

Attendance: approx. 30 to 54 online (including phone dial-in)

Facilitator: Elyse Cain Notes taken by: Rocellita Lacsina

1) Acknowledgement of Country and introduction (Elyse Cain, NCOSS A/Director Policy & Research)

NCOSS has partnered with the University of Sydney for a number of years to run the NGO Research Forum, which has taken a few different shapes and forms over the years. Today is an opportunity for us all to explore what we want out of a reinvigorated forum, and to really think about generating research development, to support the sector's identified needs and common goals.

2) Introduction to Community-Led Research (Professor Amanda Howard- Program Director, Bachelor of Social Work, The University of Sydney)

Community-led research (CLR) is very much about placing the community at front and centre in all aspects of the research process: from developing research questions and designing the research, to co-owning the results.

How do we actually start asking questions alongside communities, working and walking with them, in a very real way? This can be a bit of an uphill battle for a large traditional research institution like The University of Sydney, but it is increasingly important for us to start relocating as researchers.

We need to see research shift towards something that's useful to people, that is led by what people in communities actually want, wherever those communities are- as communities of place, communities of interest, communities of connection or identity, of culture, or however people define their idea of "community".

So, how do we actually design our research... to have co-leadership, co-support, co-research and co-design?

We're aiming for this forum to be a place where we can have those discussions together, today and into the future.

3) Zoom Poll results (n=22 responses)

What are your TOP TWO priorities or reasons for attending the forum this year?	Listen to academics present research findings that are most relevant to my service	36%
	Hear presentations from NGO researchers about their work	68%
	Time to talk with forum participants	23%
	Time to collaborate on ideas for future research	64%
	Others (please specify in chat box afterwards)	0%
Do you want themed forums? Please indicate your preference.	One theme per forum meeting	73%
	One consistent theme for the year	5%
	Multiple themes (e.g. 2-3 topics) per forum meeting	23%
	Others (please specify in chat box afterwards)	0%
What is your preference for time allocated within a 90-minute forum meeting?	More time for research presentations	23%
	Equal time for research presentations AND discussions among participants	77%
	More time for participant discussions	0%
	Others (please specify in chat box afterwards)	0%

4) FORUM CONTENT: issues, themes and desired outcomes

Discussion highlights from break-out rooms (5 x approx. 6 per room= 30 participants)

a) Connecting and hearing ideas from other NGOs

- We need opportunities to connect with (and listen to) other NGOs as well as research academics.

- *We need ideas (from NGO presentations) that people can speak on, so they could offer up their skills. It will be a way for people to share what was already happening in their space, to share across the sector so we don't have to repeat the same things over again.*
 - *This is a valuable opportunity for smaller agencies, especially in remote and rural areas, to connect with a research network. It's very hard for smaller agencies to actually do a lot of research themselves.*
- b) Strengthening the way we analyse and use data**
- We need robust evaluations. The research needs to inform the work that we do- a 'mixed method approach', where there's a strong collaboration between research data and our work.
 - We need (skills) to analyse the data (rather than making assumptions about the data), in order to inform our work accurately
 - Examples of good practice in doing research and evaluation (successes and challenges)
 - *Have an 'expert panel' (to support discussions).*
- c) Strengthening the way we apply data (to enhance practice and outcomes)**
- *Research (presentations) that come out of this forum should lead to some sort of tangible results, not 'stuff that's really theoretical and conceptual' but 'stuff that's actually going to lead to change at a service level'.*
 - How do we apply academic research to the real world?
- d) Capturing data that communicate impact, or translate into impact**
- How do we do evaluation monitoring to capture service impact or collective impact, *especially among people who are on the outer fringes, e.g. people with disabilities or significant mental health issues?*
 - How do we use that evaluation to set up new projects?
 - How do we translate the research that we do into impact- whether it's 'getting more eyes', or 'getting the right eyes' on the work we're doing?
- e) Using data for advocacy purposes**
- How do we develop capabilities across the sector for collaborative advocacy?
 - How do we advocate around designing the research itself? Example: are we asking evaluation questions that somebody else has asked us to?
- f) Generating new research**
- Within this forum, how do we influence what gets researched, as distinct from *just being told what research has been done?* How do we generate a research project, or participate in the project?
 - Ideas and strategies to get research funding- e.g. sharing resources
- g) Improving outcomes for beneficiaries/service users**
- From a research perspective, how do we support people with multiple complex issues, when they intersect across a whole range of different services (e.g. mental health and domestic violence)?
 - Measuring, consulting, engaging, collaborating
 - Good practice- creative and diverse ways that orgs have done online service and support, e.g. for older people (challenging the assumption that everyone has internet connection)
- h) Promoting inclusivity (*grey research*)**
- We need an exchange of grey research and grey knowledge that is very practice-based and action-based without necessarily going down the academic research part. Examine some of those, and often.
 - *Where's the knowledge base for someone who isn't an academic, and doesn't have the research background? There is a great body of knowledge that is more grounded in local practice.*
 - We need a **gateway** for local informal research, and we also need to support people to access it.
 - Participatory evaluation
- i) Addressing workforce and sector issues**
- Workforce retention and recruitment – at crisis point in community aged care and disability
 - Mental health issues of workers
 - Covid impacts

- Overlaying theme is the competitive funding environment and limited resources in the non-profit environment, and all the challenges that it poses.

5) **FORMAT of NGO presentations**

- Good practice examples
- Case studies we could all talk to, and recommend to our workplaces
- Capacity-building (e.g. 'operationalising co-design': how to 'share power', make decisions together, design stuff together and 'just see how it kind of works')

6) **Selection process and guidelines**

- There will be four themes per year (one theme per forum and 3 to 4 presentations within a theme).
- Presentations will be chosen from a pool of submissions after a call-out.
 - a) General call out, then organise submissions into themes.
 - b) Specific call out, around a given theme.
- The call out will NOT be for abstracts, but for a description of the 'grey research' knowledge/material, or a research project that people have been working on/have recently completed.

7) **Next Step**

NCOSS and USyd Neighbourhood Research Hub will summarise the discussions and feed back to today's participants and all registrants, and will work out ways to continue this dialogue to plan the 2022 forums.

8) **Forum dates in 2022**

Fourth Thursday bi-monthly, 10:00-11:30 am (via Zoom until further notice)

- 28 April
- 23 June
- 25 August
- 27th of October