TRANSFORMING
INDIGENOUS / NON-INDIGENOUS
RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

THE INDIGENOUS/NON-INDIGENOUS
RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT
This comic is a resource produced to encourage researchers who are embarking on Indigenous and non-Indigenous research partnerships to think about their methods, assumptions and behaviour.

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GREAT NEWS, NICOLA! WE GOT THE FUNDING!

THAT’S AMAZING! WE SHOULD CALL MAIA RIGHT AWAY — SHE’LL BE SO PLEASED!

MAIA? MAIA? IT’S SIMON AND NICOLA!

WE JUST GOT FUNDING!

GUYS! IT’S 3 O’CLOCK IN THE MORNING RIGHT NOW! YOU’VE GOT TO REMEMBER THE TIME DIFFERENCE!
OH SORRY! I GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO GET USED TO THAT AS WE WORK TOGETHER.

WE WANTED TO GIVE YOU THE GOOD NEWS - IT MEANS WE CAN GET STARTED ON OUR END FIRST THING MONDAY MORNING.

WELL HANG ON!

WE NEED TO GO BACK TO THE COMMUNITY HERE FIRST; LET THEM KNOW AND WORK OUT HOW TO PROCEED.

BUT WE HAVE THEIR APPROVAL! WE GOT IT BEFORE WE PUT IN THE FUNDING BID.

WE AGREED, IF WE GOT THE FUNDING, WE WOULD GO BACK TO THE COMMUNITY TO TALK MORE ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT AND FINALISE THE DESIGN AND PROCESSES OF THE RESEARCH.

WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO THAT? WE NEED TO WATCH OUR TIMELINES.

I'LL CONTACT THEM AS SOON AS I CAN, BUT IT IS UP TO THEM WHEN THEY MEET. WE'LL NEED TO KEEP THEM UPDATED TOO AS THINGS DEVELOP!
WE HAVE TO DO THIS RIGHT, OR NOT AT ALL.

OUR RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP DOESN'T JUST EXIST IN A BUBBLE, IT EXISTS IN A WORLD SHAPED BY WESTERN COLONIALISM, AND THIS HAS CONTINUING IMPLICATIONS...

"THE WEST HAS PERSECUTED AND OPPRESSED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES NOT ONLY IN NEW ZEALAND, BUT ACROSS THE WORLD, FROM THE PACIFIC TO THE AMERICAS."

"WESTERN PEOPLE HAVE ALSO STOLEN, APPROPRIATED AND PROFITED FROM INDIGENOUS RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE, ALL THE WHILE DENIGRATING INDIGENOUS CULTURES AND KNOWLEDGE, AND THIS IS STILL GOING ON TODAY."

"ACADEMIC INDIGENOUS/NON-INDIGENOUS RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS CAN PERPETUATE THIS. THERE CAN BE ASSUMPTIONS IN WESTERN SCHOLARSHIP THAT YOUR KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORKS ARE BETTER AND CAN ONLY HELP INDIGENOUS SCHOLARSHIP, REPLICATING ASSUMPTIONS OF INFERIORITY."

"THERE IS ALSO A TENDENCY TO ASSUME THAT ALL INDIGENOUS RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS ARE THE SAME, BUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ARE DIVERSE AND GLOBAL, SO THERE IS NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL SOLUTION WHEN IT COMES TO INDIGENOUS/NON-INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS OTHER THAN A STARTING POINT THAT RECOGNISES THE IMPACTS OF COLONISATION."

"JUST AS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ARE NOT A HOMOGENOUS GLOBAL GROUP, INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES ARE NOT HOMOGENOUS; THEY ARE GROUNDED IN OUR VARIOUS AND SPECIFIC WORLD VIEWS."
Maia, we're so sorry!

We didn't mean to overstep - we know we need to take the time needed, we got ahead of ourselves.

It's ok, you need to tread carefully. The first thing I'll do is get hold of the community contacts to organise a meeting and get you two to join by Zui - a Hui over Zoom. I'll Skype with you before the Hui and stop calling me at 3 am!

So the researchers got to work...

I'm so nervous to talk to the community members.

Wonder if that cultural competency course we did will have helped us!

It's important you introduce yourselves, let them know a bit about you and what your issues are. I've looked over your presentation and sent some feedback.

Main thing is to listen carefully and answer any questions. Don't make promises you can't keep.

It's been good to finally see your faces, next time we hope it's in person - you're missing out on some great kai (food)!

We think some useful data will come out of this that fits our iwi (tribal) vision and our strategic planning.

And with Maia and her team, we know the project's in good hands.

*The meeting house design is abstract rather than realistic, as we did not want to depict any building or designs belonging to particular peoples.*
THE DATA WE'RE COLLECTING OVER HERE LOOKS REALLY INTERESTING AND WE THINK THAT IT SPEAKS WELL TO THE DATA YOU AND YOUR TEAM HAVE BEEN GATHERING.

HOPEFULLY IT'S GOING TO BE USEFUL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I AGREE, IT'S LOOKING REALLY USEFUL. I'VE ORGANISED A HUI WITH THE COMMUNITY TO GO OVER THE ANALYSIS.

WE NEED TO GET SOME PAPERS OUT SOON, HAVE YOU DONE ENOUGH ANALYSIS TO START ON A DRAFT?

I HAVE MADE SOME NOTES BUT I NEED TO DO THIS WITH OUR KEY COMMUNITY PEOPLE.

GREAT! TALK SOON.

I'M HOPING THEY'LL AGREE TO BE NAMED AUTHORS TOO.

HEY, I HEARD YOU GUYS ARE DOING AMAZING WORK IN NEW ZEALAND. WOULD IT BE COOL TO DISCUSS YOUR PROJECT SOMETIME?

WE'RE NOT REALLY "WORKING IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND", IT'S A MUTUAL PARTNERSHIP WITH CLEAR ROLES. MAIA'S LEADERSHIP IS KEY AND SO IS UNDERSTANDING OUR POSITION AND ACCOUNTABILITIES.

I HAVE AN UPCOMING PARTNERSHIP IN SOUTH AMERICA AND I WANT TO MAKE SURE I DO IT RIGHT.

WE CAN TELL YOU ABOUT WHAT WE LEARNT, BUT WHAT WORKED FOR US MAY NOT WORK FOR YOU.
“However, this is our advice: we had to learn to build a team relationship based on mutual respect. Even though we were on other sides of the world, Maia is our partner and we needed to be guided by her and listen.”

“And our team relationship didn’t emerge instantly... we had to ask ourselves some difficult questions, step outside our comfort zones and work hard to develop trust.”

“Most importantly we had to understand ourselves and be honest and clear about the project.”

“I took a risk working with people I didn’t know that well and who didn’t know much about how we work. But I trusted them and they listened - and our project turned into something useful and special.”

“But by being honest and open, we have the foundation of something great - who knows how far our partnership can go?”

This comic was itself a resource produced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers in collaboration. It involved some compromise in reducing complex and difficult issues to key messages about Indigenous and non-Indigenous research collaboration. For more information, please visit www.indigenous.ncrm.ac.uk.