Transcript: SSEAC Workshop "Doing fieldwork in the time of COVID-19"

00:33:12   **Ariane Defreine:**
Good afternoon everyone,
Here is the link to the program: https://bit.ly/3a1ryPc
Here is the link to our Padlet for the workshop:
https://padlet.com/arianedefreine/doingfieldworkinthetimeofCOVID19
You can find a handy list of resources attached.
Feel free to let us know if you have any questions!

00:33:53   **David Guest:**   Teleporting

00:34:00   **Daniel Howell:** Control plants

00:34:09   **Natali Pearson:** Breathing underwater

00:34:19   **Jeffrey Neilson:** flight

00:36:06   **Kristy Ward:**   Ditto teleporting

00:36:17   **Susan Park:**   invisibility

00:44:11   **Natali Pearson:** DAVID: Need to make sure project designs are resilient and adaptable. The way we have been doing business has depended so much on being able to travel

00:45:42   **Natali Pearson:** DAVID: Partly depends on what stage of the project you are at - and if you have been able to build trust and capacity with your partners

00:46:16   **Natali Pearson:** DAVID: It has brought to light problems with collaborative workshops, and the failure to invest in capacity

00:47:12   **Natali Pearson:** DAVID: pushing back against helicopter research (see Budiman Minasny's article, in the resources document)

00:49:20   **Natali Pearson:** DAVID: Opportunity to shape future foreign policy? Providing feedback to DFAT about value of international research

00:49:33   **Natali Pearson:** DAVID: Are we saving money by not travelling?

00:50:45   **Natali Pearson:** DAVID: In between zoom sessions, we need to make time for reflection and think about the opportunities that might be presenting themselves as a result of all these changes

00:51:58   **Natali Pearson:** AIM: Managing RAs remotely in different locations in Australia and Southeast Asia

00:52:04   **Natali Pearson:** 1. Readjust timeline and budget, and communicate to funders the need to do this

00:52:42   **Natali Pearson:** 2. Challenges of care and working from home - more time, less productivity?

00:53:48 **Natali Pearson:** 3. Free zoom accounts limit the time that you can be online, so share your University account (and password) with your RAs so they can have longer interviews and can record them. Need to consider cybersecurity and ethics. Needs to be carefully scheduled if you have multiple RAs

00:54:32 **Natali Pearson:** 4. Being contactable at all times, and making sure your team is contactable - time differences might mean you never get to talk synchronously, so tools like messenger are useful

00:55:54 **Natali Pearson:** 5. RAs who may not have expertise doing interviews, or in English - how to manage? training, communication, trust

00:58:29 **Natali Pearson:** 6. Using software to manage progress - SLACK

01:00:09 **Natali Pearson:** 7. Hiring RAs in light of budget ban - explore all the options... Can funds be repurposed?

01:00:36 **Sonja van Wichelen:** That was very helpful--thanks Aim!

01:01:39 **Natali Pearson:** JEFF: Very much depends on where you are in the project cycle - late in a project, you might be at the research dissemination stage, which is a lot more manageable

01:02:41 **Natali Pearson:** JEFF: But early in a project, it is a lot more difficult to leverage new partnerships - really highlights the resilience of your relationships

01:04:16 **Natali Pearson:** JEFF: Opportunities abound! More people are online, and everyone is increasingly comfortable with doing webinars. Respondents are also more comfortable. Online ethnography... join local Facebook groups, participate in those online communities. This creates opportunities that can be formalised.

01:04:38 **Natali Pearson:** JEFF: Local news sites are emerging, which Facebook often gives you links to.

01:05:04 **Natali Pearson:** JEFF: Need to be disciplined: go online for an hour, make the notes you would be making in the field. More of an obligation (and opportunity) to keep up to date with what is going on.

01:05:51 **Natali Pearson:** JEFF: Using surveys online - response rates might even be higher given people are more at home at the moment

01:06:46 **Natali Pearson:** JEFF: Reallocating budgets to local RAs, who are taking more responsibilities - may lead to greater co-authorship rates.

01:07:29 **Sonja van Wichelen:** Thanks Jeff!

01:07:41 **Kristy Ward:** Thanks all - great insights!

01:08:03 **Sonja van Wichelen:** have another meeting but will be back, apologies...

01:08:07 **Dadung Muktiono:** Thanks all!

01:08:33 **Ariane Defreine:** Topic for first breakout session: Strategies for developing technical solutions for doing fieldwork.

01:10:18   Ariane Defreine:
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01:21:31   Natali Pearson: SOPHIE: Ethical, practical and conceptual questions are being brought to the fore, but really should be there from the outset

01:22:37   Natali Pearson: SOPHIE: Working with local community members with whom you have existing relationships - in terms of funding, it is a good idea to look outside ARC funding, which allows it to happen more smoothly

01:23:59   Natali Pearson: SOPHIE: Doing more archival and historical work (a gap she had been avoiding until now), online observation, grey literature (policy documents) - all of these complement the ethnographic work

01:24:31   Natali Pearson: SOPHIE: Expanding across disciplines - thinking about the issue from different perspectives

01:25:04   Natali Pearson: SOPHIE: Reframing gaps and challenges as things we can think with rather than trying to justify, bridge or conceal

01:25:36   Jeffrey Neilson: Decolonising development research
https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/how-can-covid-19-be-the-catalyst-to-decolonise-development-research/

01:25:45   Natali Pearson: SOPHIE: not everything needs to be about COVID - the focus on it is obscuring other challenges that communities are facing. Look outside and beyond COVID

01:27:12   Natali Pearson: SOPHIE: Jump starting research? Caution is urged - research priorities may have shifted; think through those changes with collaborators, and keeping track of those changes

01:29:25   Natali Pearson: JUSTIN: Pre-COVID, he would spend extended face time in rural communities, meeting committee heads, clinicians, local government representatives etc. Maintaining these relationships over email is difficult - how to keep momentum?

01:30:30   Natali Pearson: JUSTIN: Participating on field trips helps contextualise and interpret collected data; what coping mechanisms to use?

01:31:09   Natali Pearson: JUSTIN: Strong local networks - without them, it would be very difficult to start a research project. Having them already in place makes things manageable - not perfect, but manageable.

01:31:59   Natali Pearson: JUSTIN: repurposing relationships - COVID has given a great excuse for breaking with cultural norms (young female lab scientists acting as a representative on the ground)

01:32:34   Natali Pearson: JUSTIN: Relying more on academic and intellectual partners on the ground - and their students!

01:33:16   Natali Pearson: JUSTIN: If you don't have a local network, you need to tap into someone else's

01:35:33   Natali Pearson: JOSH: Usually works with actors and performers, in theatre spaces. Instead, this is an opportunity to work more closely with the archive (eg the recordings that are already made) and with the troupe (local partnerships already in place. This provides context to what he has already done.

01:36:57   Natali Pearson: JOSH: Are we getting more insights into a private world? What are we seeing differently on different platforms (WeChat, WhatsApp, etc). They all operate within different political, social and cultural parameters

01:38:18   Natali Pearson: JOSH: Opportunity to gain more insight because it is less clear who has the right to speak - changing roles between teachers and learners

01:38:33   Natali Pearson: JOSH: Recognition of challenges to livelihoods posed by COVID

01:39:52   Ariane Defreine: Topic for second breakout session: Methodological alternatives to traditional fieldwork

01:49:34   Natali Pearson: Comments from breakout groups: public/private selves - ethical issues associated with using social media (what is public, what is private?

01:50:01   Natali Pearson: Comments from breakout groups: greater ability to work with both senior AND junior collaborators - online environment is becoming more natural

01:50:17   Natali Pearson: Comments from breakout groups: Comparative approaches might emerge as more useful

01:50:51   Wendy Lambourne: including using existing fieldwork data in new ways

01:51:18   Natali Pearson: Comments from breakout groups: Zoom is seen as quite formal in some communities, so WhatsApp might be a better alternative - a less formal option. Using a medium people are familiar with

01:51:52   Aim Sinpeng: @Josh ethics is pretty tricky with social media research

01:51:52   Natali Pearson: Comments from breakout groups: Think about what you can do, rather than what you can't do. Draw on whatever resources you can.

01:54:51   Natali Pearson: Comments from breakout groups: Funding opportunities are starting to recognize that we can't do face to face research - more emphasis on local partnerships. Re-aligning your research will be partly driven by the funders

01:56:14   Natali Pearson: MICHELE: Observing what people do, rather than what they say we do, is irreplaceable. If fieldwork does not come back, there will be serious consequences. Maintaining that critical knowledge that helps contextualise your research is invaluable

01:56:48   Natali Pearson: MICHELE: The joy of writing! Using research you have already done: mining your personal archive

01:57:14   Natali Pearson: MICHELE: Using work you have done in combination with other technologies and methodologies

01:58:43   Natali Pearson: MICHELE: Impact on grant applications. If we can't travel to our field sites for a long time, assessors might decide our work is not realistic. We need to work hard and be very aware of this risk

01:59:53   **Natali Pearson:** HOLLY: Envisages a future where international travel will be possible but on a limited scale. Timeframes and budgets will look very different. Professional societies should make the case that social scientists should be prioritized, esp the long-term immersion that regional specialists use

02:01:09   **Natali Pearson:** HOLLY: Not just fieldworkers, but guardians of the ethnographic record. But fieldwork has, in a way, prevented researchers from diving deep into the ethnographic (and archival) record. Is this a chance to go into the big questions, without the distractions of fieldwork?

02:01:29   **Natali Pearson:** HOLLY: Time to process field notes! And write about what you already know but have not had the time to write up yet

02:02:20   **Natali Pearson:** HOLLY: Opportunity to take a break from fieldwork, get more value on what has already been done, and come good on promises (informants v collaborators, participants v co-authors)

02:03:20   **Natali Pearson:** AARON: seek out partnerships with those who have different methodological expertise

02:04:03   **Dadung Muktiono:**   Thank you very much to all speakers, SSEAC, and participants for this wonderful workshop. It is very insightful!! I am sorry I have to leave now due to a family matter to attend. Have a great day everyone!

02:04:13   **Natali Pearson:** AARON: have we become overly reliant on technologies? Does the way we use technologies obscure what we are asking?

02:04:50   **Natali Pearson:** AARON: we talk about academic dissemination, but let's also think about what comes AFTER fieldwork - thinking more about dissemination back to the communities we have worked with

02:05:33   **Ariane Defreine:**   Topic for third breakout session: Strategies for responding to possible changes in your discipline

02:16:32   **Natali Pearson:** Comments from breakout groups: If you have relationships where people depend on you for their income, that can be very difficult

02:16:54   **Natali Pearson:** Comments from breakout groups: Setting up sustainable collaborations, valuing different types of skills

02:19:45   **Natali Pearson:** Comments from breakout groups: It is ethical practice to be writing up our research

02:19:57   **Natali Pearson:** Comments from breakout groups: Skills development - langguages

02:20:13   **Natali Pearson:** Comments from breakout groups: exposure to MORE content through online conferences and webinars

02:20:56   **Natali Pearson:** Comments from breakout groups: Political risks of cooperation?

02:21:50   **Natali Pearson:** Generational impact on research - shifting from interviews to surveys; writing of more books might mean we end up with more theorists rather than empiricists. Impact on the authority of knowledge in terms of what is considered "best research"

02:22:22   **Nick Goodwin:** Thank you to organisers and to everyone for sharing. Let me know if anyone needs help in Jakarta.

02:23:48   **Ariane Defreine:**
https://padlet.com/arianedefreine/doingfieldworkinthetimeofCOVID19

02:25:19   **Ariane Defreine:**   https://www.mentimeter.com/

02:35:32   **Sonja van Wichelen:**   thanks everyone!

02:35:32   **Ariane Defreine:**   Thanks for joining our online workshop: Doing fieldwork in the time of COVID-19. We hope you enjoyed it and it provided you with useful strategies to further your research in Southeast Asia in these unusual times.

Please fill out this survey to help us refine and improve our future events: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/sseacfieldwork.

Your responses are completely anonymous, and the survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your support. Stay safe and take care!