Ethnography & public policy

• **Ethnography**: the qualitative research and holistic analysis of human social experience.
  • Community based
  • Informing public processes from the local to federal levels.

  See: *Ethnographic Studies Can Inform Agencies' Actions.*

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Why ethnography for a community water strengths & needs study?

- Ethnographically informed interviewing & listening sessions
  - Community members are experts
  - Fosters partnership: government, NGO, CBO
  - Implements community inreach
  - Open-ended questions in social contexts yield “water stories”
    - Patterns, connections, “hidden” factors
    - Community-specific & comparative
    - “Thick data” for technical assistance programming

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Products

• Evidence base to guide Technical Advisory Committee project selection

• Best practices procedures for water agency community engagement
  • Appropriate social processes: “disadvantaged communities”
  • Accountability: listening, report back, responsive relations
  • Baseline: ongoing program & project evaluation

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