IMPACT CASE STUDY 11

Traveling Together? Navigating the Practice of Collaborative Engagement in Coast Salish Communities

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This Impact Case Study was produced by Dr. Crystal Tremblay in collaboration with the faculty lead(s) identified in the following case study. All twelve Impact Case Studies were included in Dr. Crystal Tremblay’s research project, Community-Engaged Research (CER) at the University of Victoria 2009—2015, that scanned the impact of UVic’s involvement with community-engaged research over a six-year period.

Dr. Tremblay’s research was supported by the Office of Community-University Engagement and the Office of the Vice-President Research. Learn more about this project at uvic.ca/ocue/research.
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UN Sustainable Development Goals addressed by this project

3. Health & well-being 10. Reduced inequalities


UVic's International Plan Goals addressed by this project

- International Development, Health and Education

Identifying community concerns and jurisdictional responsibility for transportation safety and health in an Indigenous context

Faculty Leads: Sarah Marie Wiebe, Leslie Brown, Kelly Aguirre, Amy Becker, Israyelle Claxton, Brent Angell; School of Public Administration

Partners: Tsawout First Nation, Pacheedaht First Nation, Seabird Island First Nation, BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Songhees First Nation

Project timeframe: 2013-2016

Funding: Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR), Auto 21

Website: http://crdcommunitygreenmap.ca/story/travelling-togethertsawout-transportation-safety-project
About

Academics widely understand Participatory Action Research (PAR) to be relevant to communities, collaborative from project design to dissemination of results, equitable and participatory while also action-oriented in pursuit of social justice. This research examined the challenges and opportunities that researchers encounter when applying participatory tools within an Indigenous context. In September 2013, the University of Victoria Research Team began a transportation safety project in partnership with the University of Windsor and participating Indigenous communities across the country. This project entailed both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, including a national survey in addition to community conversations, to promote community health and injury prevention. Responsible for outreach to coastal communities in British Columbia, the interdisciplinary Research Team employed PAR methodologies to address local and national transportation safety concerns ranging from booster seat use to pedestrian safety.

This project asked: what can participatory approaches offer the study of community engaged research (CER) with Indigenous communities? The research team assessed the promises and perils of PAR for community-engaged research when working with Indigenous communities; second, we aimed to demystify the process of PAR based on our experience working with the Tsawout First Nation to “Light up the Night” through participatory video with Indigenous youth; third, we reflected on what we learned in this process and discuss avenues for further research. Our outputs entailed a written article and accompanying videos that illuminate the creative approach to collaborative engagement with Indigenous communities.

"Indigenous partners were involved in all stages of the process from design to dissemination of research findings. A partner from the Tsawout Nation was involved in the co-authorship of a journal article and community video"

Impact Summary

The transportation project identified community concerns around health and safety (i.e. lighting in the community, sidewalks, booster seat, seatbelt use, speedbumps, licensing, etc) focused on transportation. We also identified jurisdictional responsibility for addressing transportation safety concerns in an Indigenous context. By interviewing public officials with community partners, we entered into a dialogue about community health and safety.

Extent of community collaboration throughout the project cycle  100%

Motivations for starting the project

Dr. Brent Angell from the University of Windsor School of Social Work approached us to work on this project. He had a previous working relationship with Dr. Leslie Brown from the University of Victoria. Dr. Sarah Marie Wiebe led the research team as a post-doctoral fellow affiliated with the Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community University Engagement. To begin this work, we reached out to Dr. Robina Thomas and staff from the First People’s House then hosted potential community partners at the Songhees Nation Wellness Centre for an information session.
Student role & Impact

Graduate students at the MA and PhD level were involved in developing participatory workshops with youth as well as facilitating community conversations with community members and policy-makers who share an interest in transportation safety.

"Students learned about Indigenous perspectives on transportation safety concerns as well as building skills in participatory research methods"

Key successes & challenges

These projects take time, often must longer than the academic cycle. Project funding must always have a budget line for food and hospitality. Need to have support for materials and training (i.e. camera gear, flip charts, food, etc).

Some challenges negotiating the expectations of community partners and principal investigator, we took care to try to adhere to local policies and protocols and provide updates to national partners on a frequent basis to enhance communication.

Outputs

- Refereed journal publications: 1+
- Multimedia products
- Workshops
- Students employed: 5+
- Community video: multiple

Outcomes

- Student skills, knowledge, attributes towards capacity building
- Development of new and improved theory
- Increased interdisciplinary linkages
- New innovations including social and technological
- Partnerships secured through MoUs
- Strengthened community-university networks

Key References

Traveling Together? Navigating the Practice of Collaborative Engagement in Coast Salish Communities (Engaged Scholar Journal, forthcoming Fall 2016)