

# Beyond the Ivory Tower: Building Bridges with Community Research

## Engaging Communities for Lasting Impact

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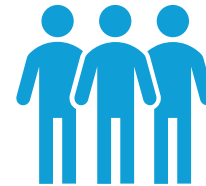
# About Diversity Resource International (DRI)



DRI's mission and purpose:  
Developing human capital and  
fostering inclusive environments



Focus on ethnic minority  
communities and mobilising  
diaspora support



Leading from within to inspire  
community change



DRI works with local government,  
national, international and  
grassroots communities

# The Power of Co- Production in Research



Co-production principles: Equal partnerships between researchers and community members



Benefits for researchers, communities, and stakeholders



Aligning academic goals with community needs for social impact

# The Power of Community Research



Community research is transformative



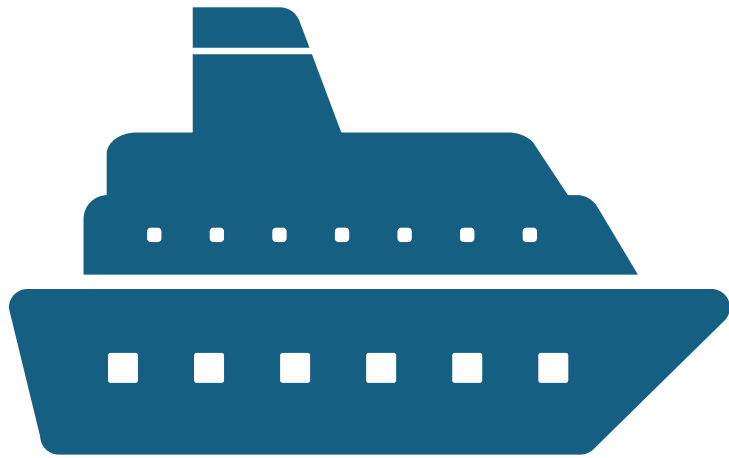
Challenges with traditional research models (Ivory Tower isolation)



Bridges the gap between academia, communities, and practitioners



Leads to more relevant, impactful, and sustainable solutions to social issues



# Introducing the EMBaRK Framework

- Empowering Migrant Bridges: Active Research and Knowledge (EMBaRK)
- A co-designed framework that guides collaborative research with vulnerable communities
- Boat journey metaphor: Preparation, trust, adaptability and continuous evaluation
- Co-production model: Researchers and communities as equal collaborators
- Key steps: Building trust, mutual respect, sharing resources

# Benefits of the EMBaRK Process

- EMBaRK fosters meaningful engagement and empowerment of community members.
- It ensures research is culturally sensitive, relevant, and addresses community needs.
- The framework promotes transparency, accountability, and shared ownership of the research process



# Case Study: Collaborative Research in Action



- **The Community perspective:** Sussex Research Engagement Network
  - Community researcher programme
  - Information, skills and knowledge exchange
  - Leadership and co-applications
- **The academic perspective:**
  - Mixed-methods approach: Systematic reviews, interviews, and data analysis
  - Policy recommendations and practical application



# Practical Strategies for Researchers



- Invest time in building relationships and trust with community organisations.
- Actively listen to community perspectives and priorities – identify mutual goals early on
- Be flexible and adaptable to the needs and dynamics of the community.
- Communicate openly and transparently throughout the research process.
- Acknowledge and value community contributions



# Overcoming Barriers and Maximising Community- Based Research



- Aligning academic timelines with community needs
- Navigating group dynamics and funding limitations
- Resilience and adaptability (relating to the boat metaphor in the EMBaRK Process)
- Creating research with both academic rigour and practical value

# The Future of Community Research?



The evolving role of academia  
in community engagement



Long-term benefits of co-  
produced research for  
policymakers and communities



Sustainability: What happens  
post-research?



Building bridges and fostering  
impactful change

# Acknowledgements



# Questions

