COMMUNITY ENGAGED RESEARCH TRAINING

Day 2 - June 8, 2022

UC DAVIS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

How we'll spend our time today

1. Welcome / Welcome back - New participant intros
2. Review community engagement goals for each researcher / team
3. Discuss common pitfalls in community engaged research and how to prevent or repair them
4. Planning for Community Engagement

CALIFORNIA NATIVE LANDS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UC Davis Environmental Health Sciences Center,
Community Engagement Core

We acknowledge that we are gathering today throughout the unceded territory of California that is home to nearly 200 tribal nations. As we begin, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of our various regions.

The work of the Environmental Health Sciences Center is based in Sacramento and Davis, on unceded lands stolen from Native peoples to form the University of California campuses.

To the original inhabitants of this land:

To the Nisenan people, To the Southern Maidu to the North, To the Valley and Plains Miwok/ Me-Wuk peoples to the south of the American River, To the Patwin Wintun peoples to the west of the Sacramento River, To the people of the Wilton Rancheria surrounding Elk Grove, To the Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, To the Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, and To the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation:

May we honor your ancestors who came before the colonizers and whose descendants still walk beside us today.

For the contribution of countless elders, activists, healers, families, loved ones, and Peoples in forming the history of the region where we reside today, we thank you.

In acknowledgement of the genocide and displacement of the indigenous peoples of California, we invite those who have benefited from the seizure of Native Lands to consider taking part in a form of financial reparation.

Nisenan Ancestral Homelands Reciprocity Program
https://chirpca.org/ancestral-homelands

Sacramento Native American Health Center
https://www.snahc.org/give-now/

News from Native California
https://newsfromnativecalifornia.com/about/support/

(Re) Introductions

Name and affiliation

Level of experience with community engaged research

Brief overview of your project and any community engagement components

ACTIVITY:
Revisit Community Engagement Goals for Each Researcher / Team

ACTIVITY:
Common pitfalls and best practices in community engaged research

Issue Selection & Research Question

Common pitfall(s):

Community only approached once issue and research question have already been determined.

Resulting challenge(s):

Issue selected is not relevant; research question would not provide the information that the community needs; loss of community and/or partner trust

How can we prevent?
How can we repair?

Issue Selection & Research Question

Prevention Strategies:

Work with community stakeholders to identify a priority issue and research question that you have the expertise to study.

Repair Strategies:

Approach potential partners with humility; re-allocate funds toward partner support even if they weren't included in the original grant; consider modifying research question(s) to address community concerns.

Research Design

Common pitfall(s):

Research design over or under-estimates community partner capacity, and/or is culturally inappropriate or not feasible.

Resulting challenge(s):

Project cannot be implemented as planned; community stakeholders lose trust in partner organization and/or academic researchers.

How can we prevent?
How can we repair?

Research Design

Prevention Strategies:

Clearly define partner roles; collaboratively develop budget; solicit feedback on research design.

Repair Strategies:

Engage in open dialogue with partners about how to define roles moving forward; re-align expectations and capacities

Data Collection

Common pitfall(s):

Does not involve partner organization or other members of stakeholder groups.

Resulting challenge(s):

Trouble identifying/accessing sampling sites; mistrust of local community resulting in low recruitment rates and small sample size.

How can we prevent?
How can we repair?

Data Collection

Prevention Strategies:

Develop relationships with community stakeholders with help from community partners; pay partners or local stakeholders for help with data collection; solicit partner assistance with “ground-truthing”

Repair Strategies:

Seek partner assistance to rework the data collection plan; be prepared to re-allocate resources/change data collection strategy

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Common pitfall(s):

Partners not involved or consulted in the process.

Resulting challenge(s):

Important contextual variables left out of analysis and interpretation; results are less compelling or useful

How can we prevent?
How can we repair?

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Prevention Strategies:

Discuss results with community partners as they are collected; solicit feedback on confounding variables

Repair Strategies:

Share preliminary results and solicit feedback

Dissemination of Findings

Common pitfall(s):

Findings not disseminated appropriately to stakeholders, including participants and community partners

Resulting challenge(s):

Findings not communicated clearly; might cause fear; materials not culturally appropriate or relevant; participants and/or stakeholders feel abandoned; reduced reach of project

How can we prevent?
How can we repair?

Dissemination of Findings

Prevention Strategies:

Dedicate time and resources to reporting findings to participants and stakeholders; engage community partners in the development of a dissemination plan and any communications materials

Repair Strategies:

Be prepared to re-allocate resources, modify your approach, and respond with humility to concerns or other feedback

Taking Action

Common pitfall(s):

Community stakeholders not involved, or no action takes place; or the action is seen as problematic by the researcher

Resulting challenge(s):

Results may be used in a way that undermines local advocacy efforts, or community has to use their own resources to take action

How can we prevent?
How can we repair?

Taking Action

Prevention Strategies:

Allocate time and resources for action; develop an action plan with partners in the research design stage

Repair Strategies:

Create space for dialogue with partners and other stakeholders; demonstrate care

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices
Process Considerations

Timely communication and communicating about time

- Avoid last minute asks / give sufficient time for feedback
- Be responsive and follow through
- Communicate project timelines (and any delays) clearly and directly

Incorporating community input

- Researchers should always communicate how community input was used OR explain why it is not being used

Community budgets and payments

- UC accounting processes are slow, and payment delays and miscommunications can negatively impact relationships. Researchers should do everything in their power to expedite partner payments.

ACTIVITY: Scenarios in Community Engaged Research

Scenario 1: Strategic communication of research results

A community-based organization (CBO) approached an academic researcher to initiate a research project because they were concerned with a contaminant in their community and the lack of adequate response by the regulatory agency.

Data was collected with the support of the CBO. Towards the end of the project, the CBO expressed concern about how the findings may be taken out of context by the regulatory agency and because they want to use the data in a lawsuit against the agency.

The CBO has asked the researcher to hold a press conference about the study to launch the lawsuit. The researcher is concerned about their research being seen as less independent if they do this press conference associated with the lawsuit.

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Is it a conflict of interest if the CBO hopes to use the research results to support their lawsuit?

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What risks do community members and collaborators face during the results dissemination phase?

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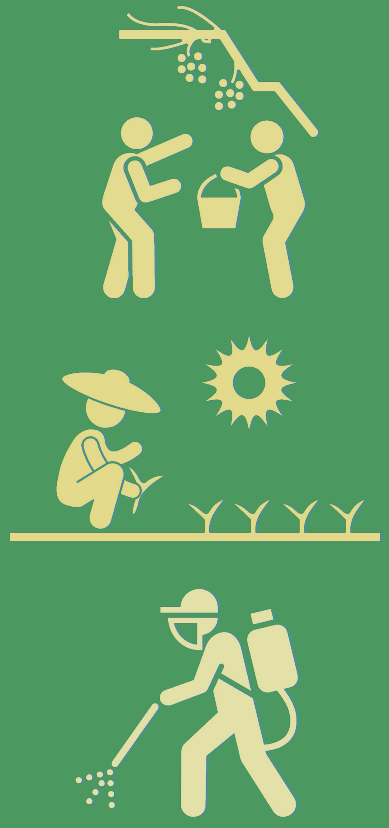
How can the team address the academic researcher's concerns about independence and objectivity?

Scenario 2: Accessibility and Language

A community partner and an academic researcher are collecting data via interviews with a local farmworker community.

There are some people who speak Spanish on the research team, but they discover that many farmworkers speak indigenous languages that no one on the team is familiar with and are not fluent in Spanish.

The team didn't budget for translation/interpretation in any indigenous languages, so they decide to conduct interviews only with farmworkers who speak Spanish.



After the project is complete, the team holds a series of community meetings to share the results. Fact sheets are provided in English and Spanish and one of the researchers serves as a Spanish/English interpreter.

The meetings are poorly attended, and after one meeting, a participant shares that a question critical of the study was inaccurately interpreted from Spanish to English. The meetings also do not include any Indigenous community members.

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How can accessibility (or lack of) impact sampling and data results? What populations are most vulnerable to participation barriers?

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Why might community meetings have been poorly attended? What could have been done differently to increase participation?

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How can research teams address unanticipated costs that arise during the project? How are (expected and unexpected) costs prioritized?

Scenario 3: Compensation, shared benefits, and trust

An academic researcher and community-based organization (CBO) are writing a grant proposal together for a large, multi-year project that has the potential to impact policy.

The researcher sent a budget to the community partner that includes $5000/year for the community partner, noting that this is the maximum amount that can be paid to the partner without sacrificing the quality of the scientific research.

The CBO responded that 5k is significantly lower than the budget they require to participate in the project. The proposal is due in a few days and the researcher is unsure how to respond.

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What components contribute to the "quality" of research? How might academic and community partners differ in their understandings of what quality means in a research context?

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How could this conversation shift from "transactional" to "relational" thinking? What benefits besides funding might the research be able to provide the CBO?

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What are the potential consequences of not adequately funding the CBO partners for their portion of the project?

Closing ACTIVITY: Planning for Community Engagement

5. Q & A and next steps

- Please complete evaluation (sent by email)
- CEC will reach out to set up quarterly check-ins for individualized, project-specific support
- Supplemental support materials heading your way soon!

Community roles at each phase of research

Research goals development

Community partners may be able to...

Illuminate new issues of concern to stakeholders / priority research topics

Help develop action-oriented research questions that consider policy / regulatory environment

Help determine how to make the research most beneficial to key stakeholders, particularly in terms of identifying and prioritizing short-term community benefits

Identify the relationship(s) between research goals and action/community goals

- Multi-level community goals could include education, advocacy, policy change, mitigation, etc.

Study design

Community partners may be able to...

Assist with instrument development, testing, and revision for efficacy and relevance to addressing community concerns

Help determine cultural acceptability of sampling methods (i.e. blood draws versus hair samples)

Help identify and minimize community and participant-level risks, including, for example:

- Regulatory triggers that may impact risks associated with sampling (i.e. results that require disclosure and could impact land value)
- Risks associated with receiving test results with personal or community health implications

Study design

Community partners may be able to...

Open up new design possibilities through leveraging of community resources / networks

Identify key stakeholders for inclusion on research team or advisory board

Help determine participant accessibility needs (i.e. language, literacy, sampling/meeting locations, etc.)

Data collection

Community partners may be able to...

Help develop an effective, culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach plan

Assist with participant recruitment via existing networks / relationships

- Host meetings / events
- Leverage existing communications channels
- Develop recruitment materials

Collect data (conduct surveys, collect water samples, etc.)

Train others to collect data

Data analysis

Community partners may be able to...

Assist with accurately coding and analyzing qualitative data

Provide additional context for interpreting results (qualitative or quantitative)

Sharing of results

Community partners may be able to...

Help develop a dissemination plan to effectively reach direct stakeholders and decision makers.

Develop public-facing science communications materials and/or policy briefs.

Help make connections to key decision makers.

Help design a participant report-back process that is effective and culturally and linguistically appropriate

Sharing of results

Community partners may be able to...

Help understand and address implications of results with participants and impacted communities.

Follow up with participants and other community stakeholders on any concerning results

- Provide trusted source of information on mitigation, risk management, etc.
- Highlight / leverage existing support resources
- Work with community stakeholders to determine next steps

Host community meetings with project team to share results with stakeholders

Evaluation

Community partners may be able to...

Help determine next steps for research or outreach planning.

Help assess replicability / relevance beyond original research scope / community context.

Contribute to process evaluation, in particular goals around collaboration

- Evaluate partnership and feasibility of working together again.
- Identify areas of improvement for future collaborations.

Develop criteria for and contribute to impact evaluation.