions. This template is an example of a coding framework from our Income Security, Race and Health Project. Note that this template has been excised from a larger document, and reflects the data analysis software used by the project.

Exercise: Data Analysis Scavenger Hunt

We practice analysis each day as we interpret the world around us. These daily analytic skills can be applied to research. For this exercise, you may select one to two interview transcripts for your team to read. Use the checklist below as a guide for identifying moments of significance within or between transcripts. You may wish to do this in partners, small groups, or as a team. This data scavenger hunt will assist you in moving from descriptive analysis (the what) to interpretative analysis (the so what).

Template - Data Analysis Summary

Beginning the writing process is an important part of the analysis process. You may wish to begin this process by writing data analysis summaries to share with your team. This process will help you refine your ideas, and provide a platform for dialogue between team members.

More Resources on Data Analysis

Collaborative Data Analysis

The CBR toolkit, Inclusion Research Handbook, created by the Ontario Women's Health Network contains a working strategy for collaborative data analysis. <http://www.owhn.on.ca/tools.htm>

Qualitative Methods and Analysis

The Wellesley Institute has developed resources on data analysis for both quantitative and qualitative methods. The following training modules are available here:
http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/presentations/cbr_200_series/

- CBR221 Introduction to Survey Data Analysis
- CBR 302 - Qualitative Methods and Analysis



reSearch for Change:

Storing your Data: Steps to Ensure Privacy and Confidentiality

I. Confidentiality during Data Collection

- ✓ Inform participants that they do not have to use or share their personal name during focus groups or interviews.
- ✓ When speaking about data collection with the research team, assign participants a number (particularly in focus groups).
- ✓ Inform participants that they do not have to use actual names when referring to other individuals or agencies.
- ✓ For focus groups, encourage participants not to share with family/friends and others what was discussed during the focus group.
- ✓ Whenever possible, conduct interview/focus group/survey in neutral locations (e.g. libraries, community centres) and in rooms that can ensure privacy.
- ✓ If data collection happens within your own centre and includes clients, take necessary extra measures to ensure privacy/confidentiality. Service providers should not be aware that their clients took part in the research (e.g. hold interview afterhours; keep information about interview discreet).

XI. Processing of raw data

- ✓ First level security processing - remove all references to names and identifiers.
- ✓ Second level of security processing - closer read to remove any data that can potentially identify an individual, agency or small group of people.

XII. Secure storage, access, and utilization of data

- ✓ All consent forms, recruitment/screening forms to be stored in a sealed envelop and stored in locked cabinet (accessible only to PIs and project coordinator).
- ✓ All raw data to be stored in secure, locked cabinet; all electronic raw data to be password protected and stored in protected folders.
- ✓ Research team members should have access to different levels of security-processed data as per their role and responsibility.
- ✓ Keep close track of data requests, utilization, and transfer; share data in password protected, secure mediums (e.g. memory key should be password encrypted)
- ✓ Remind all data users to practice confidentiality when storing and password-protected raw data in their personal computers.
- ✓ Raw data to be securely destroyed following completion of project.

XIII. Confidentiality agreements from all external persons who have access to raw data

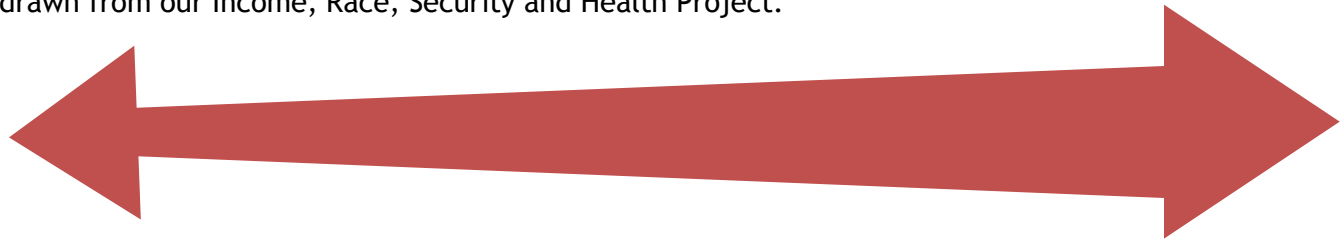
- ✓ All external people who will have to work with data need to sign a confidentiality agreement (research assistants, interpreters, transcribers, translators, etc.)
- ✓ Ensure external people give back all copies of raw data or confirm that they have purged their copy.

XIV. Security and data sensitivity audit for results and reports

- ✓ Ask people reviewing reports to check for data confidentiality/sensitivity.
- ✓ Be sensitive and prepared about how some stakeholders (e.g. media) make distort results for negative purpose.

reSearch for Change: Building your Analytic Frameworks

There are three levels of analysis: **Descriptive, Interpretive and Critical**. These levels of analysis are not fixed categories. Rather, they are dynamic continuum. The more meaning and significance you assign to your analysis the more you move from descriptive to interpretive to a critical level of analysis; in that sense, the process is cumulative. However, researchers may go back and forth in this continuum depending on the type of data and research goals. Examples in this handout are drawn from our Income, Race, Security and Health Project.



Descriptive

Interpretive

Critical

Descriptive analysis: Simple descriptive analysis involves creating a list of themes/issues based on the data without examining the significance, meanings or relationships in and between these themes/issues. In descriptive analysis, you list and describe these without assigning them any order or significance.

Example 1.1. Strategies Utilized to Achieve Employment and Income Security

Strategies	resumes, internet searchers, job posting boards; temporary agencies, approach potential employers directly; volunteering; networking; job fairs; adapt to Canadian labour market; government funded employment programs; Volunteering (to get Canadian experience); Take on survival jobs; make personal & professional sacrifices; employment insurance, workfare/welfare; income earning activity outside of the mainstream labour market (working 'under-the-table' jobs, criminal activity); Education & training (ESL, upgrade skills, obtaining equivalency for foreign credentials, apprenticeships, etc...); self-employment, financial literacy/strategies Hope; patience; determination; denial of negative impacts; advocating for change
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Interpretive analysis: In this step, you give significance, hierarchical order, or meaning to the themes/issues you have generated. To do so, you may regroup themes/issues into the related categories and assign significance or order to them. By doing so, you assign significance and implications for each of the types of strategies.

For example, based on our preliminary analysis of findings, the range of strategies identified by participants are: 1) Strategies used to find work, 2) Strategies used to financially make ends meet, and 3) Strategies that invest into long-term solutions.

Example 1.2 Strategies Utilized to Achieve Employment and Income Security

Strategies	Strategies Finding Work (short-term)	Traditional Job search methods (resumes, internet searchers, job posting boards, etc...); temporary agencies, approach potential employers directly; volunteering; networking; job fairs; adapt to Canadian labour market; government funded employment programs; Volunteering (to get Canadian experience)
	Strategies for Making Ends Meet (short-term)	Take on survival jobs; make personal & professional sacrifices; employment insurance, workfare/welfare; income earning activity outside of the mainstream labour market (working 'under-the-table' jobs, criminal activity)
	Long-term Solutions (resource intensive)	Education & training (ESL, upgrade skills, obtaining equivalency for foreign credentials, apprenticeships, etc.); self-employment, financial literacy/strategies
	Protective Responses	Hope; patience; determination; denial of negative impacts; advocating for change

Critical analysis: This step takes interpretive analysis a step further and assigns political significance to the themes and issues. Critical analysis looks at participants' actions/experiences and places them in a wider context (the 'so what?' question). Answering the 'so what?' question can take you in many different directions. It is important to continually return to the goals of the research project.

The following example focuses on common responses from racialized residents and service providers on the effectiveness of mainstream strategies. It provides insights into personal strategies to the systemic barriers and challenges to finding decent work:

Example 1.3. Strategies Utilized to Achieve Employment and Income Security

Findings from the study suggests that in spite of using all available mainstream resources and supports, racialized groups continue to face barriers in securing decent well paying jobs in their field and consequently face difficulties in meeting their everyday basic needs. In general, our preliminary analysis indicates that the most accessible mainstream programs/services to finding work present short-term strategies supporting families in their efforts to make ends meet from month-to-month. While participants from all focus groups did identify successful mainstream programs and services presenting long-term solutions, findings indicate that many racialized residents face multiple barriers accessing these programs/services. This suggests that existing mainstream job search, career training, and settlement services may not be effective solutions to addressing the challenges and barriers facing racialized groups, particularly barriers that are deeply rooted in larger systems of oppression and racism.

During critical analysis, you may begin linking your analysis with larger theories about how the world works. This might include exploring how we come to understand our findings, or the impact of systemic oppression on peoples' experiences. Our theories about the world and how knowledge is constructed will always influence the way we read and understand the data.



reSarch for change: Reading, Memoing and Coding

Reading is the process of extracting meaning from written or printed word. As such, reading and reviewing your data is an important element in data analysis.

Memoing is the process of recording observations and thoughts about the data. This can be done in the margins of transcripts, in a notebook, or in emails to team members. Memoing can include first impressions, personal reflections, or questions and is a valuable stage of data analysis. Often, these initial memos frame the foundation of our later writing. It is also a rigorous method of naming and accounting for subjective reactions to the data.

Coding is a process of classification. Without classifying the data, it will be difficult to know what it is you are analyzing. During the classification stage, if you are using interviews or focus groups, you may begin to generate a list of possible codes amongst your team. Codes are used to mark the processes that arise in your interview or focus group transcripts. Codes can be used to categorize the data both within and/or across transcripts, and make up the foundation of your analysis. This is sometimes called the thematic or coding framework.

Data Analysis Checklist

- ☑ **Be an active reader.** While you are reading, use a highlighter or pen to mark the text. Underline or circle key words and phrases that intrigue or confuse you. Continually ask the questions: Who? What? Where? Why? So what?
- ☑ **Identify themes and sub-themes in the transcript(s).** What patters are emerging? Make comparisons between other transcripts. How is this different from other transcripts you have read and why?
- ☑ **Select key quotes or words.** Identify and reflect on quotes that stood out to you. This may include words or phrases that are repeated frequently throughout one or several transcripts.
- ☑ **Continually ask questions.** What images come to mind? What are your reactions? What surprised you? What did you expect would be discussed but was not?
- ☑ **Discuss your initial reactions with your team.** Active reading and memoing is particularly important when engaging in collaborative data analysis as it is a useful way to record and share your ideas. **Talking about your ideas** can generate new insights. Make sure you return to your notes after discussing your transcript.

EXAMPLE: IDENTIFYING CODES & MEMOS

Expectations of Canada:
Education Expectations:
Continue studies started
back home

R10B: For me, I also told myself that I was going to learn English and then from there go back to study something that I had previously studied. But, I come here and I face a completely different reality. My challenge was my English. Even though I was there, but as a Latino,

Barriers to Learning English: No time, need to work (pay bills)

"caribe?" What does that mean? Need to check that with peer researchers?"

being the way that it is, the majority of the time, the ones who are able to come in are the ones with very little money, no? Because they come here to work. But they have to give more time to work because we have to pay for things. So, in my case,

the time passed, almost more than seven years, one as a *caribe* is not able to study because they have to dedicate themselves...so over those seven years, I fell behind. So, the longer I was

"Although they did not explicitly say that their expectations to learn English was not meant, this is definitely implied. Lack of time is mentioned as a barrier, so is family (I am assuming they are related)"

English

Barriers to Learning English: Difficult with Families

this process unfolded. But for writing, grammar, so then I told myself 'I'm going to bring my degree' the west and converted (?) translated everything ??? but, the English. One has to know the language to write the TOEFL examination, and in my case, study...or for being a teaching assistant, in order to be a teacher. But yeah, as we get older, we have our own families and it becomes more difficult. So, this...well, your dreams no longer ever seem to become a reality. So, you try to take up different types of jobs. In my case, something that I was able to do was work with kids and in childcare.

Expectations of Canada:
Work Expectations: Child care worker;
Expectations Not Met:
Dreams Disappear

"Why was childcare selected to be the profession they were to pursue in Canada? Is this the live-in care giver program? Need to find out if their plans to be a child care worker improved their chances of being accepted into Canada? Is it possible that these expectations around 'taking care of children' limited their imagination of what could be possible?"

Coding Framework

Once you have a solid understanding of the codes in your data, you may want to develop a coding framework. This is a complete list of codes from your data, and will help you in categorizing your data. In a coding framework, the codes are grouped thematically and include associated definitions. This template is an example of a coding framework from our Income Security, Race and Health Project. Note that this template has been excised from a much larger document, and reflects the data analysis software used by the project.

Code #	Code Name	Code Description	References
1	Education - General	Parent Node: This captures general (descriptive) comments about their pre- and post- migration education. This includes level of education, certificates completed or in progress, other qualifications, years in school, institutions attend, etc...	Sources:1 References: 1
1.1	Education	Pre-Migration Education Experiences <u>Child Node:</u> access (accessibility and barriers) to education; quality of education; educational pathways; cost of education; cultural/social values around education; <u>Coder's Notes:</u> Employers perceptions of 'foreign' degrees/education	Sources: 7 References: 34
2.2	Education	Post-Migration Education Experiences <u>Child Node:</u> access (accessibility and barriers - including childcare) to education, quality of education; education pathways; plans for future education; cost of education; education support; high school equivalency programs, cultural/social values around education; accreditation, re-certification; discrimination in education systems; views on the value of education as a strategy to find work <u>Note:</u> responses that talk about education as a strategy for finding work and/or as part of a long-term plan to achieve income security should also be coded under strategies to find work and/or long-term income security strategies	Sources: 17 References: 143
3	Strategies for Finding Work	<u>Parent Node:</u> captures all discussion on families' strategies to find work (decent work and survival jobs); descriptive list of the range of strategies the project's families are using; insight into the effectiveness of the strategies they are using; comments on the nature and quality of support services; descriptive list of programs/services available <u>Note:</u> responses about education as a strategy for finding work should be double-coded under strategies to find work and Post-Migration Education Experiences	Sources: 17 References: 205
4	Challenge/ Barriers to Finding Work	<u>Parent Node:</u> socio-economic climate (changes in policies, recession); childcare; lack of (Canadian) references; English language fluency; family/community influences over choices/decisions; employer strategies; Canadian experience; non-recognition of degrees/credentials; Discrimination <u>Note:</u> responses regarding discrimination as a barrier/challenge to finding work should be double codes as a 'challenge /barrier to finding work & discrimination <u>Coder's Note:</u> Captured a lot of comments on recent changes in the labour market (secure jobs do not exist, the recession); Includes comments from self-employed and their difficulty in developing a successful business	Sources: 17 References: 213

reSearch for Change: Connecting the Dots and Making Sense of Data

We practice analysis each day as we interpret the world around us. These daily analytic skills can be applied to research. For this exercise, you may select one to two interview transcripts for your team to read. Use the checklist below as a guide for identifying moments of significance within or between transcripts. You may wish to do this in partners, small groups, or as a team. This data scavenger hunt will assist you in moving from descriptive analysis (the what) to interpretative analysis (the ‘so what’).

- **Simple Quantitative Significance:** Identifies the most frequent and infrequent responses. This may include answers to how many, how long, how much, etc.
 - What is the majority of participants saying? What is the second most frequent response? What do you think is important but perhaps not a lot of people are saying it?
 - **Example:** 50% of participants identified childcare as a significant barrier to finding and keeping decent work

- **Qualitative Significance:** Identifies subjective meaning behind human experience. This might include personal experiences, feelings, understandings, and explanations. It includes not only what someone said but also how they said it (e.g. they laughed).
 - ✓ What perspectives are represented in the data? These are often represented as participants’ opinions.
 - ✓ What experiences are represented in the data? These are often descriptions of what happened.
 - ✓ What are impacts are represented in the data? These are descriptions of how an event or experience affected the participant or their community.
 - ✓ What responses are represented in the data? Responses include how a participant reacts or responds to an event or experience. This may be represented alongside the impacts of an event or experience.
 - ✓ What casual explanations a represented in the data? Casual explanations are participants’ explanation of why something happened.
 - ✓ The list below points to different examples of qualitative significance: categorical significance, comparative significance, uniqueness, etc.

- **Categorical Significance:** Identifies common groupings within or across data sets. Without organizing data into groups, there is no way to make sense of it.
 - ✓ What types of responses can be grouped together? What heading or theme could you assign each group or sub-group?

- **Example:** Findings from our study point to different types of discrimination as a key barrier finding and keep work. Response from participants can be grouped into the following categories of barriers: Racialized discrimination; Gender-based discrimination; Xenophobia and discrimination faced by immigrants; Place-based discrimination; Discrimination based on language; Age-based discrimination
- **Comparative Significance:** Identifies comparisons between two or more categories, quotes, or themes, etc.
- ✓ **What are the differences and/or similarities in responses between groups of participants?**
 - ✓ **Example:** While the majority of focus group participants identified racism as a key barrier to finding and keeping work, participants in the Vietnamese focus group and male participants who have been in the country less than 2 years noted that they did not perceive racism as a barrier to the labour market.
- **Diversity/Complexity/Heterogeneity:** Identifies data that challenges our simplistic or initial reactions to phenomenon.
- **How do these differences or similarities correspond to race, class gender, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, ability, or unique experiences etc.?**
 - **Which responses do you find puzzling or complex?**
 - **Example:** In an Access Alliance study on refugee youth, we initially started out with differentiating between two types of groups within refugee community (sponsored refugees and refugee clamaints). However, during data collection and analysis, we quickly realized that there were more layers of heterogeneity within refugee community that we needed to consider including the nature of forced migration, the number of migrations, the length of being a ‘refugee,’ and whether refugee youth came as “unaccompanied minor.”
- **Uniqueness:** Identifies data that provides significant insight in response to the research question.
- ✓ **Which interviews or quotes stand out as particularly meaningful?**
 - ✓ **Example:** “I just think it is not really now as we go to 2010 I don’t really think it’s a black and white issue anymore, I think there is more diversity now a days and with the whole Black Creek area and the OW I think it is all laziness. People get so used to the cheque coming in direct deposit every month that they don’t want to do better. Then they get down on the big man, oh it’s the big man, the white man doesn’t want me to prosper or I’m in Jane and Finch and the police won’t leave me alone and yet you walk around with a gun on you so how will he leave you alone and the brother who is next to you hang with you who is trying to prosper gets brought down with you because you’re doing it and he is hanging with you. That is what it is.” (Female Participant, Black Community FG)

- **Personal Significance:** Identifies moments in the data that resonates with your personal experience. These moments will help you acknowledge and account for your own subjective interpretations.
 - ✓ Which data do you find familiar? Which interviews can you relate to?
 - ✓ **Example:** One interview participant may have experienced barriers finding employment at the same hospital where you work.

- **Outliers:** Identifies data that do not seem to “fit” with the rest of the data. Sometimes, these pieces of data are anomalies. Other times, they provide valuable information and new insights to your study.
 - ✓ Which responses don’t seem to “fit” with your analysis? Which responses confuse you?
 - ✓ **Example:** In an Access Alliance research project on precarious employment, we had recruited for participants who had at least two years of paid work experience in precarious types of jobs. However, we realized after examining our data that some of the participants had self-employment experience. We had not considered self-employment as a variable in our study parameter. Thus the self-employment data was an ‘outlier.’ However, upon closer analysis, we realized that many more participants have had some kind of experience with self-employment (even short term ones) and that self-employment was an important experience in people who are stuck in precarious employment. Based on this realization, we decided to make this ‘outlier’ an integral component of our analysis.



reSearch for Change: Data Analysis Summary

Possible Title:

The goals of this section:

What will the readers learn from this section?

List in point form the purpose of this section and the main messages. These are the things readers will learn based on the data from the data summary.

Section Outline

Provide an outline of all of the sub-sections using headings to separate each section. Each section should have an introduction, a breakdown of the key findings, recommendations for additional reading and/or context that might be useful in placing the findings (data) in a wider political context. It should also contain a conclusion.

Content Notes

Provide bullet point, plain language notes that will tell us what each subsection will be about.

Do not worry too much about the quality of your writing as long as the group can understand what it is you are trying to say in this section.

A subsection of key findings (patterns & trends in the data) should include or at least consider the following:

Point form summary of what you found in the data.

- ✓ Supporting Evidence (a list of relevant quotes that support the point you are trying to make)
- ✓ Try to show us how you came to this finding by demonstrating simple qualitative significance, categorical significance, comparative significance (differences/similarities between groups of participants - e.g. gender, race, age), Uniqueness, Qualitative Significance (summarize the perceptions, experiences, causal explanations, responses and impacts communicated by participants)

Discussion Questions

Think about and list some questions or concerns that you want to bring to the core research team on the day you present. This may also include something interesting that you learned from the data that may not have a lot of quotes to support it (the outliers). You may want to also ask the group what they think the implications of the findings for this section. What kind of recommendations for change the findings could support? Get the group to agree on the main message of this section.

Chapter Nine

Disseminating your

Community-Based Research Project



Chapter Nine: Disseminating your Community-Based Research Project

You have finished the data analysis phase and have summarized your findings. Now it is time to share your findings with a larger audience. Much like evaluation, dissemination does not have to begin at the end of your Community-Based Research project. In fact, because dissemination is often aligned with access and control of knowledge, much of the dissemination planning should be done at the beginning of your project. Similarly, you may choose to begin dissemination before you have even analyzed your data; sharing your research design and data collection process is also valuable.

This section will help you think through the what, how and why of your dissemination strategy. Since dissemination is often about sharing your findings with decision-makers and the general public, this section should be read alongside the following section, [“Creating Policy Change”](#).

What is Dissemination?

The term dissemination refers to the sharing of research findings beyond your research team. Dissemination can also be seen as a call to action. To disseminate is to distribute, educate, circulate, publicize and promote.

In more traditional forms of academic research, researchers use academic journals, conferences and books to disseminate the findings of their work. These practices connect the findings to communities of academic researchers (and to some extent beyond the academy). Because Community-Based Research broadens the research agenda, it opens up the scope and range of options for participation in the research dialogue. The target audience may include a wide variety of stakeholders, including community members, who are often the ones actively participating in sharing findings. Dissemination can also promote sustainability; finding creative ways to get the information out into the community can be a way to ensure the impact of your project continues after your project terminates.

How to Disseminate your Findings

Appropriate, timely and effective dissemination takes time, planning and resources. For this reason, it is useful to build dissemination into your budget and plan at the beginning of your Community-Based Research project. Dissemination is best planned when designing the research itself - especially as the dissemination plan can have an impact on the research. For example, if you plan to distribute findings through video footage you need to secure permission from potential participants at the time of filming. As evidenced by the Dissemination Cycle handout below, dissemination can be implemented throughout all stages of the research project.

The research team should identify key dissemination goals and prioritize dissemination strategies. This involves examining what strengths, resources and opportunities the team/organization(s) have as well as obstacles in terms of dissemination. Even with limited time and money, there is a lot that can be done to move research findings off the shelf and out into the world. Dissemination tools include local and mass media, magazine and journal articles, websites, blogs, conferences, “brown bag” lunches, cultural events, newsletters and even old-fashioned meetings. There are many

creative ways you can share your findings from video screenings, to workshops, to community symposiums. However, no matter what dissemination outlet you choose, it is important to plan strategically based on your project's purpose, goals and objectives. The type of outlet you choose should be consistent with your audience. (You may choose to have multiple dissemination outlets to reach multiple audiences).

It is also important to manage dissemination strategies with project goals and resources. To assist you, you may wish to create a dissemination plan with your larger team. In this process, key stakeholders explore different shared goals of how the research findings should be disseminated and used to affect change. Creating a dissemination plan is a collaborative ongoing process that will change as the research unfolds, findings emerge and political contexts change.

Developing a Dissemination Plan⁸

Before you begin disseminating your findings, you may want to develop a dissemination plan. A dissemination plan maps out the what, who, why, when and how of dissemination. Your plan should attend to the following questions:

I. What findings do you want to share?

- ✓ What are the goals of your research project? If your goal is to influence particular practices within social service agencies, you may want to share findings on best practices with social service workers.
- ✓ What were your project successes? Did your Community-Based Research project follow an innovative model? Did you resolve particular challenges that would be useful to share?

XV. Who should hear about your research findings? Why do they need to hear about your research? Why do you want to reach them?

- ✓ If you want to reach social service agencies and affect community practice, what conferences can you present your findings at?
- ✓ If you want your research to be part of grassroots mobilizing, how can you make sure your dissemination is connected, relevant and community driven?
- ✓ If you want your research to have a strong policy impact (influencing what laws are written and how they are enforced), what policy makers will you be targeting? How can they be involved in shaping the framework of the research?
- ✓ Once you know who your stakeholders are, how will you frame your findings?
 - What are your messages? What are the different ways that specific communities make meaning and share information?
 - What is your relationship with key stakeholders?

XVI. What is the Big Picture? What other factors do you need to consider in planning for dissemination?

- ✓ What is the political, institutional or environmental context in which the research is being conducted?

⁸ Created in assistance from the "Developing a Dissemination Plan" by Canadian Health Services Research Foundation http://www.chsrf.ca/knowledge_transfer/communication_notes/comm_note_dissemination_plan_e.php

- ✓ How does your research team view the ownership of knowledge produced during the study? Who “owns” the research?
- ✓ Are you positioned within a particular community? Are there community members that were part of the research that were part of the research involved in the dissemination plan?
- ✓ How does the research relate to other research? What could the research change (i.e. programming, policy, etc.)?

XVII. Given your audience and aim, what is the best way to share your findings?

- ✓ How can you disseminate your findings in a way suited to your audience? What community leaders can help to connect you with people, and ensure that your message is accessible?
- ✓ Are there major events that you can connect your research to once it has been completed? (e.g. conferences, days focusing on a particular issue, etc.)
- ✓ What resources do you have (human and material) to maximize your ability to distribute your findings?
- ✓ Does your research challenge dominant understandings? (If so, how will this have an impact on getting media? Will this impact the sharing of your research in public venues?)
- ✓ Have you tailored your knowledge dissemination to fit the profile of your diverse audiences?

XVIII. Given your audience and aim, who is the best person (or people) to share your findings? Different people are effective at delivering different messages.

- ✓ Who will be the lead on different dissemination platforms? (i.e. articles, conference presentations, public forums, etc.)
- ✓ Do community members who were involved in the research present materials? Do they have ownership over knowledge being disseminated?
- ✓ What role can your community partners play in assisting your with outreach for dissemination?
- ✓ In identifying the ‘messengers’ of your research, how can their social location affect audience dynamics (i.e. gender, race, immigration status, sexual orientation, first language, etc.)?

XIX. When do you need to share information on your research process and/or findings? What are the timelines for your proposed activities?

- ✓ What are the timelines for getting an article in a journal or magazine?
- ✓ Does a newspaper or magazine have a special focus or edition that will relate to your work?
- ✓ Are some of the dissemination activities time-sensitive (e.g. tied to a current campaign or window for policy change)?

XX. How will you know if you have reached your dissemination goals?

- ✓ Are your goals measurable?
- ✓ How will you measure success?
- ✓ How will you track your dissemination process versus dissemination outcomes?

Exploring Innovative Knowledge Translation Tools

“Effective messages explain what your research results mean, why they are important, and what action should be taken as a result. They are not simply a summary of the results. Note the wider context if applicable – how the results fit with the body of related research on the topic. Make messages clear, simple, and action-oriented. The style and content should be tailored for each audience.” - The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation

Dissemination does not have to be a one-way process, nor does it have to be a summary of your findings. Plan events where people can engage with the findings. After all, dissemination should be about knowledge *exchange*. Community-Based Research is a living, breathing and dynamic approach to doing research - Your dissemination process should reflect this!

Access Alliance has a track record of using innovative means to engage communities and share findings, such as photovoice, community panels, digital storytelling and theatre. In planning for knowledge translation, you may want to think through different ways that you can engage multiple stakeholders, including community members. Arts-based dissemination methods can be one way of achieving this, while also increasing the accessibility and ‘fun-factor.’ How can a knowledge translation event or medium become a platform for new knowledge creation? How can your dissemination strategy be used to create social change?

Tools and Templates

Handout: Dissemination Cycle

Dissemination does not have to start and end at the conclusion of your project. This handout shows how to integrate dissemination throughout your Community-Based Research project.

Activity: Dissemination Planning Tool

Findings are like stories. What story do you want to pitch? Who do you want to hear it? What do you want your audience to take from it? The story might change depending on the audience. Use this activity to help you plan your dissemination strategy according to audience.

Handout: Choosing your Dissemination Outlet

Choosing a dissemination outlet can be a challenging task. It is important that your medium matches your message. The outlet you choose should reflect both the goal of your dissemination strategy as well as the audience you have in mind. Use this handout as a guide to think through possible dissemination outlets according to stakeholder group or goal.

Activity: Planning your Dissemination Outlet

Choosing a dissemination outlet can be a challenging task. There are strengths and limitations to each dissemination outlet that you choose. For example, an academic publication will contribute to the literature but may not be accessible to the community members who participated in your research. Use this activity to think through the pros or cons of each outlet.

Checklist: Disseminating your Research

Community-Based Research shouldn't just sit on a shelf. Sharing knowledge about your research process and findings is an important step in Community-Based Research. This checklist provides a list of possible steps in disseminating your work.

Checklist: Event Checklist

This template, originally designed in Microsoft Excel, helps research coordinators at Access Alliance plan and coordinate Community-Based Research events. You may wish to use this checklist as a model to create your own event-specific checklist. By creating a checklist in Excel, you can re-organize the categories based on completion date, content, or task manager.

Template: Publication and Authorship Policy

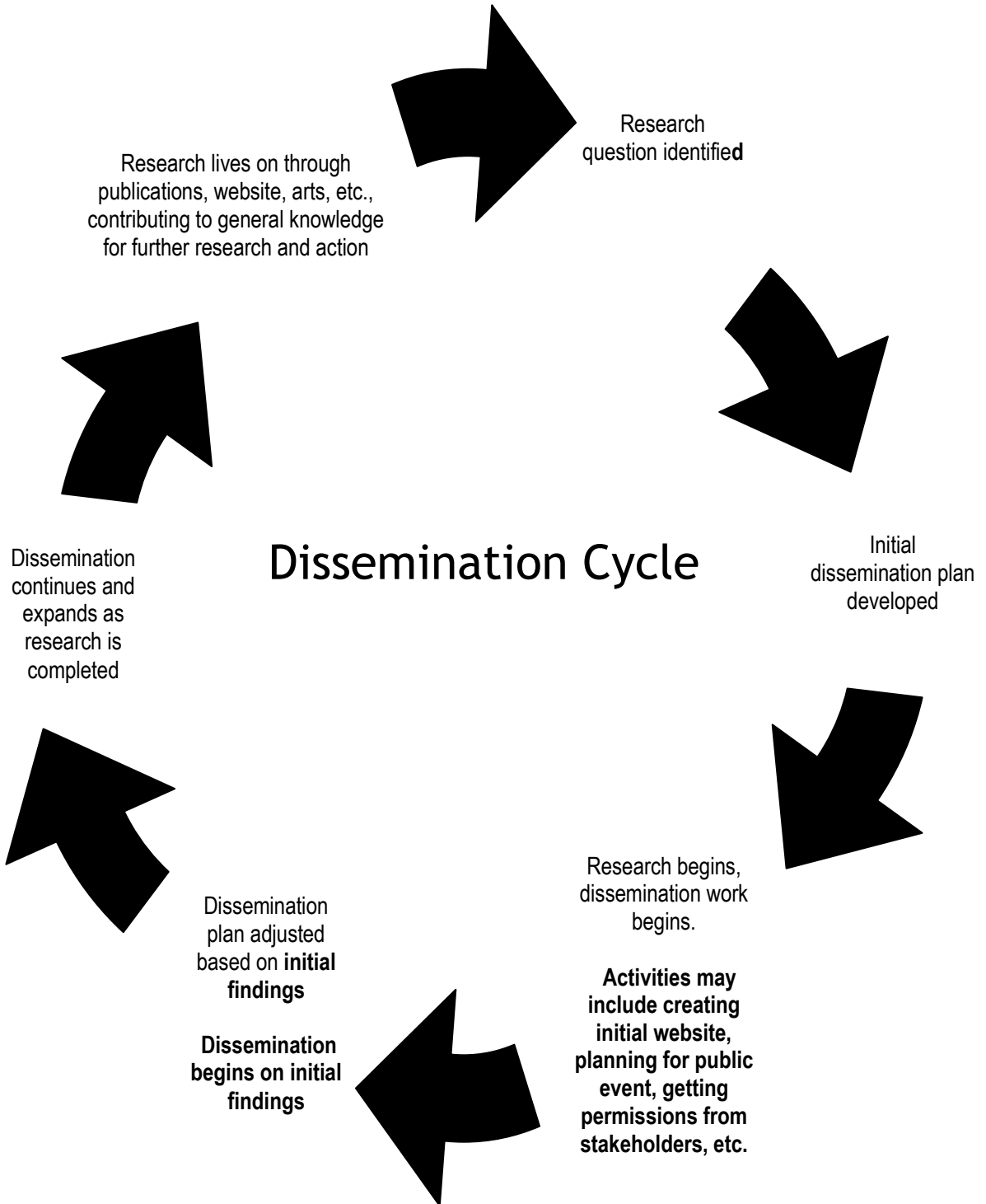
Give credit where it is due and create a policy on authorship or data. Agree who owns the raw, analyzed and interpreted data from the beginning. Make sure that community members and community agencies receive proper recognition of their contribution to the work. Invite community members and stakeholders to participate in the authorship processes. You may wish to consult Access Alliance's Publication and Authorship Policy as a template to guide your work.

More Dissemination Resources

The Research Matters Knowledge Translation Toolkit: A Resource for Researchers. (International Development Research Centre and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) Available from <http://www.research-matters.net>

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO (2006). *Doing More With What You Know.* Ottawa, Ontario. www.onthepoint.ca.

reSearch for Change: Dissemination Cycle



reSearch for Change: Dissemination Planning Tool

Findings are like stories. What story do you want to pitch? Who do you want to hear it? What do you want your audience to take from it? The story might change depending on the audience. Use this tool to brainstorm possible dissemination options.

Who (Specific stakeholder)	Why do you want to reach them?	What do they want to hear?	What do you want them to hear?	How? (tools, strategies)	When?	Where?
Policy Makers (e.g. Minister of Health)						
Management / Decision Makers in an Agency						
Front-Line Workers						

Community of Interest						
General Public						
Media						
Other Researchers						
Students						

reSearch for Change: Choosing a Dissemination Outlet

Choosing a dissemination outlet can be a challenging task. It is important that your medium matches your message. That is, the outlet you choose should reflect both the goal of your dissemination strategy as well as the audience you have in mind. Use this handout as a guide to think through possible dissemination outlets according to stakeholder group or goal.

Goal of Dissemination	Audience/ Stakeholder	What might they look for?	Dissemination options include
Local Policy Change (Municipal or Provincial)	Local policy makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues that affect their constituents or riding • Issues related to committees they sit on • Stories, statistics, formal studies • Research that has previously been unavailable (e.g. gaps) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local media • Booklets/pamphlets/newsletter • Art event/showcase • Website/blog/social networking • Face to face meetings • Conferences • Academic Papers • Fact Sheets • Depositions
National Policy Change	National Policymakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of concern to their political party • Issues that affect their constituents or riding • Issues related to committees they sit on • Stories, statistics, formal studies • Research that has previously been unavailable (e.g. gaps) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass media • Booklets/pamphlets/newsletter • Website/blog • Face to face meeting • Depositions • Academic Papers • Fact Sheets
Change in community practice or implementation of new services	Community Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research related to their mandate/mission • Stories, statistics, formal studies that help them make the case for their work and/or help push the field or movement forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences • “brown bag” lunches • Discussion groups • Website/blog • Art event/showcase • Articles in trade magazines • Post-secondary programs relating to social work, public health, etc.

Contribution to Literature or Academic Research	Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research related to their field or project • Articles and research published in peer reviewed journals • Research conducted with academic standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences • “brown bag” lunches • Discussion groups • Website - E-Bulletins • Articles in peer reviewed journals
Mobilized Grassroots Community Action	Community Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories/issues that are intriguing, statistics. • Stories/issues that affect peoples local communities • Action oriented formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies must be tailored to the specific community • Local media—language specific • Art event/showcase • Website/blog • Booklets/pamphlets/newsletter • Conferences • Celebrations • Social Networking

Chart adapted from the International Development Research Centre at www.idrc.ca



reSearch for Change: Planning your Dissemination Outlet

Spread the word! What is the best way to share your findings or research process? There are strengths and limitations to each dissemination outlet. For example, an academic publication will contribute to the literature but may not be accessible to the community members who participated in your research. Use this activity to think through the pros or cons of each possible dissemination outlet according to stakeholder group or goal.

Dissemination Outlet	How does this outlet help you meet your dissemination goal?	Pros	Cons
Community Panel			
Community Workshop			
Multi-Stakeholder Workshop			
Academic Journal			

Community or Research Bulletin			
Showcase			
Conference			

reSearch for Change: Disseminating your Research

Community-Based Research shouldn't just sit on a shelf. Sharing knowledge about your research process and findings is an important step in Community-Based Research. This checklist provides a list of possible steps in disseminating your work.

- Give credit where it's due! Create an **authorship policy**. Agree who owns the raw, analyzed and interpreted data from the beginning. Make sure that community members and community agencies receive proper recognition of their contribution to the work. Invite community members and stakeholders to participate in the authorship processes.
- Create a **dissemination plan**. This should not only include where and how to disseminate your work, but ethical dilemmas as well: **What happens if your findings are unflattering to a community?**
- Share information on **your process and your findings**. Don't wait until you've wrapped up your findings to begin presenting or publishing. How can you communicate your process or project aims to different stakeholders?
- **Support Community Members.** Community members may need training to feel comfortable participating in presentations. Build this preparation time into your plan.
- Remember your audience. You will need to pitch **different messages to different stakeholders**. While academics may want findings, affected communities may have different needs.
- Disseminate in the **multiple languages** if you're working with multi-lingual stakeholders.
- Direct your message to media and **speak in sound-bytes**. Provide or source media training to all key speakers at public events.
- Control your message. Provide "**media kits**" to all media representatives at your event.
- **Think about policy change**. How can you link your knowledge exchange strategy to the policies you want to change?
- If you decide to publish in peer-reviewed journals, **take care in selecting journals**. Think through the following questions: What is the readership? Where is it indexed? What is their access policy? How is it distributed? Are there publication costs?
- Extra resources? If you have the resources, you may wish to bring in a **knowledge exchange coordinator** to provide expertise on sharing findings and support for organizing public events or publications. The knowledge exchange coordinator can also work directly with community members to provide support and mentorship during this phase.

Generic Event Template

<i>[INSERT PROJECT OR AGENCY LOGO HERE]</i>				
TASKS	BY WHO?	DEADLINE	COMPLETED	NOTES
Promotion Completed				
Food ordered				
Food pickup arranged				
Drinks ordered/bought				
Napkins, plates, glasses, utensils				
Order coffee/tea				
Supplies [List below]				
Childcare worker contacted				
Childcare room available				
Minutes from last meeting are photocopied				
Minute-taker assigned				

Honorarium money				
Honorarium Form				
TTC tokens				
Room for meeting is booked				
Access card to building				
Access to room is arranged, keys etc.				
Sign-in Form				
Consent form photocopied				
Other documents photocopied				
Participants receive reminder phone call				
Camera for pictures				
Audio visual materials: laptop, projector, flipchart				
Room setup arranged				
Evaluation Form				
Thank you cards/gift cards				



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Publication and Authorship Policy

Access Alliance expects that its staff and external research partners (academics, students etc.) will carry out research and scholarly work maintaining the highest ethical and scientific standards. The Centre recognizes that as producers of research, **we (as an organization and as staff and students) have the ethical obligation to publish and disseminate findings so that they may benefit the community.** Access Alliance therefore strongly encourages the sharing of research with service providers, community members and policy makers so that it may be utilized and lead to change.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to provide direction in the establishment of practices for the authoring of research and recognition of intellectual property.

1. Guidelines for external publications (e.g., journal articles, book chapters, abstracts, presentations)

The Centre will ensure that any person who has substantially contributed to the concept or design of the article, the generation of its content, and its drafting is included as an author. Reviewers will be acknowledged. In the case of a research project, anyone who has contributed to carrying out the study and/or interpreting the data must be duly acknowledged. When making the decision to appear as an author, individuals should be aware that:

- Anyone accepting authorship accepts responsibility for ensuring the validity of the whole manuscript;
- The principal author(s) listed on the publication must oversee the accuracy of the publication;
- All authors must be involved in making decisions about the publication and its distribution and should have the opportunity to review research results, analyses and interpretations used in preparing the publication;
- **Each author should have access to the full manuscript prior to its submission for publication and should agree to being listed as co-author;**
- **All authors should be involved in deciding the order of authorship. In general, the principal author (s) will be the person(s) who have made the greatest contribution to the writing of the article. In the case of equal authorship, alphabetical order will be used.**
- Where applicable, Access Alliance staff will list Access Alliance as their affiliation on the publication. In the case of students, a note will be included to indicate that the research was completed in the context of a placement at Access Alliance.

2. Guidelines for Internal Publications

The same guidelines apply to reports and other publications produced by Access Alliance. In this case, Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre will appear as the publisher or the author.

3. Addressing Misconduct in Publications

Integrity is fundamental to the research and publication process. Misconduct of any sort will not be condoned and may result in disciplinary action. In the context of research and publishing,

misconduct sometimes takes the form of academic dishonesty. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, falsification or fabrication of scientific results, and plagiarism (i.e., copying another person's work and passing it off as one's own).

When staff or students have reason to believe that misconduct has occurred, the individual has a responsibility to report it to the Executive Director, after seeking an explanation directly from the person if he/she is comfortable doing so. If the complaint is about the E.D., the complaint will be filed with the Chairperson of the Board Directors.

I have read the above document and agree with all the stated policies on publication and authorship.

Signature

Date

Chapter Ten

Creating Policy Change



Chapter Ten: Creating Policy Change

Community-Based Research is driven by a commitment to concrete social change outcomes. This means creating research that doesn't just sit on a shelf; research should be conducted with the final aim of impacting service or policy at a local and structural level. First, in order to create policy or service change, you must share your findings with broader audiences. For this reason, this chapter should be read in tandem with [“Disseminating your Community-Based Research project.”](#) Second, while this chapter falls at the end of the toolkit, policy change should not be considered a last step. In order to create policy-relevant research, you may need to begin thinking about policy at the design-stage of your project.

What is Policy Change?⁹

“Policy” is the rules, legislation, and regulations that are put in place around a particular issue at municipal, provincial or national levels of government. Policies often cut across these three levels through laws, program guidelines, regulations, ministry procedures or guidelines on how money should be allotted or spent. Policies may also be enacted to respond to particular issues at an organizational or agency level.

While connected to broader social change, policy change is something specific. It is different from, but connected to changing “practice.” Practice is what is actually done, how policies are carried out, or what is done when there is no formal policy. Practice may be something that has history in a particular bureaucracy or even in an individual. In many ways, practice is harder to change.

As we know from our work, policies can either help or hinder communities. Findings from Community-Based Research can be used in valuable ways. They can provide the necessary evidence to begin a campaign for policy change, be used to adapt or develop community-programming needs, or can be shared with the broader community in order to influence perceptions and behaviour.

Understanding How to Affect Policy Change

Affecting policy does not happen over night. It requires a lot of preparation, research and planning. In order to use your Community-Based Research findings to affect policy, you must alert policy makers to the purpose and implications of your research. This may involve significant knowledge exchange in order to educate and convince decision makers that there is problem in the first place. This also involves explaining how your specific research outcomes connect with specific policies. You must propose concrete solutions and alternatives to current policy, which may mean amending or creating new policy. This also means fostering political will so that politicians or decision makers *want* to act.

When thinking about policy change, it is important to remember that not all projects need to create large-scale policy change. Is the research about building the capacity of community members or

⁹ The Section “What is Policy Change” was created with assistance from the Wellesley Institute’s CBR Module 301, “Using Community Based Research to Affect Public Policy” as well as *Speaking Truth, Creating Power: A Guide to Policy Work for Community-Based Participatory Research Practitioners* (Cassandra Ritas, MPP Hunter College Center on AIDS, Drugs and Community Health For Community-Campus Partnerships for Health).

changing governmental policy? Some Community-Based Research projects may be more process focused than outcome focused. For this reason, it may be useful to begin thinking about policy change at the beginning of your project. Your decisions around intended impacts may influence who you invite to your team, and how you design your project. For example, if you wish to influence health policy at a municipal level, you may invite your municipal public health unit to be a partner on the project. You may also organize a policy symposium where you invite community members, social service staff and policy makers to the table to identify key issues and policy gaps that are important in planning your study.

Furthermore, for projects that aim to create policy change, it is important that your research question, methods and findings are policy relevant. What *type* of policy would you like to impact? Knowing the policy landscape and the type of policy you would like to change will help you to determine the type of information you need. Projects that have successfully impacted policy have often provided information where there was limited data. After all, creating policy change often means capturing *the type information* that policy makers want to hear in *the forms* that they want (numbers, stories, etc.). How can you ensure that decision-makers take your findings seriously?

Selecting Promotional Strategies

Many of these questions are similar to questions asked when creating a dissemination plan. The planning cycle of identifying your message, mapping your audience and choosing a promotional strategy is cyclical. Similar to creating a dissemination plan, a policy change plan should contain multiple strategies geared to multiple audiences. There are a wide range of methods to influence political policy and practice; each strategy has its benefits and weaknesses. These methods include lobbying, public education, letter writing campaigns, petitions, street demonstrations, street theatre, boycotts and beyond. Policy change and social change movements often inform each other, as public awareness can increase political pressure.

You may also wish to link your dissemination and policy change strategy. Certain dissemination methods will have more/different impact than others. For example, a peer-reviewed paper may be more likely to influence professional training programs (e.g. medical education), whereas a 1-page policy brief may have greater impact with ministry officials. You may also wish to think about who has access to these documents.

When considering different strategies for policy change, it is important to think about risk. Who is taking a risk and what kind of risk are they taking? It is one kind of risk to write a letter; it is another kind of risk to participate in a public demonstration as protests may carry some risk of arrest. Certain communities such as people without status are particularly vulnerable to legal action and other repercussions.

Working with the Media

One way to impact policy change is to move your findings into the media. However, the media won't take just anything. Media outlets rarely cover "issues", preferring to focus on stories instead. This may not be surprising. For example, it is not really news that people live in poverty. It may be news if you have a story about what strategies communities are using to survive or if certain communities are facing specific challenges that are seen as "new" to the media.

The good news is that Community-Based Research often tells a story that is both compelling and relevant to community need. Research and issues can be framed into a format that works for the media. Questions to consider include:

- I. What is the story?
- II. Why is this compelling?
- III. How can you summarize the story or stories?
- IV. How does it connect to other stories circulating in the press?
- V. If it is an event, what will be happening and why might people want to attend?

You may have several different stories depending on the policy you are attempting to change, or the message you are trying to promote. You may also wish to pay attention to “windows” of opportunity. The media will be more willing to cover findings from your project if it taps into a pre-existing issue. Similarly, a media buzz might provide the necessary “push” for decision-makers to take your request for change seriously.

Developing a media strategy

One practical issue in getting media coverage is that reporters rarely spend a lot of time researching a particular topic. Reporters are very busy and there are many organizations and individuals who are trying to get their attention. If you want media coverage for your issue you need to have a media strategy. You cannot simply send out a press release and hope to have media coverage. This media strategy may be created in conjunction with your dissemination strategy (see [“Disseminating your Community-Based Research Project”](#)). When it comes to media outreach, you may wish to address the following questions:

- ✓ What do we hope to accomplish?
- ✓ Who are we trying to reach?
- ✓ What specific media outlet/reporter is most sympathetic to our issue?
- ✓ How can we link our message to policy change?
- ✓ What is the best timing to maximize our chance for exposure?

Targeted media coverage by a few is better than wide media coverage by all. Reporters cannot be experts on every topic they report on; it is important to have a sense of the perspectives, strengths, and weaknesses of a reporter’s analysis. Furthermore, not all media coverage is beneficial to your project or the communities affected. Certain communities have a history of media exploitation. It is important to keep everyone (and their stories) safe. You may want to have a discussion with your team about what people are willing to share, especially community members. It is important for people to identify boundaries, especially when the research hits so close to home. One strategy may be to encourage community members to develop fake personas so that they can convey a story without exposing or putting themselves at risk.

It is worth remembering that reporters are likely to be writing for a media outlet that supports dominant ideas. Stories that challenge common assumptions may be met with some resistance. It is important that the community you are working with is represented in the way they want to be. For this reason, you may wish to provide media training for public speakers at events. You may also develop media kits for media personnel in order to tailor the information they disseminate to the broader public.

Tools and Templates

Handout - Six Strategies for Policy Change

There are a wide range of methods to influence political policy and practice. This handout includes six strategies for changing policy from meeting with your MP, to creating a policy brief, to partnering up with community-based advocacy groups or organizations. This list is not exhaustive.

Template - Sample Press Release

Once you have developed a media strategy, it is time to implement it. But wait - there is one more step. You may plan an event and invite media, hold a press conference or simply try to talk to a reporter about the research and the work. Regardless, you will need a press release. Use this template as a guide to creating a press release specific to your Community-Based Research event.

Template - Sample Policy Solutions Roadmap Chart

It is important to work together with policy makers to look at the evidence your study has generated in order to identify which policies are working, what are policy gaps, what are policy solutions and how to develop these policy solutions. If policy makers are partners in your research then this step can be happening throughout your research process. If not, then you can hold policy roundtables or meetings with policy makers to discuss this. The following Policy Solutions Roadmap Chart can be used to present the highlights of your evidence and its implications and then work with policy makers to identify the policy domain that this concerns, the effectiveness of existing policies, the gaps in policies (or policy implementation), and most importantly what are the policy solutions and how can these solutions be mobilized.

Template - Sample Policy Brief

Do not leave it to policy makers to create the connections between your findings and larger policies. Use this template to write a policy brief explaining why the policy needs changed and how your research could better inform new policy. Policy briefs should be no longer than two pages and can accompany a phone call or meeting with a politician, media-maker, or staff with decision-making power.

More Policy Resources

For step-by-step instructions on **how to write a policy brief**, including examples, check out “Chapter 8: The Two Pager” in *The Research Matters Knowledge Translation Toolkit: A Resource for Researchers*, published by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Available for download here: <http://www.research-matters.net>

For more training on policy change, including how to **conduct a policy scan**, **use media to drive policy**, and **deliver a presentation to policy makers**, you may wish to consult the

Wellesley Institute's e-modules on Community-Based Research & Policy Change. The policy modules are broken into four units:

- I. Using Community Based Research to Affect Public Policy*
- XXI. Policy Analysis from a Community Perspective
- XXII. Using Media to Drive Public Policy
- XXIII. Delivering a Policy Presentation

You may access these e-modules here:

http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/presentations/cbr_300_series/

reSearch for Change: Six Strategies to Affect Policy

There is a wide range of strategies available for influencing political policy and practice. The strategies listed below may be employed in different ways, depending on where you are with your research project. For example, if you are at the research design stage, you may approach a policy maker differently than if you have a report full of findings.

Strategy # 1: Meet with Decision-Makers

One powerful way to affect change is to meet directly with policy makers and other government workers. These individuals are the “Implementers” of Policy or Practice. To affect policy one usually addresses politicians; to affect practice you may need to address civil servants as well. To change policy within organizations, you may also wish to meet with managerial staff or directors.

Meeting with politicians

Meet with politicians to educate them on your research findings. Once on your side, a politician can do a lot for you and your issue: make a statement in the legislature, raise the issue with the party, propose a bill, support a motion, hold a community meeting, mail out information to the constituency or hold a press conference with you. You may meet directly in a face-to-face meeting or have an opportunity to give a deposition. A deposition is an opportunity for an individual or a group of people to speak formally to an elected body of officials. You can meet with a Member of Parliament (MP) or a Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and/or their staff. Before you decide who to approach and how, it is important to see if the politicians and their parties have a position on your issue. This can be done by searching the web through the politician's and party's website.

Meeting with civil servants¹⁰

Civil servants are “non-political” employees of the government who work to implement the policies of the government through their department or ministry. Civil servants do not make formal policy decisions or decide on policy messages, however, they do build and implement systems and programs, which may impact policy change. Many civil servants will work through a number of political appointees and a number of governments. Therefore they may have experience with an issue and how that issue has been taken up through different administrations. You may ask to meet with civil servants to seek advice on how to best approach the government with your issue, to request changes in practices based on existing policy, or to simply inform them of your work and its connection to the work of the department or ministry.

Strategy # 2: Do your Research

Whether you are meeting with an MP or president of a board, preparation is important. Proper preparation will help you stay “on message” and win your case. Remember, *you* have the expertise on your issue. You have done the research and know about the issues. Your task is to show the policy makers how beneficial and necessary it is to create the change you want to see. You should be aware of current policies in relation to your issue and how your research fits within the existing policy framework or government agenda (the “policy landscape”). This is called a policy scan.

¹⁰ Adapted from Stapleton, John. 2003 “Understanding Civil Servants: a short user’s guide for advocates” Community Undertaking Social Policy, St. Christopher House

You should be clear about how your research supports a proposed policy change, and at what level (municipal, provincial, federal, etc.). Once you are aware of the policy landscape, stay tuned to windows of opportunity. Whether it is a media story, or a particular political climate (e.g. an election, passing a new bill), be ready to act quickly and push out your research findings at the appropriate time.

Strategy # 3: Write a Policy Brief

Do not leave it to policy makers to create the connections between your findings and larger policies. Write a policy brief explaining why the policy needs changed and how your research could better inform new policy. Policy briefs should be no longer than 2 pages and can accompany a phone call or meeting with a politician, media-maker, or staff with decision making power. A Policy Brief should do the following:

- Communicate evidence in a brief and understandable form
- State why the evidence is significant
- Set out a proposal for evidence-informed policy change (including who should change policy, how it should be changed and any issues which may arise as a result).

Strategy # 4: Sculpt Your Message and Refine, Refine, Refine.

Much like a policy brief, presentations to decision makers need to be concise, relevant, and neatly packaged to address the what, why and how of your research and proposed change. Use the 3 Message Rule. Whether you are at a conference or at a public meeting, *how* you deliver your message is as important as *what* you deliver. By structuring your presentation around 3 key take home messages, you will hold the audiences' attention as well as ensure that they take home what you want them to. If there is media in the room, staying on message will assist you in getting the message out the way you want it.

Message Overview → 3 Key Messages & Relevance to Social Change → Message Summary → Any Questions?

Strategy # 5: Partner up to Act up!

Look to action on the frontlines! What are community groups doing to bring attention to this issue? By linking up with other agencies, movements, or non-profit groups you may be able to share resources and further your message. Furthermore, because many funders restrict funding for specific advocacy efforts, this may be a way to link your Community-Based Research project to advocacy without overstepping funding requirements. For example, by linking up with a grassroots group that focuses on impact of immigration policies, you may be able to gain access to a large number of committed community organizers. In exchange, you can provide the group with the facts and numbers politicians and media makers like to hear.

Strategy # 6: Combine Policy Change Efforts with Public Education.

By increasing public awareness around an issue, you may increase political pressure. Organize a round table event, create an online petition, or facilitate a workshop on issues relevant to your research. Social networking sites like Twitter or Facebook may be useful organizing tools. Also, education-oriented activities may lead to policy change but are not always considered "advocacy." These events may be another way of creating social change without overstepping funding requirements

A Sample Key Messages Document

Key Messages from 'Working Rough, Living Poor' Report

SYNOPSIS

Working rough, living poor: Employment and income insecurities faced by racialized groups in the Black Creek Area and their Impacts on Health.

Wilson R, Landolt P, Shakya Y, Galabuzi G, Zahoorunissa Z, Pham F, Dahy S, Joly M-P. 2011; Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services.

This report is a result of community-based research conducted in Toronto's Black Creek neighbourhood in collaboration with local residents. We conducted 8 focus groups with diverse groups of racialized residents from the Black Creek area (n=105) who identified as being stuck in precarious employment. Focus groups were led by community researchers in the first language of the community; language specific focus groups were conducted in Arabic, Hindi/Urdu, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Focus groups were conducted in English with the Black community, Canadian born population, and two mixed groups. We also conducted 3 focus groups with service providers (n=24). Our study provides rich qualitative evidence on everyday impacts of being precariously employed for racialized families from different backgrounds.

Participant narratives reveal the everyday forces that systematically push racialized families into protracted conditions of precarious employment (part-time, low-paying, unstable jobs without benefits). Experiences of study participants point to a highly discriminatory and exploitative Canadian labour market where race-based discrimination and racialization strongly determine access to stable „fair“ employment. The direct and indirect strategies that employers use to not hire racialized people for stable employment or keep them in precarious types of employment relationships are exposed. Moreover, we found that existing employment resource programs, resume clinics, and job search services are largely ineffective because these services seek to meet the needs of, rather than overcome, the highly discriminatory and increasingly precarious labour market. “Temp agencies” in particular play a salient role in channelling people, including highly qualified immigrants, into precarious employment trajectory.

Study results also indicate that protracted exposure to precarious employment and income insecurity is damaging to health (and costly to Canadian healthcare). Participants attributed precarious employment conditions as the key cause of many health issues including digestive disorders, physiological and cardiovascular impacts, injuries, and mental health. Participants were particularly concerned about the cumulative “health strain” and deterioration of overall health for themselves and their family and children.

MESSAGES

POLICY MAKERS (LABOUR MARKET): Improve Regulations

Evidence calls for policy solutions to stop systemic discrimination and growing precarity in the labour market: Study evidence underscore urgent need for bold policy solutions to (i) protect precarious workers and enable them to get stable employment (expand and enforce *Employment Standards Act* to extend rights to precarious workers and promote „fair employment;“ improve enforcement of *Occupational Health and Safety Act*; improve regulation of temp agencies through the *Employment Standards Amendment Act - Temporary Help Agencies*); (ii) eliminate discrimination in the labour market and promote employment equity (revive the *Employment Equity Act for Ontario* and improve implementation of *Federal Employment Equity Act*; stronger oversight by *Ontario Human Rights Commission* in the labour market and establishment of national *Equity and Anti-Racism Directorate*); and, (iii) ensure that government funded employment services (Employment Resource Centres, accreditation programs etc) have proven ability to link people to stable employment.

EMPLOYMENT AND SETTLEMENT STAFF: Strengthen linkages

Cross-sector collaboration that build direct linkages to stable employment pathways works best: Our evidence indicate that most employment and settlement services focus on retraining job seekers to fit the needs of a highly discriminatory and increasingly precarious labour market. We need to move away from short-term and superficial fixes (like „rejjing resume“ or training immigrants on Canadian labour market „etiquette“) and instead offer services that can build long-term employment security for everyone. Study participants highlighted that the real solutions require cross-sector collaboration between government, private sector and community service sector to create direct linkages to stable employment pathways (career/professional bridging programs, paid internships, on-the-job training, long-term career planning etc.) and to overcome discriminatory and exploitative practices in the labour market.

HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP: Improve access and quality

Healthcare sector leaders have an important role to play in promoting health of precarious workers: Precarious employment not just results in detrimental health impacts (with high costs to Canadian healthcare) but also undermines access to healthcare and the ability to take care of one's health. Healthcare leaders need to (i) develop proactive solutions to improve access and responsiveness of healthcare for precariously employed families; and, (ii) champion for „fair employment,“ anti-discrimination, and workplace safety policies since these are important determinants of health.

RESEARCHERS: Build evidence

Evidence gap in Canada on economic and health inequities faced by racialized people need to be overcome: Researchers need to take bold steps to collect and build disaggregated evidence (by race and ethnicity) to fill the critical evidence gap in Canada about causes and solutions to the growing economic and health inequities facing racialized people.

reSearch for Change: The Press Release

A press release is an important tool. Press releases can advertise an event that you would like media to attend. On its own, a press release may not do much. Reporters get many press releases a day. Therefore, personal contact with a reporter is essential. Before you contact a reporter you should have all of your press material ready to help you focus your message and to be able to provide the information if it is requested.

There are many resources for writing press releases on the Internet. While the resources differ in their approaches, the differences are fairly minor. All press releases should clearly identify the document as a press release, contain the date, who it is from, what the key story is and how to get more information. It should contain facts, not hyperbole, be clear and be free of errors. Again, the press release should be in the language of the media outlet you are approaching.

A press release generally contains a number of standard components:

A header with your organization's contact information on it. Ideally you have letterhead on which to do the press release.

The word PRESS RELEASE in capital letters in the centre of the document.

The date you are issuing the release.

The phrase "For immediate release" so that reporters know that the release is not to be held. If you want the release or news held you label it as "embargoed until XX date" but that request may not be honored. In most cases your release should be for immediate use.

A headline in bold and caps—The headline should read like a newspaper headline and contain at least one verb. The key here is grab the attention of the reader

First paragraph - The key story starting with a location of where the story is taking place and an introduction sentence that covers Who, What, Where, When, Why and how. This is especially key if there is an event.

A second paragraph—details. Here you can add some substance to the issue. It is often good to have a quotation by a key stakeholder.

Third paragraph - info about your organization. What is the history of your organization/group in a just a few sentences?

- number marks to signify that the release is finished (it does not go onto another page)

Key contact information—Someone that knows very well the details of the project or issue and can speak to the media about it. Include name, title, phone, and email.

A header with contact

Fictional Community Agency
123 main street, Mytown Canada MMM 111
555-555-5555 FCA@internet.ca www.fca.ca

The phrase "press release" in CAPS in the centre of the

PRESS RELEASE

The date of the release

February 29, 2010

This phrase tells reporters the information is good now and is not to be held or "embargoed" for a later date. In most cases your release is for immediate use.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

location

STREET-INVOLVED YOUTH SKIPPING MEALS TO SURVIVE SAYS NEW STUDY
study shows that services are failing to meet needs of youth

Headline contains verbs

Mytown- A new study entitled "coming up short: the failure of programs for street youth in Motown" by the Fictional Community Agency has shown that community services available to youth in Mytown are failing them and that most youth most skip meals to survive. The study was released today on the Fictional Community Agency's website [www.fca.ca](#)

Key story: who, what, where, why

"Our study followed the lives of over twenty street involved youth and their lives were disturbing," says Fictional Community Agency Executive Director YY XXX. "One youth, we call her Alice, was kicked out of her house at age thirteen and has been surviving on the streets for three years. She has dropped out of school and has been moved from program to program because there is no comprehensive system. So keeps having to switch agencies. Unfortunately her story is not unique."

More detail on the issue

The report used interviews and survey with youth and community agencies over a period of eight months and involved a team of researchers from the University of Mytown as well as community workers and former street youth. "Our key recommendation is that the city look at creating an office specifically responsible for coordinating services." said Dr. AA BBB one of the researchers.

The report also recommended: [etc]

The Fictional Community Agency's is a charitable organization founded in 1985 and its mission is [details].

Interviews with some participating youth can be arranged.

Information about you/your organization

Contact:
Dr. AA BBB

Contact information can be put at the top, below immediate release, or at the bottom, but information should be very easy to find.
- Signifies that press release doesn't continue past this page.

[Title]
[contact info]

Sample Policy Brief

English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development Policy and Implementation Gaps

Prepared by: Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services with Pathways to Education Canada

ISSUE:

Identify the issue in 2-3 sentences.

Insufficient policy consideration and resources directed at promoting success in education for youth with refugee experience and other immigrants who are English Language Learners (English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development).

CONTEXT:

Toronto houses people from 170 countries, making it the city with the most foreign-born residents than any other in Canada, with more than 100 languages.¹¹ The number of foreign-born residents, including immigrants, refugees and other newcomers, will continue to rise in the coming years. Toronto's diversity is closely linked with its prosperity, vitality, and attractiveness for immigration. Among the approximately 300,000 people who come to Canada every year, more than 52% take up residence in Ontario. Around one-third of the newcomers are under the age of 19 and three quarters are from a country of origin where English is not the first language.¹²

Use data from your findings and other peoples' research to set the context. Naming other studies gives your brief credibility.

Within foreign-born populations, individuals who come to Canada as refugees tend to have lower levels of education and fluency level in English/French. With the enactment of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in 2002, Canada made firm commitments to sponsor refugees primarily on humanitarian grounds and removed restrictions on "admissibility" based on medical, economic, and educational criteria. Canada has become recognized globally as one of the few nations that have a "non-discriminatory" refugee resettlement policy committed to creating a new safe and promising "home" for vulnerable and displaced people who have faced protracted oppression and marginalization.

Arrival data from 2000 to 2009 from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) indicates that on average, 32.3% of refugees 15 years and older have 9 years or less of schooling; for people who come under family class or as spouses and dependents of principal applicants (under economic class) this rate was 18.2%.¹³ Since 2005, the percentage of refugee immigrants 15 years and older with 9 years or less of schooling has been steadily increasing from 27.7% in 2005 to 38.3% in 2009. Since 2005, the percent of refugee who spoke neither English nor French has been rising from 32.6% in 2005 to 44.4% in 2009; for family class and spouses and dependents of principal applicants (under economic class) this rate has remained around 40%.³

Given the demographics, there is a continuous demand for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) classes (particularly for refugees), but this demand is not sufficiently met by the province, the effects of which are far reaching and of great effect on Ontarians.¹⁴

¹¹ Community Social Planning Council of Toronto. (2005) *Renewing Toronto's ESL Programs...charting a course towards more effective ESL program delivery: Executive summary*. <<http://www.socialplanningtoronto.org/CSPC-T%20Reports/Reports.htm>>

¹² Statistics Canada. (2004). 2001 Census Data. <<http://www.statscan.ca>> & People for Education. (2008)

¹³ Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), *Facts and Figure, 2010: Immigration Overview*, Canada

¹⁴ Ministry of Education, (2007). *English Language Learners ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12*.

BACKGROUND/CURRENT POLICY:

The current provincial policy framework around English language learners (ELL) is designed with the purpose to receive, provide orientation for and place ELL students, in order that English learning is accelerated for academic purposes, i.e. increased credit accumulation, graduation rates and post-secondary enrollment.⁴ The Ministry of Education's mandate defines the roles and provides opportunities for skills development to educators and administrators to prepare them for the successful implementation of ESL and ELD programs and instruction.

What is the current policy you hope to change? This information should be informed by your policy scan.

The ELL process begins with an assessment of English language proficiency, through a structured interview to determine reading comprehension, student writing, and mathematical knowledge and skills.³ If the assessment indicates the English

language learner does not have sufficient prior schooling, the board will provide additional support by being placed in a class or several classes based on the assessment report. If the student has had prior education from their former country of residence through which they have acquired age-appropriate first-language literacy skills, then they are placed in an ESL program. If the student lacks the age-appropriate first-language literacy skills, the reasons for which include inconsistent, disrupted or unavailable schooling in his/her former country of residence, a situation most salient to students with refugee experience, then he/she is placed in an ELD program.

ANALYSIS:

Despite the forging of a new provincial policy on ESL in 2007, which provides optional guidelines and recommendations not uniformly enforced, the gap between those who require English language support and those receiving it remains wide. Over the last five years, school boards have received a slight increase in ESL funding that did not match the needs of English language learning students. The number of ESL and ELD students is greatly disproportionate to the resources available. In Ontario, 48% of elementary schools with ESL students do not have an ESL teacher.³ At the secondary level, half of schools have ESL students, some reporting an ESL/ELD population of over 90%, with only a third having ESL teachers. As a result of these gaps, only two thirds of ESL students go through with writing the Grade 10 Literacy Test, a requirement for graduation, while the rest defer it. Among the two thirds that do take the test, only 52% pass.³ The demands of this test, among others, put English language learners at an increased disadvantage, when it comes to their academic success including, among other things, graduation, a popular campaign issue and stated top priority of the current provincial government.

Bring together your policy scan, external research, and findings from your CBR project to explain why the existing policy (if any) is inadequate.

Policy Gaps:

- The 2007 Provincial ESL Policy does not outline the terms as mandatory, but rather provides only recommendations and guidelines to school boards and schools.
- There is a recommendation that an acceptable standard of English should be achieved before ESL supports are taken away but the policy does not define or enforce that standard.³
- On one side, the policy stipulates that ESL funding will be provided for students until they gain enough skills to function in English academically, but the funding is limited up until four years, even though it takes many students longer.¹⁵
- The policy outlines the different English language learning needs of students with different educational backgrounds, and differentiates between ESL and ELD students but it does not provide differentiated

¹⁵ As Cummins maintains, students fall into categories where they possess no English or language skills, "basic interpersonal communicative skill (BCIS)", and "cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)". While BICS may take two to three years to form, CALP takes at least five to seven years (Cummins, J. 1981) which is not resourced properly because of the policy's four year limit.

funding.³ Funding for ESL programs is split between ESL and ELD programs at the boards' discretion.

- Many school boards divert up to 50% of their ESL/ELD funding to school maintenance and utilities. The 2005 Ontario Auditor General's report on ESL and ELD programs revealed that the Ministry of Education did not have information on whether the \$225 million provided for ESL programs was actually being used for that purpose. Although school boards are responsible for designating funding toward ESL/ELD programs, the Ministry is ultimately responsible for the effectiveness of the education system.

KEY RECOMENDATIONS:

Set out a proposal for evidence-informed policy change (including who should change policy, how it should be changed and any issues which may arise as a result).

The current policy on ESL and ELD and its implementation does not meet the needs of students in Ontario. The assumptions, explanations and recommendations outlined by the Ministry are vague. Further, the implementation plan needs to be reconsidered.

Our recommendations are as follows:

- There must be a clear definition of the differences between ESL and ELD learners and this definition must be linked to funding. Further, there is a need to separate multi-level classes into lower and intermediate groupings. Based on assessment of learners, separate classes must be designed accordingly along with proper funding that is clearly directed and applied to each type of learning environment.
- There is a great need for an increase in ESL and ELD educators. The issue here is twofold: not enough teachers and lack of ESL and ELD teacher training. The policy must require teachers to develop the capacity to understand the sensitivities and techniques of dealing with the different level of English learners and to enable students who have not had access to education or have experienced disruptions in education (particularly those who have come from war-torn countries or experiences of trauma) to overcome literacy gaps and achieve levels of English fluency that promote academic success.
- There is a need to develop clear standards and accountability that measure success of ESL and ELD not just based on enrollment numbers but on successful completion of ESL/ELD classes and school graduation rates of ESL/ELD students.
- The availability of ESL and ELD funding to secondary students must be extended to beyond their fourth year in the programs. It takes much longer than four years, sometimes up to seven, for newcomers to be able to function academically in English, putting them on the same level as students whose first language is English.¹⁶
- With more recent funding, there is an additional transparency requirement in the policy for the Ministry to properly monitor how ESL and ELD funding is spent. This requirement needs to be strictly enforced to ensure that this funding is spent accordingly.

Cite sources accurately.

Keep your policy brief to 2-3 pages

¹⁶ Cummins, J. (1981). Age on arrival and immigrant second language learning in Canada: A reassessment. (*Applied Linguistics*, 2(2), 132–149. doi:10.1093/applin/2.2.13)



**reSearch for Change:
Policy Solutions Road Map Chart**

The example in this template is from our Refugee Youth Health and Education project.

Theme	Findings and Implications	Policy Domain (list all relevant policy, regulations and guidelines)	Policy Effectiveness/Gaps (identify opportunities and gaps within existing policies)	Policy Solutions/Next Steps (Who, How, When and Opportunities for Collaboration)

Chapter Eleven

Evaluating your

Community-Based Research Project



Chapter Eleven: Evaluating your Community-Based Research Project

Congratulations! You have reached the end! Although evaluation comes at the end of the toolkit, evaluation should not be completed at the end of each project. Rather, evaluation should happen at all stages of your Community-Based Research project - after capacity building, after Collaborative Research Design and after data collection. After all, evaluation is more than handing out and collecting forms. It can influence your project plan, your approach to working with a community, and in the end, the path you wish to take at any given stage.

What is Evaluation?

Put simply, evaluation is a way of determining the value of something - for example, the value of undertaking a Community-Based Research project. Evaluation is the process of systematically assessing what has been achieved and how it has been achieved. It means looking critically at your project, working out what was good about it, what was bad about it, and how it could be improved. When you evaluate your initiative, you are gathering information to help you draw conclusions about the efforts of your work. By using that information, you can decide what aspects of your plan are working, and which areas need improvement. You can then make any necessary changes to your action plan so that you will be more likely to reach your intended goals.

The evaluation information you gather can be used to improve your current initiative or the next community initiative you undertake. It can also be helpful for others who are trying to develop similar initiatives in other communities.

But there is more to evaluation than simply finding out how well you did. Evaluation is about a way of thinking (sometimes called “evaluative thinking”). It is about creating a working culture where you are constantly learning from your actions. For Community-Based Research projects, it is essential that the process, as well as the outcome of your project benefits those who are participating and affected by the research.

Why Should You Evaluate Your Work?

Evaluations are conducted for a variety of different reasons. You need to be clear about why you are evaluating your work, because this will affect the way you evaluate and how much effort you put into it. Here are some reasons you may choose to evaluate your Community-Based Research project:

I. To improve your work

Conducting evaluations helps you to build on your successes and learn from your mistakes. Evaluation can document your success with facts, figures and examples, which in turn will lead to more support and encouragement from the community. Evaluation can also help to point out where you have fallen short of your goals, so that you will learn from your mistakes. Negative evaluations should be seen as an opportunity to learn about what works, not as a failure.

II. To help other people improve their work

It is important to think about sharing the results of your initiative with others. Completing a thorough evaluation will help you to present your project in a way that will help other people learn from your experiences. It is important to publicize problems and setbacks as well as successes.

III. To justify the use of resources

You will need to be accountable to those who provided your initiative with monetary or in-kind resources. Most funders require you to conduct a thorough evaluation as a part of your reporting procedure. A positive evaluation also provides evidence to support the case for doing similar kinds of work in the future.

IV. To recognize the value of your work

Engaging in the process of evaluating your initiative gives you the satisfaction of knowing how useful or effective your work has been, especially with the communities you are attempting to serve. Being able to see the success and value of your work can motivate you to continue with your work.

V. To identify unexpected outcomes

Your initiative may produce some unplanned or unexpected outcomes. Whether these outcomes contribute or detract from the goals of your initiative, conducting a thorough evaluation will help you detect and respond to these outcomes.

In summary, think of evaluation as an opportunity for collective learning and continuous improvement. Learning and evaluation are part of the same process. Evaluation processes are a way to structure learning about your project. Evaluation plans should feed directly into your project by converting evaluation data into project learnings; these project learnings are then used to re-imagine, adapt, or affirm your core activities or actions. This process is cyclical.

Conducting your Evaluation

Project evaluation is very similar to research. First you must identify a question or a set of questions. Your evaluation questions might include the following:

What?	Did we do what we said we would do?
Why?	What did we learn about what worked and what didn't?
So What?	What difference did this project make? What changed (for participants, for the organization, for the community?)
Now what?	What could we do differently in the future?
Then what?	How do we plan to use evaluation findings for continuous learning?

Second, you must develop a set of formal or informal methods to go about answering this question. These methods could include interviews, group discussions, surveys, or creative means like arts-based evaluation (photography, mural-making, theatre). Third, you must sort through the evaluation data you've obtained to determine how you have done. Last, you must record the findings of your evaluation project so that you can think through how to make changes for current or future projects.

There are two types of evaluation: Process Evaluation & Outcome Evaluation. For a diagram modeling each type, see the Tools and Templates section below.

Process evaluation - An ongoing dynamic process where information is added continuously (typically using a qualitative approach), organized systematically and analyzed periodically while the project is carried out. A process evaluation will tell you how the project is operating and allow you make changes/adjustments along the way.

Impact or outcome evaluation - An approach to gathering information about the anticipated results, or changes in participants, to determine if these did indeed occur. An impact evaluation will tell you about the (short and long-term) effects of a project on participants, organizations or communities.

Steps in Conducting a Project Evaluation

Now you are ready to develop and execute your evaluation plan. Conducting a project evaluation follows many of the same steps as conducting a Community-Based Research project. It is important to engage team members in evaluation from the beginning so that you can track your progress, and respond quickly to changing needs and outcomes. You may also want to provide a training workshop on evaluation at the beginning of your project to bring everyone up to speed. This can be a valuable capacity-building experience.

I. Clarify your project's goals and objectives.

To evaluate a project there must be clear, measurable project goals and objectives that outline what the project plans to accomplish. While this may seem obvious, many evaluations have gone off the track because this initial work has not been done. Goals are general statements on what you are trying to do in a project while objectives are specific, measurable statements on what you want to accomplish.

II. Engage stakeholders.

Identify your key stakeholders, understand their interests and expectations and engage them in a review of objectives for the program.

III. Develop evaluation questions and success indicators.

Your evaluation questions specify what you want to know about the project. The process of defining what constitutes success for a project is another important step. Project stakeholders need to define the success indicators for their projects. The success indicators allow project stakeholders to evaluate whether they accomplished what they set out to do and what the impact of their project has been. In other words, think about: *how do you know if your project has been successful?*

IV. Select the data collection method(s) you want to use.

After the first three steps have been completed, it is necessary to determine:

- the specific kinds of information you want to collect to answer the evaluation questions;
- the resources that are available to conduct the evaluation;
- who can provide the information (stakeholders); and
- how the information will be collected (method).

V. Collect and analyze the data.

Carefully develop your data collection tools and pilot test them. As the evaluation data is collected, it should be put in a format that can be summarized and interpreted. Enlist the support of an experienced researcher or analyst if possible.

VI. Interpret and share the results.

Evaluation findings can be used throughout the project to improve the planning and implementing of project activities. By sharing the results of your project, you can add to the knowledge and expertise of others who may be interested in the results. Where possible, present the results to project stakeholders in person and ask for their feedback.

VII. Take action.

At the end of the project, develop a set of concrete recommendations based on the evaluation results and an action plan for how these recommendations will be implemented.

Tools and Templates

Handout - Process and Outcome Evaluation

There are two types of evaluation: process and outcome evaluation. This handout contains a diagram of each evaluation type, alongside guiding questions, methods, and outputs for each.

Activity - Process Indicators Planning Guide

What does success look like? Each Community-Based Research project will have unique indicators for success. You may wish to use this Process Indicators Planning Guide activity with our team to create process indicators for your own Community-Based Research Project.

Template - Research Project Evaluation Survey

Template - Community Advisory Committee Evaluation Survey

For a list of potential survey questions to ask community members, and members of your core research team, see two evaluation surveys from our Refugee Youth Health Project and Newcomer Youth Health Project.

More Evaluation Resources?

Participatory Evaluation

For more training on Participatory Evaluation check out the community toolbox's Participatory Evaluation training module here: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/section_1907.htm

Checkoway, B. and Richards-Schuster, K. (2008). W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Participatory Evaluation with Young People Workbook and Facilitator's Guide. Program for Youth and Community.

<http://ww2.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=1172&NID=&ItemID=5000501&LanguageID=0>

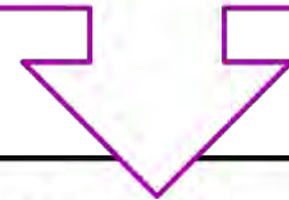
Paloma-Wellesley (2010). Working Together: The Paloma-Wellesley Guide to Participatory Program Evaluation. Toronto: Paloma Foundation and Wellesley Institute.
http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/research/social_innovation_research/working-together-the-paloma-wellesley-guide-to-participatory-program-evaluation/

reSearch for Change: Process and Outcome Evaluations

reSearch for Change: Process Evaluation

Guiding Evaluation Questions

- What did we do?
- How did we do it?
- What worked well? What did not work?
- How satisfied are participants with their involvement?
- What major barriers were encountered?



Evaluation Methods (Activities)

Activity/event log to document activities and outputs

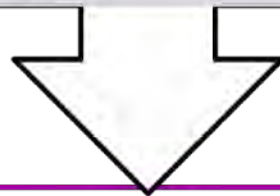
Debriefing activities and check-ins

Process documents (i.e. monthly reports)

Evaluation forms

Observation notes

One-on-one meetings



Evaluation Outputs & Indicators (Findings or Data)

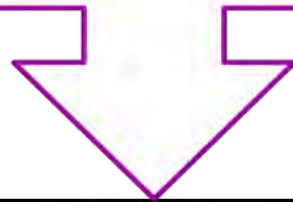
* # of participants recruited * Resources Compiled * # and type of trainings Delivered *
Materials Produced * Events Organized *

* Level and quality of participation in the project * Quality of communication among participants * Participant/partner satisfaction * Degree of democratic decision

reSearch for Change: Outcome (Impact) Evaluation

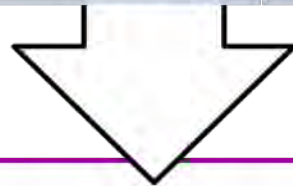
Guiding Evaluation Questions

- What difference did the project make?
 - Did *participants* experience any changes in their skills, knowledge, attitudes or behaviours?
 - What changes were made by participating *organizations* as a result of this project?
 - What changes were made in the *community* or at the *policy* level as a result of this project?
- Were there any unexpected outcomes?



Evaluation Methods (Activities)

surveys and evaluation forms	interviews or focus groups	observation notes	arts-based methods (e.g. story-telling)	knowledge skill tests	auditing organizational practices	measures of behaviour or health status
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Individual, Community & Organizational Outcomes & Indicators

- * increased awareness of and access to community resources
- * new knowledge and skills
- * changes in attitudes or behaviours
- * enhanced social support networks
- * improved health status
- * new/improved programs or services
- * changes in policies and practices
- * new/improved links, to other organizations
- * equitable partnerships
- * increase in community member participation and control within organization
- * increased community awareness and dialogue
- * enhanced local leadership capacity
- * effective resource mobilization
- * improved links, relationships, partnerships
- * favourable policy changes



reSearch for Change: Process Indicators Planning Guide

Overview: Process Indicators

What are process indicators?

Process indicators tell us how well we are doing in our project. They can be used monitor how we are working together effectively (according to your guiding principles) and in ways that are collaborative, participatory, equitable and that build the capacity of all participants. They can also help us identify participant concerns or barriers.

Why are they important?

Evaluating your process over the course of the project allows us to make changes/adjustments along the way. They can also offer important insights into why our project was successful or not. In addition, good process indicators can help us to determine whether we are working together in a way that is consistent with your stated values and principles.

Seeking your input:

Please take a few minutes to share your ideas about how we can monitor (keep track of) our processes over the course of this project.

Collaborative Partnership

These indicators will help us to assess whether all project partners have had an opportunity to participate and contribute equitably. Collaboration means that we also draw upon the diverse skills/knowledge of each partner in ways that help to achieve the project objectives.

For example:

- *All participants contribute actively to all stages of the research process, according to their capacities and interests.*
- *All partners are satisfied with their contribution to the project.*
- *Barriers to participation are acknowledged and discussed openly. Tangible efforts are made to support the active participation of diverse community members.*

What indicators of a collaborative partnership do you recommend?

Anti-Racist/Anti-Oppressive Working Environment

These indicators will help us determine if project team members proactively address power inequalities and barriers to participation. These indicators will also help to determine if we maintain an environment that is free from oppression and discrimination (on the grounds of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, organizational affiliation, etc.)?

For example:

- *The research team meaningfully engages individuals with from racialized communities in Black Creek.*
- *Participants take part in training on anti-oppression and anti-racism.*
- *Differences in power and social location among participants are acknowledged and discussed openly.*
- *Data is collected, analyzed and disseminated using an anti-oppressive/anti-racist lens (that takes into account race, gender, class and sexual orientation of those doing the work).*

What indicators of anti-racism/anti-oppression do you recommend?

Open and Transparent Processes (vision, goals and roles)

These indicators will help us assess whether team members (e.g. community advisory board members) have a clear, shared vision and understanding of the project's vision, goals as well as their roles.

For example:

- *Team members develop and communicate a shared vision for what they want to accomplish and how.*
- *Team members have a clear understanding of the project's main goals/objectives and how these goals will be achieved (i.e., work plan).*
- *Team members have a clear sense of their own and others' roles and responsibilities.*

What indicators of and open and transparent processes do you recommend?

Open and Respectful Communication

These indicators will help us determine how well team members are communicating with each other and with key community stakeholders.

For example:

- *Partners communicate openly with one another.*
- *Team members use plain language and minimize/explain technical terms and academic jargon.*
- *Team members offer constructive comments and feedback to each other.*
- *The project coordinator(s) provides regular updates to participants and key stakeholders.*
- *Open communication happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways*

What indicators of effective communication do you recommend?

Collaborative/Participatory Decision-making

These indicators will help us assess whether key decisions are made in a collaborative way.

For example:

- *A clear process for decision-making has been established by the team and is followed.*
- *All team members have the information they need make informed decisions.*
- *All partners demonstrate openness to different ideas and approaches related to the project.*
- *The decision-making process provides adequate 'space' for dissenting opinions to be raised and discussed.*

What indicators of effective collaborative/participatory decision-making do you recommend?

Reciprocal (Two-way) Learning and Capacity-Building

These indicators will help us to determine whether team members actively share their relevant knowledge and skills and expertise. These indicators will also help us determine if team members (particularly community members) have sufficient opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills and sense of agency.

For example:

- *Team Members regularly share relevant knowledge, skills and resources with each other.*
- *Community members and partners have opportunities to develop skills and knowledge (related to conducting research, income security, determinants of health and other related areas of interest).*
- *The process allows academics and agency representatives to learn from the lived experiences and knowledge of community members.*

What indicators of reciprocal learning and capacity-building do you recommend?

Commitment to Community Benefit and Positive Social Change

These indicators will help us to ensure that all project activities are clearly linked to outcomes that will benefit the community and increase the likelihood of positive social change.

What indicators of community benefit and positive social change do you recommend?

Other ideas or comments?

Please suggest any other process indicators that were not covered in the previous sections. ***Thank you for your feedback!***



Project Title;
Indicate who the
survey is for

Refugee Youth Health Project Evaluation

Use this template to construct an evaluation survey for your core team. For projects at Access Alliance, we have used Survey Monkey to generate surveys in an electronic format. This not only allows participants to electronically engage with the survey (e.g. click agree or disagree for each question), but also allows easy calculation of results at the end of the survey.

Welcome!

This survey is for participants on the core research team for the Refugee Youth Health Project (including Peer Researchers). If you were not a member of the core research team, please do not complete this survey.

This information tells the participant how you will use the information from the survey. Include the length of time it will take to complete.

Access Alliance is conducting an evaluation of the Refugee Youth Health Project. We are seeking your feedback help us understand your experience as a research team member and to identify ways that we can improve how we do Community-Based Research. More specifically, we want to look at how we worked together; communicated with and learned from one another; and to determine the benefits of participating in the project for team members.

The information that we collect will be used by the Access Alliance Research & Evaluation team to improve our work and to plan future Community-Based Research projects. The survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete.

There are no right or wrong answers. Answer each question in the best way that you can. We would appreciate it if you complete the whole survey, but you can skip any question that you do not want to respond to. Your answers will remain private. You will not be asked to provide your name. Any responses that could be used to identify a particular participant will be included in the project findings.

Remind participants that they may skip questions and that their answers will remain confidential.

not be

Thank you!

Evaluation Questions

***Which of the following best describes your role on the research team?**

- Access Alliance Staff
- Community Agency Representative
- Peer Researcher
- Principal Investigator or Academic

This question will help you to categorize the data for your evaluations according to role.

These outcomes should be measurable, realistic, and useful. Using a combination of close-ended questions (eg Likert scale) and open-ended questions is recommended.

2. Benefits (Outcomes) for Participants

One of the objectives of Community-Based Research is for Peer Researchers and other community members to benefit positively from their participation in research. The following statements will help Access Alliance and our funders understand ways that participating in the Refugee Youth Health Project may have helped you or made a difference in your life.

Use a likert scale from 1 to 5 to grade each of the comments where 1 represents Strongly Disagree and 5 represents Strongly Agree. Circle the appropriate answer.

I have a greater understanding of issues faced by refugee youth as a result of participating in this project.	1	2	3	4	5
I gained knowledge and skills that have helped me progress towards my educational, employment or career goals.	1	2	3	4	5
I improved my knowledge and skills related to conducting research (e.g., developing a research question, data collection and analysis)	1	2	3	4	5
I improved my writing skills	1	2	3	4	5
I improved my skills related to preparing and delivering presentations or workshops	1	2	3	4	5
I made new friends or contacts that I plan to stay in touch with	1	2	3	4	5
Taking part in the project inspired me to get involved in my community in new ways.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel more empowered to work on issues that are important to me and to members of my community	1	2	3	4	5

Please describe any other ways that participating in this project helped you or made a difference in your life:

Include questions that are open-ended to capture stories and experiences.

3. Training and Team Learning

Please circle one response for each of the following statements:

I was consulted on my training needs and interests.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training that I participated in made it easier for me to contribute to the project in a meaningful way.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learned new things from other members of the research team.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I had opportunities to share my knowledge, skills and resources with other members of the research team.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There was enough training and discussion of anti-oppression principles and practices.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Statements should reflect your process indicators.

How could the training for research team members be improved?

What other kinds of training would you have liked to have?

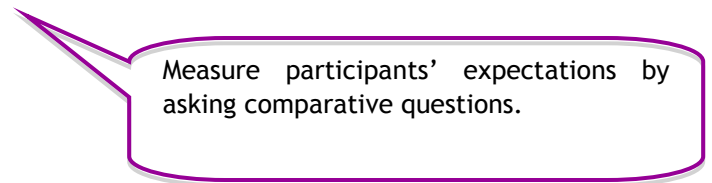
Plan for the future, and remember to ask participants to evaluate on what they think can be improved, or what was missing.

4. Project Vision, Roles and Goals

Please circle one response for each of the following statements:

I clearly understood the vision and goals of the Refugee Youth Health Project.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The research team set reasonable goals for the project.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I clearly understood my roles and responsibilities within the project team.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with my roles and responsibilities within the team.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I felt personally engaged in this project.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Would you say that your responsibilities were heavier or lighter than you expected? Please explain.



Please add any other comments about your role in the project.

Group evaluation questions by theme.

5. Communication

Please circle one response for each of the following statements:

Research team members communicated openly with one another	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Research team members communicated with me in a way that I could understand (e.g., using plain language and avoiding or explaining academic terms and 'jargon')	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received regular updates about project activities and accomplishments	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Differences in power and social location in the research team were acknowledged and were discussed openly	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree

How could communication within the research team be improved?

6. Collaboration and Decision-Making

Please circle one response for each of the following statements:

There was a clear process for making decisions in the research team.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The research team valued my ideas and opinions.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Research team members were given space to disagree and present alternative points of view.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with the degree to which I participated in making key decisions about the project.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree

How could collaboration and decision-making be improved?

Thank participants for their time. List contact info for questions.

7. Thank You!!!

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. Once everyone has completed the survey and the responses have been compiled, we will share the findings with all participants. If you have any questions about the project, please contact the Research department at: Tel: 416-XXX-XXXX ext. XXX or e-mail: -----@accessalliance.ca

If you have any other questions, comments or feedback about the project, please share them with us here.

Prompt participants to leave any other comments or feedback not addressed by your questions.



Project Title;
Indicate who the
survey is for

Newcomer Youth Mental Health Project Community Advisory Committee Evaluation

Participant Survey

****Please complete by Tuesday, July 28!****

Remember to indicate when the evaluation needs to be completed by. Put this info in the very beginning.

This survey includes questions that will help Access Alliance to understand your experience with the Newcomer Youth Mental Health Project (NYMH) project. The information we collect from this survey will help us to improve future research projects. It will also help us determine the ways which the project helped the youth participants.

BEFORE YOU START, PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS! It will take about 15 minutes to fill out this survey.

There are no right or wrong answers. Answer each question in the best way that you can. We would really appreciate it if you complete the whole survey, but you do not have to answer any question that you are not comfortable with.

Your answers will be anonymous. (Your name will not be on the survey). This information will be used by members of the research team and by Access Alliance to evaluate this project. The information may also be used in the dissemination of this project, to discuss youth engagement.

Tell participants approximately how long it will take to complete the evaluation. This will help them plan. Also knowing that it won't take too long can encourage people to complete the evaluation.

THANK YOU!

Evaluation Questions

1. These questions are about you and your involvement with the Newcomer Youth Mental Health Project.

a. Are you a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) member or a Peer Researcher (PR)?

b. Why did you decide to get involved in this project?

Ask participants about their motivations to get involved.

c. Which parts of the NYMH project did you enjoy? (Check all that apply. Please note that only the YAC received anti-racism/anti-oppression and community based research training. Only the Peer Researchers recruited youth for this project).

- Training (Anti-racism/anti-oppression, community based research, forum theatre)
- Youth conference preparation
- Meetings
- Recruiting youth

4. Please explain any of your answers above. In particular, please tell us more about any parts of the NYMH project that you did not like.

3. Involvement questions continued

For each of the following statements, circle ONE response to show whether you agree, disagree, or are not sure/undecided.

I clearly understood my roles and responsibilities within the project.	I agree	I'm not sure/undecided	I disagree
I felt that my participation was valued and encouraged by the research team.	I agree	I'm not sure/undecided	I disagree
I felt that my participation was valued and encouraged by other YAC members and Peer Researchers.	I agree	I'm not sure/undecided	I disagree
I felt that there was adequate training which helped me understand the issues more deeply.	I agree	I'm not sure/undecided	I disagree
The Research Coordinator and Research Assistant communicated effectively throughout the project.	I agree	I'm not sure/undecided	I disagree
I was happy with the ways in which, and the extent to which, I participated in this project.	I agree	I'm not sure/undecided	I disagree

Please explain any of your answers above:

5. Please list 2-3 things that you learned from participating in this project that you feel are useful. How would you use this knowledge in the future?

6. These questions are about outcomes. Participating in a project like this one may affect participants in many different ways. The following statements suggest some of the ways that taking part in this project may have affected you. For each statement, circle the response that reflects your experience.

I learned a lot about the key mental health issues faced by newcomer youth.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know/ unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I developed new skills and knowledge that have already helped me towards achieving my educational or career goals.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know/ unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learned about the experiences and perspectives of people with ethno-cultural backgrounds that are different from mine.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know/ unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I made new friends with whom I plan to stay in touch.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know/ unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel better about myself as a person than I did before I got involved in the project.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know/ unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel more hopeful about the future than I did before I got involved.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know/ unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have more people to whom I can talk when I have a problem than I did before I got involved.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know/ unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel inspired to get involved in my community in new ways	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know/ unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. Please describe any other ways that participating in this project has made a difference in your life.

8. Please suggest anything that could have been done to make the project better. You can also use this space to write down anything else you want to say about the Newcomer Youth Mental Health Project.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR FILLING OUT THIS SURVEY!!

Appendices



Community-Based Research Glossary

What is Community-Based Research (CBR)? CBR is research conducted *by, for* and *with* communities on issues that are relevant to the communities, usually with the goal of creating positive social change. The CBR approach enables community members to participate not as “research subjects” but as research collaborators and agents of change. In CBR, research is not an end to itself but rather a means to empower communities through the participating in the research process and to bring about social change by mobilizing action/advocacy based on research evidence.

Advocacy	The act of arguing on behalf of a particular issue, idea or person. The purpose of advocacy is usually to convince an organization or government to change their policy in some area. Different ways of doing advocacy include writing letters, contacting political representatives, organizing community meetings, distributing public education materials, or participating in a public protest.
Asset Mapping	A process that a community can use to identify, catalogue, and use its existing resources to support positive change.
Case Study	A research strategy focusing on the study of single cases. The case can be an individual person, an organization, a situation, etc.
Community Capacity	The ability of a community to organize itself to identify and solve its own problems. Building community capacity may involve training in areas such as: shared power, leveraging resources, communication and advocacy.
Credibility	The ability to demonstrate that the research was designed in a way that accurately identified and described the issue or topic being investigated. It calls for a detailed description of the methods used and explanation of why they were used.
Data	Information produced by and used in research – includes numbers, words, pictures, or any type of information used.
Dissemination	The stage of the research where you share your findings with others who may be interested in the results.
Environmental Scan	A way of developing an understanding of your organization’s or community’s current environment. This is done by identifying and gathering information from key informants and from other sources. The goal is to identify trends, gaps and issues to help you plan future projects or activities.
Focus Group	A type of interactive interview that is conducted with a group of people to explore their ideas on a particular topic. They are often used to gain a deeper understanding of respondents' attitudes and opinions. Focus groups typically involve 6-10 people, and last for 1-2 hours. A key feature is that participants are to able interact with, and react to, each other.
Informed Consent	The process of obtaining voluntary participation of individuals in research based on a full understanding of the possible benefits and risks involved.
Interview	A way to collect data involving an interviewer asking questions of another person (respondent) either face-to-face or by telephone. Questions are usually open-ended. Interviews may either be <i>structured</i> in which the

	interviewer asks all respondents the same questions using an a formal interview guide that specifies the precise wording and order of the questions, unstructured which is more like a conversation because questions are open-ended and the person is able to talk more freely on the topic and to influence the direction of the interview, or semi-structured with a mix of both.
Key Informants	People who are known to have knowledge, experience, expertise and/or opinions specific to the subject of the research, and who are selected as data sources for this reason.
Literature Review	A way to bring together individual journal articles, reports, books etc. It should weave together the individual items into a broad overview of the subject. The aim is to inform the audience of the current state of knowledge about a particular subject. It is commonly used to set the scene for introducing new research or a new perspective.
Photovoice	A strategy that combines photography with grassroots social action. Participants in a Photovoice project are asked to represent their community or point of view by taking photographs. It is intended to give insight into how people see and understand their circumstances.
Qualitative Data	Information gathered from interviews, observations, or documents - usually in the form of words. May include detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviors, and people's own thoughts about their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs.
Quantitative Data	Information collected from questionnaires, tests, standardized (fixed, unchanging) observation instruments, and program records. Focuses on things that can be counted (numbers), categorized, and analyzed using statistical procedures.
Research Ethics	Principles and systems relating to what is right and wrong. In research involving people, there are standards and codes of conduct that are followed to ensure that the benefits for participants are greater than the harms and that the privacy and confidentiality of participants is protected.
Research Methods	Ways of collecting data that are needed to answer the research questions. The choice of which methods to use will depend on who the information is for, how it will be used, what types of information are needed, and also the amount time and resources that are available.
Research Question	A clear statement (in the form of a question) of the specific issue that you want to focus on in your research. Good research questions are clear, specific, answerable (can be answered) and relevant.
Rigour	Rigour refers to designing research and doing analysis in systemic and comprehensive ways in order to strengthen the validity and relevance of your research.
Sampling	The process by which you select a representative number of respondents for a research project from a larger/total population, which is practically feasible and theoretically acceptable (the sample).
Survey	A tool for collecting information from a sample of individuals. Surveys usually comprise of closed-ended questions and are used for quantitative studies.

	Surveys can take a number of forms, including oral, written, and electronic.
Stakeholders	People who care about what will be learned from the research and about what will be done with the knowledge gained.
Theory	A theory describes or explains something. Often it is the answer to 'what', 'when', 'how' or 'why' questions.
Variable	Any factor which may be relevant to a research study. In a survey, for example, you may choose to analyze data by the age and gender of respondents. 'age' and 'gender' are variables.

The above glossary terms were defined using the following sources: The Center for the Advancement of Community Based Public Health, The Health Communications Unit (www.thcu.ca), Real World Research, 2nd Ed. (by Colin Robson), Research Mindedness (www.resmind.swap.ac.uk/content/00_other/glossary.htm)



Community-Based Research External Resources

The following list contains additional resources on Community-Based Research. This list contains toolkits, learning modules and fact sheets. A few key academic articles are also referenced. Many of these resources have been listed throughout the toolkit. You may find more resources online or at your local library. This is not a comprehensive list. Last, this list does not include resources created by Access Alliance. Please see Appendixes for additional materials.

General Community-Based Research Resources

ArtReach Toronto. (2011). Community-Based Participatory Research Kit (GOAL Youth Workshop Series). Available for download here: <http://www.artreachtoronto.ca/toolkits/>

Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network. (March 2006). *Fact Sheets*. Available for download here: <http://www.caan.ca/english/factsheets.htm>.

Flicker, S., & Savan, B. (2006). *A Snapshot of CBR in Canada*. Toronto, Canada: The Wellesley Institute.

Israel BA, Eng E, Schulz AJ, Parker EA. (Eds.) (2005). *Methods in Community-Based Participatory Research for Health*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Minkler M, Wallerstein N. (Eds.) (2003). *Community-Based Participatory Research for Health*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

The Reconnect Action Research Kit. (2000). Australia) Research Action Research Kit. The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, Youth and Students Branch. Tandon, D.

The Community-Based Participatory Research Curriculum for General Pediatrics Fellows. <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/commbas.html#Syllabi>

Wellesley Institute Community-Based Research Training Modules. <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/presentations/cbr-workshop-materials-now-available/>

- ✓ Detailed e-modules on all stages of Community-Based Research including partnership-building, research design, data collection (e.g. focus groups, surveys, etc.), analysis, dissemination, policy change, working with the media, and evaluation.

Community-Based Research and Partnerships

“A Bridge Between Communities: The Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center” (June 2000). Video produced by Vivian Chávez. For information on how to obtain a copy of the video, please contact Robert McGranaghan, Detroit URC Project Manager, at rojomcg@umich.edu. Several excerpts from the video can be viewed throughout the URC web site: <http://www.sph.umich.edu/urc/>

Dukes EF, Pisolish M, Stephens S. (2000) *Reaching for Higher Ground in Conflict Resolution: Tools for Powerful Groups and Communities*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Publishers.

The Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research Group. (2006). *Developing and Sustaining Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships: A Skill-Building Curriculum*. www.cbprcurriculum.info

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO (2006). *Doing More In Partnership*. Ottawa, Ontario. www.onthepoint.ca.

Capacity Building and Community-Based Research

Community Tool Box. <http://ctb.ku.edu>

Ontario Women's Health Network. (2009). *Inclusion Research Handbook*. Toronto: OWHN. <http://www.owhn.on.ca/inclusionhandbook.htm>

Van Wagner, Moody, R & Dumond, C. (2004). *Participatory Action Research with young people: A Leader's Manual*. HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development <http://www.heartwood.ns.ca/ourresources.html>

Community-Based Research and Ethics

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans <http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/>

Introductory Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Tutorial <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/tutorial>

Community-Based Research and Data Collection

Reid, C., E. Brief, and R. LeDrew. (2009). *Our Common Ground: Cultivating Women's Health Through Community Based Research*. Vancouver: Women's Health Research Network. <http://www.whrn.ca>

Ontario Women's Health Network. (2009). *Guide to Focus Groups*. Toronto: OWHN. <http://www.owhn.on.ca/focusgroupguide.htm>.

Community-Based Research and Knowledge Exchange (Dissemination)

The Research Matters Knowledge Translation Toolkit: A Resource for Researchers. (International Development Research Centre and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) Available from <http://www.research-matters.net>

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO (2006). *Doing More With What You Know*. Ottawa, Ontario. www.onthepoint.ca.

Community-Based Research and Policy Change

Ritas R. (2003). *Speaking Truth, Creating Power: A Guide to Policy Work for Community-Based Participatory Research Practitioners*. Seattle: Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. This toolkit is designed for CBPR partners who want to create or change policies that affect health in their communities. http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/ritas.pdf

UC Berkeley School of Public Health Team & PolicyLink. (November 2008). *Promoting Healthy Public Policy through Community-Based Participatory Research: Ten Case Studies*. Download here: depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/CBPR_final.pdf

VOICE in health policy Project Canadian Public Health Association. *A Guide to Collaborative Processes in Health Policy Development and their Implications for Action*. Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA). http://www.project-voice.ca/English/voice_publications.html

The Praxis Project: Learning Circle Series. (2003). *Effective Policy Advocacy Curriculum*. The Praxis Project. <http://www.thepraxisproject.org/irc/advocacy.html>

Community-Based Research and Evaluation

Checkoway, B. and Richards-Schuster, K. (2008). W. K. Kellogg Foundation. *Participatory Evaluation with Young People Workbook and Facilitator's Guide*. Program for Youth and Community. <http://ww2.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=1172&NID=&ItemID=5000501&LanguageID=0>

Paloma-Wellesley (2010). *Working Together: The Paloma-Wellesley Guide to Participatory Program Evaluation*. Toronto: Paloma Foundation and Wellesley Institute. http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/research/social_innovation_research/working-together-the-paloma-wellesley-guide-to-participatory-program-evaluation/

Good Luck with your
Community Based Research Project

We would love to hear from you about how useful this toolkit has been for your project. Please send us your feedback at research@accessalliance.ca