Guiding Ethical Principles

Preamble

Research processes, over the last ten years, have changed to fully encompass Indigenous partners. For many years research undertaken by academic institutions served to benefit the academy and selected scholarly groups.   Aboriginal peoples (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; UATF, 2007; Wilson 2008; Kovach, 2009; OFIFC, 2012) created a shift in thinking concerning the acquisition of knowledge, the process of research and how seeking knowledge, as it applies to academic research, can benefit both the academic scholar and the Aboriginal community.   The UAKN is an example of how the research paradigm shift can be carried out in practice.

Research undertaken through the UAKN is premised on implementing meaningful change at the community level.   The Guiding Ethical Principles encompasses an acknowledgement of community ethics concerning research. It is further recognized that this document is a small iteration of the many Indigenous ethical protocols currently in existence.

Introduction

Community driven research practices are the foundation from on which the UAKN has been created; as such, the UAKN strives to adhere to ethical principles relevant to the communities with whom they are engaged in research. Additionally, ensuring the research is mutually beneficial to all partners is a fundamental principle of the UAKN.   The UAKN Secretariat developed the Guiding Ethical Principles to represent the urban Aboriginal communities' generally applied considerations concerning ethical research and to provide a practical tool that encompasses the attainment of mutually beneficial research.

The UAKN project is funded, primarily, through the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council which is governed by the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* 2 (TCPS 2). The TCPS 2 recognizes the responsibilities inherent to conducting ethical research with Aboriginal peoples, which necessitates respecting their knowledge and worldviews. Further, the TCPS 2 acknowledges the following,

> Traditional knowledge is specific to place, usually transmitted orally, and rooted in the experience of multiple generations. It is determined by an Aboriginal community's land, environment, region, culture and language. Traditional knowledge is usually described by Aboriginal peoples as holistic, involving body, mind, feelings and spirit. Knowledge may be expressed in symbols, arts, ceremonial and everyday practices, narratives and, especially, in relationships. The word tradition is not necessarily synonymous with old. Traditional knowledge is held collectively by all members of a community, although some members may have particular responsibility for its transmission. It includes preserved knowledge created by, and received from, past generations and innovations and new knowledge transmitted to subsequent generations. In international or scholarly discourse, the terms traditional knowledge and Indigenous knowledge are sometimes used interchangeably.

The Guiding Ethical Principles document is created to complement the TCPS 2 guidelines in conjunction with the requirements of any UAKN grant recipient's University and/or Indigenous research ethics board.

The following principles will be taken into consideration by all researchers, academics, community partners and organizations while conducting research within the UAKN.

Principles

There are a number of broad ethical considerations when conducting research with Aboriginal peoples, which include: a) the research methodology be in line with Indigenous values; b) that there is community and academic accountability; c) that the research gives back and benefits the community; and d) that the researcher is an ally and will not do harm (Kovach, 2009; OFIFC's Research Presentation Protocol, 2012). The following principles seek to be representative of these ethical considerations.

Community Driven Research
The research project will be community driven and promote relational accountability in the following ways:
1. Research is grounded in community priorities, and constructed or designed collaboratively between communities and researchers e.g. advisory committees or other formats relevant to community.

2. Research conducted is respectful of Aboriginal people's languages, cultural protocols, values, lifecycles and gender(s);
3. Research conducted is respectful of Aboriginal people's research approaches and protocols;
4. Aboriginal peoples and organizations will endeavor to be an active participant in the research process at the level of their choosing;
5. Principles of USAI (Utility, Self-Voicing, Access and Inter-relationality, (OFIFC) and OCAP™ (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession, (FNIGC) will be looked to as useful and guiding references informing community driven research.

Protection

The research process will ensure the protection of all individuals, communities and/or organizations by:
1. Protecting the well-being of persons and communities involved in the research;
2. Minimizing any negative impacts in all aspects of the research process;
3. Ensuring that the research will also serve the greater good of society.

Fairness

Fairness will be met throughout the research process through:
1. Fair and equal treatment for all individuals and communities involved in the research;
2. Ensuring that all those involved in overseeing the research, will become aware of how their beliefs, values and biases may influence and create unfairness to those involved in the research. If such biases are present, the researcher will ensure that remedial steps are taken prior to conducting any research. The reflexivity approach put forth by OFIFC may be useful as a guiding and practical reference. Reflexivity in this context is explained as an ongoing awareness of unbalanced power relations (OFIFC's Research Presentation Protocol, 2012).

Respect

The research process will respect the Indigenous approach to Creation and hold in special regard those involved in the research by:
1. Honouring one's autonomy;
2. Honouring community protocols regarding the research process;
3. Espousing a deep regard for human rights and human dignity;
4. Ensuring a right to confidentiality that will be determined by communities and/or individuals, pre and post informed consent (prior to project and after project completion), and disclosure of results;
5. Committing to provide special accommodations and support to those in need.

Honesty

The research process will be honest and free of false claims by:

1. Providing honest research;
2. Providing true and accurate results.

Community Relevance and Practicality

The research outcomes will ensure progress and practicality, especially as it concerns Aboriginal peoples and/or organizations that are directly involved in the project:

1. The research is intended to enhance social/community conditions and for society as a whole. The intent of the research outcomes may be to lead to action, whereby research impacts policy, which in turn will impact practice and vice versa.
2. The research will be relevant to the urban Aboriginal community with the aim to link knowledge with action;
3. Research Agreements will be created between the researcher and community prior to starting the research projects. The Agreements will reflect the Guiding Ethical Principles, as well as any other ethics determined by communities.

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