



# CFICE Community Impact Symposium

## A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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**Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE)**, a major SSHRC-funded project, aims to strengthen Canadian communities through action research on best practices of community-campus engagement. We ask how community-campus partnerships can be done to maximize the value created for non-profit, community based organizations in four key areas: poverty, community food security, community environmental sustainability, and reducing violence against women.

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
CFICE’s Symposium Planning Process .....	1
Symposium Findings .....	2
Lessons about why CCE is important .....	2
Lessons about how to work together as individuals in CCE projects.....	2
Lessons about infrastructure supports and needs for impactful CCE.....	3
Lessons for a large networked project (like CFICE).....	3
Assets, Values, and Visions Exercise .....	4
Recommendations .....	4
Governments (provincial, federal, local) should.....	4
Fundors of CCE partnerships should... ..	4
Post-Secondary Institutions should.....	5
Faculty should... ..	5
Students should.....	6
Community-Based Organizations should... ..	6
CFICE should... ..	7
Knowledge Mobilization .....	7
Post-Symposium Evaluation .....	8
Conclusion.....	8
Appendix 1 – Assets, Values, and Visions Word Clouds .....	9
Assets .....	9
Values.....	10
Vision.....	11



## Introduction

On January 18th and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) project hosted an important research event for its community and academic partners titled *Community Impact: A community/academic symposium for clarifying, sharing and celebrating CFICE's key messages*. This event was held in Carleton University's Discovery Centre (MacOdrum Library), and ran from 9am to 5pm each day. The symposium began with a welcome and opening prayer from Mohawk elder Paul Skanks, and with an acknowledgement that Carleton is situated on unceded Algonquin territory.

The purpose of the event was to bring together CFICE project partners to collaboratively discuss the findings of our Phase I evaluation process, and to develop key messages and lessons for our Phase II work. The event celebrated CFICE's impact in communities across Canada and also looked at what recommendations could be carried forward in Phase II to improve community-campus engagement work nationally.

During the intensive two-day meeting, attendees sought to achieve the following goals:

- Draft key recommendations to better support 'Community-First' CCE (Community Campus Engagement) practices by governments, funders, post-secondary institutions, faculty members, community-based organizations and students.
- Identify and celebrate CFICE's achievements from Phase I (2012-2016).
- Understand how we can better work together within CFICE in Phase II (2016-2019)
- Decide on how we will share our findings moving forward.

The preliminary results of this symposium are compiled in point form in this report. The intent is to use this report as a basis for further discussion of the ways in which CFICE and its partners want to share this information.

## CFICE's Symposium Planning Process

Following CFICE's Phase I evaluation, which largely took place between January and August 2016, our Evaluation and Analysis Working Group (EA WG) began to plan how to process and share the evaluation results. This was no easy task since the six hub-specific evaluation summary reports yielded over 200+ pages of summarized content. In addition, the EA WG wanted to ensure that any analysis of the data remained true to the stories shared by community and academic partners during the Phase I evaluation process. In the end, the EA WG felt that the best way to share and collaboratively analyse the data was through an event, and thus the Community Impact Symposium was born.

In planning this event, CFICE and the EA WG strove to remain community-first. Realizing that the EA WG was made up of only academic participants, the EA WG established a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC was composed of Phase I community partners and was chaired by Nadine Changfoot. The Committee proved to be an important and valuable guiding force in planning the symposium agenda. Their contributions, along with those made by our facilitator, Randy Stoecker, resulted in a symposium event that prioritized the opportunity to network, hold important discussions, and share stories.

In addition to the CAC's contributions, the EA WG relied heavily on the work of their research assistant, Magda Goemans. Magda reviewed all the evaluation reports prior to the symposium. She synthesized the data and worked closely with CFICE members to interpret and compile it into the [CFICE Symposium Backgrounder](#) report.

The report provided all participants with a general overview of the Phase I evaluation findings, which helped to ground the lessons and recommendations that follow below.

## Symposium Findings

What follows is a point-form collection of the lessons and recommendations that came out of the CFICE symposium. To compile this data, Peter Andrée synthesized and grouped (where needed) the information that was shared by symposium attendees through the community impact stories, the Community-Campus Engagement (CCE) Lessons exercise, and the Recommendations activities.

Where possible, Peter has referenced the source of the lesson or recommendation.

### Lessons about why CCE is important

- Community-driven, participatory, CCE processes have impacts on the ground for community organizations (Living Saint John, Barb MacQuarrie)
- Graduate students immersed in community projects have a larger impact than undergraduate student projects (CES hub)
- CCE generates unique student experiences, builds skill-sets, and presents new career options (Gotta Go, ANC Peterborough, Abbey Gardens)
- Post-secondary institutions value the global partnerships and initiatives that can come out of locally-focused community based research (U Vic)

“From phase I, there are a number of student project impacts: Things like trail maps, educational plans and some great reports. For me, an outcome of CFICE, is to strengthen and continue our relationship with Trent [university] in particular. I would love to see the potential to expand these relationships with Carleton, Uvic, and some of the other universities at the table today.”

Heather Reid, Abbey Gardens, Community Environmental Sustainability (PBTO-HALIB) Community Partner

### Lessons about how to work together as individuals in CCE projects

- Deep and respectful relationships (in-person, with safe spaces for dialogue) are a foundation of strong community-campus partnerships (Volunteer Victoria)
  - A flexible experimental approach is required to navigate hurdles in CCE projects (Abbey Gardens, brokering WG)
  - Community partners value research differently from academics (Kathy Sandford)
  - Community and academic partners need to understand each other’s personal and institutional constraints, including need to prioritize faculty/academic outputs that can lead to ongoing funding. We need to address core misunderstandings about how universities and CBOs work.
    - ‘Connectors’/‘Boundary spanners’ important to community-campus partnerships (many examples across CFICE), including specifically brokering organizations (TCRC, Station-20) Student RAs are often the key connectors (Abbey Gardens, CES Ottawa)
      - It is important to negotiate and get clarity about expectations, limitations, potential problems, etc. among CCE partners (communicate!)
    - Recognize that participant/partner goals change over time

“Rachel Canham’s work particularly really helped us push to get toilets in the LRT (Light Rail Transit) hub stations. There weren’t any toilets planned for it except at a few places for employees...We got toilets now at Bayview Station, which is on the O-train exchange, and at Hurdman, which is a major bus interchange. There will be toilets there and there will be toilets in phase II hub stations when they do the second phase of the LRT. Her work was very important to that [and] having an app that can tell you where the nearest toilet is and whether or not it’s open is probably very useful to people.”

Joan Kuyek, GottaGo!, Community Environmental Sustainability (Ottawa) Community Partner

(brokering WG)



## Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE)

- Communicate in plain language (CFICE Intellectual property rules a bad example!)
- Recognize and address power differentials (sharing resources, building trust). Whoever controls the money has a lot of control in CCE projects.
- Co-governance of projects should be institutionalized (“common-good led”(Anita)), but differences in capacity to co-govern may lead to tensions (Diana/VAW hub)
- Address question of ownership/control of community knowledge (CFS hub)
- Meet in the community to deepen relationships (Kathy/UVic)
- A personal (esp. faculty member’s) commitment to CCE matters (GottaGo)
- Engage wisely/strategically – partnerships working on justice/sustainability take effort and resources

“The objectives of our organization are to connect research interests from community organizations to the university. We’ve been in operation since 1999 as a formal organization and for 10 years before that as an informal entity. The research that we have been able to connect to the university at this point in time has all been undergraduate research. CFICE has been able to give Graduate level students to the community to assist with bigger research questions, things that couldn’t be done in the scope of an undergraduate student program.”

Marie Gage, U-Links, Community Environmental Sustainability (PBTO-HALIB) Community Partner

## Lessons about infrastructure supports and needs for impactful CCE

- Importance of university infrastructure for CCE
  - CCE takes real effort and resources. It requires institutional commitment (Volunteer Victoria)
  - Administrative/logistical support is critical
  - Value of accessible institutional spaces
  - Structural changes needed (peer review, tenure and promotion, etc.) (Trent)
- Importance of community infrastructure for CCE
  - Value of community-based backbone organization for CCE projects (PR hub)
  - Value of community-based CCE brokering infrastructure (TCRC, Station-20, etc.)
- Funding for community, lived experience, and student participation
  - Importance of funding community participation in PSI-driven projects (Gotta Go)
    - Creative funding of community partners
  - Importance of funding for lived experience participation in all community and academic projects (Station-20)
  - Need for PSI funding of student participation in CCE (and barriers to it) (Abbey Gardens, Maeve)

## Lessons for a large networked project (like CFICE)

- Effort needed to nurture networks across geographical distance (UVic.)
- Need to provide clarity around transitions (CES Ptbo-Hali)
- Tapping into smaller/local needs is a challenge (CES P-H)
- Maximize value of steering committee
- Longer-term project allows for real impact

### Additional lessons:

- Lessons about student training (Barb)
- Intra-University Tensions can affect CCE project
- Uncategorized lessons

“The RA, has actually become embedded and enfolded within the neighborhood. People see her and say “There’s the survey lady” and “can I do a survey with you, survey lady”. That’s certainly been a huge part. I’ve been able to attend conferences that have a lot to do with community building and that are very much connected with our work and what we’re doing.”

Jason Hartwick, Active Neighbourhoods Canada Project, Community Environmental Sustainability (PBTO-HALIB) Community Partner



## Assets, Values, and Visions Exercise

During the symposium, Maeve Lydon ran a quick exercise asking all attendees to write down the assets, values and visions they have for the CCE movement in Canada. From the content attendees shared, we generated three word clouds, which can be found in the Appendix.

## Recommendations

Acronyms used: Community Campus Engagement (CCE); Post-secondary Institutions (PSIs); Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

Note: This section of recommendations was pared down to create a 'Top 3' for each audience category (with the exception of CFICE). The recommendations are based on the evidence generated through Phase I and reflect those that CFICE and its partners, collectively, are best positioned to carry forward. Below each list of recommendations are the additional recommendations that were generated for the audience category. The recommendations in the 'top 3' lists remain open for discussion until the June Program Committee meeting.

### Governments (provincial, federal, local) should...

- 1) Provide greater institutional and funding support for strong CCE partnerships between PSIs and the non-profit sector. Why?
  - CCE contributes to innovation and 'evidence-based policy'
  - CCE is part of social license/responsibility of post-secondary institutions
  - CCE enhances student workplace skills (different from co-op), livelihood skills, and gets them excited about taking on meaningful work for the public good.
  - CCE is about hopeful, positive engagement with the future
- 2) Recognize value of community-based brokers (e.g. Station 20, TCRC, OETN) for furthering all of the above, grounded in furthering community needs.
- 3) Join collaborative networks committed to expanding CCE (esp. provincial higher education authorities, local governments).

Other recommendations to Governments:

- Require plain-language communication and training
- (Federal only) Revisit charitable status audits and policy. It is compromising innovation.

### Funders of CCE partnerships should...

- 1) Join collaborative networks as equal partners (not simply the holders of purse-strings) committed to expanding CCE in Canada and beyond.
- 2) Address key funding challenges to CBO participation in partnerships, including:
  - Allow for more direct funding of CBO participation
  - Recognize true costs in time and resources for administration and reporting
  - Demonstrate trust by flowing money to CBOs as soon as possible
- 3) Expand the model of long-term partnership projects like CFICE and include CBO representatives with solid partnership experiences on grant adjudication committees



## Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE)

### Other recommendations to Funders:

- Fund more community-based partnership brokerage capacity (e.g. Station 20, TCRC, OETN)
- Recognize high value of face-to-face meetings for partnership projects
- Recognize need for CBOs to hold some grant money in reserve.
- Develop something like mitacs for the CBO/PSI sector, not just framing the value in economic terms

## Post-Secondary Institutions should...

- 1) Develop tenure and promotion standards that meaningfully reward community-engaged scholarship by:
  - Co-developing metrics (with community partners) for demonstrating CCE efficacy and impact of engaged scholarship
  - Valuing the impact of non-academic outputs of CCE projects
  - Valuing community knowledge (e.g. letters from CBOs to support tenure files)
- 2) Provide real resources for community partners who work with PSIs, including:
  - On-line library access for community partners
  - Space for in-person meetings
  - Easy guest access to university wifi
  - Expedited processing of payments to partners.
  - Funds for community 'backbone organization' partners in CCE projects, for community-based brokers, and for CBOs that accept student placements.
- 3) Provide more CCE training for faculty and students (e.g. guidance on 'how to make a difference' through CCE, plain language training through student writing centres and for faculty, curriculum guidance around pathways to CCE for students, guiding transitions to meaningful employment for students, guidance on space/time/respect for community knowledge, guidance for students on liability and responsibility in CCE, etc.)

### Other recommendations for post-secondary institutions:

- Adjust course-loads to recognize time/effort of community-based teaching
- create 'just-in-time' credits to respond to project requests on timelines defined by community
- Recognize CCE best practices as part of policies for increased internationalization
- Celebrate CCE success stories (for community/policy impact, student skills and employability, faculty research)
- Undertake internal evaluations of all forms of CCE (including CBOs as well as students with CCE experience in the evaluation process) using a CCE classification system

## Faculty should...

- 1) Develop a strong personal set of CCE principles and practices. This includes:
  - Recognize and value community knowledge/expertise 1<sup>st</sup> epistemologically, 2<sup>nd</sup> where possible with honouraria (when they are asked to speak in a class or attend meetings)
  - Get plain-language training and then use it
  - Meet partners *in* the community
  - Engage wisely/strategically (recognizing that CCE takes resources and time)
  - Address question of ownership/control of community knowledge in research projects
  - Clarify shared expectations with CBO partners around roles and expectations for social-justice, innovation, change projects
- 2) Support students in developing long-term alliances, networks, projects, by offering:
  - CCE mentoring
  - Travel advances



## Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE)

- Diverse RA-ship experiences
  - Equal role in decision-making
  - To value the community knowledge some students already have
- 3) Work to strengthen the institutionalization of community-driven CCE:
- Build community of CCE practice and to realign values and culture within their own post-secondary institution, and then scale up regionally and nationally through bodies like Universities Canada & Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.
  - Push for faculty training related to CCE (e.g. understanding CCE pathways for students, plain language training, valuing community and student knowledge)
  - Address issues of power in CCE at intersections of race, class, gender, colonialism. Attention in-terdisciplinarity

### Other recommendations for faculty:

- Build relationships with CBOs to understand one another's cultures, realities and needs
- Take risks to do and support CCE (especially tenured faculty)
- Ask retired (senior) faculty to provide mentorship (students, CBOs, etc.)
- Provide mentorship for students who may be faces with personal conflicts/rediscovery of personal norms (e.g. in connecting with Truth and Reconciliation Commission)
- Lobby governments and funders for more and better CCE

## Students should...

- 1) Enhance communication skills among diverse audiences (e.g. expand plain language writing skills).
- 2) Actively seek out opportunities to enhance and co-create CCE skills and capacity (for example, by drawing on their own previous involvement in community contexts), and mentor other students based on those experiences.
- 3) Seek out opportunities to develop longer-term CCE projects, alliances and networks.

No other recommendations for students.

## Community-Based Organizations should...

- 1) Learn to engage strategically in CCE projects only when they add value to your organization, clearly communicating organizational needs to partners.
- 2) Develop peer-to-peer opportunities for information exchange and collaboration among CBOs about how to engage with PSIs, and to help others translate information coming from PSIs.
- 3) When involved in a CCE project, build reciprocal relationships with the faculty members/ PSIs to understand one another's cultures, realities and needs.

### Other recommendations for CBOs:

- Stay on mission: say yes to CCE projects that add value. Retain trust/power to say no to projects that do not work for both parties (some of this point integrated above)
- Host, convene at conferences, summits, etc. to share lessons of CCE
- Get plain language training and use it
- Engage retired people (faculty, business people, government staff, craftspeople, etc.) in mentoring roles. They may need some training to do this well.



## CFICE should...

- Challenge funders to think about CCE differently and take up the lessons from Phase I
- Critically revisit 'community' and basic purpose of 'CCE' (to challenge institutional privilege)
- Don't try to brand results primarily as "CFICE". Work in partnership with others
- Have indigenous community representation on PC
- Develop community-only advisory and action committee chaired by community representative
- Align with CBRC and key national groups to launch a national collaborative network at C2UExpo (to provide champion profiles, training opportunities, resource-sharing, funding/partnership pathways)
- Draft plain language version of intellectual property policy
- Develop robust pan-Canadian engagement strategy around Phase II work (working groups and knowledge mobilization) that meets people where they are at and ensures continuing communication in a way that is digestible and makes strategic use of resources (technology, time, people)
- Use steering committee to maximum effect
- Provide resources for scholarly outputs for faculty (e.g. RA-ships)
- Provide resources for plain language outputs
- Profile CCE Champions/boundary-spanners as means of promoting individual passions, interests, assets and connecting partners
- Integrate symposium recommendations in the CFICE self-evaluation tool for post-secondary institutions.

## Knowledge Mobilization

What did we learn about what we should DO with these results? How should these results be shared?

- Develop calls to action around CCE based on CFICE experiences to date
- Develop student guidebook on 'how to make a difference' through CCE, including issues like liability, responsibility, working with CFICE RAs/grad students
- Develop short, shareable, outputs – not just huge reports
- Develop tools for local community groups to directly access local institutions (e.g. in Ottawa). As a broker is not always necessary.
- Develop tools for conveners (drawing on collective impact lessons – shared measurement, etc.) of CCE projects
- Develop checklist for CBOs so that they understand that CCE is about reciprocal relationships
- Write op-eds and policy briefs from CFICE for reaching out to governments (e.g. The Hill Times, globe and mail). Get high level champions (e.g. outgoing Governor General David Johnston) to sign on.
- Develop tool based on CFICE learnings that would enable governments and other stakeholders (not just PSIs) to do better CCE work. CBOs can share this with municipal governments, for example.
- Use higher education to bring together various actors interested in developing better public/community engagement practices. PSIs can play this 'neutral' role.
- Weave symposium insights into the self-assessment classification system being developed by AIWG
- Better integrate idea of decolonizing CCE into AIWG activities (Isobel Findlay, Katalin, etc.) Ask Indigenous scholar/activist to write a blog on this.
- Build the business case for CCE: Get upper level admin onboard beyond rhetoric, frame in terms of the neoliberal language they are familiar with (employability, student success, etc.). Generate the success stories to speak to governments and higher admin on this level.



## Post-Symposium Evaluation

Sixteen symposium participants responded to the CFICE Post-Symposium Evaluation, which asked respondents to comment on their impressions of the event and related actions moving forward. Respondents noted they appreciated opportunities to make connections with other symposium participants, and to better understand links between different CFICE hubs, working groups and committees. Participants valued opportunities to work together, to learn from each other, to meet other participants from across the country, and to engage with others in informal settings during evening social events. They also appreciated the flexible and responsive approach to symposium facilitation -- under the guidance of Randy Stoecker -- that allowed for “course correction” when needed on Day 2.

Many survey respondents stated there was not anything missing from the symposium event. Among those who provided other responses, participants noted they would have liked to have heard additional community voices and input from the facilitator (Randy), and to have received more detail regarding Phase II objectives and approaches (including associated budget implications). Additional time to develop Day 2 outputs, as well as “more structured time for working group priority activities” would have been appreciated as well.

Many respondents favour a diversity of approaches to sharing CFICE findings moving forward, including through reports (concise summaries as well as more detailed reports), webinars, email updates and academic articles. Other preferred media include videos, newspaper articles, infographics, blogs and varied social media outlets. One respondent requested “a central accessible venue like Researchgate...where everything can be uploaded as a project and searchable”. Another noted, “I do not think the medium is as important as a commitment to ensuring that the output is as meaningful, accessible and potentially useful to community members as it is to academic participants. The next step is surely how to co-create some of these outputs.”

In regard to staying involved with CFICE, respondents noted many of the options listed in the evaluation question -- contributing to the CFICE newsletter, attending C2UExpo 2017, attending CFICE webinars, and taking part in future CFICE meetings. Some participants noted they plan to initiate/continue active membership in working groups and on committees. Respondents are also taking or planning several specific actions resulting from their participation in the symposium that were suggested in the survey, including contributing to a blog, getting involved with a working group, preparing an academic article or book chapter, reading the TRC calls to action, and arranging follow-up meetings with participants. Other actions include developing a webinar or presentation, reporting to the CFICE steering committee or a local community organization committee, or following up with an academic institution. One respondent is also “considering how we can shift government values to be more aligned with our CCE tools/lessons”.

## Conclusion

Overall, attendees felt that the symposium event was a huge success. It was an opportunity to meet new people, share project successes, and gain a much deeper understanding of the CFICE project, and its findings. Now, the next step is to work collaboratively to share these findings in ways that are in tune with, and accessible to, those audiences that need to hear them most.





