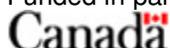


Community Research Planning Guidebook



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The objective of the community research-planning guide is to prepare researchers to visit a KO affiliated community. It is a compilation of experiences and recommendations offered by community members and leaders, KO staff and community-based researchers. The community contact is the best person to consult to ensure the visit is successful (low impact and highly beneficial to the community). Community visits should be a rewarding and learning experience for researchers and community members alike.

Objective

The research objective should be inline with the following: To visit a First Nation community to meet with leaders, elders, program workers, youth and community members to improve First Nation access to information and research capacity that will improve programs and services and ultimately improve quality of life in the community.

The researcher is in the community to generate discussion, get people thinking and talking about how to improve services and programs. The researcher is not there to extract information to provide to an outside source.

1 Preparation

The following steps are recommended for preparation of a community visit. Refer to Appendix A for a flow chart including all the necessary steps involved in planning a community visit.

1.1 Chief and council

Firstly, call the chief and ask permission to visit the community. Explain the reason and duration of the stay. If approved, the chief will indicate a community contact. Fax the Chief and council a one-page info sheet explaining who you are representing, the purpose and expected outcome of the visit.

The Chief is the first contact; permission must be obtained from the leadership before the visit can take place. If the chief is unavailable, the deputy chief or councillor may be contacted. However, if the councillor recommends that the chief be ultimately consulted, follow their advice.

1.2 Community Contact

Second, call the Community Contact (CC) and fax them an info sheet. The CC is usually a person overseeing the topic of interest. Ask the contact about including a Community-based Researcher (CBR).

The community contact will be a worker involved in local programs pertaining to the topic. The worker may be too busy to organize the visit, however, it is ideal to have the CC present for the community meeting. The CC will be interested in the results of the visit and how they can be used to benefit the community through their work.

1.3 Community-based Researcher

Where applicable, contact the CBR to see if they are available prior to and during the visit. Fax a negotiable contract to the CBR and discuss the deliverables. Keep in contact with the CBR for updates and to provide additional information and support when required.

The CBR acts as the link between the researcher and the community. The researcher is working in partnership with the First Nation and the CBR as a contact. The researcher should involve the CBR in all aspects of the research to improve the local capacity. The CBR may also provide transportation, translation and act as a guide. They are usually younger community members who are knowledgeable, flexible, fast learners and can help the researcher avoid any cultural mistakes.

The CBR will complete the preparation work including planning and promoting the community meeting, deliver surveys, set-up meetings with elders, and may even take the researcher on a tour of the community. The relationship with the CBR is vital to the success of the visit. KORI's objective is to work with CBRs at every opportunity to most effectively carry out research.

2 Resources

When visiting KO affiliated communities, researchers are encouraged to take advantage of available communication resources. IP telephones are available in

offices and some homes allowing networked calls to be made with no long distance charge. A broadband internet connection is also available in the communities at varying speeds depending on demand and weather. Video Conferencing is widely used. Adding a visual aspect to communication helps to build relationships faster. The E-Center is a local public internet access point and also has a VC unit.

3 Sharing and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge

3.1 OCAP Principals

The term OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession) was coined by the National Steering Committee of the First Nations and Inuit Regional Longitudinal Health Survey. OCAP is used to make decisions regarding why, how and by whom information is collected, used and shared for research, evaluation and planning purposes.¹ It can also ensure that individual and community privacy is protected in a way that is appropriate to the First Nations language, culture and beliefs. It is used to strengthen the gap left by the Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act that apply to individuals but not to overall community issues.

Ownership: The First Nation owns the cultural knowledge, information and data.

Control: First Nations people, their communities and leadership have control of the research and information processes.

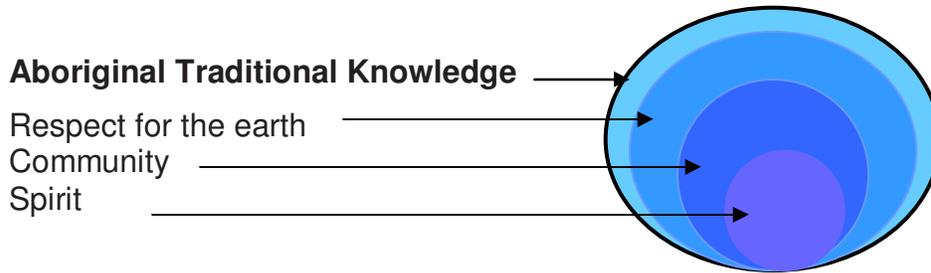
Access: The First Nation has access to the information collected and resulting documentation.

Possession: The First Nation is in possession of the data collected and may distribute it according to agreements.

In keeping with OCAP, a number of best practices have been identified for collecting Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.

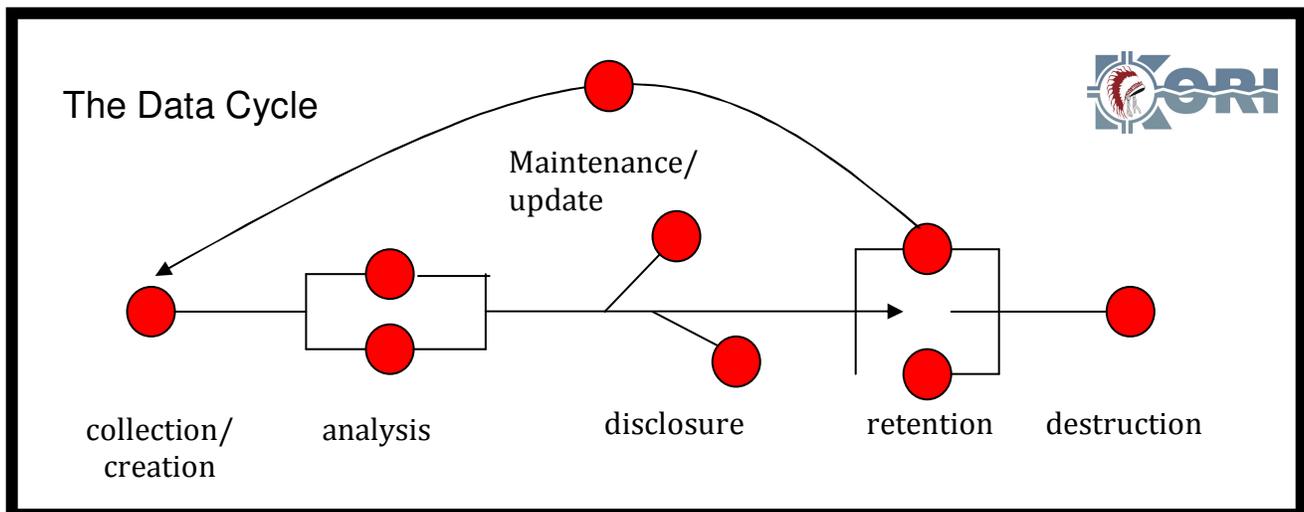
- Respect the ownership and origin of the knowledge
- Take the time to establish a trust relationship based on honesty, openness and sharing.
- Provide regular, open communication with project updates and seek input
- Provide useful products in return that the community can own, maintain and understand, such as reports and presentations

¹ Research Tool Kit, National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO/ONSA) 2003.



Create a Privacy Impact Assessment Statement. The PIA can be a brief, clear document that describes the portion of the project that will be collecting and managing data. The objective of the PIA statement is to clearly communicate the terms of the data collection, how the data will be used and allow the community to decide if they would like to share.

- Clearly identify the purpose of the research and its outcomes
- Describe the data cycle, how the information will be used and with whom it will be shared
- Request approval of the privacy impact assessment statement



4 Community Visit Itinerary

4.1 Meeting with Chief and Council

Upon arriving in the community, the researchers and CBR should go immediately to the band office to introduce themselves to the Chief and council. If necessary, prepare a presentation to outline the visit purpose. A discussion and question period will follow the presentation. The researchers will be asked direct questions regarding the purpose of the visit and benefit to the community. The leadership may express some frustration from being overly researched. The position of the researcher should be that they are there to listen to the community and do their best to record suggestions and comments in order to improve local programs and services and ultimately the quality of life for community members. (If this is not the objective, re-examine the visit purpose). Be attentive to the amount of time that the leadership has. Leaders may suggest several community members that will be valuable to visit.

4.2 Meeting with community workers

As time allows, the researcher should visit all service centres in the community (Health Centre, Clinic, Community Hall, School, NAPS Office, Youth Centre, KiHS Building, E-centre, Telehealth Office, etc) to meet with community workers. It is important to tour the community centres for three reasons: to understand how the community works, what resources are available, and to meet people. When the researcher is seen visiting and touring the community, they are seen as more approachable and transparent. People are affected by all the working parts of the community, it is important to be familiar with more than just the research topic. These visits can be unannounced unless a formal meeting is required.

It is also important to spend some time at the local store where the researcher is visible and can meet many other people.

4.3 Meeting with Elders

Elders are valuable leaders in the community and their input provides significant contributions to the visit. Elders share a passion for their communities. They are an invaluable source of knowledge and are widely considered as holding communities together.

A translator must accompany the researcher, as many Elders prefer to speak their native language. Meeting with Elders in their homes demonstrates respect and helps to make them more comfortable. Meetings with Elders must be prearranged (same or previous day). Elder discussions may only require one opening question. Elders may speak at length in response to a question, giving anecdotes and examples. It is respectful to bring a small gift for the Elder.

4.4 Meeting with Youth

Youth are an important part of the community. It will be difficult to attract youth to a formal meeting, however they can be better reached in informal settings. Develop relationships with youth by hanging out at the local store or participating in sporting events. Do not pressure youth to speak; they may share if they wish to. In a recent trip, KORl's researchers asked the council about a program for youth, after providing some suggestions, the comment was made, "make sure you ask the youth what they need."

4.5 Sharing Circle or Community Meeting

The sharing circle is used to invite a sample of the community to discuss a topic of interest (similar to a focus group). It is a culturally appropriate method that communities use primarily for healing purposes. Each participant contributes to the circle as a listener and a speaker. The discussion is not directed at the facilitator but to everyone in the circle. Participants find the discussion most rewarding when they are given an opportunity to share and learn from their peers. The sharing circle format can be found in Appendix E. It may be advised that the meeting not be called a sharing circle even if it is designed that way, the title may scare some away.

When the topic is less personal, it may be more appropriate to have a community meeting rather than a sharing circle. The sharing circle may intimidate participants because it is usually associated with personal sharing. A community meeting is more of an open discussion, with a presentation and subsequent discussion. It is more of a dialogue between the researchers and participants. The meeting must proceed even if one person attends. That one person should be treated equally important as a larger group.

5 Life in a Remote First Nation Community

KO communities do not allow alcohol or drugs and all bags are searched upon arrival in the community. There are limited groceries available at the local store, however many staple items can be purchased and cooked at the hotel or MTO kitchenette. Food prices are 3-4 times that of larger centres and limited fresh foods are available. The weather is unpredictable and flights may be delayed for hours or even days. It is important to spend some time at the local store, community centre and other public places where the researcher is visible and can meet many other people.

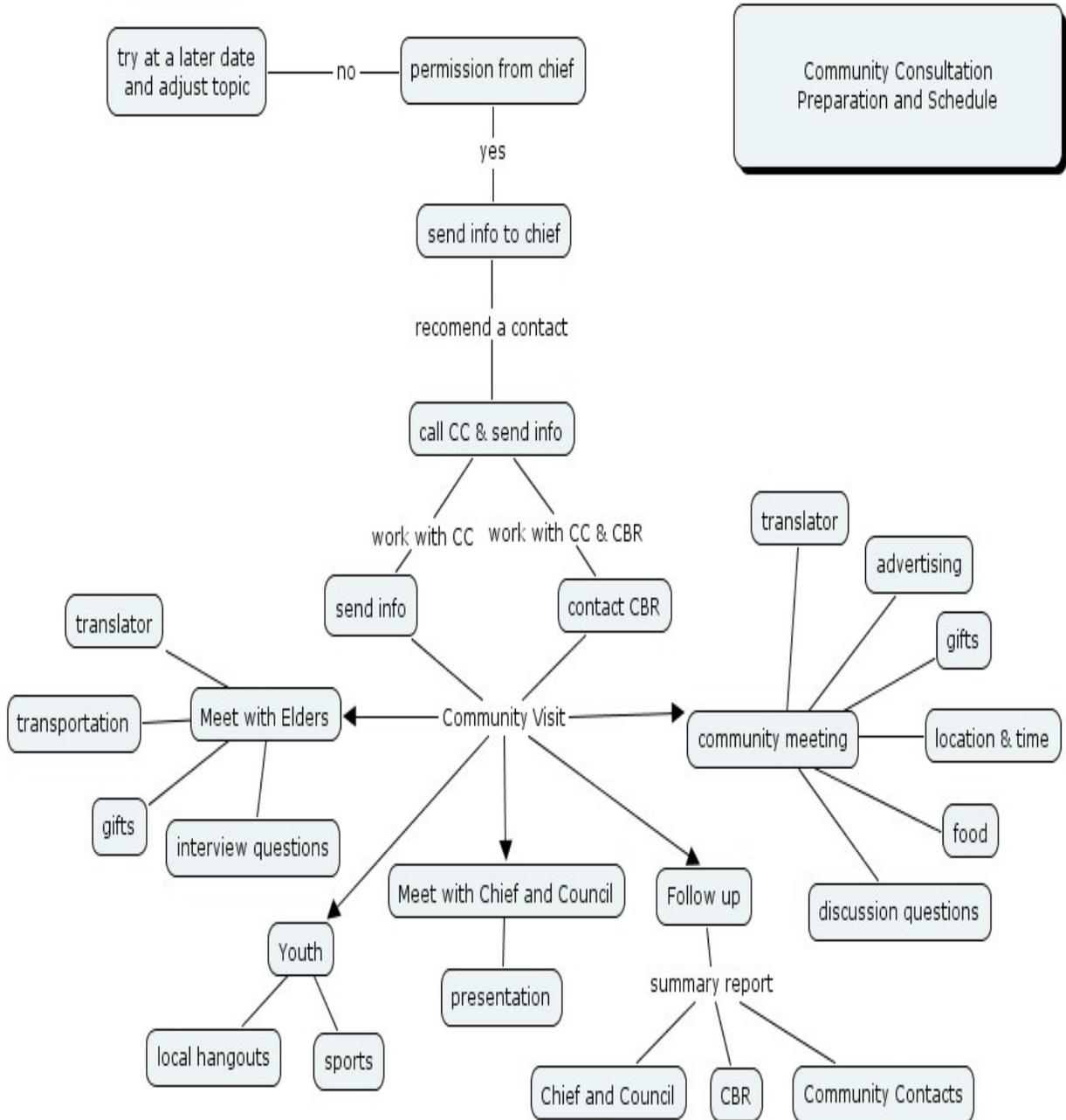
6 Ongoing Engagement

Following the visit, the draft results should follow for review by pertinent KO staff and community representatives. Work with contacts to edit and complete the results of the visit. Provide a copy to the contacts and make it available online in a clear, easy to read and access format. A presentation may complement the report if it is lengthy. The relationship with contacts and exchange of ideas should continue beyond the visit, resulting in future projects, benefits and relationships.

Success is developing a relationship with the people you meet. It also occurs if the community should feel that they have benefited from the visit and that they were shown respect. Hopefully the outcome will be to improve access to information that will help to improve programs and services and ultimately quality of life in the community.

Appendix A

Community Visit Flow Chart



Appendix B

Community Visit Suggestions

Have a positive attitude, be open and approachable – be transparent and available to talk and meet with people. It is important that the researchers are seen at the store, visiting community locations, talking with people and playing with youth.

Be flexible, scheduling will not follow your plans – transportation, office procedures and work schedules are not regimented. There are many circumstances that will change the schedule. There is only one flight per day between Keewaywin and Red Lake (the closest urban centre). Flights are frequently delayed or cancelled. The first trip, flights out were cancelled for two days. During the second trip researchers had to take a boat for the 1-hr ride from Keewaywin to Sandy Lake FNs because the air route could take more than one day.

Do not interrupt people when they are speaking – people may talk at length in response to one questions but never or shorten their time to speak. There was a recent session with many people, and the circle was halfway finished when someone was talking for over 30 minutes. The researcher looked around the circle and no one was fidgeting, restless or even distracted. Everyone was being respectful, attentive and listening. The researcher did the same and let them finish.

Clearly word questions - particularly wording for surveys, interview and discussion questions. A recent when a survey question was not clear and someone asked, “what does this questions mean?” After explaining it more clearly, they replied: “well why didn’t you just say that then?”

Be patient and understanding - there will always be a cultural gap and community members will be patient with the researcher’s ignorance. The researcher should not force an agenda.

Show respect – treat others as you would have them treat you.

Building relationships is the number one priority.

Appendix C

Sharing Circle Format

1. Obtain talking stone
2. Designate a recorder and facilitator for the sharing circle.
3. A prayer is said to open up the circle
4. Ask for permission to make transparent notes on a visible flip chart*
5. Included the flip chart in the sharing circle
6. Recorders will obtain consensus on what was written before moving on
7. A talking stone is passed around the sharing circle
8. The person with the talking stone will introduce themselves and share their thoughts feelings and experiences on the theme of the question
9. End sharing with a thank-you and pass the talking stone to the next person
10. Close the circle with a prayer

*Based on the sensitivity of the discussion topic, recordings may not be allowed.

Guiding Principles:

1. We are all equal.
2. No judgments upon another or upon ourselves.
3. Remember to use the seven gifts: love, sharing, honesty, trust, humbleness, bravery and wisdom in the circle.
4. What is said within the circle stays within the circle unless it is agreed ahead of time to put it on paper for documental purposes.
5. Respect each other's right to speak without interruption. The person holding the stone has the right to speak as long as he/she wishes. You don't have the right to speak if you are not holding the stone.
6. A person can pass the stone if they don't have anything to say.
7. Seek healing by sharing and understanding yourself, not trying to get others to change for you.
8. Nothing is coincidental; there are reasons for every experience.
9. Offer your support, not your pity when healing comes to others within the circle