

Community Environmental Sustainability (CES) - Ottawa

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Hub Structure and Governance:

- In its first two years, the CES Hub worked to facilitate comparative case studies and connect actors from its two regional nodes, Ottawa and Peterborough/Haliburton. Over time, the **two nodes began to function as independent hubs**, each working with half of the CES hub's allocated budget.
- The Ottawa node supported three **modestly-sized, locally-focused CBOs**.
- Central to the organization of the CES Ottawa hub was the practice of **'embedding' graduate-level RAs in specific community-based projects** to provide applied research support and develop meaningful relationships with community partners over time.

CES Ottawa Hub Phase I Activity:

- **Provided research and administrative support** to Sustainable Living Ottawa East (SLOE), and its sub-group Innovative Housing for Older Adults in Old Ottawa East (IHOA), both of which aim to influence sustainability measures within a large local redevelopment project.
- Assisted the Ottawa Eco-Talent Network (OETN), which aims to link environmental initiatives with pro-bono advisors and expertise, in **securing Trillium Grant funding** for the organization to hire a new Executive Director for three years.
- **Provided seed funding** to GottaGo!, an advocacy group campaigning for a larger network of public toilets in Ottawa. The funding supported the development of a report that contributed to the city's approval to include public toilets in its new Light Rail Transit plan.

Phase I Evaluation – Key Highlights:

- Community partners credited CCE with strengthening the **capacity, research base and visibility/prestige** of their organizations.
- Community partners valued the **continuity of relationships with CES-Ottawa hub RAs** within a multi-year research project. The quality of student engagement, including the student's ability to grasp the complex context in which community groups struggle, as well as to serve as **'boundary spanners'** between community and academic worlds, was critical to the success of their CCE projects. Community partners would like **more control over the selection of student RAs**.
- All CES-Ottawa hub participants acknowledged the need for more **equitable decision-making around resource allocation**, and ease of access to funds for community partners.
- Community-engaged **faculty work under significant strain, and lack adequate support** from the academic institution for CCE work.

Community Environmental Sustainability (CES) - Peterborough-Haliburton

Community Co-Leads

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Hub Structure and Governance:

- In its first two years, the CES Hub worked from its two regional nodes, Ottawa and Peterborough/Haliburton. Over time, the **two nodes began to function as independent hubs**.
- The CES Ptbo/Halib hub established and evaluated **four local demonstration projects** in its first year. In subsequent years, a more **long-term view** was taken, resulting in continuity for all participants. The immersion of RAs provided the **relationship building required when working with a vulnerable population** marginalized by traditional planning processes and academic engagement.

CES Peterborough-Haliburton Hub Phase I Activity:

- Supported the Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) project, which developed with residents a Portrait and Vision for the Peterborough Stewart Street Neighbourhood to **collaboratively reimagine the space to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles**.
- Helped Abbey Gardens (Haliburton) to create **improvements for its market table at Farmers' Markets**.
- Supported the creation of four public event kits for Abbey Gardens and Haliburton Highlands to raise awareness and knowledge of local ecologies and sustainable ethics and practices.

Phase I Evaluation – Key Highlights:

- Community partners acknowledged **CFICE funding as important** -- yet it was also a **relatively small contribution** in the overall context of CBO operating budgets and project development, on the one hand, and the **multi-year funding facilitated a longer term vision for CCE**, on the other. The university held the power balance as it controlled the funds.
- **Existing long-term relationships**, CCE and social change commitment between CBOs and RAs increased the depth of community research, accommodated complex projects, and facilitated trust-building critical to project success. RAs were viewed as **'integrators' and 'boundary-spanners'** between university and community cultures, and built connections beyond project parameters.
- Building community-campus relationships requires a **conflict resolution protocol and opportunities to discuss power dynamics front-end**. **Language** was sometimes a contributor to power imbalances in these relationships.
- In regard to **knowledge-creation and mobilization**: who owns the body of knowledge and outcomes from the research, how could/should the community voice be incorporated, and how can existing resources and outputs meet the different needs of both PSI researchers and community?