Indigenous Research: Youth Engagement in Community Needs Assessments

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Abstract:

This research process was a multi-stakeholder endeavour that included the Trent University Geography Department, Trent Centre, Red Cross of Peterborough and the Curve Lake First Nations Community. The report is inclusive of background information that educates one on Indigenous research, Youth Engagement and Community Needs Assessment. Our role was to develop a structure/template of youth workshops and methodology that could be imparted to First Nations Youth in the future. The idea is to educate and instil the methods, means of communicating, conducting and implementing research so as to prepare them for their own endeavour into research within their community.

Introduction

The Community Needs Assessment for Curve Lake is inclusive of much more than information gathering tools and a mechanism of statistical generation. This research utilized a unique rural community, a reserve in order to gain perspective into the traditions, culture and needs of a First Nations Community. An in-depth look into the services and infrastructure available to the community members is required in order to obtain a more over arching picture and/or tool to be used in other Canadian reserves for the purpose of Indigenous Studies. Using a historical-hermeneutical approach to the research the project will be able to use past knowledge and insight to develop current strategies and assessment. Preparing communities to be equipped to conduct their own Community Needs Assessment will allow the Indigenous community the opportunity for a better illustration of what is lacking and/or required in terms of the services provided.

This picture and information of the community was to be formulated from within the community through literature analysis and participatory research with interviews and focus groups that are representative of the communities demographic. The research undertaken for this assessment and community in particular is a multi-stage endeavour that will ideally continue after the conclusion of this particular work. The objective of this introductory research is to develop strategies and mechanisms that are then imparted to the youth of the community. Through educating and informing the youth of the community on how to conduct such research the community will be equipped with citizens that can conduct research and implement the results for effective change. The role held by the researchers at this stage is to gain insight into the community and the aspects of what defines or differentiates the community through key person interviews and then impart the critical information to educate and prepare the youth to advance with further research to better their own community.

The community has recognized the necessity for such a device in the pursuit of understanding and future development for their community. The opportunity presents itself to learn and critically reflect upon methods used to facilitate effective cross-cultural dialogues.

Literature Review

A literature review in terms of this particular research project consists of major section or components. The focus is directed towards literature on First Nations and then more specifically the Curve Lake First nations Community in order to provide an understanding of the uniqueness and differences of such communities. Secondly an analysis of discourse on research specifically in Indigenous communities was necessary in order to better understand how to approach such research and what considerations are required. A specific analysis of resources focused on the

inclusion of community youth in the research project. This aspect of the project is very unique

and at the same time very important to understand. Finally in terms of literature discourse that

had to be regarded in reference to the actual community needs assessment to understand the use,

and importance of such a mechanism. As researches plans of action, explanation and past

attempts in terms of these assessments are highly important.

The methodology for this project has unique characteristics. The methods undertaken

have to be culturally acceptable to the Curve Lake First nations Community. Throughout the

course of the research these culture, norms, traditions and beliefs will have to be regarded with

the upmost respect to maintain the partnership with the community.

The History of Curve Lake First Nation:

The history of First Nations and Curve Lake in particular will be invaluable in providing

background information in order to understand the reasoning behind the need for a Community

Needs Assessment. This section will provide a backdrop to how Curve Lake came about and

why it is the way it is today in terms of geographical location and policies. Three separate

sources have been examined in order to explore the history of Curve Lake and First Nations.

A book written by John L. Steckley and Bryan D. Cummins titled, Full Circle: Canada's

First Nation's is a source that is about First Nation's people and the "wall that separates

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada." Other prominent sources found were

obtained from the Curve Lake First Nation's Reserve library both written by Mae Whetung-

Derrick and are titled History of the Ojibwa of the Curve Lake Reserve and Surrounding Area:

History of the Mississaga (Curve Lake) and History of the Ojibwa of the Curve Lake reserve and

Surrounding Area: Social and Cultural History. The purpose of these two documents is to provide specific background to reserve life and how Curve Lake in particular came to be.

The similarities or comparable attributes of these three studies have one main component. The idea of a historical account of how reserves came to be is the main theme and similarity of all three sources. The Steckley and Cummins' book differs from the other two articles because of the scope at which the examination focuses. The book concentrates on Canadian First Nations communities and the other documents focus directly on the Curve Lake First Nations Reserve. All three sources include the background information on the effect that the white man had on their land and community as well as the legislation that had to be imposed because of them. The Curve Lake document on the History of the Mississaga Band is the most specific and useful source. This source provides background into economic affairs, education, levels of independence and land ownership. Overlaps occur in the Social and Cultural History document that covers aspects of what forms of independence were available and what recreational committees could do. The Steckley and Cummins book covers many of the same themes that are loosely covered throughout the Curve Lake Documents which include; "origins, culture areas, legal definitions, effects of colonialism and contemporary debates and social action" (Steckley & Cummins, 2008).

The Steckley and Cummins book Full Circle: Canada's First Nation's presents significant information that is relevant to the Community Needs Assessment of Curve Lake First Nations Reserve. The focus of this book is to break the barriers between both cultures. The idea of the Community Needs Assessment is to have the Peterborough branch of the Red Cross infiltrate into the Curve Lake community thus strengthening the ties between Peterborough and Curve Lake. This would be a step towards weakening the wall between the cultures and

communities. This book is also a very recent source having been republished in 2008, therefore this source will bring more recent information involving First Nations people.

The History of the Mississaga Band document will be the most significant resource in providing a detailed background to the Curve Lake community. Different sections of this document cover many topics but the section that is the most pertinent to this Community Needs Assessment is the "local autonomy" information. "Indians themselves are becoming increasingly restless over the absence of local autonomy, and this trend will undoubtedly be speeded up under the influence of community development programs" (History of the Mississaga Band, 1979). This quotation signifies conditions in 1976 but the community development programs that are mentioned include studies such as this Community Needs Assessment. Band autonomy is also discussed throughout this source in terms of how it is that Curve Lake obtained independence in terms of funding and planning. Now that Curve Lake is able to plan, a Community Needs Assessment can help to create a comprehensive plan according to what is most critically needed.

The Social and Cultural History document provides minimal information considered as relevant to the Community Needs Assessment but what little information is still influential to the study. In order to know what recreational activities involved in the past and what it has become, this document provides the evolution of the activities. Activities have shifted from work based to more leisure based and this is relevant to the Community Needs Assessment as it is critical to understand the recreational sphere of community needs.

These three sources are alike and dissimilar at the same time. They are individual enough to provide unique information while supporting the points of each other through reiteration. These sources will prove invaluable in order to get a better understanding of the different

community conditions and needs of the Curve Lake community. The Community Needs
Assessment will refer to this literature numerous times throughout the research study.

Indigenous Research:

A key component to this research project is the direct relation to an Indigenous
population and more specifically community. "The most obvious meta-ethical question with
which geographers can (and do) engage is that of relativism. The moral codes which people
have devised and observe or otherwise vary from place to place – i.e. what is good and what is
right is to some extent relative to place (and to time), or specific to a particular culture" (Smith
D. 2000, 232). David M Smith utilizes Philio's discussion for the requirement of human
geographers to look through a moral lens at all time. "There can be little doubt that these
assumptions and arguments do vary considerably from one nation to the next, from one
community to the next, and one street to the next" (2000, 233). There is such diversity in the
human race that it cannot be ignored. When working with specific populations that differ
culturally, ethically or in any other way the researcher must always bear in mind these unique
differences.

Michelle M. Jacob (2006) examines the concepts of subjectivity and identity. She centers
the article on a key component, "at the heart of the analysis is an important epistemological
question: How do power dynamics affect the knowledge production processes involved in
research?" (2006, 450) Diego herself is an Indigenous researcher and in this particular research
she is a participatory researcher who is researching, participating and a member of the population
in the Indigenous activity.

Tuhiwai Smith (2001) is one individual who has written directly to the empowering of Indigenous research conducted by Indigenous researchers. She explicitly calls for a 'decolonizing' of research methods and practices. The need to remove the idea of otherness and ethnocentricity views from the research on Indigenous populations. On the first page of Decolonizing Methodologies she states " 'Research' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary." Likewise, Michelle Jacob demands changes to the already existing framework of research in this context and demands more attentiveness to the situation. She makes reference to the overwhelming contrasts held between the Indigenous identity and the white privilege, and that there is a need for more native researchers.

Smith's work is more directly focused on Indigenous researchers and the need for their work and the paths they should be taking to affect change in the field. However, she omits any discussion on non-Indigenous researchers and the steps they should be taking to alter the previous framework. Perhaps more attention paid to the subject would influence a change and therefore create a more accepting environment for any researchers, Indigenous or non-Indigenous. Researchers are often met with an apprehensive attitude when approaching Indigenous populations. Jacob suggests that "there are important and terrible reasons for the widespread antiresearch sentiment among many Indigenous peoples… Part of the problem is that research is most often associated with institutions and usually is related to the government. Thus, the history of violence, abuse, and terror on the part of the government toward Indian peoples is ample evidence why many Indians have a deep mistrust toward the notion of research"(Jacob, 2006, 455). Jacob in her own research to combat this negative attitude towards research encourages the community members to view the research as a way to 'lift their race' to

be proactive in fostering change. This idea is particularly relevant to the inclusion of youth in

this research project as participatory agents in the conducting of the research.

A resonating idea throughout the discourse on Indigenous research and study is the need

for beneficial gains and goals from the research for the Indigenous populations. The historical

path of research in regards to these populations has been for the sole benefit of the 'white'

researcher with complete disregard for the prevalent issues and problems existing in the

communities that need to be addressed. Mihesuah and Wilson discuss in the sequel to

Mihesuah's book how the research should interact, and influence aspects of the Indigenous

population.

> empowering ourselves through examination of what we can do to Indigenize the
> academy; to carve a space where Indigenous values and knowledge are respected;
> to create an environment that supports research and methodologies useful to
> Indigenous nation building; to support one another as institutional foundations are
> shaken; and to compel institutional responsiveness to Indigenous issues, concerns,
> and communities. (Mihesuah, 2004, 2)

What needs be taken from the discourse on Indigenous research is that the research

whether they be Indigenous or non-Indigenous have to keep in mind all contributing factors,

traditions, beliefs and/or values of the population. The other component to such research is to be

representative; the research undertaken should be intended to benefit the population being

researched.

Youth Participation in Conducting Research:

The role of youth in this study will play an integral part to the research process. As youth

are to be the ones that benefit from the plans and strategies formulated, they are to be the ones to

be left with the ability and preparation to carry out further research, there is a necessity to

understand the role of youth engagement. Different considerations need to be taken into account for employing children as research assistants. An article titled "The importance of Local youth involvement: A case study of Youth Volunteering in the county and city of Peterborough, Ontario" takes an in depth look at this issue. Also, a study conducted by the Concerned for Working Children was done that was titled "Taking a Right Turn: Children lead the way in research." These two articles both contain information that is applicable to the study at hand.

The case study that was done by Alice Bickle and Amardeep Takher on the city of Peterborough and the county sets out to look at the ways in which the United Way can employ the sample of youth in terms of where their opinions direct them. This study is designed to assess the impact that the geographical location of the youth has on their participation in recreational activities and their involvement in volunteer opportunities. The Concerned for Working Children study sets out to encourage children to conduct research by training them to do so. These particular studies do not have direct and significant similarities but can both contribute to the Curve Lake Community Needs Assessment study that facilitates youth in the research process.

Bickle and Takher set out goals of the study as determining the issues facing youth that live in urban and rural settings and applying them to Peterborough and the county. This portion of the study is similar to the Concerned for Working Children study as the involvement of youth is discussed in both. Another comparison that can be made is the way they chose samples of youth to be studied. A random sampling process was chosen, with the criteria that the youth chosen needed to be fully committed to the study. Bickle and Takher organized their study to examine a Canadian population involving rural and urban participants. The Concerned for Working Children study examines numerous urban and rural communities or villages in India.

Although the country where the information originates from can be criticized as different, the similarities in content can still be found.

While there are some similarities in these studies, the differences are numerous. The Bickle and Takher study was not looking at employing youth to facilitate the research, but had youth be the research subjects. The Concerned for Working Children study focuses mainly on employing the children to do the research on other youth. Both studies tended to put emphasis on different areas of the study in terms of ethics, training, surveying and sample populations. Bickle and Takher emphasized the importance of a random sample being taken for the surveys, that accurately represents all factors being considered, while The Concerned for Working Children study was concerned with employing children that were interested in community involvement and improvement.

These studies both have major findings that will contribute to the study of the Community Needs Assessment of the Curve Lake First Nations Reserve. Bickle and Takher (2008) studied a specific geographic location similar to the rural setting of the Curve Lake Reserve. Bickle and Takher found that differences in community involvement varied from one geographic location to another. This information is critical to understand and recognize when dealing with a sensitive population such as the Curve Lake First Nations Community. This study recognizes the obstacles that youth have when trying to volunteer and positively contribute to the community which is relevant to the Community Needs Assessment as working with youth volunteers will come with a similar set of issues concerning transportation, time constraints and apprehension (Bickle & Takher, 2008). Bickle and Takher present solid information that will be relevant to the Community Needs Assessment.

The Concerned for Working Children study is especially relevant to the Community Needs Assessment. As the purpose of the Concerned for Working Children study is to encourage children to facilitate research based on proper training, the Community Needs Assessment is about training youth to conduct the research in focus groups. Information about how to train youth to conduct the research can be drawn from the Concerned for Working Children study. This study also found that the importance of having youth involved in their personal community needs proves immeasurable for the future and this theme will be apparent in the Community Needs Assessment of Curve Lake (Concerned for Working Children, 2006). The Concerned for Working Children study found that youth should not be underestimated in their ability to comprehend complex issues and they can effectively immerse themselves in the politics of the government when it comes to community needs. This information is a significant reminder when dealing with the youth participants in the Community Needs Assessment.

Both the study by Bickle and Takher about youth involvement in the community of Peterborough and the country, as well as the Concerned for Working Children study pertaining to children leading the way in research contain major findings that will contribute to the Community Needs Assessment in First Nations Communities. Although different, they can contribute to the knowledge needed when dealing with sensitive populations and having youth conduct the research.

Community Needs Assessments:

The purpose and premise behind this specific research is to formulate and conduct a workshop that prepares youth to conduct community needs assessments in order to provide insight for the community leaders and decision makers. The purpose of producing this workshop

on research and needs assessments is so it can be replicated and/or reproduced by the Canadian Red Cross in other Indigenous communities. There has been other work completed in this field, in terms of community needs assessments for community in general as well as government initiative guides for assessments directed to Indigenous communities. According to Nardi's Community Health and Wellness Needs Assessment: A Step-by-Step Guide there are four theoretical models these are Community-as Partner, Ecological, Health Behaviour, and Health Belief. In terms of this particular research, the model used will be Community-as-Partner. Community-as-Partner signifies the joint relationship between the researcher and the community of interest. The community is an involved partner that is interested in the process and the results of such research in order to make effective change. The premise is that the community is the target as well as a partner in the research.

When conducting the Needs Assessment there is the use of action research, or participatory research. "Thus there is a duel commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system in changing what is together regarded as a desirable direction" (Nardi, 2003, 8). The process itself can be made up of different methods of data acquiring. Nardi suggests five methods including, focus groups, interviews with key informants, traditional survey methodology, secondary analysis of existing data, and geographical information system. More specific attention will be paid to the concepts of key informant survey as well as focus groups, as these methods are those approved by the community partner.

The focus group is "to determine the expressed and felt needs and wants of members of a specific community" (2003, 9). The goal is to ask open-ended questions that will generate discussion amongst the community members. The key informant interviews are with individuals

"recognized as having specific experience or expertise"(2003, 13). The idea is that they will be able to provide insights into the current services and what are generally the needs. A unique feature of these interviews is the sampling snowball effect they can have; by their suggestion of other key informants the participant list can be exponentially increased.

Nardi suggests that the "purpose of a health and wellness needs assessment can serve as a foundation for improved communication and cooperation within a community in identification of health and wellness service and evaluation needs" (2003, 19).

Through the analysis of data gathered by the aforementioned methods the researcher can proceed to prioritize the needs to be presented. This prioritization can allow for future planning by the community. What Nardi does not give due diligence to is the fact of unique populations such as the Indigenous population and the important considerations that must be taken. In order to get a better notion of the specific considerations one can turn to the Health Canada produced handbooks. "The steps outlined in the Handbook do not need to be followed in every way. Its goal is to support – not replace – the essential process of determining what will work best in your community. Importantly, the Handbook promotes the integration of community beliefs and values into the design of the program" (Health Canada, 1995,1). The important characteristic of moulding such research in any vulnerable population is to take the beliefs and values into consideration. To work in conjunction with the community allows both parties to benefit from the research. In the introduction there is a particularly resonating statement, "a needs assessment study provides a comprehensive and unbiased documentation of the needs in the whole community" (1995, 3).

Methodology:

Preparation:

The methodological component of this particular project is very important in the process of obtaining the information that is desired by the involved parties. As a study that will examine how to educate youth to prepare them to conduct research on their own community, there are important considerations involved in this methodology, including the aforementioned categories of cross-cultural research and youth participatory research. Throughout the process of gaining the knowledge to educate youth on performing and conducting their own research on their own community, it is important to research what tools and research techniques will work most effectively. In preparation for this research, many documents have been examined to gain a better sense of youth involvement, including community needs assessments that have been conducted in the past. In the meshing or joining of these two topics, an effective methodology can be found. In terms of a future endeavour of collecting raw data to be used for analysis, the tools and/or mechanisms would be discussed and decided on through the partnership with the Indigenous community.

Looking into past community needs assessments as well as research conducted by youth, will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of any challenges that could be faced when youth is conducting research. This background knowledge will allow for a template to be devised and created in order to compile a template for future Indigenous communities to model their own youth instructed community needs assessment.

The participatory involvement of the community youth is a key component to the projects overall goal at benefiting the community. The objective of the project is to instil the education, and ideology of research, including methods, ethics, analysis and action planning of research, in the youth. This will help in preparing and encouraging the youth to be active members of their community and aid them in being able to be productive at bettering their own surroundings and community. The community will be benefited by having the skill set and the people to follow through with further research and implementation without dependency on outside agencies.

The training of the youth is inclusive of many components and encompasses many individuals, each with specific insight into the processes involved as being a researcher. The youth are instructed on the importance of ethics in research, instructed on methodology, including its use, and its importance. What this research aimed to address and explain is the benefit of using a focus group ideology and combining it with some of the premises of a traditional talking circle. This collaboration would include the benefits of group discussion and involvement as well as maintain aspects of the traditional Talking Circle that is more recognized and accepted in the community. In this setting there are some alterations and/or adjustments to the standard use and idea of both the focus group and the Talking Circle in order to make them work effectively together. The progression of discussion is still facilitated by one member, and the discussion follows around the talking circle in a respectful manner allowing everyone a chance to verbalize their thoughts and opinions. A traditional Talking Circle is a sacred and respected aspect of Indigenous culture, and is understood to be a place of acceptance and safety. The traditional way of conducting the circle is, however, that any shared information is not to leave the circle. For this collaboration it is explained that the findings are to be used for

dissemination, but in the most ethical and respectable fashion. This understanding of the meshing or joining of two methods is discussed, illustrated, and explained to the youth, and this will enable them to impart the understanding to their research participants in the future.

The focus groups/Talking Circle would be explained in great detail to enable the youth to utilize the specific elements on their own in the future. The participants should include a cross section of the community, to be representative the majority of the community population. The premise and objective of the Circles would be to gain perspective on public perception, attitude and opinions towards the current public services available, to evaluate the degree they are serving the community, and defining what is needed or required. The focus group participants should be representative of age, gender, and life cycle stage. The idea is to gain insight on how the views and opinions differ among social grouping which is seen as a key attribute of the focus group in Flowerdew and Martin (2005, 129). Flowerdew and Martin attribute the two main regards of focus groups as providing the researcher "…with a way of gaining insight into (a) the spectrum of views that individuals hold regarding a particular issue, and (b) the nature if their interaction and dialogue over that issue." (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005,129.)

A component of the information workshops will be utilized to further illustrate the methodology with a practical component involving the active participation of the youth. The youth themselves participate in a talking circle and discuss the benefits and advantages of the information as well as the idea of conducting their own research. This is an exercise that both prepares the youth for their research, as well as allows the researcher to analyze the workshops influence, and acceptance with the youth.

The goal is to impart the proper knowledge and training so as to encourage the youth of the community to be active and take an interest in their personal community and the future of it.

Implementation:

Through utilizing and implementing the template with a pilot group and then with other community youth, an understanding can be gathered of its usefulness and effectiveness. The following breakdown of the workshop will illustrate how information and insight will be gained through the actual workshops.

The workshops would consist if basic activities that would start out with getting to know the participants and allow them to meet the facilitators. Inclusive of brainstorming activities that get the youth thinking about research and what it entails, and what being a researcher means to them as citizens and to their community. A major focus would be on demonstrating and explaining this new concept or hybrid method of research, a talking circle focus group. By explaining the importance of both, and then how they will work together, this will allow these students to conduct research in the future that is inclusive of their culture and traditions and which will hopefully be more acceptable to their research subjects and/or participants than would that of outsiders.

The template for the research is included in Appendix B. The workshops are developed around the premise of a comfortable atmosphere that is inclusive and encouraging. Starting out ice-breaker activities would be used to allow the participants to get to know the facilitators and vice versa. The first component of the workshop will deal with getting to understand the concept of youth engagement, what it means and what it entails. The next component would be inclusive of activities that reveal the importance and relevance of ethics within research. The third

component will involve a discussion of the aforementioned hybrid methodology. Encouraging the youth to come up with similarities and differences of both methods and how they feel about joining them to form one methodology. In order to wrap up the workshop a mock Focus Talking Circle should be practiced with the youth to provide confidence in the use of the methodology and further understanding of how it will work in the future. This will also provide the facilitator with an oppourtunity to gain insight into how well the workshop went, and how well the methodology was instructed. It would be encouraged as well to have further discussion with the youth on their thoughts and opinions on the workshop, and how they think it will or can be utilized and beneficial.

Discussion:

Researching a community such as a reserve, the researcher can encounter difficulties. The populations of reserves have often been subjugated to many research inquiries and ambitions and have often been bombarded with survey mechanisms. The idea of this research was to be as inclusive as possible, working step-by-step with the community to understand their opinions on the issues, and their take on what should be done and how. Through youth participation the researcher becomes an eager member of society looking to gain insight rather than a curious outsider. The goal is not for others to understand the community but to impart the tools and knowledge for the community to gain better insight for themselves of their own community and to understand the issues and remedy them as they see fit. The premise is to empower a younger generation to become involved.

Issues:

The researcher in this situation does encounter challenges and set backs in many situations. Along with any research project, issues, alterations and modifications can occur due to unforeseen circumstances. This research encountered road blocks in the following four areas; approval, time frame, participation and communication.

Approval

In order to conduct research on any persons or group of population, approval on many levels is needed. Without approval, the research cannot continue or proceed. First, approval was needed from the Geography Department of Ethics at Trent University. Once approval was received, another letter to request approval was required by the Indigenous Studies Department at Trent University. A letter from the Chief of Curve Lake was required in order to obtain ethics approval by the Indigenous Studies department. Approval was still needed from the Curve Lake community itself as well. Concerns were held by the community as to the position of the researcher and to gain the acceptance and trust is at times seemingly difficult. Once these levels of approval were obtained, the research participants of the Youth Committee of Curve Lake was required. Upon receiving the deliberation of this clearance it was found that this committee was burdened with many other projects and commitments. With this information in hand we realized we needed to find new research participants and they were obtained from the Peterborough Branch of the Canadian Red Cross. This group of students was also asked for approval to use them as our 'pilot group' of youth was another hurdle to climb. With getting these numerous

levels of approval and consent, it was a task that took a lot of waiting time in order to conduct

any research at all.

Time Frame

As a second issue encountered, a time budget was of major concern. With the time it took

in order to gain approval from all the parties involved, this set our proposed timeline off track.

Working with the multi-stakeholders of this project, caused time issues to become the main

focus. The position of the researcher is one of continual flexibility, in adapting, changing and

altering the framework and ambitions of the project to be more suitable and acceptable to all

involved parties. In trying to make sure that all parties were informed, this took the majority of

time. In particular, when working with the Youth Committee of Curve Lake, it was found that as

they were high school students, obstacles such as their exams would not work with scheduling of

the intended research days. As the youth are in school all day, timing again proved to be another

obstacle as research needed to be conducted outside the normal working hours. In trying to

satisfy all the stakeholders in this project, a great amount of time was needed.

Participation

In regards to participation, issues were met in the research participants. In trying to set up

the key persons interviews, many attempts and methods were issued to the participants in order

to collect some research. The participants were given a paper copy of the survey, contact

numbers and emails if they would rather discuss their responses with the researchers. With this

multi-method approach to getting responses from the community, it still proved to be ineffective

as no response was ever received. An explanation for this could include the fact that Curve Lake

and many Indigenous communities have been bombarded with numerous surveys and given no

feedback in return on what they had contributed to. Because of their past experience, their

willingness to participate could have been hindered. There was a need for the researchers to

understand the community's situation, traditions, and culture prior to conducting the research.

This would allow for a better understanding to what methods off research would be the best

approach. This issue was met throughout the research as the research participants made it

difficult to conduct any research at all.

Communication

As a fourth major issue encountered in this project, communication proved to be one of

the main problems. When conducting research with many stakeholders, trying to ensure that all

parties are informed was an issue. This created an obvious disconnect between the researchers

and the participants. In this situation there was a pressing need for further insight and

independence on the part of the researcher. All forms of communication had to go through the

some of the participating stakeholders, first channelled through the project host then through the

host community representative. With this disconnect, the obstacle was most obviously

communication and it was reflected in obtaining approval, time frame issues and in getting

specific groups to participate. With indirect communication with the participants, research is

very difficult to conduct.

Future Steps and Goals:

There are many hopes and aspirations for this research, in the affect it will have in the

community, and the willingness of the community members and trained youth to continue with

the process. With a trained youth committee the goal is that the community will be better

equipped to continue with their own research and understanding the issues that it presents and follow through with strategies. This research hopes to serve as a strengthening tool for the relationship between Peterborough County, Red Cross and the Curve Lake First Nations Reserve. On a broader scale the hope is that the Red Cross will be able to share the strategies and understanding that this work presents to other First Nations Communities and that it be beneficial for them as well.

Conclusion

The relevance and importance of this research is in its future use. If the background, history, and methodology is implemented within communities and imparted to the youth of these communities than it will be justified. Through researching and understanding the historical and traditional contexts if the community, utilizing Curve Lake as a sort of pilot community for this particular research we were able to do so. This understanding allowed the creation of a hybrid methodology that combined traditional practices with the focus group method.

There is a need for future researchers in this area to understand the obstacles and challenges that can be faced. There is a vital importance to build a repour with the community as well as being flexible with time frames.

The goal is to be able to empower the communities with a youth engagement aspect. To encourage understanding and initiative within the youth to being active members in their community to promote understanding of community issues and provide options and solutions to the situation. Through the empowerment of actual community members the goal is to allow

these communities to be in control of the research that is undertaken in their community and to

be the people who develop the solutions as well.

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Appendix:

Appendix A:

Informant interview are for the purpose of insight into the community from both the perspective of community leaders and service providers. Both sections of informants is vitally important to needs assessment and each has unique knowledge and understanding on the current situation. Separate questions are required for each of two sectors of participants, and the questions are also only a starting point to lead into further discussion.

Key Knowledge Person Interviews:

Service Providers:

- What service do you provide? (overall and more specifically to the Curve Lake Community)
- To what sector are your services targeted to? (age, gender)
- What are the limitations or barriers to you as a provider?

Community Representatives:

- What services are currently available?
- What services are required?
- Where limitations exist is it due to lack of external agencies assistance or a need for organization in the community?
- Are there suggestions by you for the community to make in pursuit of better provision?
- Is there a sector that is currently at a disadvantage or more vulnerable?
- Are there any specific population groups that are unrepresented? (i.e age, gender)

- Please describe the unique characteristics of your community that should be taken into account in planning.

Note: For some both sets of questions will be asked.

For any who can compare, ask for comparative analysis in regards to other communities in regards to disparities or successes.

Appendix B:

Workshop Template

Ice-Breakers

Time: 10-15 minutes

Activities:

- Would involve general introduction of the participants and researchers.

Youth Engagement:

Time: 25-30 minutes

Activity:

- Brainstorming using a conceptual model/diagram of Youth Engagement
    - What Starts Engagement?
        - Initiators to becoming involved
            - Individual (participating because of personal interests and values), Social (participating to be with friends or asked to) and/or System (organization, committee, school, etc.)
                - What are the benefits or disadvantages of these initiators?

- o What Sustains Engagement?

  - ▪ Individual, Social, System

    - • Are they sustainers or barriers to the above sectors?

- o What are the outcomes?

  - ▪ Individual, Social, System

    - • What are the positive outcomes, and the negative outcomes for each sector?

Ethics:

Time: 25-30 minutes

Activity:

- • Dramatizations and role playing

  - o To illustrate situations that involve situations, to learn how to respond, and the necessity of ethics within research

Methodology Discussion:

Time: 25-30 minutes

Mock Focus Talking Circle:

Time 25-30 minutes

Discussion and Wrap-Up