

Chapter 22

Community Voices the Need to Write, Record, and Disseminate Research Findings From the Grassroots

Stewart Sutherland

The Australian National University, Australia

ABSTRACT

Research on Indigenous people has moved from looking in on a subject to having the subjects as re-search partners, alongside academic researchers. Community-based research has a number of ethical requirements that means research partners have a voice. How this voice is captured, stored, and distributed is of great importance. For many publishers, academic or institutional, the voice of the layman or grassroots organisations are not valued. This results in much work going unpublished and hence being poorly archived. Often the stories of community are told with an earthy richness that is lacking in academic writing. This is partly due cultural storytelling, not writing to the rigidity of academia. This chapter will discuss a variety of methods that can be employed to raise the voice of community research partners who may not be academics and academically minded. However, the stories of our partners are important and are just as valid as those of the academic researcher.

INTRODUCTION

A case study is used in this chapter to reinforce its major themes and to demonstrate experiences in publishing grassroots voices. The grassroots voice within academic literature has been uncommon (Van Hout & Jacobs, 2010). However, it is important due to: the ethical consideration as part of community research partnerships; and dissemination of the research finding to a readership of peers (grassroots people). This in turns means, there is need for libraries to hold and store copies of such works. Modern libraries should be a place where people are able read and review works that represent the communities in which they reside. The modern library should carry on the tradition of being a place where all can

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go to be free of racial, ethnic, political, and socioeconomic divides, as such they should represent all who visit them.

The use of narrative evidence will help many readers make sense of the work, particularly those who may not have English as a first language or are not used to reading academic works. This is an important part of both readership and the grassroots voice. Globally, the grassroots voice is becoming stronger due to the changing ethics environment where Indigenous partnerships are required.

Modern ethics and current partnerships between the researchers, Indigenous communities, and individuals, at least in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, are under-written with national ethics statements, implemented through a variety of ethics committees (Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), 2012b; Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Canada (CPHR), 2016; National Health and Medical Research Centre (NHMRC), 2003). These statements and committees have developed due to past actions where researchers were allowed to take what they wished from Indigenous people, without permission or acknowledgement, including human remains, cultural artefacts and intellectual property (BBC News, 2003; Fredericks, 2007; HealthInfoNet, 2012; Moeke, 2013; Wilson, 2008). This was allowed to occur as many saw Indigenous people as less than.

This undervaluing of people started at invasion or settlement, as Indigenous people were seen as less than human; as time passed, human but not equal; and finally equal, in some things (Belgrave et al., 2004; Elder, 2002; MacDonald, 2007; Orange, 2011; Shaw, 1992; Wasserman, 2005). This value system extended to traditional knowledge systems, as they were seen as not based in evidence. This is an example for an area where, even in a modern world Indigenous, non-indigenous equality has not been reached as traditional knowledge systems are still not recognised in science. At least not academic science, leading to a diminished representation of Knowledge Holds in academic journals.

This has meant that most of what is written regarding Indigenous cultural views and knowledge systems within academia are written from a non-indigenous viewpoint (Ninomiya & Pollock, 2017); not surprising given the history of academic journals. Leaving library services to file, archive and promote these as experts in these areas. To move away from this, more Indigenous authorship is required within academic works. There are three main ways for this to occur: Greater grassroots readership, forcing academic journals to move to servicing the readers; more independent publishers, working with grassroots authors; and/or for more co-authored papers to be written, that is authorship between grassroots and academic authors. These would bring about change within publishing. Of course, each has its own positives and negatives that need to be viewed and discussed independently.

CASE STUDY

This case study demonstrates some of the obstacles presented when grassroots authors within an academic space, try and publish their works.

International Indigenous Librarian Form Monograph (IILF)

The International Indigenous Librarians' Forum (IILF), is a network of like-minded people who work in the Indigenous information knowledge space, libraries and archival sectors, and who care about the clients they serve and the collections of which they are stewards, including those within and external to the institutes they work.

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