

Looking Forward, Looking Back: Community-Based Research and the COVID-19 Pandemic

CBRCanada is delivering an 8-part virtual learning series titled "Community-Based Research and COVID-19: Addressing Widening Inequities and Amplifying Community-Based Visions for Change". The summary below highlights themes from September and October's live online discussions. Participants were asked two questions:

- Looking Back: How has COVID-19 impacted your community-based research practice?
- Looking Forward: What is one thing you are taking away from the pandemic that you want to bring into your work moving forward?



Institutions Unprepared for Drastic Change

Many organizations and institutions found themselves unprepared for the drastic changes brought on by the pandemic, resulting in slow policy development and minimal institutional support from research ethics boards.

Reprioritizing Action



Data collection was put on hold for many community-based researchers, slowing progress on various projects. Researchers redirected their efforts towards immediate community action.



Access to Technology Influenced Participation

Many communities could not access technology and quality internet, highlighting various inequities involved in doing community-based research online. However, for some, meeting online reduced participation barriers (e.g., no need for travel, options for anonymity).

Sustaining Meaningful Relationships



Online social interaction may lack the intimacy of face-to-face conversations and can contribute to feelings of isolation. Creating new and meaningful ways of maintaining collective care was challenging yet important.



Opportunities for Reflection

The pandemic provided community-based researchers and practitioners the opportunity to reflect on community resilience, adaptability, feasibility, and their own practice.

Expanded Connections



The shift to online and remote settings encouraged organizations to expand social networks and create new connections and relationships, particularly when gathering across far distances. Going forward, many organizations have decided to continue using technology to increase accessibility in the research process for participants, researchers, and community partners.



Time for Change

For many community-based researchers, the pandemic inspired a surge of activism within projects and organizations. Many hosted conversations on how to renounce outdated policies, expose capitalistic ideals of productivity, question power imbalances, and redirect resources to meet communities' immediate needs. This created a strong foundation for improved action-oriented community-based research coming out of the pandemic.

Thank you to all the participants for their insight!

We hope you can join upcoming [webinars and live discussions](#) in this series.