

Reducing Research Fatigue in Research

With the Case Study of the Thesis Hub and The Hague Southwest

→ Research fatigue is indifference, or resistance to participating in research

Consequences of Research fatigue:

- Communities are tired of participating in research.
- Communities stop seeing the value of research.
- Communities become more isolated.

- Researchers lose participants.
- Research becomes biased.
- Research loses scientific validity.

Research has an important role in understanding the world we live in and growing existing knowledge. However, research can cause a lot of harm towards the communities being researched.

“Mom, why do I always have to be a guinea pig?” ~ a 15-year-old HIV-positive youth.

Research fatigue is most important in marginalized communities, because researchers and research institutes target them more. Groups who have a lot of research done on them are considered “over-research communities.”

“We know you want our stories to take them to the Rwandan government and UNHCR in order to chase us [out of Uganda]; you must be sent by them, and you are here deceiving us that your research is for academic purposes.” ~ a Rwandan refugee in Nakivale, Uganda.

→ Community engagement and connection can become a tool to reduce research fatigue in over-researched communities.

• Increasing transparency

- Creating a collection of current and past research.
- Make research accessible and understandable for everyone involved.

• Increasing trust

- Include stakeholders & community members in every step of the research process.
- Ask stakeholders what topics they think are important to study.
- Show the final results of the research to everyone involved.

• Increasing engagement

- Offer some form of benefits (like food, coffee or reimburse transportation).
- Build long-term partnerships with communities to create real changes.
- Use creative and interesting research methodologies.

• Increase Research Ethics

- Universities should take critical steps towards making changes in their programs.
- Talk about ethics before students start their research process.
- Talk about the risks of research fatigue as an ethical problem.

“We used to be very participative in Bradford County. We saw research as a way to gain information, but now we’re so disinterested with it, because nothing changes” ~ a resident in an oil and gas boomtown in Bradford County, USA.

Suggestions specific for the Thesis Hub:

- Provide long-term continuations with stakeholders, communities and students, after the research is done.
- Give students specific advice on how to engage with communities in The Hague Southwest.
- Create stronger connections with universities and start workshops earlier in the study program.