Confronting *Uncomfortable* Truths:

LEARNING LESSONS FOR **DECOLONISING** THE EQUALITY INSTITUTE'S RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE PRACTICES

Table of contents

Acknowledgement of Country[ii]

This paper was written on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People. The Equality Institute (EQI) was founded in Naarm (Melbourne, Australia) on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of this land and waterways, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, as well as their elders, past, present, and emerging.

We extend this respect to all Indigenous peoples of this continent and its adjacent lands, recognising their cultures as the oldest continuous living cultures in human history. We recognise the deep and enduring spiritual connections and relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with community, as well as the lands, oceans, waterways, air, and sky. Furthermore, we acknowledge and pay our respects to Indigenous, First Nations people, and other Traditional Custodians of the many lands where EQI works around the world.

We acknowledge that the land we live, work, and play on, always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land. Regarding our work and purpose – the prevention of violence against women and girls – we understand that all forms of oppression are interlinked, and we cannot address gender inequality without also addressing racial inequality. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and other Indigenous people around the world, as leaders and knowledge holders in this space. We particularly pay our respects to, and acknowledge, the strong Indigenous women leading this work. Indigenous people's generosity, hope and ongoing efforts to prevent violence, inspires us. We are committed to listening, learning, and working alongside one another with humility, perseverance, and open hearts and minds. It is our hope that we can be a contributor to a future that is just and free from violence for communities everywhere.

Purpose of this paper

The Equality Institute (EQI) is a global research and creative agency working to advance gender equality and prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG). We have conducted over 50 studies around the world on VAWG and what works to prevent it. Our work is values-driven and underpinned by intersectional feminist principles.

Although EQI have some staff and resources located in Timor-Leste and the Northern Territory (Central Australia), EQI as an organisation is led from, and largely based in, a colonial/settler context (Naarm/Melbourne, Australia on unceded Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country). We acknowledge that we benefit from and often perpetuate the unequal colonial power structures that pervades the sectors and spaces where we work.

This paper emerges from our commitment to continuously learn, improve our practice, and foster partnerships that are more equitable. We seek to ensure the voices and knowledge we amplify and the research we conduct is informed by feminist, Indigenist, and decolonial principles and actions. In this paper, we share principles and practices which help to produce more equitable and ethical outcomes, especially for research with historically marginalised communities. We are still learning. We don't have all the answers and acknowledge that, as an organisation and individuals, we have more to do. We acknowledge that this work draws from decades of work gone before us by Indigenous and historically marginalised scholars and practitioners, as well as those with lived experiences other than our own. We seek to amplify these voices and credit them where they are used.

Note on language

There are tensions and debates on the language used in international development and public health, particularly regarding knowledge production, research, decolonisation, and categorisation. In this paper we draw from preferred language amongst scholars, practitioners, and activists we have worked with, as well as wider scholarship. However, there are limitations with any terminology we use, and we will continue to adjust our language as these conversations evolve.

Specifically, you will notice we haven't used the more common terms, such as 'low and-middle-income countries' (LMICs) or the 'Global South'. We do this in a bid to include the many Indigenous communities and other historically marginalised groups geographically located in so-called 'high-income countries' (HICs), or the 'Global North', who experience deep structural disadvantage rooted in colonialism (and other forms of oppression). We refer to populations in these contexts as 'historically marginalised people and/or communities' in an attempt to reduce a focus on income (which could also be viewed as reductionist) and acknowledge,

and centre historical power imbalances present in both 'Global North' and 'Global South' contexts. We acknowledge that historically marginalised people continue to be marginalised and discriminated against in the present. We have opted to use 'coloniser/settler backgrounds' to describe researchers and practitioners who come from, and benefit from the relative structural privileges of what others might term 'HICs' and the 'Global North'.

There is debate around 'decolonisation' itself in this space. Many scholars highlight that decolonisation is "not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies" or ourselves (Brownell, 2021; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Others argue it is not possible to 'de-colonise' knowledge systems and suggest new paradigms should be reinvented separate from Western influence (de Sousa Santos, 2015; McGuire-Adams, 2020). We acknowledge these arguments, whilst also recognising the term 'decolonisation' is broadly understood and used throughout the literature and, as such, has its practical uses. As such, we use the concept as the basis for this paper.

Introduction

"The intellectual project of decolonising has to set out ways to proceed through a colonising world. It needs a *radical compassion* that reaches out, that *seeks collaboration*, and that is *open to possibilities* that can only be imagined as other things fall into place."

SMITH, 2012

Legacies of colonisation and other intersecting forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and capitalism, create systemic challenges that stand in the way of gender equality and human rights. Through the upholding of practices and structures rooted in colonialism, knowledge production and research often deepen these inequities, even when seeking to address them. There is evidence that research has, and continues to, extract, disparage, and devalue Indigenous knowledge systems, as well as cause and perpetuate harm and systemic violence to individuals and communities (Smith, 2012).

Researchers and institutions from coloniser/settler backgrounds, including our own, continue to perpetuate and benefit from a power imbalance weighted in our favour. It is important therefore, that we[1] use our unearned privilege to transfer power, resources, knowledge, and recognition more equitably, especially to historically marginalised people and communities – and commit to a process of critical self-reflection on our own role in upholding these power imbalances.

If persistent power imbalances in knowledge production and research are to be addressed, decolonising practice is imperative. As researchers working from an intersectional feminist perspective on research and evaluations on VAWG and gender-based violence (GBV), we have a particular responsibility to examine and challenge these power imbalances in our work. For decades, Indigenous and decolonial scholars and activists have been calling for better practice that centres their own localised knowledge, experiences, and needs (Ball & Janyst, 2008; Datta, 2017; Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2020; Smith, 2012; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021; Zavala, 2013). While adapting research to consider individual contexts has been relatively highly adopted by the sector, these scholars, practitioners, and activists have highlighted common principles and actions for decolonising knowledge production and research.

Gender inequality is a root cause of VAWG and GBV. Rates of VAWG and GBV experienced in many historically marginalised communities around the world are extremely high. This trend is intimately connected to colonialism and other intersecting forms of oppression (Mannell et al., 2021). For example, in countries which have been colonised, a high prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) against women is 50 times more likely than in non-colonised countries (Mannell et al. 2021) and colonialism is one of the key drivers of gender-based violence against First Nations women (Our Watch, 2018; Alsalem, 2022). This paper asks, **'How can we hope to properly understand or eradicate VAWG and GBV *without* adopting decolonial approaches?'** This paper expands on existing resources on VAWG research ethics and feminist practice[2] by adopting and integrating an explicitly decolonising approach.

[1] By 'we' we refer to us as researchers from coloniser/settler-based institutions or backgrounds, working in contexts with historically marginalised communities

[2] The existing literature includes resources advancing VAWG and GBV research ethics (Ellsberg et. al. 2001) and analysis of research practice, through a feminist lens (IWDA, 2017; Leung, et. al. 2019; Raising Voices & SVRI, 2020).

Shifting the power imbalances in knowledge production and research requires effort from everyone. Ethical, feminist, *and* decolonial research practices should become the norm. When it comes to decolonising research, it is important to recognise that, due to position, privilege, and lived experiences, researchers from coloniser/settler backgrounds and historically marginalised backgrounds have distinct, and sometimes separate, roles to play.

Indigenous and historically marginalised researchers are leading the way in 're/imagining and re/making' decolonial practices and there are certain roles which are more appropriate for them to lead and speak on, such as self-determination, research benefit and what constitutes good practice. However, researchers from coloniser/settler backgrounds also have a role to play. In allyship and partnership with historically marginalised researchers and communities, we must undergo personal transformation, interrogate our own methods, and use our privilege to advocate for more equitable practices and the transformation of unequal structures (Azmat & Masta, 2021; Krusz, et. al. 2020).

EQI is seeking to better understand how decolonising practice applies in our own work. In the process, we hope to share our learnings with other VAWG and GBV researchers and institutions from coloniser/settler backgrounds.[3] We have, and will continue to, confront uncomfortable lessons when we fail to get it right, listen to and learn from our partners and researchers from historically marginalised communities, and action these learnings in our work.

[3] Besides our own experiences, this paper was informed by a literature review that drew in large part from sources written by Indigenous and historically marginalised authors and scholars. The paper was also enriched through a review process with scholars and practitioners from historically marginalised backgrounds.

Shifting the power imbalances in knowledge production requires *effort from everyone.* Indigenous and historically marginalised researchers are leading the way in 're/imagining and re/making' decolonial practices. Researchers from coloniser/settler backgrounds must *work in allyship* with historically marginalised researchers and communities, interrogate their own methods and advocate for more equitable practices and the transformation of unequal structures.

What does it mean to decolonise research?

Colonisation refers to the dispossession, genocide and repression of Indigenous people and their cultures. It also describes the ongoing systems of power that normalise so-called Western, European, and Eurocentric values as superior. This worldview includes and is interlinked with other forms of oppression, including capitalism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy (Cox, 2017).

Where possible we refer to our work as 'decolonis*ing*' knowledge production and research – to recognise that the process of learning and bettering our research practice is active, ongoing, and evolving. To claim we have 'decolonis*ed*' our research practice would incorrectly imply that it is a task possible to 'complete' and that we have 'got it right'. There is *no end point to this work*. We are still, and always will be, learning and improving our knowledge and practice in this space.

Colonialism has permeated research and knowledge production, leading to an enforcement of Eurocentric worldviews and values and devaluation of other ways of knowing, living and being (Megaw et al., 2021). This includes narrow ideas about 'legitimate' knowledge, including what it is, who it is by and for, and how it can be produced and used (Connell, 2015, p. 51; Megaw et al., 2021). Research practices originating from colonising or settler societies have long been criticised by historically marginalised groups as being extractive and driven by agendas of little or no benefit to the populations on whom the research was being done. The legitimisation of the knowledge and research held by colonialist/settler researchers and institutions has been criticised as a form of power exercised over others, and as such, has been viewed with distrust (Smith, 2012).

Decolonising knowledge and research, therefore, works to achieve empowerment and justice, especially for Indigenous people and other historically marginalised groups (Cox, 2017), through a critique and rejection of European and Western superiority, and an emphasis on a "plurality of values, practices and knowledges, especially Indigenous knowledges" (Megaw et al., 2021).

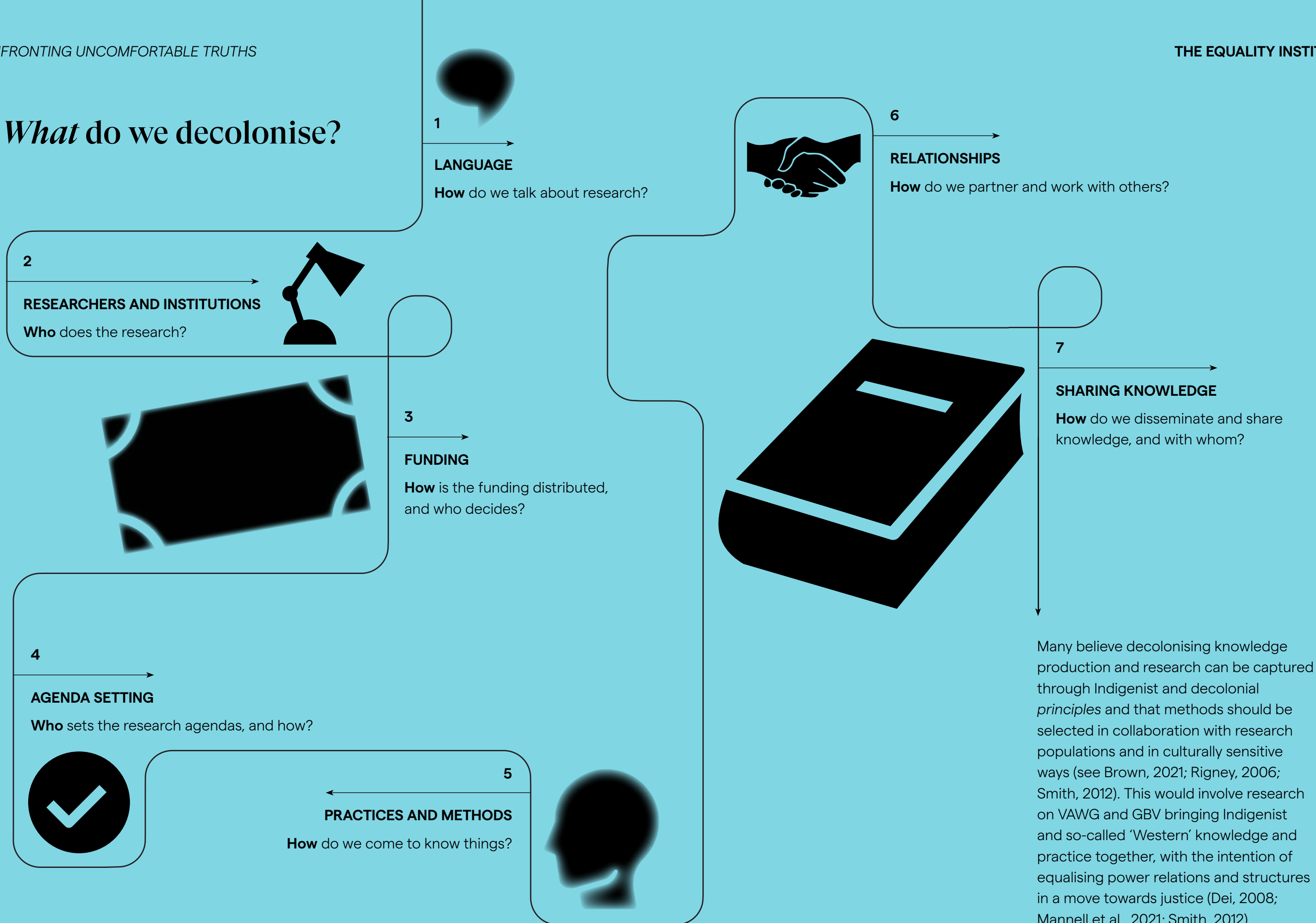# Decolonising research: multi-faceted considerations

No single component of knowledge production and research needs decolonising. All its parts deserve scrutiny (see Connell, 2015). These include (but are not limited to):

1	Language
2	Researchers and institutions
3	Funding
4	Agenda setting
5	Practices and methods
6	Relationships
7	Sharing knowledge

What do we decolonise?

1

LANGUAGE

How do we talk about research?

2

RESEARCHERS AND INSTITUTIONS

Who does the research?

3

FUNDING

How is the funding distributed, and who decides?

4

AGENDA SETTING

Who sets the research agendas, and how?

5

PRACTICES AND METHODS

How do we come to know things?

6

RELATIONSHIPS

How do we partner and work with others?

7

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

How do we disseminate and share knowledge, and with whom?

Many believe decolonising knowledge production and research can be captured through Indigenist and decolonial *principles* and that methods should be selected in collaboration with research populations and in culturally sensitive ways (see Brown, 2021; Rigney, 2006; Smith, 2012). This would involve research on VAWG and GBV bringing Indigenist and so-called 'Western' knowledge and practice together, with the intention of equalising power relations and structures in a move towards justice (Dei, 2008; Mannell et al., 2021; Smith, 2012).
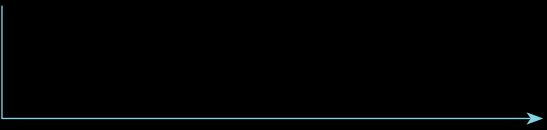
Principles and practice: learning lessons for decolonising knowledge production and research

Indigenous, feminist[4] and decolonial scholars, practitioners, and activists have documented lessons from decades of work, which outlines clear guiding principles and actions for decolonising practice (AIATSIS, 2020; Ball & Janyst, 2008; Bhattacharya, 2009; Boudreau Morris, 2016; Datta, 2017; Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2020; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Mohanty, 2003; Smith, 2012).

EQI is attempting to apply these principles to our research and knowledge practice, drawing from the existing scholarship, as well as our partners and work across over 50 research projects on VAWG and GBV, mostly undertaken with partners from historically marginalised communities. The following sections offer practical examples of how we've tried – and sometimes failed[5] – to apply these principles in our work[6], what we've learned from it, and how we endeavour to change our practice as a result.

Some common principles for decolonising research include:

1   Learn, reflect and be reflexive

2   Flatten hierarchies and develop equitable partnerships

3   Centre Indigenous and local knowledge, lived experience and contributions

4   Practise reciprocity and being of benefit to communities

5   Conduct ethical and safe research

6   Be transformative

7   Ensure accessibility

[4] We acknowledge that many branches of feminism have not always included or worked for the emancipation of all women, and in many instances, caused further harm to historically marginalised communities. However, for EQI, intersectional feminism underpins our work, and as such, we understand decolonial research practice to be connected to our intersectional feminist ways of working.
[5] Many times, lessons have been learned when we haven't got it right and we learned by understanding 'what not to do'.
[6] We have anonymised some of the projects discussed to protect confidentiality and privacy.

1

Learn, reflect, and be reflexive

Key lessons

· Incorporating and advocating for the inclusion and legitimacy of non-academic sources in literature reviews helps to challenge the assumption that 'Western' academic knowledge is the only one of 'value'. This includes (but is not limited to) blogs, news articles, art, music, and oral testimonies.

· Positionality statements can help researchers of coloniser/settler backgrounds in particular, to reflect on their worldview and redress some of the inequitable power relations between them and historically marginalised researchers. Stating your positionality in your work is a practice of reflexivity. This brings power, biases and lived experiences to the table, and acknowledges that 'Western' contexts should not be considered the default.

What does this principle mean?

Being reflexive extends beyond a researcher's awareness of their own and others' relative privilege and disadvantage (Lockard, 2016: 2). It means acknowledging how our own beliefs, attitudes, identities, and life experiences shape how we work, and using this understanding to improve our methods. To do this, we must continuously reflect on, learn about, and understand our own bias, worldview and positionality within intersecting systems of oppression, such as colonisation, patriarchy, capitalism, racism, casteism and homophobia.

Learning, reflection, and reflexivity help to:

· keep us accountable,

· continuously improve processes and outcomes,

· make us ethical and culturally safe workers, and

· break down existing hierarchies.

(AIATSIS, 2020; Russell-Mundine, 2012; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021: 3)

How can we practise it?

· Commit to continuous reflection and learning, both across specific projects, and as a 'lifelong' objective, both individually and collectively (Chambers et al., 2018).

· Reflect on whether you are best placed to conduct the research. If there are locally based researchers who could or should do the work instead, practise stepping aside (AIATSIS 2020).

· Include in your research activities:

  ° Methods that help challenge existing power dynamics and unequal structures

  ° Opportunities to reflect and challenge your own and others' assumptions

  ° Opportunities for equitable review and feedback, including from advisory boards, local and other researchers, and communities.

· Recognise your positionality upfront, including in publications, especially in relation to other audiences and the communities you are working with (Maclean et al., 2021; Potts et. al. 2022).

EQI's experience: recognising our own and others' positionalities

For this paper, we tried to include an exploration of our positionality, and integrate decolonial practices into our methods. For example, most literature reviews in 'Western' academic methods, normally fail to integrate 'grey' or non-academic literature, and the voices of historically marginalised scholars (Chambers et al 2018). Our literature review involved seeking more 'grey' literature, and authors from historically marginalised backgrounds. We set a target (somewhat arbitrarily) to have 30-40% of the sources coming from historically under-represented voices.

It was a challenge, however, to quantify this. Some Indigenous and decolonial authors state their positionality upfront, however this information is lacking in most academic writing (Maclean et al., 2021; Skelton, 2020; Underhill-Sem, 2020). Furthermore, no one, especially not researchers of coloniser/settler background, has the right to determine another author's positionality (Underhill-Sem, 2020), and this assumption undermines the Indigenist principle of a 'right to self-determination' (AIATSIS, 2020). We are still reflecting on the implications of this tension for our future work. Ultimately, the process should be transformative, disrupt power imbalances, and centre the voices of those directly affected by the subject matter.

Though recognised as good practice, explicit 'positionality statements' are not yet formal practice at EQI. It is not generally a convention for researchers of coloniser/settler backgrounds, and has largely not been adopted as a result of our own privilege, assuming our positions as 'default'. However this is changing with this paper. We will continue to include historically marginalised voices where possible and include our own positionality statements in our work, and advocate for other researchers do the same.

2

Flatten hierarchies and develop equitable partnerships

Key lessons

· Building partnerships takes time and effort and should be built on reciprocity. This includes a commitment to incorporating the perspectives of others in the spirit of collaboration, justice, and equity.

· Meaningful and equitable partnerships are developed not just within a project, or as 'a means to an end'. They are ongoing, enduring, and reciprocal relationships.

· Advocating for more democratic processes and equity in research often involves challenging larger structures and systems where power is held.

What does this principle mean?

Colonialism is grounded in inequity and hierarchy. Research methods borne from colonisers (i.e., 'the West') also can only ever be conducted through a colonial lens (Megaw et al., 2021). While some hierarchies are entrenched in powerful, overarching systems and structures beyond our influence (at least in the short term), where possible, working in non- (or at least *less-*) hierarchical ways and engaging in fair and meaningful partnerships within our own sphere of influence, will mean knowledge production and research can be made more equitable (AIATSIS, 2020; Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2020; Smith, 2012).

How can we practise it?

· Work with existing women's and Indigenous movements to build on existing data and evidence. Conduct VAWG and GBV *with*, not *on* communities, and privilege multiple voices, especially those historically marginalised.

· Value local capacity and, when strengthening capacity, be guided by local communities in priorities, topics, and approach (Leung et al., 2019).

· Be strengths based in your work with partners and communities, and build cultures of respect, mutual benefit, and reciprocity (EQI & ANROWS, 2022).

· Meaningfully involve all partners in decision making, especially those from historically marginalised backgrounds (Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2020).

· In literature reviews, aim to include more scholars of historically marginalised backgrounds (Chambers et al., 2018; Megaw et al., 2021).

· Share spaces, platforms, and opportunities with young and emerging researchers, especially researchers from historically marginalised backgrounds (EQI & ANROWS, 2022; Underhill-Sem, 2020).

· Give credit and visibility to Indigenous and historically marginalised partners.

EQI's experience: partnerships and decision making

Hierarchies are embedded in institutions of power and external structures. Our organisation, and the structures we operate in, is no exception. In many projects, EQI aims to put in place mechanisms where *more* equitable partnerships are fostered, recognising there is always more to do. For example, in most of our research projects we partner with local organisations, advisory groups and researchers, and seek to implement democratic and collaborative decision making as much as possible, at all phases of a research project. We haven't always done so; however it is important to set aside budget to remunerate advisors and advisory groups for their time and expertise, especially those who share from their own lived experience.

From 2020-2021, EQI and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI), facilitated the co-creation of a global shared research agenda on VAW research (SVRI & EQI, 2021). The project involved dialogues and discussions which drew on evidence, expertise and lived experience of academics, practitioners, activists, and survivors of VAW to "set a fair, effective and relevant research agenda on VAW in low and middle-income countries". The project adapted a method called CHNRI, which 'crowd-sourced' multiple perspectives, aiming to surpass the so-called 'expert' judgement of one

or a few senior project leads (Tomlinson M. et al., 2007). Three groups were established to guide and govern the activities: a stewardship group from EQI and the SVRI to oversee the process; a global advisory group of 30 technical experts in VAW; and a global expert group, made up of approximately 400 VAW experts from coloniser/settler and historically marginalised backgrounds. Surveys were developed in multiple languages and all stakeholders were invited to 'vote' on iteratively developed priorities. While this project included some better practices for reduced hierarchies, there were key learnings.

The development of the agenda required engaging with multiple people working in different time zones, spaces, and with different levels of access to resources across the world. Significant time and budget were required for logistics, including ensuring meetings and platforms were as accessible as possible, and interpretation into multiple languages. The governance structure had built-in mechanisms to ensure the agenda was more democratic, inclusive, and representative, however some structural power imbalances remained, and some feedback included that the survey itself was complex for some stakeholders.

3

Centre Indigenous and local knowledge, lived experience and contributions

Key lessons

· When authoring knowledge products, such as academic articles and reports, the process should be one of collaboration between researchers from coloniser/settler and historically marginalised backgrounds.

· Knowledge and research products, and the knowledge of researchers from coloniser/settler backgrounds, are enriched by historically marginalised researchers' perspectives.

· Including and supporting researchers from historically marginalised backgrounds can help them gain access to academic spaces and institutions.

· Allocating time and budget towards mutual collaboration between researchers from coloniser/settler and historically marginalised backgrounds is vital to ensure the process isn't rushed or done to 'tick a box'.

· Advocating with governments and donors to recognise the work of feminist and Indigenous grassroots movements is a key role coloniser/settler researchers can play in decolonial practice.

What does this principle mean?

So-called 'Western' knowledge has been largely defined by the perception of objectivity, the structured testing of assumptions and the creation of knowledge as a series of 'facts' (Westmarland, 2001). This means most researchers of coloniser/settler backgrounds have had their perspectives shaped by colonial ideologies. As a result, Indigenous and 'non-Western' ways of knowing have been viewed as 'unscientific' and, therefore, 'less than' (Smith 2012). Therefore, to restore equity and justice to research, valuing non-Western frames of knowledge needs to be at the forefront of decolonising practice (Laird et al., 2021; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021).

How can we practise it?

· Centre the community's voices and perspectives and work in partnership with them in all aspects of the research design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination (Buhendwa Nshobole, 2020; Chirhuza, 2020; Faciolince, 2019; Battiste, 2000).

· Include stakeholders from historically marginalised backgrounds on advisory boards, with their contributions remunerated, to value their time and shift resources to them.

· Validate your findings with local researchers and community members, so your interpretations of the data can be contextually verified (Leung et al 2019).

· Incorporate data collection methods that are less hierarchical in nature and centre Indigenous standpoints (Moreton-Robinson, 2013), such as 'yarning' from Indigenous Australian contexts (Bessarab & Ng'anduor, 2010), Kaupapa Māori processes in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Brewer et. al. 2014), Talanoa research methods (NIRAKIN, 2022) and/or art, music, or storytelling (Yongan, 2018).

· Plan international collaboration and events that are accessible to historically marginalised partners and collaborators. This may include:

  ° Adjusting your use of language, in acknowledgement that English is generally the language of the coloniser and disadvantages non-native speakers

  ° Acknowledging 'visa justice' and imbalances of power around citizenship. Many historically marginalised people don't have the privilege of a 'powerful' passport and are not able to engage in international discourse, such as conferences, as a result.

EQI's experience: co-authoring academic journal articles

EQI is currently conducting a mixed-method impact evaluation of a primary prevention of VAWG programme in the Pacific, in which we have collaborated with a local lead-practitioner to co-author an academic journal article presenting the findings. An EQI staff member,

more familiar with the publication process, set aside time to provide guidance to the local lead-practitioner, because the process can often feel very alien to people outside academia. The drafting process was improved by integrating her on-the-ground expertise, and she gained experience in the academic publishing process. We think this was *better* practice but feel it could be improved. Some aspects still felt tokenistic. We learned this would be vastly improved if we had set aside proper budget as well as time to support our colleague through this learning.

EQI's experience: advocating for the acknowledgement of grassroots efforts

Our roles come with a significant responsibility for advocacy, and we have sometimes had to press partners and donors from similar contexts to credit local knowledge and contributions. In one project, we evaluated the effectiveness of VAWG prevention work done by a large donor over a long period. The multi-country evaluation found that while the organisation had contributed significantly to addressing VAWG prevention, the tireless work of grassroots, women's movements and organisations had also played a large role. The client had wanted to downplay the significance of these contributions. We utilised our position of power to advocate to the client, educating them on the importance of including recognition into the report, and ultimately, they agreed.

4

↓

Practise reciprocity and be of benefit to communities

Key lessons

· Researchers from coloniser/settler backgrounds should be directed by the needs and wants of the communities they work in.

· Failing to be guided by the requests of the community harms them and relationships, and is not in the spirit of decolonising knowledge and research methodologies.

· When mistakes are made, be guided by the community on how to address the mistake/s and make genuine commitments to learn and do better in the future.

What does this principle mean?

In the past, reciprocity has been understood as a way for researchers to 'give back' in response to the extractive nature of research (Bryman, 2004). However, it should instead be understood as "a continuous process and practice of reciprocation, recognition, and negotiation without closure" (Kuokkanen, 2007: 154). Reciprocity fosters important connections and trust between researchers and communities; however, it must never be seen in transactional terms or as 'a means to an end'. Researchers must consistently interrogate what *true* reciprocity looks like, incorporating it into every stage of research, and reflecting on its various forms (McGregor & Marker, 2018).

Research must also never be driven by the sole intentions of the researcher (and/or funders, governments or other stakeholders who hold relative power) but be relevant and beneficial to the wishes of communities with which the research is conducted (AIATSIS, 2020; Ball & Janyst, 2008: 35; Brown, 2021; Cochran et al., 2008; see also Rigney, 2006; Smith, 2012).

How can we practise it?

· Acknowledge that reciprocity can take different forms. It must always be negotiated with the community and be guided by what they want and need. It could involve a payment of some kind, an exchange of labour or skills, or something else entirely.

· Ensure knowledge production and research outcomes respond to the needs of the *entire* community, not just those who participate in the research (AIATSIS, 2020).

· Practise continuous consent, and respect for self-determination (Barreiros & Moreira, 2020; Datta, 2017; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021).

· Ensure equitable partnerships as a vehicle for ongoing reciprocity and benefit.

EQI's experience: making decisions that don't benefit communities

In one project, EQI partnered with an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)[7] in Australia to develop a series of knowledge products resulting from an evaluation of a VAWG prevention programme. These products were posters, banners, and films selected by the community as the most beneficial, accessible, and useful for promoting the key messages of gender equality. The language, content, and design were workshopped with the community in depth to ensure it reflected their needs, and this iterative process meant they had multiple opportunities to provide input that reflected the needs of their communities. However, EQI did not get this process completely right. Before dissemination of the products, EQI staff altered the language and content without the partner's and community's approval in line with our own ideas of what we thought was more appropriate language. Ultimately, this change was caught before it was publicly distributed, and the necessary changes were negotiated, and we achieved the project goals. However, it was not without significant difficulty and management of relationships. This highlights the importance of deep listening to communities about what works best and is most accessible to them, rather than imposing, and prioritising, an 'expert' opinion from outside. We continue to learn from this experience.

[7] An ACCO is an independent, not-for-profit organisation, that's incorporated as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation and/or is a registered community service initiated, based, governed, and operated by the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community. It is endorsed by and accountable to the local community and facilitates local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to have input into service design, delivery and performance, to deliver holistic and culturally appropriate services or activities that benefit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and people, including empowerment and building strength (Closing the Gap, 2020).

5

Conduct ethical research

<div style="border:1px solid black;padding:1em;">

Key lessons

· Adequate time and resourcing is required to implement these approaches and methods. Time pressures and budget limitations can often become the justifications for failing to fulfil this principle.

· Checks and balances built into project processes on an ongoing basis can help ensure no harm is coming to research participants and their communities.

· We should always question and critique whether human research ethics boards (especially those based in academic and colonial/settler contexts) are most appropriate when it comes to determining what is safe and ethical for research with historically marginalised communities. Ethics should also be considered from a localised understanding.

</div>

What does this principle mean?

An ethical and culturally safe protocol is vital for decolonising research and should adhere to the principle of 'do no harm' (see Charancle & Lucchi, 2018) and to the highest research ethics standards (Leung et. al. 2019).

How can we practise it?

· Implement an ethical and culturally safe protocol to ensure research will not cause harm to participants and that there are strong support services in place to help mitigate risk.

· Involve communities in deciding ethical guidelines for the researchers, and include guidelines that address their needs explicitly, such as "respect for and protection of the rights, interests and sensitivities of the people being studied" (Smith, 2012: 2582; see Contreras-Urbina et. al. 2019).

· Include processes around data sovereignty in your practice (Maiam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Collective, 2018), including writing this into project contracts.

EQI's experience: Acknowledgement of Country[8] and data sovereignty

Cultural safety and data sovereignty are important features of ethical VAWG research. EQI mandates all its staff undertake cultural safety training, and collectively, we continue to learn from our Indigenous partners. As part of this, we aim to include an Acknowledgement of Country in our published work, however some of our larger or global partners have, on occasion, refused our requests to include this in collaborative reports. We continue to advocate where possible for its inclusion, educating these partners on the significance for cultural safety and recognition of power.

Recently, we've begun advocating for stronger agreements around data sovereignty, i.e., the ownership of research data and intellectual property by the communities that it draws from. Many larger partners and clients contractually own intellectual property and data related to projects, rather than smaller grassroots partners or the relevant community. We have found that while many larger partners and clients are open to different parties using or accessing the data in secondary analysis, there are processes for obtaining consent to use. A better practice would be for this to be shared or transferred back to community-based organisations where the research was conducted.

[8] An Acknowledgement of Country is a practice which demonstrates respect by acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership and custodianship of the land, their ancestors, and traditions (AIATSIS, 2022). It usually takes place at the beginning of public events and meetings and is becoming commonplace in publications.

6

↓

Be transformative

Key lessons

· Training local community members to conduct research is a powerful way to transform power structures, value local knowledge and subvert traditional colonial/settler ways of collecting data.

· Training of local researchers and building in opportunities for 'two-way learning' are important and need adequate resources allocated. This ensures researchers and practitioners from both coloniser/settler and historically marginalised backgrounds can work competently and in line with ethical standards.

· Whilst transformative practice is the aim, it is also important to 'meet people where they are at'. Coloniser/settler researchers should be mindful of not forcing so-called 'Western progressive' views onto partners.

· Seeking to be transformative and shift entrenched social norms can potentially increase risk and backlash for certain groups, such as, women or LGBTQIA+ communities. It is important to carefully consult with local communities and mitigate risk.

What does this principle mean?

The research process itself and the recommendations which emerge from the findings on VAWG research seek to transform unequal power structures, including harmful and rigid gender norms, and gendered, colonial structures and other systems of oppression (Leung et al., 2019; Mertens, 2010). The central purpose of doing research with historically marginalised communities comes from a desire to uplift and indeed make way for communities to present their own experiences in authentic ways. In practice, embedding transformational practices into the process of research is a means to 'walk the talk' and transform the structures which can compound inequality. For example, training and employing local women to be researchers can help, in small ways, to transform gender norms.

How can we practise it?

· Employ methods which transform systems and structures (Leung et al., 2019).

· Take on advocacy work as well as research (Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021).

· Support work that is community led.

EQI's experience: training enumerators from communities for peer-to-peer research

One of the practices we often adopt is training and employing enumerators and researchers from the communities we conduct research with. For example, in a multi-country study seeking to better understand female, male and transgender sex workers' experiences of violence across four countries in Asia, sex workers were trained and employed to conduct peer-to-peer interviews with other sex workers. This provided an opportunity to build capacity among sex workers to undertake research in their own communities and tell their own stories. The study benefitted from the insights of the sex workers involved, including iterative verification of data analysis.

This takes more time than utilising the expertise of professional/career researchers from coloniser/settler contexts, and adequate resource allocation must be made to account for the added time needed to comprehensively train non-career researchers. However, we have found the outcomes for research are ultimately more nuanced and complete as a result and more importantly, the lived experiences, skills, stories, and capacities of those normally overlooked are centred.

7

↓

Ensure accessibility

Key lessons

- Collaborating with local research partners at the start of the project helps in understanding local communities' priorities and needs when it comes to knowledge dissemination.

- Often, researchers wait until the dissemination phase of the research to consult local partners on these outputs. To ensure meaningful collaboration, these conversations should start during the design phase of the project.

- Ensuring accessibility in knowledge production and research means more affected communities can participate in and benefit from research activities. Developing a wide range of knowledge products that cater to different accessibility needs and audiences will ensure greater research impact.

- Allocating time and budget for accessibility is important. Advocacy may be needed to convince stakeholders of its importance.

What does this principle mean?

Often, research is conducted and disseminated in ways that are inaccessible to various stakeholders, including research partners, policy makers, other researchers, and the community the research is supposed to benefit. Overcoming barriers to access and dissemination should be a part of all planning (EQI & ANROWS, 2022; Leung et al., 2019). VAWG researchers carry out research to build the evidence base, which informs practice and policy and facilitates impact. However, research findings cannot meaningfully inform policy and programming if it is only accessible to a select few. Therefore, the ways in which knowledge and research are created and shared must be accessible to a wide variety of people, including affected communities, so they can use it meaningfully.

How can we practise it?

- Ensure research products (including Terms of Reference [TORs] research protocols and tools, reports, and other communications products) are linguistically and culturally accessible, e.g., knowledge products are relevant to the context and translated into local language and/or plain English.

- Ensure knowledge products meet the needs of people with disabilities. This includes using audio description where appropriate and appropriate font size and colour contrast ratios for people with visual impairments.

- Develop audio-visual products that allow people to access knowledge in a diverse range of ways. This could include podcasts, animations (with closed captions), public talks or in-person meetings, to account for accessibility needs regarding reading comprehension.

- Consider geographical and infrastructure barriers, such as time-zone differences, low internet bandwidth and lack of phone network when disseminating products.

EQI's experience: accessible products

We are committed to developing accessible knowledge products and events; however this is a learning we have developed over time. Sometimes this principle is difficult to implement in practice, especially when partners might not consider it a high priority or budget constraints persist. More than once we've had to sacrifice minimum accessibility requirements at the request of a donor or partner. In these situations, we advocate for accessibility, and oftentimes are successful. For example, in one project a client engaged us to produce accessible communications products, such as policy briefs and animations. For the policy briefs, research reports and other documents, we ensured they met the gold standard AAA requirements for disability access (see Accessible Web for guidance). In animations, we've ensured not only clear audio, but subtitles in plain English. In one animation for a non-Australian audience, we ensured local voice-actors were employed so accents matched the specific context and that closed captions were included in local language. We also included an inset in animations of a person translating with local sign-language to ensure accessibility for Deaf people.

It is vital that adequate and additional time and budget are allocated to ensure accessibility. As a result, knowledge and research can be accessed by wider audiences who stand to benefit. This, in turn, also powerfully reduces hierarchies related to access.

Moving forward: EQI's internal processes and sharing lessons

Confronting *uncomfortable truths* about power, hierarchies, and injustices in VAWG and GBV knowledge production and research is *necessary* for all researchers to critically engage with, especially those of us from coloniser/settler backgrounds.
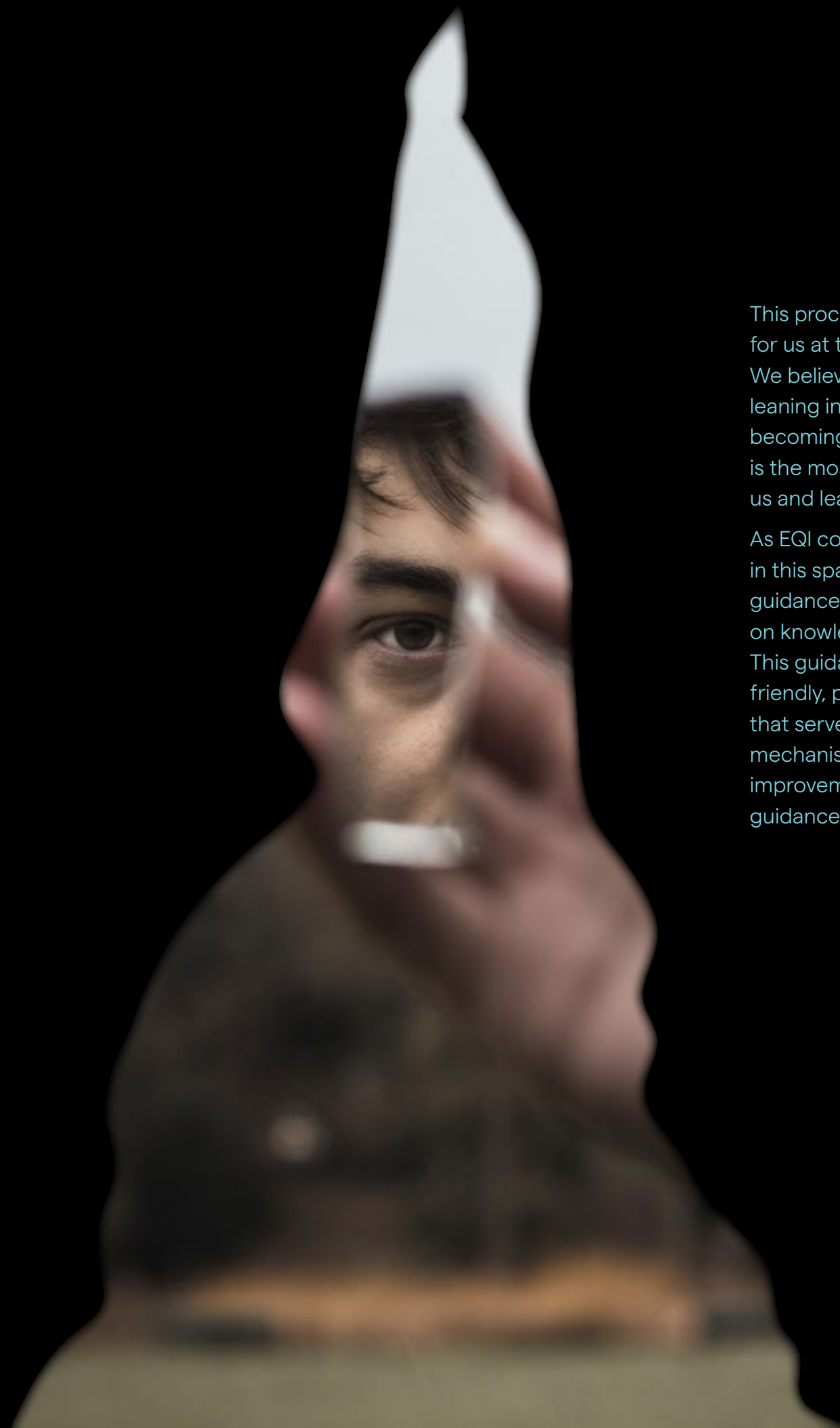
This process has been uncomfortable for us at times as we continue to learn. We believe that acknowledging and leaning into this discomfort, rather than becoming immobilised by it or ignoring it, is the most constructive path forward for us and leads to action and accountability.

As EQI continues to learn and develop in this space, we are developing practical guidance to apply to our internal practices on knowledge production and research. This guidance is intended to be a user-friendly, practical, and adaptive tool, that serves as an accountability mechanism and used for continuous improvement. We will share the practical guidance in 2023.

Acknowledgements

The authors would first and foremost like to acknowledge the women, especially those Indigenous women and women from historically marginalised backgrounds, who work tirelessly to address and prevent VAWG and GBV. We hope our collective efforts help to create violence-free communities everywhere. We also thank all our partners, too numerous to name individually. In particular, we thank our Indigenous partners and partners from historically marginalised backgrounds. We are grateful to work alongside you and your patience and generosity continually help us learn from our mistakes.

This paper was strengthened by the generous guidance of Yvonne Te Ruki-Rangi-o-Tangaroa Underhill-Sem, Gopika Bashi, Elizabeth Dartnall, Chay Brown, Loksee Leung, Xian Warner, Emma Fulu and Katherine Lim, thank you kindly for all your input.

The paper was also guided by the insightful conversations with Ayesha Mago (SVRI) and the participants in the pre-conference workshop, 'Confronting uncomfortable truths: Unlearning colonial research methods', which we co-facilitated at the SVRI Forum in Cancun, Mexico (2022).

This lessons learned paper was designed by Scarlett Musu. The team gratefully acknowledges the support of The Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

References

AIATSIS. (2020). *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*. Retrieved from: https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/code-ethics

AIATSIS. (2022). Welcome to Country: Acknowledging Country. Retrieved from https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/welcome-country#toc-acknowledging-country

Alsalem, R. (2022) *Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls: Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*. Human Rights Council, Fiftieth Session. Geneva.

Azmat, A., & Masta, S. (2021). Power, positionality, and purpose: employing Indigenous methods as a non-Indigenous scholar. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 34(10), 974-987.

Ball, J., & Janyst, P. (2008). Enacting research ethics in partnerships with Indigenous communities in Canada: "Do it in a good way". *Journal of Empiral Research Human Research Ethics*, 3(2), 33-51.

Barreiros, I. B., & Moreira, J. K. (2020). "To decolonize is to perform": The Theory-in-Praxis of Grada Kilomba. In M. Rendeiro & F. Lupati (Eds.), *Challenging memories and rebuilding identities: Literary and artistic voices that undo the Lusophone Atlantic* (pp. pp. 56–81). New York: Routledge.

Battiste, M. A. (2000). *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Bessarab, D., & Ng'anduor, B. (2010). Yarning About Yarning as a Legitimate Method in Indigenous Research. *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, 3(1), 37-50.

Bhattacharya, K. (2009). Othering research, researching the other: De/colonizing approaches to qualitative inquiry. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 105-150): Springer.

Boudreau Morris, K. (2016). Decolonizing solidarity: cultivating relationships of discomfort. *Settler Colonial Studies*, 7(4), 456-473.

Brewer, K. M., Harwood, M. L. N., McCann, C. M., Crengle, S. M., & Worrall, L. E. (2014). The Use of Interpretive Description Within Kaupapa Māori Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 24(9), 1287–1297.

Brown, C. (2021). *From the roots up: Principles of good practice to prevent violence against women in the Northern Territory*. (Doctorate of Philosophy). The Australian National University, Canberra.

Brownell, J. (2021). It's not decolonise, it's desupremify: Shifting our language to reflect what we actually mean. *An Injustice*. Retrieved from https://aninjusticemag.com/its-not-decolonize-it-s-desupremify-9b6e9ea02aae

Bryman, A. (2004). Feminist ethnography. In *Encyclopedia of social science research methods* (pp. 379). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.

Buhendwa Nshobole, J. (2020). "Donor-Researchers" and "Recipient-Researchers": bridging the gap between researchers from the Global North and Global South. Retrieved from https://www.gicnetwork.be/donor-researchers-and-recipient-researchers-bridging-the-gap-between-researchers-from-the-global-north-and-global-south/

Chambers, L. A., et. al. (2018). Decolonizing Scoping Review Methodologies for Literature With, for, and by Indigenous Peoples and the African Diaspora: Dialoguing With the Tensions. *Qualitative Health Research*, 28(2), 175-188.

Charancle, J. and Lucchi, E. (2018) Incorporating the principle of *"Do No Harm": How to take action without causing harm*, Humanity and Inclusion (Operations Division) and F3E.

Chirhuza, E. (2020). Taken out of the picture? The researcher from the Global South and the fight against 'academic neo-colonialism'. Retrieved from https://www.gicnetwork.be/taken-out-of-the-picture-the-researcher-from-the-global-south-and-the-fight-against-academic-neo-colonialism/

Closing the Gap. (2020). *National agreement on closing the gap*. Retrieved from Australia: https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-05/ctg-national-agreement_apr-21.pdf

Cochran, P. A., et. al. (2008). Indigenous Ways of Knowing: Implications for Participatory Research and Community. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(1), 22-27.

Connell, R. (2015). Meeting at the edge of fear: Theory on a world scale. *Feminist Theory*, 16(1), 49-66.

Contreras-Urbina, M., Blackwell, A., Murphy, M., & Ellsberg, M. (2019). Researching violence against women and girls in South Sudan: ethical and safety considerations and strategies. *Conflict and Health*, 13, 55.

Cox, A. (2017). Settler colonialism. In E. O'Brian (Ed.), *Literary and critical theory*: Oxford Bibliographies.

Datta, R. (2017). Decolonizing both researcher and research and its effectiveness in Indigenous research. *Research Ethics*, 14(2), 1-24.

de Sousa Santos, B. (2015). *Epistemologies of the south: Justice against epistemicide*. New York: Routledge.

Dei, G. J. (2008). Indigenous knowledge studies and the next generation: Pedagogical possibilities for anti-colonial education. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 37(Supplementary), 5-13.

Ellsberg, M., Heise, L., Peña, R., Agurto, S., & Winkvist, A. (2001). Researching Domestic Violence Against Women: Methodological and Ethical Considerations. *Studies in Family Planning*, 32(1).

EQI & ANROWS. (2022). *Mapping Australia's National Research Agenda against the Global Shared Research Agenda for research on violence against women and girls in low-and middle-income countries*. Retrieved from: https://www.equalityinstitute.org/projects/research-priorities-and-pathways-for-progress

Faciolince, M. (2019). The "local" researcher - merely a data collector? Retrieved from https://oxfamapps.org/fp2p/the-local-researcher-merely-a-data-collector/

Guttenbeil-Likiliki, O.-K.-L. (2020). *Creating equitable South/North Partnerships: Nurturing the vā and voyaging The audacious ocean together*. Retrieved from: https://iwda.org.au/resource/creating-equitable-south-north-partnerships/

IWDA. (2017). *Feminist research framework*. Retrieved from: https://iwda.org.au/resource/feminist-research-framework/

Krusz, E., Davey, T., Wigginton, B., & Hall, N. (2020). What Contributions, if Any, Can Non-Indigenous Researchers Offer Toward Decolonizing Health Research? *Qualitative Health Research*, 30(2), 205-216.

Kuokkanen, R. (2007). *Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes, and the Logic of the Gift*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Laird, P., Chang, A. B., Jacky, J., Lane, M., Schultz, A., & Walker, R. (2021). Conducting decolonizing research and practice with Australian First Nations to close the health gap. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 19(1), 127.

Leung, L., Miedema, S., Warner, X., Homan, S., & Fulu, E. (2019). Making feminism count: integrating feminist research principles in large-scale quantitative research on violence against women and girls. *Gender & Development*, 27(3), 427-447.

Lockard, C. A. (2016). Unhappy confessions: The temptation of admitting to white privilege. *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, 2(2).

Maclean, K., et. al. (2021). Decolonising knowledge co-production: examining the role of positionality and partnerships to support Indigenous-led bush product enterprises in northern Australia. *Sustainability Science*, 17(2), 333-350.

Maiam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Collective. (2018). *Good data practices for Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance*. Retrieved from: https://www.maiamnayriwingara.org/

Mannell, J., et. al. (2021). Decolonising violence against women research: a study design for co-developing violence prevention interventions with communities in low and middle income countries (LMICs). *BMC Public Health*, 21(1), 1147.

McGregor, H. E., & Marker, M. (2018). Reciprocity in Indigenous Educational Research: Beyond Compensation, Towards Decolonizing. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 49(3), 318-328. doi:10.1111/aeq.12249

McGuire-Adams, T. D. (2020). Paradigm shifting: Centering Indigenous research methodologies, an Anishinaabe perspective. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 12(1), 34-47.

Megaw, T., et. al. (2021). Our role as international development researchers in decolonising research practices. Retrieved from https://www.uts.edu.au/isf/explore-research/international-development/think-pieces/our-role-international-development-researchers-decolonising-research-practices

Mertens, D. (2010). Transformative Mixed Methods Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 469-474.

Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Mohanty, C. T. (2003). Under Western eyes revisited: Feminist solidarity through anti-capitalist struggles. *Signs*, 28(2), 499-535.

Moreton-Robinson, A. (2013). Towards an Australian Indigenous Women's Standpoint Theory. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 28(78), 331-347.

NIRAKIN. (2022). Research Methodologies and Methods. Retrieved from: https://www.nirakn.edu.au/dashboard/research-methodologies-and-methods/

Our Watch. (2018). *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*. Retrieved from: https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/changing-the-picture/

Potts, A., Kolli, H., & Fattal, L. (2022). Whose voices matter? Using participatory, feminist and anthropological approaches to centre power and positionality in research on gender-based violence in emergencies. *Global Public Health*, 1-17.

Raising Voices & SVRI. (2020). *Learning together - A guide for feminist practice in violence against women and girls research collaborations*. Retrieved from: https://www.svri.org/learning-together-guide

Rigney, L. (2006). Indigenist research and Aboriginal Australia. In J. Kunnie & N. I. Goduka (Eds.), *Indigenous Peoples' Wisdom and Power: Affirming Our Knowledge Through Narratives* (pp. 32-50). Bodmin, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Russell-Mundine, G. (2012). Reflexivity in Indigenous Research: Reframing and Decolonising Research? *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 19(1), 85-90.

Skelton, T. (2020). The importance of feminist audacity: Learning from the Pacific and the Caribbean. A commentary on Yvonne Underhill-Sem's 'The audacity of the ocean: Gendered politics of positionality in the Pacific'. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 41, 332–338.

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Second edition ed.). London: Zed Books

SVRI & EQI. (2021). *Global shared research agenda for research on violence against women in low and middle-income countries*. Retrieved from: https://www.equalityinstitute.org/projects/the-global-shared-research-agenda

Thambinathan, V., & Kinsella, E. A. (2021). Decolonizing Methodologies in Qualitative Research: Creating Spaces for Transformative Praxis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20.

Tomlinson, M., et. al. (2007). Setting priorities in child health research investments for South Africa. *PLoS Medicine*, 4(8), e259.

Tuck, E. & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40.

Underhill-Sem, Y. T. R. (2020). The Audacity of the Ocean: Gendered Politics of Positionality in the Pacific. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 41(3), 314-328.

Underhill-Sem, Y. T. R. (2020). Audacity with obligation: decoloniality in Pacific geographies. Response to Sarah Radcliffe and Tracey Skelton. *Singapore journal of tropical geography* 41(2), 339–340.

Westmarland, N. (2001). The Quantitative/Qualitative Debate and Feminist Research: A Subjective View of Objectivity. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 2(1).

Yongan, R. (2018). *SAHAS for justice: Sharing and amplifying her allegorical stories for justice"*. Retrieved from: https://untf.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20UNTF/Publications/2018/StoryKitchenNepalCompressed.pdf

Zavala, M. (2013). What do we mean by decolonizing research strategies?: Lessons from decolonizing, indigenous research projects in New Zealand and Latin America. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 2(1), 55-71.

[i] **Author's positionality statement:** Sarah (she/her) is a White, Australian-born settler, descendant of Welsh and Irish immigrants, who received her PhD in Anthropology and Development Studies from the University of Adelaide, on the unceded lands of Kaurna Yerta, (the Country of the Kaurna People). She is the Senior Research Associate at The Equality Institute. As a trained anthropologist and scholar from a coloniser/settler background, Sarah understands that the disciplines in which she's trained (anthropology, International Development, and academia) have significant histories (continuing to the present) as tools of colonisation. She also acknowledges the systems and structures which afford her unearned privilege. As such, she is committed to improving her understanding and practice around decolonising research, guided by feminist, Indigenist and decolonising perspectives and by people with lived experiences different than her own.

[ii] This Acknowledgement of Country was developed based on Hopeful, Together, Strong: Principles of good practice to prevent violence against women in the Northern Territory by Chay Brown (The Equality Institute) and the Central Australian Minimum Standards for the Men's Behaviour Change Programs by Chay Brown (The Equality Institute) and Maree Corbo (The Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program). We thank them for generously sharing these frameworks with us. This Acknowledgement of Country was generously reviewed by Julieanne Axford, Gail Smith and colleagues from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Shirleen Campbell and Carmel Simpson from the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group, Sharon Meagher from the South Australian Department of Health and Wellbeing, Centre for Education and Training at the Women's and Children's Health Network, Minda Murray from the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, and Hannah Taylor from 1800 RESPECT. We are very grateful for their insights and for helping us learn.