

3

Starting Up and Sustaining Public Sociology Projects

While we recognize that there is a broad variety of public sociology projects, we present here a basic guide for students, faculty, and community partners focusing on developing and sustaining public sociology projects. Public sociology can include anything from working with an environmental group to identify health problems in a local community to working with local government to develop strategies to attract more private employers to their city. While we touch on all kinds of public sociology, our focus here is on research (original and translational) and collaborative researcher–practitioner/activist activities that fit comfortably under Burawoy’s “organic sociology” category. We use our own experience in organizing and doing public sociology and also draw from the case studies in this book.

It would be ideal to have hundreds of interdisciplinary centers and networks like the Loyola University Chicago Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) and the Wilmington Housing Authority–University of North Carolina Wilmington (WHA-UNCW) Community Campus. However, rather than talking more about established centers and networks, we focus on how public sociology projects—large and small—can get off the ground. Often it is one faculty member or a small group of faculty, or a student or a group of students, who may initiate a modest project with little or no funding or university support. This chapter is targeted to sociologists at this starting point.

Identifying Projects and Partners

There is no website with a universal list of public sociology projects that need doing. Identifying a project and potential research partners outside the university is a process that combines researchers' personal interests and skills with community research and information needs. What are the critical issues in the broader community that need more analysis? Is there an organization, network, or movement that needs this analysis and is ready to use the outcomes of the research? When is the information needed? Can the researchers deliver the information in time? What resources are needed to do the research, and are they available? Does the project have the potential to produce peer-reviewed publications, student research papers, or dissertations? From the point of view of the community partner, does the project represent the first step in a research relationship that may be a more substantial source of valuable ongoing information? What is the potential for funding if the initial project is successful?

More often than not, public sociology projects do not start with a cold call to an individual or organization outside the university, asking "Do you need my help?" Research projects typically grow out of existing relationships between sociologists and publics. These relationships may be anything from a passing conversation at a community meeting to two years of volunteering with a nonprofit organization. Santa Clara sociologist Laura Nichols's partnership with San Jose housing/homelessness specialist Fernando Cázares began when she responded to an email that he had sent to members of the Santa Clara Collaborative on Housing and Homeless Issues (Case Study 1.1).

Public sociologists are typically more civically engaged than the average citizen—or average academic, for that matter. Although areas of specialized interest may vary—one sociologist may be interested in addressing domestic violence while another may be concerned about the lack of affordable housing—public sociologists are typically in tune with community issues, political events, and social policy issues that supplement knowledge drawn from the field of sociology. Keeping on top of the news in the local community through print, TV, and Web-based media is one way of maintaining a general understanding of current and emerging community issues and a way that a sociologist may best fit in with his or her skills. *Community* may be the physical community or neighborhood, but it could also be a community of interests, such as people addressing health care issues or HIV/AIDS or a local coalition attempting to get city government to pass an ordinance requiring developers to pay into an affordable housing fund before building new developments.

Engagement in community activities facilitates the face-to-face contact that both adds to this understanding of ongoing issues and creates credibility in the eyes of community leaders. It gives the potential researcher the opportunity to “ask around” about potential projects and gives him or her ideas about emerging research needs. In many ways this is not much different from the conversations that sociologists have with each other over lunch in the department lounge or in the hotel lobby during a regional or national association meeting. The only difference is that the sociologist is talking with someone *outside* the field and including this input in defining research.

WORKING WITH THE ACADEMY: A COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Rev. Mac Legerton is the executive director of the Center for Community Action, Lumberton, North Carolina.

In my 35 years of working with the academy, there is one area of community practice that needs the most work. While good planning, development, communication, research, and evaluation skills are all important, these are technical skills that relate to instrumental learning. In working with the academy, the greatest challenge is never the skills that academics bring to community partnerships. The greatest challenge is always the *approach* to practice and the often unconscious assumptions and perspectives toward community that hinder the effectiveness and success of the partnerships and projects. An important insight is this:

Approach working in community with the same eyes that you view yourself. You are led to public sociology with a perspective of your own resourcefulness that you bring, or desire to bring, to the aid of community. Approach and come to know the community in the same way: with all its resourcefulness and resiliency.

It is neither the public service sector nor the private economic sector that holds our communities together and sustains them. The glue of community is our people and how we informally give to and support each other. Build your partnerships and community practice on these relationships and mutual support in our grassroots communities. See and come to understand the relational bonds and culture that lie within and between our grassroots people. Government service programs and private sector jobs—both for- and nonprofit—come and go. Community needs and issues also come and go and are continually changing. Our people and our resiliency remain, and are, vibrant.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Focus on building and contributing to the resourcefulness and equity of our communities. Driven by grants and the major theories of community program development, our communities are most often perceived and approached from the aspect of *need, lack, deficit, or problem*. The assumption is that the solution that is needed must come from the outside and will help meet an unmet need, right a terrible wrong, and build capacity where competency is lacking. The assumption is that the community needs what academics have to offer. Imagine going into any personal relationship in your life with this perspective and ask yourself, How would these—often unconscious—assumptions be a barrier to building effective relationships and processes, meeting relational goals, and achieving mutual outcomes?

Public sociology practice results in an authentic relationship between community and academy partners when our grassroots communities are respected and honored and our resources and resourcefulness are recognized and engaged. When practiced, this honoring and respect of community is imbued in all aspects of project development, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Working effectively together, public sociology is transformative: both community and academic partners increase the breadth and depth of self- and cultural understanding, knowledge, influence, and impact in and on grassroots and professional communities, institutions, systems, and cultures. In the end, this reciprocal gift is the most significant outcome and the most that we in community can ask and mutually accomplish.

It is my hope that the experience of community-based research and practice will accomplish more than just equip undergraduate and graduate students with new knowledge and skills for a lifetime. It is my dream that the experience will be so life changing and fulfilling that graduates will consider living and working in our grassroots communities for a lifetime, either within universities and colleges or within nonprofit or government settings. We need more people who are formally trained to make commitments to live and practice in high-poverty areas across urban and particularly rural America. For students in higher education, public sociology is a window into our world. There's a door carved in the wall right next to that window. With a combination of persistent effort and patient trust, this door of lifelong learning, deep meaning, broad purpose, and significant impact will open.

It is critical that public sociologists and students of public sociology get outside of their day-to-day environments, their comfort zones. Given the inherent boundary-crossing character of public sociology, faculty and

students need to go outside the secure walls of their universities and immediate circles of friends in seeking partners. Engaging in conversations with community leaders, policymakers, social service agency staff, and community residents in general often adds perspectives and dimensions to a research project that would not be there if we limited our conversations to colleagues in the discipline. Discovery and innovation frequently come when we are confronted with new ideas, different ways of doing things, and different ways of looking at a problem. While certainly valuable, talking with or partnering with fellow sociologists about an emerging research project does not always allow us to fully develop all facets of the research. Approaching individuals and leaders outside our circles of friends or professional colleagues can feel awkward at first. It is a bit like diving in the deep end of the pool when you are just learning to swim. This does not mean that we just look at a few websites and send a few emails to find folks outside the university that might want to collaborate on research. It means visiting communities, attending community meetings, talking to people in relevant organizations, and meeting with government officials and policy leaders in shaping research directions.

When we engage in research with people outside our everyday circles of colleagues and friends, we often gain new insights into community and organizational life. We gain a better picture of decision-making processes. We start to understand key issues or obstacles facing communities and organizations. If we are hoping to make contributions to positive social change, engaging with partners outside of the discipline provides a better view of potential problem-solving innovations. Equally as important are insights about how these innovations might be put into practice. Innovations and good ideas alone do not bring about change. Understanding organizational, community, and broader societal power structures and histories provides valuable guidance when working with nonacademic partners in creating blueprints for change. However, without an understanding of power structures and decision-making processes, research outcomes may just sit there unused. They are added to the library of good ideas and good intentions—a library where contributions gather dust rather than serve as useful social change tools.

Community-based research partners tend to have a better map of who has power, points of resistance, and the history of past attempts to bring about change. This knowledge can be used to shape the focus of the research, the methodologies, and how data are analyzed and presented. It can increase the likelihood that research outcomes not only address the needs of a community or organization but are made more consumable by publics. Working with the Center for Community Action, University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) sociologist Leslie Hossfeld and her students provided

research upon which the Southeastern North Carolina Food Systems Program was built; this movement challenges the power of industrial agriculture by supporting local farmers in developing a sustainable local food economy in the region (Case Study 6.3). Peter Callero's students at Western Oregon University who get involved in the tenants union learn important lessons about the role of social movements in challenging the power of local landlords (Case Study 8.1).

Keep in mind that there is a broad range of publics with which you can work. In addition to a large variety of nonprofit organizations (ranging from social service agencies and health care providers to cultural institutions and some media outlets), there are government agencies, chambers of commerce, foundations, religious organizations, social change coalitions, and advocacy groups. Large organizations may have dedicated research offices; smaller organizations do not, but they have even greater needs for partners on various research fronts. While local foundations focus on funding service delivery, innovative projects, and research, some—particularly community foundations that focus on local or regional issues—are often interested in matchmaking researchers with organizations in need of research.

If you are interested in working on a particular issue area but are not sure what the options are, there are both knowledgeable individuals and more formal networks that can help you locate organizations and initiatives related to your area of interest. For students, a logical starting point is to identify a faculty member who not only is interested in the subject but is engaged in this work with outside organizations, either through a research relationship or work outside his or her academic role. This faculty member may be someone outside your department; a faculty in an environmental sciences program may be excited to have a sociologist aboard in a project examining community attitudes about a cleanup of a local toxic dump. Melissa Swauger's dissertation topic was on the relevant factors and conditions that influence how adolescent girls think about their futures. She wanted to use focus groups to collect her data and needed to recruit a sample. Through a former coworker, she heard about "Gwen's Girls," a girl-centered organization in Pittsburgh. While her initial contact with Gwen's Girls was to find study participants, Melissa was soon volunteering at the agency, giving back in the form of doing a needs assessment, developing career exploration curriculum, and serving on the steering committee of a regional coalition of agencies that work with adolescent girls (Case Study 4.2).

Ideally, if there is either a university or independent research center that focuses on an area of interest to you, whether you are a faculty member or student, contacting them about existing or developing research opportunities is a logical step. Although there may be opportunities for funded positions,

most likely there will not. However, getting your foot in the door gives you the chance to prove yourself and positions you well for future opportunities. Affiliation with centers also gives you a built-in support network—one that can be of value to faculty looking for supportive colleagues as your career develops and also of value to students looking for public sociology research projects down the road. For junior faculty, connecting with a research center and applying for research grants through a center can give you instant credibility, because the reputation and accomplishments of the center are already known to community partners and funders. You are effectively connecting yourself to the *collective résumé*—the sum total of projects completed, articles published, reports completed, and changes made as a result of the work of center researchers and practitioners and activists over the years. This gives you a tremendous boost in your public sociology career.

The independent research centers outside the university, often focused on a particular policy issue, should not be overlooked. They are most likely to be found in larger cities and metropolitan areas, but regional centers can be found in midsized cities and rural areas as well. For example, in Chicago, the Woodstock Institute is nationally known for its work on banks and lending practices. Other small centers, such as the Center for Economic Policy Analysis in Chicago, are often very interested in volunteer help on their research projects. The Center for an Urban Future in New York City has worked closely with *City Limits* magazine in completing policy-oriented reports and investigative journalism projects that are routinely published in the magazine. PolicyLink, in Oakland, California, has an experienced staff with research, policy, and community organizing experience.¹ Cities like Washington, D.C., are brimming with independent policy research centers that have a national focus. Many of these organizations are listed on social change and social justice jobs websites like Good Works (goodworksfirst.org), Jobs for Change (jobs.change.org), or Idealist.org. Even though you may not be looking for a job, such lists are good maps to potential research partners in your region.

The coordinator of the university's service learning program or a local coalition of nonprofit agencies may be another source of information. One caution to public sociologists: Be aware of the need to manage the amorphous boundary between service learning and research, particularly social change-oriented research. A service learning program coordinator may be

¹In 2009 the parent company of the Center for an Urban Future and *City Limits* spun off the magazine to a separate entity. Both are still functioning. *City Limits*'s website is www.citylimits.org; the center's website is www.nycfuture.org. PolicyLink's website is www.policylink.org.

more oriented to connecting students to volunteering at a homeless shelter than in working with a local homeless coalition collecting the data to establish the case that more permanent housing is needed. Both are legitimate needs, but the latter would be a better match for a prospective researcher. These are not disconnected activities: a possible route to a public sociology project is first doing volunteer work and getting familiar with the community, organizational staff, and issues; then, second, discussing possible research projects once you have a working relationship with the organization, staff, and community members.

For faculty, service learning can represent a trap that undermines professional credibility. In its discussion of tenure and promotion guidelines, the American Sociological Association Task Force on Public Sociology was adamant in distinguishing public sociological research and “service.” Too often work with organizations outside the discipline—even substantial, rigorous research—gets pushed aside on a faculty member’s evaluation form to the service category. In most departments and universities, service is not as heavily valued as research. Service gets you a pat on the head and some attention from the university public relations office, but it does not always get you points from faculty colleagues considering you for tenure and promotion. So this word of caution has less to do with using service learning offices for contacts and more with making sure that research that you complete is viewed by your colleagues as serious sociology.

Negotiating the Research Project

The dominant model of academic research is the “lone ranger” model: a faculty member comes up with her own idea, develops the research project on her own, collects and analyzes the data on her own, and writes the single-authored article for submission for a peer-reviewed journal. There is no negotiating with a nonacademic partner about the focus of the research. There is no process of building credibility and trust in the eyes of partners outside the field. She is her own boss, sets her own priorities, and works according to her own timetable. Or at least she sets priorities consistent with the interests of the discipline and within the academic timetable.

This parallels the controlled environment of the typical classroom. A faculty member organizes knowledge into weekly topics and readings, creates a syllabus to guide the class, and fits all of this into a nicely packaged 14-week semester. Yes, there are frameworks and requirements established by departments and colleges to govern classes, but faculty typically have a significant amount of autonomy in shaping teaching a course.

This one-person-rules approach does not always fit well in public sociology projects. In working with partners outside of academia, there can be complex organizational bureaucracies to negotiate, different leaders and constituent priorities, and even amorphous leadership structures in the case of social movements or emerging community-based initiatives. You are not automatically trusted because you are a Ph.D. sociologist and have an impressive curriculum vitae. In fact, in some contexts this can be a liability until you earn your trust among community organization staff or local residents.

Depending on the nature of the initial contact with outside organizations, there is often a negotiation process as to what is to be researched, how it is to be researched, and what outcomes will be. In some cases, when outside organizations have a very specific research project in mind, there is less negotiation. This is more typical of request for proposal processes, when the organization actually has some money in hand to pay for the research. Frequently, particularly in the case of community-based organizations or smaller nonprofits, when there are limited or no funds available to support the research, there is a negotiation process between researchers and organizational staff.

Both researchers and community-based collaborators may have wish lists of research that they want to do. A process of “laying your cards on the table” in terms of interests, needs, and resources is a productive first step. A faculty researcher may be interested in the policy area but looking at something that can both contribute to the community and provide the basis for a published peer-reviewed article down the road. The faculty member has resources in terms of his time, access to students interested in doing research, and university resources such as computers, meeting space, and the expertise of other faculty. The community partner may have needs to better understand changes in community demographics or the effectiveness of their programs. Such information may be critical for continued government or private funding. The organization also has resources in the form of an understanding of practices in the local community, staff expertise, and access to volunteers who can assist on the research project (and even be more successful interviewers and focus group leaders given the credibility that they have in the eyes of other residents). In the course of such initial discussions, it might be the researcher’s fourth idea on his top-five wish list and the community organization’s number two idea on its wish list that provides the match.

Once a research idea is negotiated, negotiating work plans and schedules can be as important as the substance of the research itself. Academic timelines are often out of synch with timelines outside of colleges and universities. The rest of the world does not function on a semester or quarter schedule. Organizing public sociology work to avoid early and late-semester time crunches is not always possible. More often than not, community partners

have an urgent need for the work to be completed. It might be connected to a local political battle, such as preserving affordable housing that might be threatened with redevelopment into luxury condominiums. It might be related to evaluating the effectiveness of an early childhood education program so that government or private funding can continue. Randy Stoecker's work with the Community Shares of Wisconsin, which began in one semester but then carried over for two more semesters, highlights some of the challenges of trying to fit the community partner's timeline with the university calendar (Case Study 8.3).

In negotiating public sociology projects outside the university, time flexibility and respect for the community's urgent needs is important. This is when centers, department-wide efforts, or at least faculty networks can play an important role. The ability to manage a team of researchers, including students and faculty, over multiple semesters greatly increases the ease of doing public sociology and meeting community timelines. Thinking outside of a timeline constrained by a semester-to-semester schedule is vital in sustaining organic public sociology projects. Students may be an important part of research teams, but the ability to coordinate student work over multiple semesters is a key to success (through piecing together fellowships or making sure that new students get recruited to replace students who did the work on the project last semester).

Building Trust and Credibility

In addition to making the initial contacts, coordinating schedules, and meeting community deadlines, building trust and credibility among community partners is central to successful public sociology. What have you done for this community before? What have you done for this organization? What impact has your work had? What skills and resources do you have that the community or organization does not have? In some cases individual faculty can build up this positive community reputation over time. If you look at the careers of most active public sociologists, this trust-building and credibility-building process plays a significant role in developing the careers outside of academic circles. While skills and experience play a key role, the normal currency of the discipline—numbers of publications, papers presented, academic promotions, and scholarly awards—do not necessarily mean access or success in the community. Rather your ability to understand community needs, your talents in communicating with broader audiences outside of academia, and your long-term commitment are measures of a good researcher in the community's eyes.

The difficulty in gaining instant credibility and trust often makes the first steps for a junior faculty member or a student difficult. The difficulty is

compounded by colleagues telling you to wait until you have the dissertation done, or you have received tenure, so that you don't diminish your discipline-based work and credentials. However, delaying your community engagement is typically not personally satisfying (doing such engaged research may very well be why you entered the field in the first place) and more often than not, when you delay your community work, it does not ever happen. The wait-until-next-year approach does not generally work.

What *does* work is seeking out centers, established researcher networks, or established faculty with whom you can connect in your work. It is the collective résumés of such centers and networks or the established track record of the established researcher that can serve as the incubator for new scholar development. Shedding the lone ranger approach to academic research and joining with researcher teams and networks is a common, effective strategy for emerging public sociologists to get their careers going. Not only can you get instant credibility and trust by stepping under the existing collective résumé of the center or network—the sum total of years of past work by multiple engaged scholars—but you gain access to a network that can guide your research, open new doors for research, and provide credible support when, in the case of students, looking for jobs or, in the case of faculty, seeking tenure and promotion.

Making University–Non-University Connections More Routine

Implicit in the previous discussion is that creating working relationships with publics outside the discipline does not come naturally to academic-based sociologists. Although this will always be an issue when people function in different worlds with different cultures, rewards, and work expectations, there are strategies that can make the connecting process more routine. Following are a few ideas that can more efficiently identify mutual interests on an ongoing basis. These ideas can help to establish connections for a broader segment of faculty and students and make the process more seamless, so that you are not feeling like you are always diving into cold water.

Establish Working Groups on Substantive or Methodological Issues

Convening a group of academics, practitioners, and community members to discuss mutual interests and research needs can be an effective way of

identifying potential research projects, building trust among prospective partners, and even identifying funding possibilities. In essence this is a process of sharing university knowledge and community knowledge. These can be done as one-time two-hour “think tank” meetings or as multiple sessions over time. This has been a highly effective technique that the Center for Urban Research and Learning has used over the years. At a minimum, participants can gain an understanding of the different needs and perspectives in a particular policy or service area, for example, domestic violence prevention, creating community diversity, early childhood education, or youth violence. More often than not, such discussions lead to ongoing research connections among some of the participants.

Set Up Regular University-Community Seminars

In conjunction with the meetings just described, regular seminars can be held at which faculty, students, and community partners participate in informal seminars reporting on faculty research, community initiatives, policy research, and developing issues. In addition to providing a way to broaden your perspective on various work and emerging issues, it is an effective way of building regular communication between university and community. It also raises awareness about community issues among university colleagues and increases the legitimacy of engaged social science activities. It is not unusual for faculty attending seminars to express surprise at the knowledge and insights of nonacademic presenters.

Develop a Request for Proposal Process

Assuming that your department, university, or consortium of universities can guarantee some regular resources to research ideas emerging from the community—resources such as x amount of faculty time, x number of graduate fellows or x number of undergraduate interns—then a modest request for proposal (RFP) process to offer your department’s services to the community can be highly productive. Distributing a call for two-page community proposals on emerging needs that could benefit from additional research is an effective way of starting new research initiatives. It has the advantage of capturing emerging needs and trends in the community through the eyes and ears of people on the front lines. It also allows the university to get in on the ground floor on new issues—often issues that funders are ultimately very interested in supporting via research grants (particularly grants to university–community research partnerships).

Set Up an Advisory Committee for Engaged Research Projects

When collaborative research projects do take place, it is often helpful to create an advisory committee consisting of those faculty, students, and community members directly involved in the project along with other faculty and community leaders who may have an interest in the issue. Formally integrating community and university voice in the research project and establishing working relationships among individuals beyond the project itself is a proven way of building a positive reputation and trust in the broader community. This opens the door for future research projects as well.

Make Sure That Past and Present Research Relevant to the Community Are Visible

Descriptions of both collaborative research projects and other research that may be relevant to policy or other community issues should be visible to those outside the university. Web pages are the logical location for this. Including both descriptions and copies of reports or articles helps to demonstrate your department's or university's track record of engaged research and implicit willingness to work with nonacademic partners on research projects. This also suggests that someone should be monitoring university research for such community-relevant research. This is typically the job of the media relations office, but when trying to build more cooperative research relationships with various publics, faculty (and possibly government and community relations offices) also need to be involved in this process.

Examples of this can be found among the case studies. The youth research that Barry Checkoway has profiled in Case Study 4.3 is posted on the Youth Dialogues on Race and Ethnicity website, hosted by the University of Michigan School of Social Work.² Peter Dreier (Case Study 5.1) directs the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College; that center's website provides details on programs and lists all the staff publications.³ The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, directed by David Jernigan (Case Study 5.2) includes research reports, fact sheets, examples of advertisements (to provide a

²<http://www.ssw.umich.edu/public/currentProjects/youthAndCommunity/dialogues.html>

³<http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/index.htm>

context for the center's reports), and descriptions of successful community campaigns against marketing alcohol to youth.⁴ Finally, Leslie Hossfeld's work with the Southeastern North Carolina Food Systems Council (Case Study 6.3) is posted at that group's website; in addition to research, there is a list of partners and programs as well as practical information for growers and consumers.⁵

Do Not Forget Past Research Partners and Consumers of Research Outside the University

Regular communication with past and current partners not only keeps them on top of developments within the university but sustains positive relationships that can lead to new research projects. Moreover, such non-academic leaders or activists can be valuable resources in class presentations and in serving on university advisory committees. Keeping the attention of past partners can also make them think of you when new projects or funding opportunities arise.

Funding

In starting up public sociology projects, the issue of funding invariably comes up early in the conversation. If it is assumed that funding is needed *before* work can start, efforts can stall immediately. Looking at the case studies in this book, as well as the very early beginnings of centers and networks described in the last chapter, strong interest in demonstrating the relevance of sociology to publics outside the university and engaging in research with publics outside the university is an initial driving force. Yes, funding is ultimately valuable in sustaining larger research initiatives and developing ongoing community-engaged centers or faculty networks. However, foundations, government agencies, and private donors generally look for a track record and commitment to research before providing substantial funding. The bottom line of effective sociology is the impact it has on policy, on the quality of life in local communities, and on organization effectiveness, among other things. As demonstrated in all of the case studies, interest in social justice, community change, policy change, and contributions to the broader community is what drives most public

⁴<http://camy.org/>

⁵<http://www.feastsoutheastnc.org/>

sociologists. As much as they may be effective in writing successful grant applications, it is not purely money that keeps them committed to this work.

Having said this, it is clear that funding is important to sustaining public sociology research. What often is not understood by university administrators, including chairs of sociology departments, is that public sociology—particularly university-community collaborative research—provides greater access to larger funding opportunities than does research developed by and for the discipline. While there are sources of funding that focus just on sociology—for example, certain programs in the National Science Foundation—far greater sources of funding are available to work on issues such as educational reform, affordable housing, youth engagement, community safety, reduction of obesity, effective job training, and community economic development. These are all areas that have received substantial attention from sociological research over the years. The ability to tie research track records (on the part of an individual or on the part of the field historically) to organizations engaged in work in these specific areas is the winning combination that has helped to fund sociological research in the past. This is the secret to funding success for many university-community collaborative projects. Research with a constituency, research with publics built into the research process itself, often gives public sociologists an edge in getting funding. Vandana Kohli received a large grant to explore the motivational and technological dimensions of teen pregnancy prevention. Among the many outcomes of the project, she notes that receiving the grant increased the university's reputation in the local area, leading to more local grants that dealt with children's health issues. Securing this first large grant also improved the institution's sense of its own capacity to handle large-scale grants (Case Study 6.1).

There Is No Simple Formula for Public Sociology Success

The purpose of this chapter has been to plant some seeds among readers—whether they are undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, or community leaders—about ways to get started in public sociology work or enhance the work you are already doing. There is no simple formula for getting started in public sociology. Different orientations of colleges and universities call for different approaches; different communities call for different working relationships; different regions of the country call for different entry points for sociologists working with relevant leaders and

organizations outside of the university. The approaches suggested here may help you develop a stronger public sociology presence in your department or college. The case studies that follow provide multiple variations on how to start and sustain public sociology work in a broad range of substantive areas. Undoubtedly, those just starting out in engaged sociology will develop even more successful approaches to strengthening the collective contributions of public sociology.