SOCIAL INSIGHTS

DECOLONIZING RESEARCH

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR EQUITY TO FLOURISH

DECOLONIZING RESEARCH & EVALUATION IS A STRATEGY THAT CREATES THE CONDITIONS FOR EQUITY TO FLOURISH WHEN CREATING KNOWLEDGE OR DETERMINING A PROGRAM'S QUALITY OR IMPACT.

IT ACKNOWLEDGES THE UNDERLYING EXPLOITATIVE PROCESSES AND ASSUMPTIONS THAT CAN DRIVE EVALUATION AND RESEARCH WITHIN INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITIES,

AND IT PROVIDES PRACTICES FOR MINIMIZING HARM AND SHIFTING POWER.

-ZURI TAU

Research Myths

WE CAN PROVIDE UNBIASED ASSESSMENTS

COMMUNITY IS THERE TO BE STUDIED,
NOT CONSULTED

RESEARCH & EVALUATION ARE NEUTRAL

THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF PROOF
COMES FROM STATISTICS

Evaluators are engaged in the manipulation of power and therefore politics in its truest sense... different approaches to evaluation can result in the painting of very different pictures of reality.

ASA HILLIARD

Places equity can be practiced in research & evaluation

AT THE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT STAGE

... Gathering stakeholder input

... Ensuring project team diversity at all levels

... Engaging the community/evaluation target population

... Engagement in outcome development.

Places equity can be practiced in research & evaluation

AT THE EVALUATION SETUP STAGE

... Ensuring Black, indigenous, and people of color lead or play a major role in the evaluation

... Develop outcomes considering the community/program participant's definitions of success.

Places equity can be practiced in research a& evaluation

AT THE DATA COLLECTION STAGE

... Compensating people for their time at a living wage

... Offering incentives

... Considering community norms and practices that may impact scheduling and availability

Places equity can be practiced in research & evaluation

AT THE DATA ANALYSIS STAGE

... Avoiding the interpreting of outcomes using assumptions about ways of knowing and being that are defined by the dominant society

... Asking for feedback on your interpretation and conclusions

... Analyzing data with a diverse team

How do we change?

- Inquiry into the institution's, funders', and community's **definitions of success**.

- Inquiry into the voices and needs that are being **privileged** and **left out** of the process.

- Taking action to **minimize power differentials and exploitation** at all levels of the research project.

- **Seeking input from participants** on what questions should be asked and of whom.

- Ensuring the evaluation or research **serves the groups** with which we engage.

questions to ask yourself

- How do my ideas or definitions of success reflect a culture of white/western norms of rigor or expertise?

- How do my definitions of success differ from those of program participants or community leaders?

- What are the personal benefits of decolonizing our evaluations?

- What power differentials have I perpetuated in my work?

- What support do I need to promote equity in my research practice?

questions to ask
your organization

- How do our organization's ideas or definitions of success reflect a culture of white/western norms of rigor or expertise?

- How do our definitions of success differ from those of program participants or community leaders?

- How have our project goals been developed?

- Whose voice is missing in the process?

- What are the institutional benefits to decolonizing our research? What are the losses?

- What are the power differentials that are emerging during the research/evaluation process?

- What positive impacts on equality and inclusion, if any, could result from the evaluation? How do marginalized groups benefit?

We must soften that boundary erected long ago between those who know versus those from whom the raw materials of knowledge production are extracted.

KIM TALLBEAR