Research and Research Ethics
FACT SHEET SERIES

Inuit Tuttarvingat

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO)
Organisation nationale de la santé autochtone (ONSA)

Sharing and Reporting Results

Researchers follow guidelines to make sure they are being respectful and honourable (ethical) when they are working with Inuit communities.

> *Communication is an important part of these guidelines and it usually starts before a research project even begins.*

Most research guidelines recommend that researchers communicate well with the community and the participants throughout a research project, meaning before the research begins, during the research and after the results are in. To follow this recommendation, a researcher needs to be in contact and discussion with the community and its members during the planning stage of a project. It also requires that the researcher has a plan on how to share the research findings with the community and project participants after the actual research is finished. Researchers might need to be prepared to change plans depending on the feedback provided.

Guidelines specifically written for research involving Aboriginal Peoples in Canada also recommend that researchers educate and train community members in research methods and ethics. This training can happen before, during and after the research.

Communication BEFORE beginning a research project:

- **Good communication** is essential to the success of all research projects. All partners need to agree to communicate with each other. It may take several meetings to share ideas, be clear on roles and work out terms that satisfy all parties involved.

- Successful researchers build **relationships** with community members and individuals interested in the research project.

- It is important for the success of the research that the relationship between researcher, project participants and other community members is agreed to by all partners. This will clearly outline what **expectations** the community has toward the researcher and what the expectations of the researcher are toward the community and the research partners.

- A Memorandum of Understanding or a research agreement can be used to **record the expectations** of all partners and their commitment to act on them.

- Some researchers look for interested community members to be members of the research team and co-author the research report. They would seek **commitment** for the entire length of the research project.

- Researchers often **require help** – they might look for people to help with the research or require use of community facilities to carry out the research.

Communication DURING a research project:

- By the time research activities in the community begin, the overall research process and the times for the various phases and activities should be established and understood by all.

- Usually, much learning goes on during research activities and often the learning happens among all participants including community members who are observing the research.

- Often, researchers ask to be educated about the communities or Inuit life.

- Sometimes, things do not go as expected and plans need to be changed—in this case it is very important that researchers, project participants, community members and others involved communicate with each other about any changes.

Communication AFTER a research project:

After a research project has been conducted, there are several ways for the researcher to communicate with the community and research participants: interpreting results, sharing results with others, publishing results in journals and books, and sending results to a wider audience that can learn from them.

Interpreting results: If possible, communities should be involved in explaining the meaning of the results. This can help make the interpretation more accurate and increase the usefulness of the report.

Sharing results: When and how results are shared depends on the agreement between the researcher and the community. In many cases, research agreements require that the researcher present results and findings of a research project first to the people who were involved and the community in which the research took place. Only after the results have been shared in this way, is the researcher allowed to make the findings public.

There can be many reasons for delays in reporting back to the community and it is good practice to contact the researcher and ask for an update on the project. If the researcher is not available or not willing to share the results, community members can contact the organization that licensed or approved the research plan. For example, the hamlet or municipal office or the institution that provided the research license might know what happened. In each of the four Inuit regions, there are also Inuit Research Advisors who are usually informed of the research going on in their region. It is helpful to check with them. You can find them through the ArcticNet and ITK Web sites: **www.arcticnet.ulaval.ca** or **www.itk.ca**.

When researchers are ready to share the research results, they often ask to meet with the participants and/or make a presentation to the community. This is a good way for community members to learn more about research and how it can benefit Inuit.

Research and research ethics are the key focus of the **Inuit Nipingit — National Inuit Committee on Ethics and Research**. Inuit Nipingit is co-ordinated jointly by Inuit Tuttarvingat of the National Aboriginal Health Organization and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.