SFU

CERi
COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH

COMMUNITY RESOURCE HANDBOOK.

A Guide to Community-Engaged Research
First edition
2021

About SFU Community-Engaged Research Initiative (CERi)

Based out of the 312 Main co-working space in downtown Vancouver, CERi is focused on extending community-engaged research to provincial, national and international communities. Our aim is to act as an infrastructure that advocates for community-engaged research rooted in values of reciprocity, collaboration, equity, justice and social transformation.

We do this by strengthening the capacity of SFU's researchers and students to develop meaningful, productive and reciprocal research partnerships that are capable of making a positive difference in communities throughout British Columbia and beyond.

Acknowledgements

Copyright

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Introduction.

We believe reciprocal and respectful relationships with community are the foundation of good research. By inviting communities to co-create knowledge, community-engaged research can build capacity for imagination, and enhance the capacity of communities to advocate for their own well-being.

Acknowledgement of Place

The people associated with Simon Fraser University's Community-Engaged Research Initiative respectfully and with gratitude work on the shared Traditional Coast Salish Lands of the Squamish (Sḵwx̱wú7mesh), Tsleil-Waututh (səl̓ilw̓ətaʔɬ), Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) and Kwikwetlem (kʷikʷəƛ̓əm) Nations (in Vancouver and Burnaby respectfully) and the q̓íc̓əy̓ (Katzie), Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem (kʷikʷəƛ̓əm), Qayqayt, Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), numerous Stó:lō Nations, Semiahmoo and Tsawwassen (in Surrey).

We acknowledge the sovereignty and equality of Indigenous nations and are guided by aspirations to remake Canada into a decolonial state comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who function with respect for one another.[1] Given that the majority of higher education institutions in Canada are on unceded traditional territories of Indigenous peoples, and inequities from colonization are ongoing in Canadian society, we see community-engaged research as an actionable strategy for change that aims to make visible Indigenous ways of knowing that have traditionally been excluded across research settings and institutions.

Within this acknowledgement we seek to deepen our responsibility and respect for one another, the land and for the culture of this place.

Invitation

Conventional research does not usually emphasize collaboration with communities. Community-engaged research (CER), on the other hand, puts academic and community partnership at the centre. Bringing together these partnerships—which include different sets of priorities, experiences and skills—is not a straightforward or quick process. It takes time to build equitable and reciprocal relationships. Community-engaged research is an emergent practice that is predicated on building trust and taking risks. It often requires that we let go of our expectations and allow the unexpected to happen in ways that require patience, openness, humility and a sensitivity to what the community needs.

We believe reciprocal and respectful relationships with community are the foundation of good research. By allowing communities to co-create knowledge, community-engaged research can build capacity for imagination, and enhance the capacity of communities to advocate for their own well-being.

We invite you to join us in this work and consider how community-engaged research can enhance how to evaluate, describe, interpret and care for our shared world.

Our Offering

Our intention with this handbook is to offer readers a practical and accessible guide for community-engaged research. But it is just that: an offering. It is not a definitive guide or a prescriptive checklist. We recognize that the beauty and complexity of many CER projects lie in their unique contexts and imaginative approaches. That means a "one-size-fits-all" handbook may not make sense for everyone.

Who is this guide for?

This handbook is for community-serving organizations including, but not limited to, community groups, not-for-profit organizations, public and private foundations and local, provincial and federal government agencies. This handbook is designed to help community organizations gain a practical understanding of community-engaged research. It also provides a guiding framework for developing a CER project.

This handbook can also be useful for students, early-career researchers and anyone who is curious about using research to advance community interests.

Our intention with this handbook is to offer readers a practical and accessible guide for community–engaged research.

Why use community-engaged research?

There are critical benefits and opportunities for communities and organizations who use CER as a framework to advance their goals.

1. **Democratize knowledge creation** by centring local contexts and community expertise.

2. **Build the capacity** of communities/organizations to do research and grow their influence.

3. **Broaden the impact** of communities/organizations by using the research process as a way to build diverse coalitions of stakeholders.

4. **Influence public policy** by creating credible evidence for change.

5. **Enhance community support for solutions** based on research findings.

6. **Deepen and diversify public engagement efforts** by inviting community to contribute to research design, data gathering and knowledge sharing.

7. **Amplify** the wisdom and capacity of community researchers.

8. **Advance academic research** and theoretical discourse within and across disciplines.[2]

CER AS SYSTEMS CHANGE
Hey Neighbour Collective.

Hey Neighbour Collective (HNC) is a systems change project that brings together housing providers, researchers, local and regional governments, housing associations and health authorities to experiment with and learn about ways of effectively building community, social connectedness and resilience in BC's fast-growing vertical communities. HNC uses community-engaged research to generate evidence-based data and inspiration for residents, housing operators and cross-sectoral policy makers which highlights professional practice, systems and culture change opportunities. This research is then leveraged to showcase and engage others in learning about promising practices and policy solutions through sharing stories and evidence related to improved programming, management, design efforts and community culture of multi-unit housing. The research and public engagement effort are then mobilized to engage housing professionals and cross-sectoral policy makers in understanding and implementing opportunities to foster healthier and more resilient communities through shifts in policy, programming and practice.

Project Leads: Michelle Hoar, SFU Dialogue Associate; Stacy Barter, Building Resilient Neighbourhoods; Luna Aixin, City of Vancouver; Meg Holden, SFU Urban Studies; Meghan Winters, SFU Health Sciences; Atiya Mahmood, SFU Gerontology; Paty Rios, Happy City

Section 1: Fundamentals.

"Community-engaged research must produce useful knowledge, help advocate for vulnerable community needs, lead to policy changes and/or have a real-world impact."[3]

What is a Community?

Community is a concept that is difficult to define in a way that will satisfy the countless ways people come together. Communities can be defined as a group of people with similar characteristics or a shared identity, including people living in the same neighborhood or people linked together based on experiences of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, political association, education levels, income status—or any combination of these. Communities can also emerge from the workplace and represent a sector, organization or vocation.

When conducting community-engaged research, it is important to understand how communities define themselves so that you understand their view of what makes them a "community."[4] Having noted this, CER is more about the process of opening up social and scientific questions, than it is about a strict definition of who "is" community or who "represents" community.

What is Community-Engaged Research (CER)?

At root, CER begins with questions like: Are those most affected by the problem at the table? Are those who have a stake in the issue at the table? Do they play decision making roles?[5]

Community-engaged research is an approach to research that "creates space for communities, community members and community-based organizations to work in collaborative partnerships with academic researchers."[6]

For a project to be considered community-engaged, university-based researchers must be committed to approaching each stage of the research process as part of an ongoing relationship-building process with the community they are working with.

What can CER do for community?

Fundamentally, CER is about the collection of information to answer a specific question that is of interest to a community. CER can be used by a community to:

- Develop policy recommendations and/or support advocacy for an issue;

- Describe or improve the effectiveness of a service or program;

- Promote the work of a community;

- Tell a story to funders or policymakers;

- Answer scientific questions that are mutually beneficial to the community and the researcher, such as: discovering the social and environmental determinants of wellbeing and health or enhancing the adaptation of new technologies by incorporating the community's perspective early on in the research and design process; and

- Much more, including leveraging arts-based research methods to express a need, document a reality or move people to act.

CER IN ACTION
Our Community, Our Voice.

The Our Community, Our Voice: The Settlement and Integration Needs of Refugees in Surrey, BC project examined the needs and challenges of refugees settling and integrating in Surrey. It explored potential solutions, actions and promising practices to remediate these issues. The research team worked with community partners to recruit peer research assistants and focus group participants to hear from the refugees themselves—their dreams of settling in Canada, their stories of trauma and hardship, their resiliency and resourcefulness in the face of ongoing adversity and their deep desire, through this research, to help inform and improve national and regional refugee policies and services. In order to gain relevant and effective insight, the study drew on the local and experiential knowledge of new and recently settled refugees, community stakeholders (i.e., local and provincial organizations that offer settlemevnt services to refugees and their families), as well as civic, business and community leaders in the city. The project was grounded to the perspective of refugees, service providers and concerned citizens who bring divergent sources of expertise to the understanding of refugee settlement and integration in Surrey.

Project Leads: Stephen Dooley, SFU Surrey; Nav Chima, SFU Surrey; Nathalie Gagnon, KPU; Tara Holt, Surrey Schools; Sharalyn Jordan, SFU Surrey

PARTICIPATION CONTINUUM

Below is a continuum that illustrates ways a CER researcher can engage with community.

	LESS	MORE
Research question, methods, & design	Researcher approaches community to collaborate on development of a research question and works to find a mutually agreed-upon design/plan.	Community approaches researchers with a question and ideas for a research project/design OR researcher learns about existing community goals/needs and offers/requests to be involved. Community partners are co-researchers and leaders from onset.
Ethics & consent procedures	Researcher and community discuss standard institutional ethics procedures and build additional elements based on community context and considerations.	Community co-researchers set and share ethics and consent expectations of the local community with the university researcher/research team. University research team prioritizes community ethics as much as institutional ethics.
Recruitment, research & analysis	Researcher initially leads recruitment and research plan and integrates community to help lead the process. Where appropriate/possible, select community members get trained/involved in research and analysis. Member checking of data with community collaborators.	Community collaborators/co-researchers participate in aspects of recruitment of participants, conducting of the research and analysis/interpretation of data. Where analysis requires specific expertise, university researchers invest in (paid) training and capacity building for community co-researchers, where desired.
Knowledge sharing & future plans	Researcher checks with community for additional avenues and ideas of knowledge sharing beyond papers and publications. Community and researcher make/take up recommendations based on findings.	Early conversations elicit clear goals and plans for research findings. Community uses research, relationship with researcher and knowledge sharing as avenues to advocate for desired change and to achieve goals. Researcher advocates for systemic and policy changes using privilege and institutional connections.

Roots of CER

Community-engaged research is a research paradigm that emerges from a rich collection of practices across a number of disciplines. CER is an emergent term that draws on numerous related concepts that share historical roots, values and ethical foundations. Some related terms include: transactional research, action research, engaged scholarship and community-based participatory research.

Many of the frameworks associated with CER trace back to the popular education movement and the development of 'participatory action research'[7] (PAR) which sought to address power relations and challenge the gap between theory and practice. These foundational ideas viewed people as the experts about their own lives and sought to align research with the real needs of communities. Emerging from this came an approach to research that seeks to understand the world by reflecting what is of vital concern to people and developing knowledge and action to change it.[8]

Several other theoretical traditions have been critical in informing the development of community-engaged research. Among their many contributions, these theories problematize the act of speaking on behalf of community members and demand that researchers use their priviledge to build a platform for communities to speak for themselves—especially those who are marginalized, disempowered, subjugated or silenced in society.[9]

Decolonizing Research

Decolonization is particularly important to CER because Western research methodologies have long been, and continue to be, a source of harm and exploitation for Indigenous people.

Indigenous scholars have noted that the extractive research approaches used and propagated by Western researchers have disempowered communities, imposed stereotypes that reinforce internalized racism and conducted research that benefits the careers of individual researchers, without bringing tangible benefit to communities struggling with significant challenges and disparities.[10]

Decolonization is "a process of acknowledging the history of colonialism; working to undo the effects of colonialism; striving to unlearn habits, attitudes, and behaviours that continue to perpetuate colonialism; and challenging and transforming institutional manifestations of colonialism."[11]

Decolonizing research is a process for conducting research with Indigenous communities that places Indigenous voices and ways of knowing in the center of the research process.[12] It critically examines the underlying assumptions that inform the research. Decolonizing research challenges widely accepted beliefs that Western methods and ways of knowing comprise the only routes to objectivity, neutrality and true science. Indigenous scholars[13] have shown how processes of decolonizing research contribute to Indigenous communities regaining control over their ways of knowing and being, often in ways that can be used to advance the interests and rights of Indigenous communities.

The attempt to decolonize research is well complemented by CER as an orientation to research that is more dialogical and egalitarian in its approach and one that places emphasis on social justice.

INDIGENOUS-LED RESEARCH

Húýat: Our Voices, Our Land.

Húýat: Our Voices, Our Land (2019) is a multimedia exploration of the history of Húýat — one of a network of culturally significant places of the Heiltsuk First Nation (Central Coast, British Columbia). The digital project is the result of an eight-year collaboration between the Heiltsuk Nation, researchers from Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria and Greencoast Media. It explores Húýat's history through Heiltsuk memories, language, and oral traditions which come from community-initiated research, ethnographic sources, archaeology and archival documents assembled in the Heiltsuk Cultural Education Center (HCEC), as well as 30 interviews conducted specifically for this project. This diverse knowledge and data is woven together and brought to life in 360-degree interactive virtual tours; videos of and direct quotes from Heiltsuk and other knowledge holders; a timeline; and archival stories, photographs and recordings. This integrated approach aligns with Indigenous worldviews, in which connections among people and their history move fluidly across space and time. The website is a living archive and supports Heiltsuk efforts to assert rights. www.hauyat.ca/

Project Leads: Dana Lepofsky, SFU Archaeology; Elroy White / Qixitasu (Heiltsuk Nation); Mark Wunch, Green Coast Media; Jennifer Carpenter, Heiltsuk Integrated Resource Management Department; Nancy Turner; University of Victoria; and the Heiltsuk community.

Ethical Principles.

Community-engaged research is grounded in ethical research practices, in large part because CER often engages with communities that are historically, persistently and systemically marginalized. While not exhaustive nor universally agreed-upon, we consider ten ethical principles outlined here to be of utmost importance to fair and equitable engagement between researchers and communities.

1. Harm and Risk Reduction

CER projects should be designed and carried out with significant attention to potential risks for community and participants, including to the broader social, political and economic fabric of a community. Risks should be collaboratively evaluated and actively mitigated in an ongoing manner.

2. Community Participation

CER projects aim for high levels of community participation during all phases of research, including the identification of a research question, study design, data collection, analysis and dissemination and knowledge mobilization. Community partners and community members should be involved in leadership and collaboration to the extent that they desire. Whenever possible, their labour should be paid or otherwise reciprocated.

3. Community Benefit

CER projects should be orientated toward a primary goal of achieving community benefit. The community that is most affected by and involved in the research should see the greatest benefits of both the process and the outcomes.

4. Action Orientation

An action orientation to CER situates research as a powerful driver of political and systemic change both within a community and within broader systems that affect that community. CER projects should begin with a responsiveness to community issues and assets. It should aim to generate actionable changes at multiple levels.

5. Power Examination & Active Redistribution

Key to CER is the research team's attention to issues of power, privilege, and positionality. In addition to an examination of power, a community engaged research team has the responsibility to commit to action that aims to redistribute power in the service of addressing and shifting unequal power relations.

6. Anonymity, Confidentiality & Privacy

CER projects prioritize the safety of participant and community identities, and any sensitive data that they may share. Attention to anonymity, confidentiality and privacy in a CER project involves a close collaboration with community to understand and enact both institutional and community systems of protection, while also recognizing that individuals have the right to be identified if they choose to be (and if it is safe) through informed consent.

7. Communication, Transparency & Trust

Strong relationships form the bedrock on which CER is built, and those relationships are contingent on effective communication, ongoing transparency, and the long-term development of trust. In order for community to be involved in every step of the research, there must be an explicit commitment to transparent communication in formats that work well for all involved.

8. Attention to Context

Attention to context is vital at all stages of CER projects. Since CER happens in and with community, factors such as history, culture, language, current events and geography comprise the context in which the study occurs, and inevitably influence all aspects of the research, including design, recruitment, methodology and dissemination.

9. Focus on Relationships

At the heart of CER is a focus on relationships – relationships between people, institutions, places and knowledge (to name a few). Community-engaged research is a framework or approach to research that is especially founded on sustainable, trusting and equitable relationships between researchers and communities.

10. Collaborative Analysis & Dissemination

CER collaborations with community do not stop once data has been collected. Some of the most meaningful collaboration and fruitful insights happen at the stages of analysis (meaning-making) and dissemination (knowledge sharing). Analysis and dissemination should be carried out using frameworks and formats that make sense for community.[14]

Section 2: CER Methods**.**

In the context of CER, research methods are more participatory because they are directly tied to community engagement and the mobilization of knowledge.

What are CER research methods?

Research methods are techniques used to clarify or understand a problem or research question. In the context of CER, there are a diversity of research tools and methods used because of the need to facilitate community engagement, address community needs and mobilize knowledge. Because people know, learn and communicate in different ways, CER research methods must be open to creative ways to generate questions, engage with research and collect information. CER draws on both **conventional and participatory research methods** as a way to build community, broaden the understanding of social issues and provide creative ways to respond to issues affecting a community.[15]

Conventional research methods

- **Semi-structured interviews:** An open interview style that uses pre-determined questions but allows for new ideas to surface during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says.

- **Focus groups (or group interviews):** A small but demographically diverse group of people invited to respond to questions or discussions to determine the reactions that can be expected from a larger population.

- **Surveys/polls:** Questionnaires used for collecting qualitative and quantitative information about a population.

- **Ethnography/participant/field observation:** A type of social research involving the researcher's participation in the setting or with the people being studied to document patterns of social interaction and the perspectives of participants in order to understand local contexts.

- **Oral history:** The collection and study of historical information that typically cannot be found in written sources. Oral history uses interviews with people who participated in or observed past events to preserve memories and perceptions as an oral record of history.

How do I choose a research method?

When considering research methods, keep in mind that the most important characteristics of community-engaged research are not the methods used but the principles that guide research and the relationships between researchers and the community. Therefore, one must situate the methods within the needs and preferences of the community and be mindful of the constraints facing the people one is working with.

CER research methods can be used for a variety of purposes, including:

- **Identifying specific needs:** Collecting information about the needs of a particular community or group.

- **Co-creation:** Soliciting contributions from a community of people to inform the creation of a new program, campaign, service or policy.

- **Evaluation:** Determining the effectiveness of a program, campaign and/or policy.

- **Community-building:** Facilitating relationships within community or between researchers and community members.[16]

Tips for choosing and using participatory methods

When choosing a CER method, it is important to consider the following outcomes for research participants or community co-researchers:

- The degree to which the research invigorates the imagination of the participants;

- The effectiveness by which participants are able to represent themselves;

- The degree to which participants feel welcome, comfortable and empowered to participate;

- The degree to which participants can logistically engage in light of various barriers such as transportation, time, cost, etc.;

- The measure of freedom participants experience;

- The quality of expression that emerges from participants; and

- The depth of the networks of support arising out of the research project, including, for example, stronger community relationships among co-researchers, a deeper sense of community engagement among co-researchers and the development of informal authentic care networks that help communities thrive.

The most important characteristics of community-engaged research are the principles that guide research and the relationships between researchers and the community.

Participatory Research Methods.

Participatory research methods can be used on their own or to support more conventional research approaches. These alternative and emergent methods can create new models of expression and open up research findings in unforeseen ways. In this way, participatory methods can offer low-barrier ways to compare data, animate research processes and communicate findings.[17]

Participatory research methods that evoke creativity such as art and design-based methods, digital storytelling and photo-voice can be valuable tools for CER because they help illuminate complex narratives in a compelling manner, increase participant engagement and enhance the meaning of research findings.

Researchers have noted that these techniques can bridge communication and power gaps between residents, researchers and policy-makers;[18] facilitate cross-cultural understandings; and strengthen community networks.[19] Through symbolism and dialogue, creative approaches can provide a venue for participants to talk about their own experiences, as well as how they feel about the experiences of others.[20]

These techniques can also help to depict emotions that may not emerge during verbal or transcribed interviews[21] and incorporate the views of a wider range of community members (i.e. seniors, youth, women, people with disabilities and so forth) in development projects.[22]

Also, a technique like photovoice has been found to be culturally appropriate when working with Indigenous communities as the practice of sharing stories about photographs is more similar to the recounting of oral histories and storytelling.[23]

ARTS-BASED METHODS

Arts-based methods use the performing and visual arts (painting, drawing, creative writing, music, theatre, murals, dance, film, etc.) as the basis for inquiry, intervention, knowledge production and/or information sharing.[24]

DESIGN-BASED METHODS

Design-based methods use facilitation methods such as human-centered design and 'design jams' to inform the design process of products, processes and services by centring the needs and experiences of the end user. Design jams can be used as a creative brainstorming session to co-create a wide range of possible interventions in response to specific civic, social and political contexts. Cultural probes (or design probes) is a related technique used to inspire ideas in a co-design process by using small packages that include a mix of tools (like a map, postcard, camera or diary) along with evocative tasks, which are given to participants to allow them to record specific events, feelings or interactions. The probes serve as a means of gathering inspirational data about people's lives, values and thoughts.[25]

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Citizen science is the coordinated engagement of volunteer citizens, usually amateur scientists or natural history enthusiasts, as observers, data collectors or analysts in large-scale observational or experimental research. Working as co-researchers and collaborators, the public plays an active role in collecting and disseminating data and results. By accepting the skills of non-specialist contributors to research, citizen science can empower and educate citizens by acknowledging their contributions and developing their scientific skills while addressing significant environmental, scientific and social issues.[26] Some approaches associated with citizen science include environmental monitoring, coding data, making calendars, participatory geographical information systems (PGIS) and crowdsourcing.

SOCIAL AUDITS

Social audits are an approach to the evaluation of public services where civil society organizations engage volunteers and collect data to share with public and government officials. The process provides service users with an opportunity to scrutinize the activities of government, influence methods of decision-making and enforce transparency and accountability. Some approaches associated with social audits include citizen report cards, public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS), sector-specific budget monitoring, outcome mapping, most significant change, well-being or wealth ranking.[27]

CER AS DESIGN-THINKING AND CITIZEN SCIENCE
Pain Studies Lab (2019).

Pain Studies Lab is a research group that studies, invents and designs technologies for people who live with persistent pain, pain physicians and healthcare professionals, and caregivers. The lab engages chronic pain patients in its research, and works with pain experts, non-profit organizations and digital media researchers to investigate the physiological, social and cultural experiences and practices of people who live with pain. The Pain Studies Lab uses 'design thinking' workshops that bring together health researchers and their patient-partners to explore a 'citizen science' approach to collecting information about 'the burden of symptoms' from patients. This method of research helps to identify not only the needs of patients but also the needs of health researchers who would use that information. This process also allows patients to contribute to refining the approach of the research team regarding issues such as security, privacy, usability, compliance and effectiveness.

Project Lead: Diane Gromala, Canada Research Chair in Computational Technologies for Transforming Pain, SFU School of Interactive Arts and Technology

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Digital storytelling is a method that uses short form digital media productions that integrate photos, participant voices (such as podcasting), animations and music to allow a group or community to explore issues, voice concerns or tell stories.

PHOTOVOICE

Photovoice is a method that asks participants to express their points of view or represent their communities by photographing scenes that highlight research themes (e.g. community concerns, community assets, social issues and public health barriers). These photographs are collaboratively interpreted through discussions, and narratives can be developed that explain how the photos highlight a particular research theme.[28]

COMMUNITY MAPPING

Community mapping includes various mapping techniques that identify relationships and sites on a map in order to create a tangible display of the people, places and experiences that make up a community. For instance, asset mapping identifies the status, condition, behavior, knowledge or skills of a person, group or entity, which serves as a resource for oneself and others in the community. This method can support strategic planning efforts by building on existing community strengths and is often used in Asset Based Community Development.[29]

WALKABOUTS

Walkabouts are walking interviews and/or mapping exercises where researchers and community members generate collaborative knowledge as they explore a geographical area together. Walking allows participants to more easily express their thoughts as specific features of the landscape function as prompts or cues to personal experiences or important aspects of participants' culture. Walkabouts have been used to explore mobility and accessibility issues, health and safety issues, homelessness, oral histories, outdoor recreation, social interaction and the overall quality of pedestrian environments.[30]

Creative approaches can provide a venue for participants to talk about their own experiences, as well as how they feel about the experiences of others.

CER AS DIGITAL MEDIA ADVOCACY

Raising Awareness and Addressing Elder Abuse in the LGBT Community (2018).

This project was a collaborative digital arts project conducted with LGBT youth and seniors in Vancouver, BC. Youth and seniors worked together to produce the first Canadian materials on LGBT elder abuse—three digital videos and five informational posters. Their aims were: 1) To raise awareness of elder abuse as it exists in the LGBT community; 2) To address gaps and silences in the public discourse about this topic; and 3) To build capacity, agency and understanding amoung the LGBT youth and elders who took part in the project. They learned and applied skills of script writing, filming, acting, composition, directing and editing as they worked together to produce project materials. In this project, making art with others is positioned as a form of critical research. Participants learned about elder abuse in general—including its types, signs and symptoms and systemic causes—and identified unique ways it might manifest in the lives of LGBT individuals and be fostered by external and internalized homophobia. These understandings and insights were then widely communicated to others through videos and poster/fact sheets produced by youth and elder participants and designed to raise awareness of the issue of elder abuse in the LGBT community. These digital materials were also premiered at town hall meetings held in the five regional health authorities of British Columbia.

Project Leads: Claire Robson, SFU Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, and founder of Queer Imaging & Riting Kollective for Elders (Quirk-e); Gloria Gutman, SFU Department of Gerontology; Jen Marchbank, SFU Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, and co-facilitator of Youth for A Change (YfAC); Kelsey Blair, McGill Department of English, and co-facilitator of Quirk-e.

Section 3: Key Considerations.

History has shown that, especially when working with communities disproportionately impacted by systemic injustices and social stigma, research can perpetuate stigma, undermine existing grassroots initiatives and cause emotional harm due to outsiders "parachuting" in and out. It can consume valuable and limited community resources (e.g., time, people, infrastructure) and misrepresent communities when done poorly.[31]

Relationships come first in developing a community-engaged research project. A critical first step is working within and with the community to explore an inquiry into an issue or research question. This initial inquiry helps to develop relationships between researchers and community and to determine the research methods, intended impact, research dissemination and action strategies for a project.

Designing a CER project can involve a combination of community members, community-based organizations and researchers. Partnerships be- tween community and researchers will vary depending on resources and the needs of organizations but the research will always be defined by CER values and principles.

There are many considerations and questions when considering whether a CER research project is right for one's community. Some of these will take time to uncover. Not all questions can be answered before initiating the research. Working in a community-engaged context can result in unanticipated outcomes.

A critical first step in developing a CER project is working within and with the community to explore an inquiry into an issue or research question.

Challenges of CER

While there are many benefits and rewarding surprises in doing CER, these are often accompanied by some important challenges that must be considered. Some challenges include:

1. **Messiness and unpredictability:** Given the diversity of collaborators in CER projects, the roadmap for doing CER is not always straightforward and unexpected challenges or new directions can often arise.

2. **Differences in ways of knowing and being:** Bringing together interdisciplinary teams of university-based researchers and community partners can result in conflicting assumptions, approaches, expectations and traditions.

3. **Lack of researcher experience with CER:** Relatively few researchers have experience and expertise in carrying out CER, and therefore mistakes and missteps can occur.

4. **A lack of familiarity with both research and research protocols among community partners:** Some community members or organizations may have little or no knowledge about what research is, why it is important and how it is conducted.

5. **Different expectations of processes and timeline:** The structure, processes and timeline of the university are poorly aligned with those of community organizations which can make scheduling and planning challenging.

6. **Navigating power differentials:** Hidden power imbalances often exist between researchers and community partners which can place community partners in a subordinate status, despite contributing to the research.

7. **Limited funding opportunities and venues:** CER projects can take years to run their course. As a result, funding sources can be difficult to identify or funding can run out before a project is complete.

8. **Ethical dilemmas:** Ethical principles in CER can sometimes develop in opposition to one another, leaving researchers to determine which ethical principle holds more importance in the given context.

9. **The potential of elevated risks of harm to community:** When not conducted properly, CER can perpetuate stigma, undermine existing grassroots initiatives, cause emotional harm due to outsiders "parachuting" in and out, consume valuable and limited community resources (e.g., time, people, infrastructure) and misrepresent communities.[32]

In light of the challenges associated with doing CER, the following key considerations are worthy of reflection prior to the start of a CER project:[33]

Who are the researchers?

CER projects usually involve both university-based and community-based researchers. Considering who is the researcher means asking whether the researcher has connection and accountability to the community they are working with in an ongoing manner.

Is there leadership within the community that can facilitate involvement in the research?

Do the researchers have a prior understanding of or connection to the community?

Do the motivations of the researchers and community align?

Is there transparency about how researchers will benefit and the ways the community will benefit from a project?

Who in the research team can skillfully facilitate hospitable, respectful, and effective research connection with the larger community?

Identifying community partners

Stakeholders could include individual community members, groups or organizations such as academic institutions, non-profit organizations, policymakers (e.g., health authorities, government, etc.), industry, grassroots partners and others.

Who are the stakeholders in the community?

How will you engage community partners and identify their needs?

Are there competing interests within the team of stakeholders? If so, how will you address these?

Relationship building[34]

Considering relationship building means taking the steps necessary to build trust, equity and camaraderie among those involved in the research.

Is everyone being treated with respect and dignity?

Are the researchers sufficiently sensitive to people's lived reality and past experiences?

Do the researchers work to create conditions of equity within the work?

Is the local expertise and experience of community valued in the same way academic expertise is?

Capacity building, benefits, and reciprocity

Considering capacity building, benefits and reciprocity means focusing on community as the main benefactor of research outcomes.

What are the potential benefits of the research and do they align with the community's needs?

Will the research help to build power or develop new skills among the participating community?

Are community members able to participate as researchers by listening to stories and/or collecting information for the project?

What future avenues of dissemination and knowledge production would benefit the community?

Does the community have partial or full ownership of the data, publications, artwork or media that arise from the research?

How will research participants and community researchers be credited or acknowledged in any product created from the research partnerships, including community or academic presentations, policy briefs, media productions, artwork, press releases or manuscripts?

Accessibility

Considering accessibility means examining what kinds of barriers there may be for participants from the community to fully or partially participate in the research.

Are there available resources in the research project that can help the community to sustain their involvement in the project?

Is there compensation or honoraria for the research participants?

Is there support for necessary travel or food for participants?

Will the research take place where participants or community is comfortable or feels safe?

Is there space and time set aside to facilitate how the community or participants interpret the collected data?

Is there sufficient time for the community or organization to complete research?

Accountability and time

Considering accountability means being clear on the responsibilities of the researchers.

Are the researchers willing to be accountable to agreements created by the community that clearly lay out expectations and a clear plan about how to work together?

For example: Is there a memorandum of understating (MOU) between the researcher and community/organization that states the role, responsibilities, ownership of the data, plans for sustainability and other issues that need clarity throughout the project?

Is the research team willing to engage in on-going reflection regarding their identity, biases and assumptions?

Do the researchers and community partners have time and resources to commit to a CER process?

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Ethics and values

Considering ethics and values means establishing clarity about principles of right and wrong in the interaction between researchers and subjects/participants. In research that spans diverse cultural, geographic, socioeconomic, religious or other contexts, conceptions of what constitutes right and wrong is anything but universal. Therefore it is important to have the community's understanding of ethics clearly represented in a CER project.

What options does the organization or community have for keeping research ethical?

What process is in place to resolve disputes or complaints?

Has ample consideration been given about how to protect those who may be vulnerable to repercussions from a research project?

Does the research respect cultural integrity and protocols?

Could the research potentially harm the community or be used against it?

Are there processes in place to address conflicts of interest that exist or may arise?

Risk and safety

Considering risk and safety means responding to historical instances of exploitative research relationships and recognizing that research has the capacity to inflict unintended harm.

What is in place to create environments of care and safety for community?

Will the research take place where participants or community is comfortable or feels safe?

Have sufficient considerations of risk been given if research is conducted in less controlled environments?

Has the community been involved in considerations of risk assessment, not only for individuals but for the entire community?

Are there additional protections in place for vulnerable populations?

Knowledge dissemination and impact

Considering knowledge dissemination and impact means thinking through how research outcomes lead to advocacy, impact, policy changes, active response and knowledge that may be used by the communities involved.

What forms do the research findings take (e.g., report, video, images, art project)?

Will there be collaborative decision making on dissemination avenues?

Will the research be translated into language or images that is accessible to different levels of literacy?

Are funds available to support events where the community can learn about the research outcomes in accessible and comfortable venues?

Are there funds available to support co-researchers from community to present findings at conferences and other impactful venues for change?

How will actions based on research findings be supported after the research is complete?

CER AND COMMUNITY ETHICS
Research 101 Manifesto.

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) of Vancouver is a heavily researched neighborhood that has experienced problematic dynamics between community members and university-based researchers. Research 101: A Manifesto for Ethical Research in the Downtown Eastside was the culmination of a series of six weekly workshops (held from February to April 2018) to discuss research and ethics in the Downtown Eastside. These workshops emerged out of a wider conversation on ethics in cultural production (e.g., research, media, artmaking) within the DTES convened by Hives for Humanity and supported by Simon Fraser University's Vancity Office of Community Engagement. A group of 6 to 13 representatives from several DTES organizations, partnering with SFU researchers, met each week to discuss experiences with research in the past, the wider context of research in the DTES, and community expectations for more ethical research practice. This resulted in a co-created "manifesto" for ethical research in the Downtown Eastside.

Project Leads: Louise Boilevin, Jules Chapman, Lindsay Deane, Caroline Doerksen, Greg Fresz, DJ Joe, Nicolas Leech-Crier, Samona Marsh, Jim McLeod, Scott Neufeld, Steven Pham, Laura Shaver, Patrick Smith, Martin Steward, Dean Wilson, Phoenix Winter

Section 4: Planning a CER Project.

It is important when planning a CER Project to remember that relationships are as important as outcomes.[35]

As we all know, relationships are full of unanticipated surprises. With research there is often pressure to 'foresee' all possible outcomes and to plan for them.

In contrast, the CER paradigm asks participants to accept that unanticipated issues are a regular part of the research process. While uncertainty can be uncomfortable, we know from decades of great work done within a CER paradigm that many communities and individuals have benefitted by building flexibility into the research process. CER research projects don't always go as planned, and this is as it should be because valuable insights are gained when the research does not necessarily conform to its original plan.

It is also important to consider that planning a CER project can be time intensive. Because relationships are full of unanticipated surprises and CER projects involve a variety of collaborators—community members, community-based organizations, researchers—taking the time necessary for careful planning is essential to make sure all voices are included and accurately represented.

The CER paradigm asks participants to accept that unanticipated issues are a regular part of the research process.

Steps for Developing a CER Project.

1. IDENTIFY VALUES AND NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE: Determine your focus and research questions.

- Based on community need, strengths, interests, mission and capacity to take action, decide on the general issue/problem you are addressing. You may also decide to use CER to investigate a general issue or problem to gain a deeper understanding of how that issue or problem is seen through the lens of a community.

- Determine the specific research question(s) (associated with the issue/problem) you would like to answer.

- Discuss and decide the rough geographic boundaries where you would like to engage participants and take action. Consider that the 'community' may not agree with your definition of the community boundaries, so consider building in time to discuss and adjust these boundaries.

- Decide what research methods you will use. Discuss questions such as: What do you want to know? What hypothesis do you want to test? What do you want to highlight or draw attention to that is not already known, or if known, not sufficiently demonstrated? What can you feasibly act upon?

What is a research question?

A research question is the key question(s) at the centre of your research project. It helps to:

- Find out what you don't already know or test your assumptions.

- Focus on how and why you collect data.

- Set boundaries and provide direction.

2. FIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

OBJECTIVE: Identify potential research partners and invite them to collaborate.

- Based on community intertest and goals—explore who the key stakeholders might be. This could include neighborhood groups, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, local government, businesses, etc.

- Of the key stakeholders, decide who you will collaborate with and consider whose voices might still be missing.

- Discuss the potential roles and responsibilities of each collaborator.

- Clarify each participant's expectations about the process, include how each person or group wants to contribute: What is their interest and why? What resources do they have available?

- Agree on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that explicitly states the expectations the community has for the research as well as the roles and responsibilities of participants, ownership of the data, plans for sustainability and other issues that need clarity throughout the project.

- Make consent to participate an ongoing process.

- Be transparent about budget and sources of funding.

- Define the specific resources each partner can contribute to the project through time/in-kind contributions or cash support (including funding from grants).

3. GATHERING INFORMATION

OBJECTIVE: Choose research methods and collect data.

- Discuss what specific data you need to answer your research question(s).

  For example, this could be a combination of community knowledge and administrative data such as perceptions of safety compared with crime statistics.

- Discuss and decide what you will consider 'data' or 'information' (e.g., testimonials, artwork, photovoice, etc.).

- Discuss what data or information is already available and what you could collect.

- Discuss and decide the best participation format for collecting data and who on the team can skilfully facilitate hospitable, respectful and effective research methods with the larger community.

- Discuss who has specific knowledge of the topic and decide who you will collect data from. Consider: How many participants will you have? What is a good sample size to be representative? What is your capacity to engage participants?

- Explore how you anticipate using the findings and who your target audience for the research findings will be.

- Test your assumptions! Consider whether the data you collect both answers your research question and provides you a way to take action.

4. MAKE SENSE OF DATA

OBJECTIVE: Data analysis.

- Discuss and decide what you expect to learn about your specific issue from the analysis.

- Make a plan for analyzing your data. Consider: How will you look for clear patterns? How will the data analysis address your research question?

- Discuss whether you have interests beyond data analysis (organizing, advocacy, etc.) and how/if these elements can work together.

- Discuss questions the research will not address and decide if you would need to investigate further in the future.

5. DISTRIBUTION AND ACTION!

OBJECTIVE: Knowledge sharing and mobilization.

- Develop a plan for presenting and disseminating findings. This step should be planned prior to starting the project to avoid conflicts too late in the process.

- Consider the story you want to tell. What facts or findings will you share? Who's story will you highlight?

- Consider your audience. Who will you show these findings to? Who are you trying to influence? What do you want to show them? What will get their attention?

- Consider how the public will encounter your research. Through a report? On a website or social media? At a public hearing? At a community meeting? As a video or podcast? An art installation?

- If you are trying to influence decision-making, consider developing a public engagement strategy to explore how you will engage community members, elected officials, the media, etc. Strategies may be different for each group. Present findings to community members and other stakeholders to gather support for advocacy.[42]

Practical considerations for planning a CER project.

STAFF

What time does your staff and organization have to commit to the research project?

MONEY

Is there funding to cover these costs? Can you incur the costs, apply for funding or work creatively with partners to share costs?

DATA

Do you have data or access to the data that you will need for your project? What will you do with it once the project is done?

EQUIPMENT & TOOLS

Are there any specific equipment or tools needed, such as art supplies, audio/video equipment, or software to collect and interpret or analyze data? If so, do you have them?

PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATIONS

If your organization does not have access to some of the above resources, is there an organization that does who you may partner with?

EXPERTISE

Can your organization plan a project that lends itself to the research expertise of your staff, or partner with others who have specific expertise?

RISKS

What could go wrong in a CER project given the risks inherent in your context/community? What are the key risks you need to consider and mitigate?[36]

Conclusion

Community-engaged research is a dynamic and growing field. The goal of this handbook is to give you an introduction to the field, its key values and how you might get started on your own community-engaged research project. As this handbook has shown, there are many ways to do community-ty-engaged research and much to consider.

While CER can be challenging and unpredictable, the value of CER is that it offers an approach to research that puts people and relationships at the centre. We wish you luck on your CER journey and do not hesitate to reach out to CERi for support.

EXPERIMENTAL ART & CER
Nanay: A Testimonial Play.

Using arts-based methods can invigorate and energize engagements with community in research. It can also communicate information from the research in accessible, engaging ways to academic and non-academic audiences. Nanay: A Testimonial Play is a documentary theatre project that highlights fifteen years of research into the difficulties faced by Canadian parents in finding good dependable childcare and the temporary work visa program that brings many Filipinx women to Canada to work as live-in caregivers. Nanay was conducted in collaboration with the Philippine Women Centre of BC (pwc), and grew out of concerns of a middleclass white academic speaking on behalf of Filipinx women. The project transformed interviews with migrant domestic workers, their children, nanny agents and Canadian employers into "testimonial theatre" as a way to generate more intimate and vulnerable dialogues on the politics of labour migration and the ethics of care. Every performance was followed by a public forum, which facilitated critical discussions and the sharing of information and expertise.

Project Leads: Geraldine Pratt, UBC Department of Geography; Caleb Johnston Newcastle University; Alex Ferguson, PuSh International Performing Arts; Urban 20 Crawl Performance; The Philippine Women Centre of BC; Migrante International

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