

Maximizing the Relationship between Researchers and Community Based Organizations

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This poster describes how research assistants can be a bridging factor between scientific research and community based natural resource management programs. Research assistants obviously help researchers increase the amount of data in a limited amount of time, however, they can do a lot more – good and bad – than that. In the course of my doctoral research on tourism and wellbeing in Namibia (southern Africa), I tried to ensure research assistants positively contributed to community based-organizations' objectives. This poster presents lessons learned for research assistants' selection and training, as well as their role in preliminary results report back meetings. Key lessons have been (1) to select research assistants in such a way to spread employment opportunities across a community based organization's constituency, (2) to train assistants in both content and format of the data collection instruments, and (3) to time report back meetings before the researcher leaves the host community to strengthen the research's impacts for both the community and the researcher.

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