



ECEHH Research Insight: The REACH Project

A bite size summary of research <https://www.ecehh.org/research/reachproject/>

The REACH project aimed at making environmental and health more equal, diverse, and inclusive focused, and reflecting on the experience of the ECEHH



Who is this relevant to?

Public and environment health researchers, teaching institutions, and research funding bodies.

Background

Funded by Natural Research Council (NERC), researchers from the ECEHH led the interdisciplinary *Reflections from a Centre of Environment and Human Health* (REACH) Project with the REACH Advisory Group of scholars with expertise on anti-racism and decolonial practice, the external diversity and inclusion consultancy, INCLUDED (<https://www.included.com/>), and the Health and Environment Public Engagement (HEPE) (<https://www.ecehh.org/about-us/engagement/>).

REACH focused on understanding aspects of institutional whiteness and processes and practices of exclusion at the European Centre for Environment and Human Health (ECEHH) at the University of Exeter Medical School. The overall goal of the project was to consider what is currently being done and what more can be done to ensure an anti-racist, decolonial and intersectional approach is considered in research, education and employment for the environment and human health field and for the ECEHH.

Findings

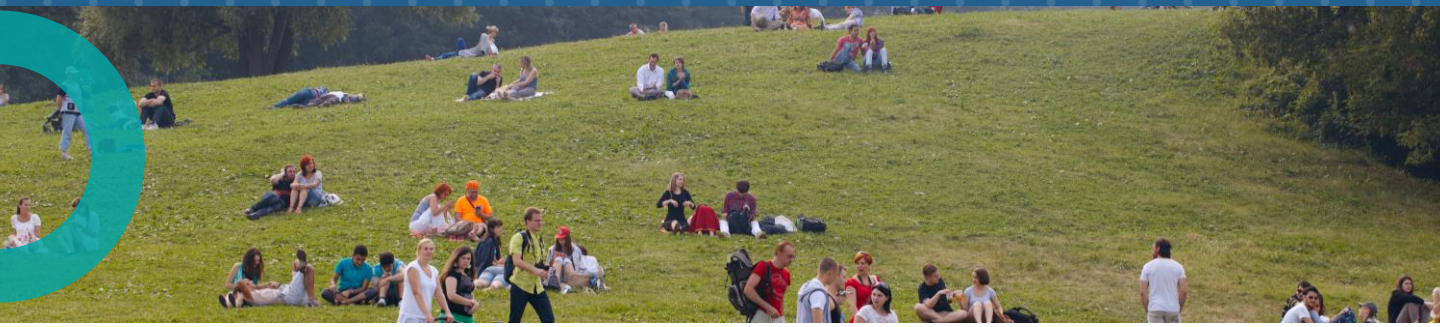
The REACH project was seen as the beginning of a process, and hoped not to be the end in itself.

Moving towards increasing diversity, anti-racism and decolonisation in research/training in environment and human health and beyond, both within the Centre and with their current and future collaborators, as well as within the Medical School and wider university.

Process Engage in ongoing reflection around the continuous practice of inclusion, anti-racism and decolonisation as both individuals and the group.

Knowledge Centre the knowledge and experiences of people of colour to ensure policies and actions are not white washed or tokenistic.

Collaborations Acknowledge and challenge power imbalances and work in dialogue to create more equitable partnerships, especially in international collaborations. Consider impacts of colonialism and white supremacy in such partnerships. Cultural differences should be discussed early in the project to ensure cultural sensitivity throughout.



Recommendations

The REACH project highlighted the importance of practicing the following values:

- To centre well-being and care for the whole person in their complexities
- Kindness and compassion
- Commitment to critical thought and reflexivity
- Reflection and action (should be at the forefront of anti-racist and/or decolonial practice).
- Non-hierarchical organisation as much as possible; challenging power dynamics through democratisation of decision making



Selected References/Resources

The *REACH project Final Report* provides a brief overview of the project, with a number of Appendices containing more detailed resources and other information on the project design and outcomes. (<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:96e81cf8-1eaa-36ff-ad87-3ee31af0348d>)

Derbyshire et al. *Keywords are missing: Insights from the publication keywords, abstracts and titles of an environment and human health research group*. *Equity in Education & Society*, 2023
<https://doi.org/10.1177/27526461231163326>

Use the REACH Resource Summary and Resource Library as starting points to support with our learning on racism and anti-racist practices
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:96e81cf8-1eaa-36ff-ad87-3ee31af0348d>

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