The Role of Collaborative Research in Co-Producing Knowledge

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SW CSC Translational Ecology Short Course
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Session Goals

- Understand the theory behind collaborative research
- Trace the history of collaborative research as a discipline
- Introduce the principles of collaborative research and apply them to project planning and development
- Use an interactive activity to engage with the challenge of planning a collaborative research project
Engaged, collaborative approaches to knowledge production tend to yield knowledge that is more likely to be used by decision makers:

- Decision makers understand the information better and feel a greater sense of ownership.
- Information is more likely to meet their specific needs.
- Information is more likely to fit organizations’ decision making processes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Origin of Research Question</th>
<th>Type of Relationship</th>
<th>Interaction Over Time</th>
<th>Stakeholder Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contractual</td>
<td>Testing and verification of technology</td>
<td>Researcher(s)</td>
<td>Researchers contract with stakeholders for services or resources</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Views and opinions of stakeholders are not emphasized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Surveying and diagnosis, testing, and adaptive research</td>
<td>Stakeholder or researchers</td>
<td>Researchers consult with stakeholders, diagnose the problem, and try to find a solution</td>
<td>At specific stages of research</td>
<td>Field staff, social scientists, or local representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Learning from stakeholders to guide applied research</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Stakeholders themselves, local representatives, trained research team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial</td>
<td>Understanding and strengthening local research and development capacity</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>Partnership + local knowledge is developed</td>
<td>Continuous, ongoing</td>
<td>Stakeholders themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is Collaborative Research?

• The act of **co-creating knowledge** with the people most likely to **use** that knowledge to make changes in their organizations, communities, and/or environments.

• Research that involves research participants/collaborators as **partners** in the research process (Fluehr-Lobban 2008).

• “[T]he key element of participatory research lies not in methods but in the **attitudes of researchers**, which in turn determine how, by and for whom research is conceptualized and conducted” (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995)
Roots of Collaborative Research

Lewin 1946
History of Collaborative Research Approaches

- Action Research (1940s - )
- Community Based Participatory Research (1960s - )
- Participatory Rural Appraisal (1970s - )
- Management and Organizational Learning (1980s - )
- Coproduction of Knowledge (1998 - )
Co-production of knowledge practices (1990s - )

Action Research (1940s - )

Rapid Assessment Rapid Appraisal (1960s - )

Practitioner Research (1970s - )

Management and Organizational Learning (1970s - )

Action learning, action science (1980s - )

Participatory Action Research (1960s - )

Community-Based Participatory Research (1980s - )

Emancipatory Research (1970s - )

Collaborative Research Family Tree
Unique Aspects of Collaborative Research

- Building relationships
- Acknowledging and sharing power
- Encouraging participation
- Making change
- Establishing credible accounts
Collaborative Research in Practice
Project Logic Model
Collaborative Practices: Project Inputs

• Consider your research team’s capacity to engage in collaborative research
• Ensure that your partners are interested and you have permission to work with the organization or community
  • When possible, financial inputs from partner is an indicator of commitment
• Develop reciprocal relationships
• Agree on project goals

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
Collaborative Practices: Research Process

- Joint problem definition and question development
- Joint data collection and analysis
- Documenting the findings from both the natural resource research and the collaborative research process (capture local understandings and perceptions)

Acknowledging and Sharing Power

Establishing Credible Accounts

Encouraging Participation
Collaborative Practices: Outputs

- Co-create outputs
- Consider how the outputs will be used by your collaborators
- Who owns the data?
  - It’s okay to still do peer-reviewed publications
    - Be transparent about needing them
    - Consider opportunities for your collaborators to co-author
Collaborative Practices: Outcomes and Impacts

- What does the organization or community want to do with the information?
  - Change in incremental steps?
  - Large-scale transformation?

- What can you do to help support action and change?

- How can you continue your collaboration into the future?

- Collaborative research does not end when the project does.
**Collaborative research is a discipline that requires specific skills and training.**

- **Principle:** Collaborative research is a discipline that requires specific skills and training.
- **Project Consideration:** Integrate capacity into project.
- **Program Consideration:** Look for collaborative research capacity when funding new projects.

**Collaborative research requires intentionality (planning and design).**

- **Principle:** Collaborative research requires intentionality (planning and design).
- **Project Consideration:** Consider collaboration as the support structure around your project. Plan and allocate resources accordingly.
- **Program Consideration:** Be flexible with funding to allow additional time for co-development of research questions and research design.

**Ensure the research is what the organization or community needs and can use.**

- **Principle:** Ensure the research is what the organization or community needs and can use.
- **Project Consideration:** Use pre-existing relationships to identify key questions, timelines, and formats.
- **Program Consideration:** Adjust funding mechanisms to allow agency questions to be addressed (timing/timelines/levels).

**Partners have roles, responsibilities, and knowledge to contribute.**

- **Principle:** Partners have roles, responsibilities, and knowledge to contribute.
- **Project Consideration:** Engage in transparent, clear discussions early in project about roles and responsibilities.
- **Program Consideration:** Work with stakeholder agencies to make them aware of roles and responsibilities in collaborative research (i.e. turnover).

**Attitude toward collaboration affects all aspects of the project.**

- **Principle:** Attitude toward collaboration affects all aspects of the project.
- **Project Consideration:** Commit to meeting the needs of partners.
- **Program Consideration:** Focus on projects that indicate genuine commitment to collaboration.
Collaborative Research and Climate Research
Activity: Recognizing Diverse Priorities in Collaborative Research

- Get into groups of 3-4 people (try to find people you don’t already know).
- Read through your case study
- Select your persona from the case study
- Using the Wall et al. set of indicators, consider which ones would be most important to you (in your persona)
- Using sticky notes, write down the top 3-5 indicators for you persona (one indicator per note)
- Compare your list with your collaborators
- Place your sticky notes on the wall in groups according to the indicator


Questions?

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