

DOING
COMMUNITY-BASED
RESEARCH

Perspectives from the Field

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It's a People Process

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Overview

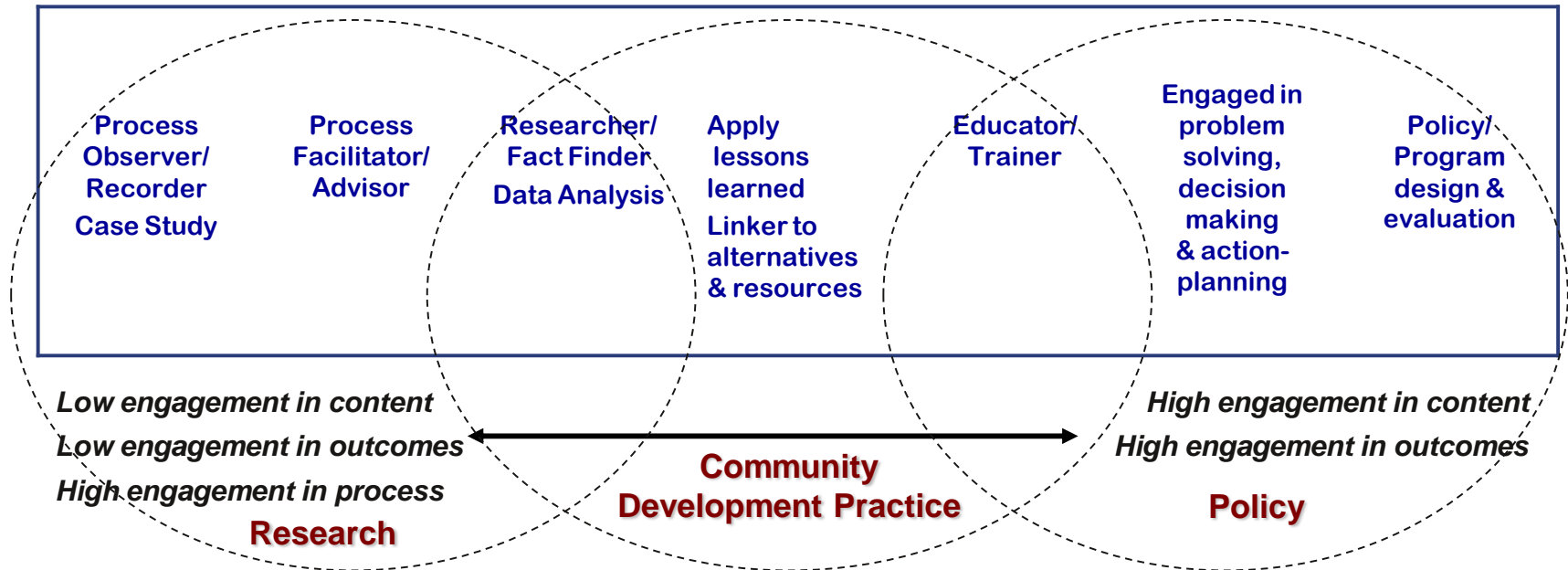
- Introduction
- Key issues
 - Readiness
 - Partnerships
 - OCAP
- Policy issues

What is Community Based Research?

- “Conducted by, for, or with the participation of community members”
- To enhance the utility of the research process by meshing the production of knowledge with community involvement/development
- Well suited to supporting a place-based approach to policy development
 - Place-based development is grounded in the particularities – assets, challenges, and dynamics – of place



Potential Roles



Engaging Communities



Engaging Communities Four Guiding Principles...

1. Respect
2. Flexibility
3. Patience
4. Sincerity

- A “partnership needs to be a “partnership”
- Best when working with communities

Community-University Relationships

Challenges

- Small places face many changes
 - Industrial restructuring
 - Service restructuring
- Seek information to make decisions
 - Timely, relevant, and useful
- Mismatch of expectations
 - Communities want answers
 - Academics want questions



Community Receptor Capacity I

Readiness

- Small municipal offices – few staff
 - Experience
 - Turnover and institutional memory
 - Limited technical support / resources
- Getting mutual commitment
- Relationship demands
 - Difficult on time / staff
 - Often need financial commitment

Community Receptor Capacity II

- Bottom-up 'may not be equipped' to mobilize knowledge
- Need support for building relationships / capacity
 - Poorly understood by funding programs
 - Academic and funding institutions talk 'engaged' language but not equipped to follow through with infrastructure / support

Partnerships

Building Partnerships

- Listening and understanding
- Search for good fit:
 - Background
- Issues to resolve
 - Goals / responsibilities
 - Differential capacity
 - Comfort with level and form of community participation

Creating / Maintaining Relationships

- Need to build relationships, project partnerships
- Requires investment of time / resources
- Struggles with funding cycles
- Requires routine interaction
 - To develop trust / credibility
 - Share power / decision-making
 - Governance / conflict resolution
 - Responsibilities / accountability
 - Mutual learning

Link Communities with Appropriate University Resources

- Need to know what types of research universities offer
 - Difficult to browse university websites
- Outreach to promote research areas
- Speaker's series, newsletter, website

- Rural infrastructure underutilized
- Meetings concentrated in urban areas



Develop Bottom-Up Research

- Research should be collaborative, community driven
 - Make research relevant, useful, and timely to support decisions
- Platform for ongoing dialogue / exchange of ideas to support community / economic renewal
- Opportunities to extend community-university relationships

Research Design Driven by Community Partners

- Involvement in project design:
 - Ensures fit with community goals
 - Improves understanding of questions and how results can be used
 - Develop realistic expectations
 - Two way learning
 - With who? Multiple voices



OCAP ®

- Aboriginal communities' protocols
 - Response to insufficient CBR approaches to address impacts of colonialism
- OCAP ® (First Nations Governance Centre)
 - Ownership of information
 - Control of funding, resources, data management
 - Access to information through protocols
 - Possession to protect use



Involve Community Partners in Execution of Research

- Builds capacity
 - (i.e. data collection, writing, promoting results)
- Become invested in mobilizing results
- Logistical support
 - (i.e. field costs, accommodations, access to records, donated items)
- Adopt a flexible approach

Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Needs Study





Working in the Field

Logistics:

- Be well prepared
 - Scheduling appointments
 - Field safety
 - Consideration to seasons the and rhythms of community

Working in the Field

Ethics:

- Conflicts and power struggles
- The inclusion of vulnerable or at-risk populations is often a focus of CBR and its desire to be more inclusive
- Differences between research in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities

Guide Knowledge Mobilization

- Communicating research
- Identify importance of results for informing action
 - Local networks
 - Update letters, newspaper articles, radio interviews, posters, copies of research products, websites, community forums, council presentations
 - Posting solely on a university website does not work!

Knowledge Mobilization: Follow Through

- Active involvement in implementation
 - Starts in project planning
 - Build momentum to initiate change
 - Linking communities with similar issues (i.e. rural transportation)
 - Promoting best practices
- Planning sessions to bridge results and next steps
 - Short term, medium-term, and long-term actions
 - Success breeds success

Policy Issues



Policy Issues: Universities

- Administrative dep'ts / REBs don't understand CBR projects
 - No clear line when research with human participants starts
 - Challenges sharing financial resources
- KM continuing to evolve
 - KM centres, training, accreditation, etc.
- UNBC's North First Initiative
 - Requires resources to follow through

Policy Issues: Communities

- Research can inform place-based policy approaches / decision-making
 - Capacity to participate
 - Understanding research process
 - Underdeveloped information management systems
- Key to asserting the 'local' and seizing policy agenda
 - Example: Fair Share Agreement
- CBR collaborations can be viewed as expense vs. investment

CDI Opens Office in Fort St. John



Policy Issues: State

- Federal funding agencies call for KM
- But...limited resources:
 - To build early relationships
 - To support engagement
 - Mobilize research into action
- Policy-makers may find CBR findings too limited
- Constantly shifting political priorities / agendas
- Lag between completion & policy uptake

Last Thoughts

- It's a people process
- “Getting to know you” protocols
- Relationship development
- Listening / sharing
- Capacity building
- Mutual commitment



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