



# MOVING THE NEEDLE ON POVERTY

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*Snapshots of community-campus partnerships*

EDITED BY KAREN SCHWARTZ ∞ LIZ WEAVER  
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# **MOVING THE NEEDLE ON POVERTY:** Snapshots of community-campus partnerships

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**MOVING THE NEEDLE ON POVERTY: SNAPSHOTS OF COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS**

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# CREATING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO INFLUENCE POLICY

LIZ WEAVER

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IT SEEMS A LOGICAL, IF UNLIKELY CHALLENGE. Can community organizations and campus faculty and students collaborate in an intentional way, and in doing so move the needle on complex issues like poverty, food security, violence against women and the environment? This publication details the unique partnership that developed between the School of Social Work at Carleton University and Tamarack Institute and Vibrant Communities Canada to tackle poverty in Canada.

The Poverty Reduction Hub was one of five self-managed community-campus hub projects that were embedded in the Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) initiative. The CFICE project was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. In addition to five issue-focused hubs, there was a national coordinating group that was hosted by Carleton University with community members affiliated with national organizations. The five hubs are described below:

- **Poverty Reduction**, co-led by the *Vibrant Communities* network, with initiatives in New Brunswick, Ontario and Alberta;
- **Community Food Security**, co-led by *Food Secure Canada*, in cooperation with the *Canadian Association of Food Studies*, working in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and British Columbia;
- **Community Environmental Sustainability**, co-led by the non-profit *Trent Centre for Community-Based Education*, with initiatives in Eastern Ontario;

- ***Violence Against Women***, co-led by the *Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies*, working in Ontario and British Columbia; and
- ***Knowledge Mobilization***, co-led by the *Canadian Alliance for Community-Service Learning*, with initiatives across Canada.

The CFICE initiative sought to unpack the unique capacities, tools and relationships that exist between campus and community environments. The CFICE core research question asked: ***How can community-campus engagement, including community service learning (CSL) and community-based research (CBR), be designed and implemented in ways that maximize the value created for non-profit, community-based organizations?***

In addition, the CFICE project focused on the following research sub-themes:

- Scale and replication of models
- Ability to share power and control
- Processes for effective engagement
- Impacts on community-campus partners
- Ethical issues in community-campus engagement

The collaborative partnership between Carleton University's School of Social Work and Tamarack Institute and Vibrant Communities is unique. The School of Social Work at Carleton University has a history of contributing to the national poverty research and policy agenda. Within Tamarack Institute and Vibrant Communities Canada, the school found a community partner with both a national poverty focus and community-based partners located in cities and communities across Canada.

Vibrant Communities Canada is a network of collaborative roundtables engaging diverse leaders to tackle the issue of poverty from a community or place-based perspective. This network has been in place in Canada since 2002 and within the past five years has grown from 13 to more than 50 member cities. Vibrant Communities Canada is convened by the Tamarack Institute and is funded by The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, Maytree, and Ontario Trillium Foundation. Vibrant Communities Canada members also contribute to the network through annual membership fees. Vibrant Communities members form an active learning community where they are deeply connected to each other and work collaboratively to address poverty at local, provincial and national levels.

The seven-year CFICE project was divided into two unique parts. The first four years were focused on community-campus prototypes. The local prototypes were designed as small-scale, locally-based experiments, which would build bridging relationships between the campus and community environments. Each local partnership identified a specific element of poverty and policy on which to focus. Faculty, staff, students and community leaders worked collaboratively toward impact. The final three years of the CFICE initiative were focused on broader-scale knowledge development and dissemination across the project. In addition, a smaller team of



community-campus leaders deliberated on challenges that surfaced during the first four years of CFICE and developed protocols for enhancing community-campus partnerships.

The CFICE project was launched in February 2013. Just after the launch, Vibrant Communities Canada published the following blog post about this unique opportunity:

Vibrant Communities Canada is delighted to be partnering with Carleton University and the Canadian Alliance for Community-Service Learning in a seven-year action research project called, CFICE (pronounced “suffice”). CFICE is an acronym for Communities First: Impacts of Community Engagement. The aim of this project is to aims to strengthen Canadian non-profits, universities and colleges, and funding agencies to build more successful, innovative, resilient and prosperous communities.

Combining community-based demonstration projects with critical policy analysis, CFICE aims to answer the question: ***How can community-campus engagement be designed and implemented in ways that maximize the value created for non-profit community-based organizations (CBOs)?***

#### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND PILOT PROJECT STRATEGY**

As described above, the core research question challenging the CFICE project put focus and priority on determining how community-campus partnerships create value for non-profit community-based organizations. The Poverty Reduction Hub partners built these two research objectives into their approach. The first research objective focused on the unique relationships between community-campus partners. The Poverty Reduction Hub conducted an environmental scan and recruited community-campus partnerships that were built on different elements and relationships. Over the first four years of CFICE, the Poverty Reduction Hub and its partners documented and evaluated how local community-campus partnerships were structured and evolved. The second research objective was designed as local prototypes of community-campus-based projects on issues related to the reduction or elimination of poverty or to influencing policies that exacerbate poverty. Each of the local community-campus partners selected an issue and then collaborated intentionally to influence policy change.

The combination of the two research objectives was unique and important. The local community-campus partnership models provided a window into how communities develop entry points into the campus environment. Supporting the local initiatives over a period of four years also enabled the partners to watch how relationships evolved and shifted over time. Equally important were the local strategies adopted by community-campus partners. These prototype strategies enabled relationships and leveraged the research and resource capacity of the campus environment by engaging faculty and students in these collaborative efforts.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Poverty Hub, at the project planning level, was co-chaired by senior leaders from Carleton University and Vibrant Communities Canada. The shared leadership approach was modeled at the local level with each Vibrant Community partner connecting with campus-based faculty. During the first four years of the project, Poverty Reduction Hub members explored different models of the community-campus relationship. The goals were to better understand this unique relationship and how it could be enhanced to drive community change at a policy and systems level. The Poverty Reduction Hub also created a learning community amongst its campus and community partners. Annual meetings of the Poverty Reduction Hub community-campus partners enabled sharing of the strategies undertaken at the local level and lessons that were being learned. Partners shared their insights about engaging with each other and the challenges and opportunities that this unique partnership created.

In the first year of the project, four Vibrant Communities partners were recruited to participate in the Hub. These communities were selected after an environmental scan was conducted. Each of the Vibrant Communities local partners were unique. They had different models of community-campus engagement, included urban and rural communities, and used engagement that involved colleges as well as universities. Models of community-campus engagement were conceptualized and validated by community partners including the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Vibrant Communities Saint John, Opportunities Waterloo Region, and Vibrant Communities Calgary to create an accurate depiction of how their community-campus relationships were structured. The research in this Hub was centred on these models of community-campus engagement.

The Hub also identified a number of outcomes in the first year which would guide their collaborative work (see a description of these outcomes in a following section). These outcomes included:

- a report related to the effectiveness of models of engagement;
- an environmental scan of partnerships;
- documentation of community outcomes and the effectiveness of models of engagement;
- knowledge created about best practices for creating community-campus partnerships for impact;
- creation of a community of practice and shared learning opportunities;
- findings presented at conferences and community sessions; and
- a tele-learning session about effective community-campus partnerships.

Community projects undertaken in the first year of the hub are described below.

**Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction collaborated with McMaster University:** The Living Wage employer movement in Hamilton is expected to result in very tangible benefits to workers with low wages. This project resulted in guidelines for implementation of a living wage for employers that would be applicable and transferable to other communities across Canada. Students were involved in the development of human resource and practical guidelines for how employers can implement a living wage in their workplace.

**Vibrant Communities Saint John collaborated with University of New Brunswick – Saint John:** This project conducted a research study that explored community-campus engagement through the work of its Promise Partnership. Promise Partnership is a community-based and university-run academic enrichment and poverty reduction initiative focused on the neighbouring low-income community of Crescent Valley. Every child in two local schools was matched with a university student mentor. The research project asked questions of students, mentors, professors and parents as they sought to understand the outcomes, motivation and awareness of this partnership.

**Opportunities Waterloo Region collaborated with Wilfred Laurier University:** This endeavour undertook a research project to more deeply understand societal attitudes toward people living in poverty. Very little research has been conducted in Canada on societal attitudes towards people living in poverty; in particular, there is an absence of research that can access unconscious or deeply held attitudes. In this research study, 100 university students participated in a variety of tests to uncover their attitudes toward people living in poverty.

**Vibrant Communities Calgary collaborated with University of Alberta:** This research project focused on poverty policy. However, this project failed to move forward due to leadership changes at Vibrant Communities Calgary. This was an early lesson learned about the importance of maintaining stable relationships and the challenges that ensue when leadership in either the campus or community environment shifts.

In the subsequent three years, community-campus projects were also developed between Living Saint John in New Brunswick and the University of New Brunswick, Saint John; Pathways to Potential in Windsor and the University of Windsor; and the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership and the University of Saskatchewan.

## **INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**

Some of the early lessons learned focused on both the challenges and opportunities that result from engaging campus and community partners. In the first year, partners reflected that:

- these partnerships take time to nurture and develop;
- in addition to the actual outcomes being achieved, the partners are growing their collective capacities to work together; and

- focusing on policy change issues is challenging but also strategic.

Karen Schwartz, Hub Co-Chair based at Carleton University, offered the following reflections in 2015:

My relationship with my hub community co-lead, Liz Weaver (Vibrant Communities), was an arranged relationship. As the principles of CFICE were organizing the project, they introduced the two of us to see if we could work together as hub co-leads. I am not sure whether Liz realized it, I am sure that I did not, but as we met in-person we were creating a common agenda and testing whether we had a common language. We had to learn each other's jargon and develop trust, which happened very easily as we both had a common vision of what we wanted to do within our hub. I realized that I was working with a strong backbone organization that had clear ideas about how to work to reduce poverty. Since part of their way of operating was to bring together all of the relevant community stakeholders, campuses were already at their community roundtables. We co-created the models of community campus engagement (CCE) that we saw at work in Vibrant Communities (VC) and then set up a mechanism to fund demonstration projects, which involved CCE, but were intended to help reduce poverty.

We consciously equalized power by making all decisions together. Even though my co-lead changed with personnel changes at Vibrant Communities, my community co-lead and I always made decisions together. Donna Jean Forster-Gill, the 2<sup>nd</sup> co-lead, had worked with the project from the beginning and she and I had a trusting relationship by the time she replaced Liz Weaver. Natasha Pei, who replaced Donna-Jean, was my research assistant and a student that I knew since her undergraduate degree so we also had a high level of trust when she became the community co-lead. Within our hub, among our community partners, we created equal relationships by co-creating knowledge. The first co-creation was our hub Theory of Change. Again this was a simple process because VC neighborhood roundtables use Theory of Change often. We had numerous face-to-face meetings where we discussed all aspects of the partnership and the outcomes of the work we were doing. We reviewed the models of CCE and co-created knowledge about how they were changing and evolving. In one of our hub reports we reported on the results of our discussions about equalizing power in this manner.

The Poverty Reduction Hub had on-going conversations about how to balance and equalize power. Community-campus partnerships are unique. The campus

environment works on an academic calendar year and is perceived as having an abundance of human and financial resources available to it. The community partners work throughout the year and, in the case of many Vibrant Communities partners, have limited access to financial resources although they often have an abundance of human resources. This theme will be explored more in the chapter on the evaluation of the project.

The prototype projects undertaken by the local community-campus partnerships were provided with a small amount of financial support, usually around five thousand dollars per year, and were encouraged to hire a research assistant (student) to assist with the local project.

Project timing, resource limitations, relationship building, and stable leadership were variables that the Poverty Reduction Hub partners faced at all levels of the project. The following reflections were shared by the co-chairs of the Hub.

#### Campus Co-Chair Perspective:

- 1) Pick a strong partner with clear ideas of what they want to achieve and a proven track record. And get out of their way.
- 2) Clearly put on the table what you have to offer and what your goals are, what you want from the partnership, and be clear about why you are doing this.
- 3) Be willing to let someone else's agenda drive the research. Put the academic agenda on the back burner.
- 4) Listen more than you talk.
- 5) Avoid university jargon, learn their jargon, agree on the jargon you will use.
- 6) Take the time to look at the world through their lens of reality, and listen to their stories.
- 7) Be honest about what you can offer and the time frame.
- 8) Attend partner meetings, conferences, gatherings.
- 9) Consider the possibility of long term relationships.
- 10) Give the gift of your time.

#### Community Co-Chair Perspective:

- 1) Select an academic partner who understands community and has previously worked in community.
- 2) Clearly put on the table what you have to offer and what your goals are, what you want from the partnership, and be clear about why you are doing this.
- 3) Spend time together to learn about each other's work, personalities and the politics at play.
- 4) Create a comfortable and safe space for community experts to share.



- 5) Avoid community jargon, learn academic jargon, or agree on the jargon that you'll use.
- 6) Be honest about what you can offer and the time frame.
- 7) Attend some academic meetings, conferences, gatherings.
- 8) Commit as much as possible to a long-term relationship.

## **POVERTY REDUCTION HUB OUTCOMES**

Over four years of hub work, the community-campus models of engagement were developed, annually reviewed and evaluated. These steps included several outcomes from hub work, including:

- an environmental scan of the different partnership models in place or in development;
- ongoing documentation of community outcomes and the effectiveness of models of engagement;
- knowledge creation about best practices for creating community-campus partnerships for impact;
- creation of a community of practice and shared learning opportunities;
- the presentation of results at various conferences and community sessions; and
- webinars hosted by Vibrant Communities Canada.

In addition, the Poverty Reduction Hub created a manual that detailed different models of community-campus engagement. This manual was made available to Vibrant Communities partners across Canada. The models of community-campus engagement were also an instrumental component informing the research agenda for the second phase of the CFICE project. The Poverty Reduction Hub community of practice also shared the learning from our demonstration projects related to models of CCE.

The Hub engaged and supported five demonstration projects that have spanned one to three years.

- Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction/ McMaster University: This CCE partnership interviewed small- to medium-sized business owners to assess their view of the hazards of implementing a Living Wage. As of December 2014, 110 employers had signed on to be Living Wage employers.
- Opportunities Waterloo Region/Wilfred Laurier University: Conducted a study that examined the preconceived ideas about people living in poverty of university students and how to change those conceptions.
- Vibrant Communities Saint John New Brunswick/ University of New Brunswick: In the first phase this group evaluated

a CCE that involved university students mentoring youth in designated neighbourhoods with the goal of improving their educational attainment. In the second phase of this CCE partnership they facilitated a city-wide collective impact initiative in Saint John.

- Pathway to Potential/ University of Windsor: The project involved consultations with key stakeholders, a comprehensive scan of local resources, and research on relevant CCE models. These activities resulted in an inventory of existing and potential human and financial resources and recommendations for how these resources could best be leveraged and coordinated to support a sustainable, multidisciplinary CCE. A report outlining the process of developing the inventory and final recommendations was also produced. A day long workshop on enhancing CCE was held in October 2015 to aid in creating the policy change to facilitate CCE between these partners.
- Station 20 West/ University of Saskatchewan: The one year research study explored (a) how effectively community-campus engagement supports innovative capacity building that can strengthen inclusive and sustainable communities; (b) how co-location affects service, how co-locator mandates influence, how synergies develop or not, and how academic presence impacts the model; and (c) how to best measure the impacts and outcomes of innovations for knowledge, frameworks, and tools applicable to urban centres across Canada.

### COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS

At the end of four years, the Poverty Reduction Hub again asked the question: *How did we move the needle on poverty?* The funded demonstration projects were successful. In each case, the campus and community partner significantly contributed to research on an issue related to the decrease or elimination of poverty. The results of these local efforts are ongoing. At the national and local levels, the campus outcomes included the publication of articles on community-campus partnerships in a number of academic journals and presentations about CFICE at over 10 academic conferences and meetings.

The community-campus partners have shared the lessons that they learned, which include:

1. The importance of the process and time to build relationships. There is a need for improved project budgeting to include adequate facilitating of face-to-face meetings. In-person communication is more productive and enables the relationship-building that is essential to the smooth running of this kind of research.

2. The need to recognize that working with partners across the country is more challenging.
3. The importance of checking out our assumptions.
4. Understanding the differences between the university and the community organizations as systems, including differences in language, ways of accomplishing things, ways to facilitate change, etc.
5. How transformative working with a community partner has been to campus partners' research and teaching.
6. Which models of CCE facilitated more equalized power and contributed to better outcomes for the community.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

In an article published on Carleton University's Alumni Website in December 2014, Karen Schwartz, Campus Co-Chair of the CFICE Poverty Reduction Hub, commented about the need to build the bridge between the 'ivory tower' and the community. This publication aims to further document and understand the unique opportunities that emerge when you leverage the knowledge, capacity and intention of community-campus partnerships.

In June 2015, in a post on the Vibrant Communities Canada website ([www.vibrantcommunities.ca](http://www.vibrantcommunities.ca)), I shared my perspectives about the potential of community-campus partnerships. The efforts of all the partners engaged in the CFICE Poverty Reduction Hub contributed to these reflections.

This blog focuses on engaging partners in the campus environment. So what do we mean by campus environment? This includes the administrative staff, faculty, decision-makers, individual students and student groups that can be found on college and university campuses across Canada, the US and internationally. Large institutions like college and university campuses can be complex and dynamic environments themselves. Most college and university structures are composed of a variety of academic and administrative departments and have a host of resources from knowledge, research, facilities, student, faculty and staff and, in some cases financial supports and incentives to help get the work done. On many campuses in Canada and other places, there are specific departments that act as a broker between the campus and the community environments. Before engaging with your campus partner, do your homework and investigate whether this brokering function exists. This could save time and get you connected with individuals you might not have considered in your collaborative efforts. Some campuses are trying to create a single point of contact for the campus, for example McMaster University recently appointed a new Director of Community Engagement (<http://fwi.mcmaster.ca/story/new-director-of-community-engagement-appointed/>).

More typically, communities get access to campus partners through individual connections or relationships. The community member might know someone who works in the campus environment and leverages this connection for the benefit of the organization or collaborative. Another typical point of access is that an academic department reaches into the community and community organizations to secure placement opportunities for students as part of their course curriculum. Beyond placements there is a growing force of community service learning initiatives that bring students from various programs together to bring their learning and skills to community. One example is at the University of Alberta (<http://www.csl.ualberta.ca>). Individual students and/or student groups also engage with the community by hosting special events in the community like Shine-a-thons or student conferences, or may partner with a particular organization to deliver a program or service.

Less typical is the engagement of the campus around a collective impact initiative or a policy change agenda. Over the last three years, Carleton University in Ottawa and a variety of campus and community partners have been engaged in a seven-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research (SSHRC) project examining how to permeate the community-campus walls to move the needle on policy and systems change. There have been many interesting lessons learned in this project including the many challenges that exist in both environments to grow strong collaborative relationships.

However, there are also some exciting opportunities. The campus and community environments contain rich resources, that when deployed in a focused way, can bring new energy, thinking, research and credibility to the collaborative table. Also communities may wish to consider going beyond the teaching research aspects of community campus engagement to considering the potential opportunities provided by endowment investments as well as choices regarding operations. For example, the University of Winnipeg has a not for profit organization tasked with making the university a contributor to sustainable community renewal (<http://uwinnipeg.ca/uwrcrc/>). They also take very community-led approaches to CSL and research.

While individual relationships and connections will continue to be key to these partnerships, the challenge will be to deepen and make these relationships resilient and focused.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS**

- Consider the different elements of the campus environment: administrative and academic faculty and staff, students, student

groups, meeting space, research, strategic advice, funding opportunities, ethics review.

- Build from individual contacts to department and cross-department contacts by presenting the community opportunity to faculty, staff and students.
- Some campus environments have a department that acts as a broker between the campus and community – investigate whether this exists with the campus partner you are approaching.
- Identify in advance how involvement in the community issue can support the priorities of the campus partner or specific department – why they should get involved and how will it benefit them from an academic or research perspective.
- Identify a contact for community-service learning to identify opportunities to engage faculty and students.
- Participate in campus activities – conferences, special events, alumni events to get to know the people and the priorities of the campus.
- Think outside the box – even though you have a strong relationship with a certain department, consider how non-traditional departments might be engaged. For example, food security collaboratives might consider engaging with the School of Business to undertake a cost study around access to local food.
- In rural and remote communities, research and build relationships with campus environments that offer online/remote programs and courses.
- Read the campus website, magazine, student newspaper and alumni magazine to discover what is going on at the institution, including research priorities.
- Meet with key campus leaders to share your collaborative work.
- Research other examples of community-campus partnerships.

### **OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS**

- Collective impact efforts can offer campus partners access to a complex community-wide issue and connections to a broader variety of possible partners that the campus partner may not have previously encountered; this may lead to new possibilities and relationships.
- Collaborative efforts work on a different time schedule than that of a campus, and generally efforts continue throughout the calendar year, whereas the campus environment activities tend to be clustered around an academic calendar that operates from September to April. This theme is revisited in the chap-



ters on the evaluation of the project and the chapter describing the path of true reconciliation from Saskatchewan.

- By connecting with a collaborative or collective impact initiative, the campus environment can be promoted to new and different populations. In Hamilton, Mohawk College has leveraged its involvement with the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction to identify and recruit students from low-income neighbourhoods.
- Recognize that campus partners may not have full knowledge of your collective impact effort and consider early and intentional engagement of campus partners. Do your homework and consider how the campus partner will benefit from the partnership.
- Consider collective impact initiatives for community-service learning.
- Research other examples of community-campus partnerships.

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# MODELS OF COMMUNITY-CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT IN THE POVERTY REDUCTION HUB OF CFICE

KAREN SCHWARTZ

AS DESCRIBED EARLIER IN THIS BOOK, the multi-year project known as Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) explores benefits for communities from research, learning and other partnerships with post-secondary institutions. Within the Poverty Reduction Hub of CFICE, we have explored more specifically how community-campus partnerships can help move the needle on poverty reduction efforts. An initial question that may be asked in these partnerships is: *How do community members gain access to campuses so that they can reap the benefits of this engagement?* Many universities, aware of their responsibility to contribute to civil society, have organized various pathways to welcome communities into institutions and help communities gain access to faculty and student support, while some communities have informally and formally established pathways to gain access to university resources (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; McNall, Reed, Brown, & Allen, 2009). This chapter reviews and reports on what the Poverty Reduction Hub has learned within community projects that have employed diverse models of community-campus engagement.

## **SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Community-campus engagement (CCE) involves partnerships between community-based organizations (community leaders and members) and post-secondary institutions (students, faculty, and administrators) that seek to mobilize the various strengths and resources of each institution for the common good (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Campuses contribute the knowledge and skills of students, faculty, and staff, as well as facilities and research funding in fulfilling their civic responsibility, while commu-

nity organizations (among other things) help to define important research questions and provide access to extended networks (including hard-to-reach populations), as well as provide in-kind contributions of staff and other resources. The most common forms of CCE involve:

- i) **Community-Based Research (CBR):** A collaborative effort between academics and community members to democratize knowledge creation by validating multiple sources of knowledge, discovery and dissemination.
- ii) **Community Service Learning (CSL):** Within community projects, students apply concepts from their coursework, learn about citizenship, and consider how to influence policy off-campus; through this work they bring fresh ideas, diversity and energy to community-based organizations.
- iii) **Community-Based Continuing Education:** Education provided by local school boards, colleges and universities to adults who wish to upgrade their skills.

Community-campus relationships can be extremely useful in maximizing the value of each partner's resources and networks, and with access within the Poverty Reduction Hub to a multi-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant through CFICE, we have been able to witness how partners of differing specializations can complement each other to achieve their goals and make the local community a healthier place. Our community partners have taught us to *apply* and *utilize* the knowledge we develop, directing it to create action and real change in the community. Though many models of CCE exist, the recommendations in this chapter are primarily relevant to post-secondary institutions that have partnered with community-based organizations around **community-based research** (the primary mode of CCE employed within the Poverty Reduction Hub).

#### FOUR MODELS OF CCE

We studied four models of community-campus engagement developed within the Poverty Reduction Hub; these models were visualized and articulated by the Poverty Reduction Hub Committee that met during monthly teleconferences and annual face-to-face events. The models (visual representations) were constructed by community representatives with input from the committee and discussed during annual in-person meetings to gain better understandings about what each model meant and how each model shifted year after year. During the first four years of this hub, annual meetings were attended almost exclusively by Vibrant Communities<sup>1</sup> members. In later years, at least one of our university partners attended the meetings.

The four models of CCE employed in the Poverty Reduction Hub are presented below, and any misrepresentations of models are the responsibility of the Hub committee that created them. The first model involves the university seeking out com-

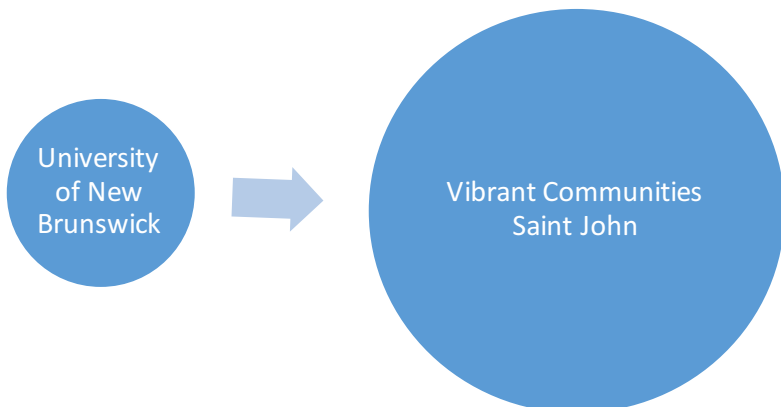
<sup>1</sup> Vibrant Communities Canada, introduced in Chapter 1, is a network of collaborative roundtables established to address poverty reduction from community perspectives.

munity partners on a project-specific basis (Saint John); the second model involves a broker that facilitates the relationship between community and campus (Windsor and Waterloo); the third model describes a centre for engagement located in the community where campus and community are co-located (Saskatoon); and the fourth model provides an example of a university-based centre for community engagement (Hamilton). We examine these models in terms of how they were established and evolved over the life of our hub's work, and in terms of their decision-making structure. In the graphics below, the size of the circles was conceptualized, by the creators of the models, to depict the relative power of each partner. A summary of strengths and challenges associated with these models is then provided in the following section of this chapter.

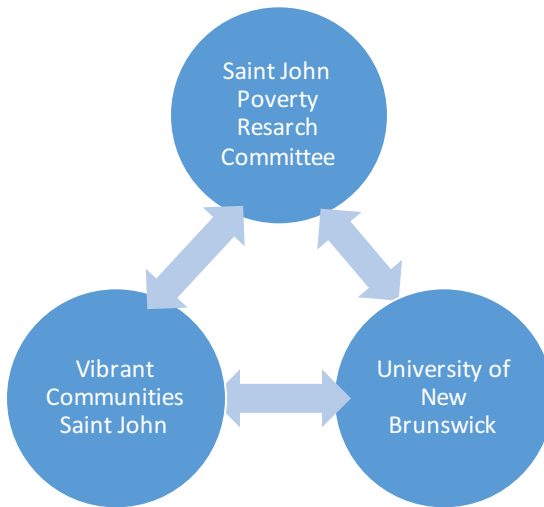
***MODEL 1: THE UNIVERSITY REACHES OUT TO A PROMINENT COMMUNITY PARTNER TO FORM AN ON-GOING RELATIONSHIP***

This model was employed in Saint John, New Brunswick, and fueled by a long-standing relationship between the community and university, in which a certain level of trust had been established and a history of mutual benefits already recognized. This has been described as an institutionalized working relationship, in which project leaders felt confident that if they should leave, the research committee and the work would continue to move forward.

**YEAR 1:** In the first year of the project, the University of New Brunswick (UNB) reached out specifically to Vibrant Communities Saint John, a well-known collaborative planning table in the community, to conduct community-based research on evaluation. Within this relationship, the partners worked very closely together, with each of the stakeholders at the table being champions in their respective fields and carrying a significant amount of clout within their own organization or sector (for example, one partner is the Dean of the Business School at UNB). One factor to consider regarding this strong connection and investment in the partnership is the involvement of a key academic leader with the poverty reduction community, and their personal interest in the relationship and work being done within the project. Another factor is that the community partner had an active role in designing the research questions to be investigated and setting up the project that was evaluated.



**YEAR 2:** In the second year, the evaluation research project concluded, but the Vibrant Communities partner sought to solidify the community-campus relationship that had been so successful. A committee was formed to bring all of four sectors (government, public, private, and non-profit) to the table in collaboration, working towards a single shared vision: a cross-sector collaborative poverty reduction strategy for the city. This group, the Saint John Poverty Research Committee, became a separately functioning body that then invited the University of New Brunswick and Vibrant Communities to participate in the new initiative, thereby facilitating (rather than brokering) a newly structured community-campus relationship. The committee has been able to mobilize research funding and set up a sustainable financial structure. Both community organizers and academic faculty are involved in this multi-sector committee, with all poverty research conducted in the region being vetted through the group, which is connected to and able to influence local governing bodies.

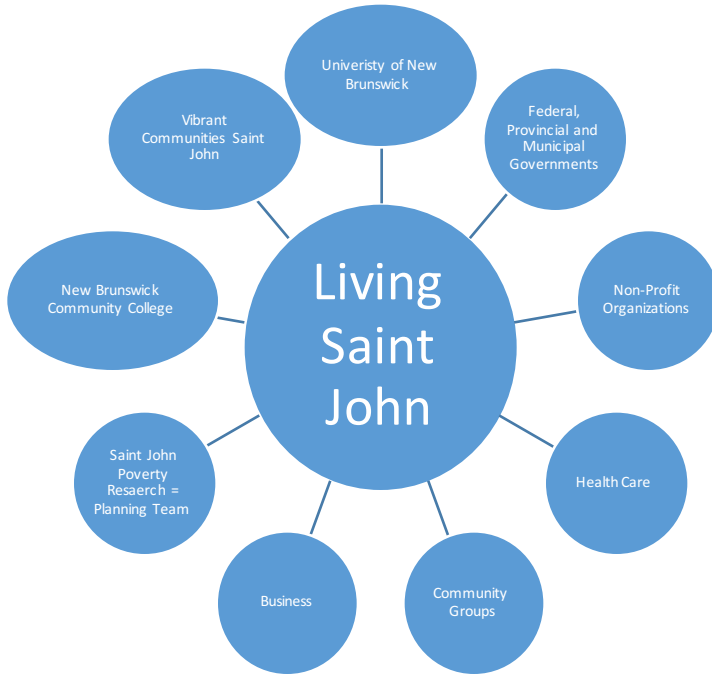


**YEARS 3-5:** In subsequent years the Living Saint John (Living SJ) project took shape and became bigger than the sum of its parts. Living SJ is a diverse network of partners representing business, government and educational institutions; philanthropic, non-profit and community organizations; and local neighbourhoods. These partners have agreed to be change leaders and work together to strengthen the city and end generational poverty, and community-campus engagement is embedded in the work they are doing in a number of ways. The University of New Brunswick and New Brunswick Community College play critical roles in the project, with faculty sitting at the Leadership Team, co-chairing one of the Collective Impact Teams and partnering in collaborative research opportunities. Students have also been involved in Living SJ through work with one of the Collective Impact Teams (Close the Education Achievement Gap) in developing a website that offers information on hundreds of programs in Saint John to help children, youth and adults achieve a quality education, find employment and enrich their lives.



The long-term goal of Living SJ is to improve the lives of those most vulnerable in Saint John, and so the success of this work will ultimately benefit these individuals the most.

There are 71 different individuals involved in Living SJ's teams and committees (not including sub-committees) with all sectors represented. The opportunity for cross-pollination of knowledge through this process is vast. Work around poverty reduction involves a commitment to reciprocity in knowledge exchange and ideas generation, with all partner (community and campus) voices and perspectives encompassed.



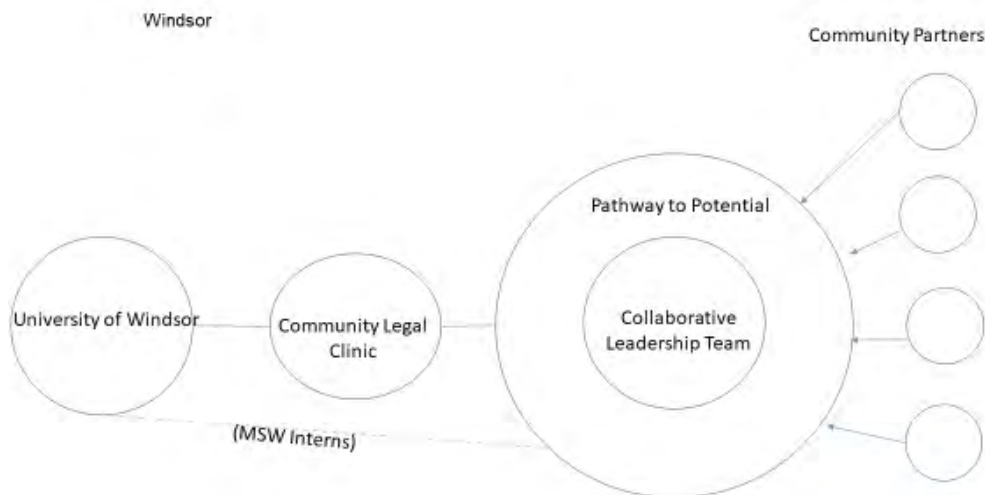
### **MODEL 2: BROKERAGE MODELS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION**

**BROKERAGE MODEL 1:** One brokerage model from the University of Windsor demonstrates how a boundary spanner can act as a broker and bring community and campus partners together. One definition of a boundary spanner includes,

people with the ability to bring together academics, community members and organizations to work towards a common goal ... a boundary spanner is heavily invested in both sides of the collaboration and is often directly involved in the project as opposed to acting as an intermediary. (Elsharkawy, 2015)

In this example the university, through its community legal clinic, sought to create relationships for engagement with a collaborative poverty reduction team. This model was very vulnerable and dependent on the faculty champion, who was a

boundary spanner because he was part of the legal clinic and part of the university. When the community legal clinic lost funding, the initiative became stalled, therefore we only have one depiction of the model. Further research could better determine how concepts of brokering merge with those of boundary spanners within the context of CCE.

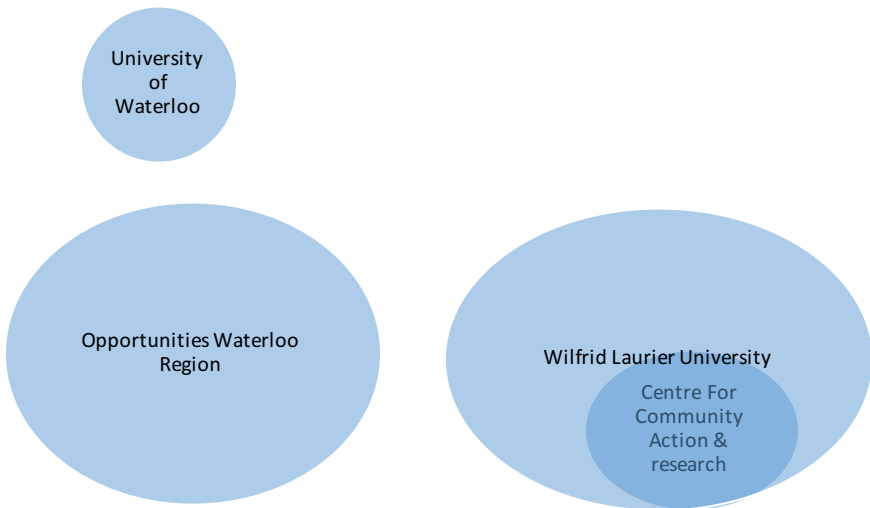


**BROKERAGE MODEL 2 – YEAR 1:** This model exemplifies the usage of a broker organization and the importance of a formal relationship to establish the connection between community and post-secondary institutions. This model was initiated when a professor at Wilfrid Laurier University was looking to establish a long-term, formal relationship with one community partner that had similar poverty reduction goals and visions as the university, and could facilitate student service learning. The university contracted with the (now named) Laurier Centre for Community Research, Learning and Action (<https://researchcentres.wlu.ca/ccrla/index.html>) to establish a link with Opportunities Waterloo<sup>2</sup>, and a bond was formed with one strong leader at each institution driving the partnership in their respective organizations. There was also another local university involved in this model, but connected only in communication with the community partner and cooperating on a smaller scale.



2 Opportunities Ontario, featured in Chapter 6, worked with Wilfrid Laurier University to explore stigma towards individuals living in poverty.

**BROKERAGE MODEL 2 – YEAR 2:** In the second year of the project, the smaller university partner chose to carry on with research in its own direction, losing communication with the community partner, and withdrew active participation from the Poverty Reduction Hub’s network. Meanwhile, Wilfrid Laurier University subsumed the broker into their Faculty of Science, forming a more entrenched relationship within the institution and managing all community-campus research that the university conducts. The Centre has kept its mandate to advance community well-being and social justice, and has been perceived as playing a very helpful role in sustaining the partnership. And whereas in the first year the academic partner was primarily driving the project forward, in the second year the academic partner took a step back and listened more to the community partner, fostering a much more equitable relationship between the two. In particular, recognition has increased that the community is a stabilizing force that engenders continuity of the project while academic staff, students, and members of the broker organization experience higher turnover. However, this model is also vulnerable to the community organization losing its core funding, which is what happened to Opportunities Waterloo during Year 4 of our project.

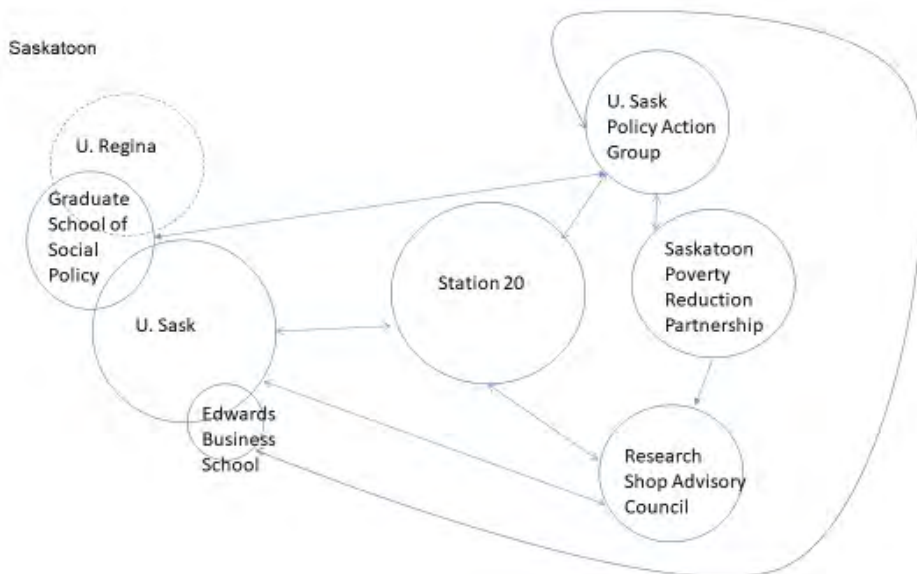


**MODEL 3: A CO-LOCATED MODEL FOR COMMUNITY-CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT**

Station 20 West involves the co-location of poverty reduction services/organizations for individuals based on specific needs (including retail grocery services, a health clinic, library, police outreach, housing office, etc.) and a university outreach office that facilitates community-campus engagement, aides in recruiting students and makes the university more visible to the community. The Poverty Reduction Hub helped to fund a project where the Community-University Institute for Social Research, the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership and Station 20 West examine community-campus engagement within their co-location station. The partners are exploring how CCE supports innovative capacity building, how co-location affects service and the synergies created (or not), and how academic presence impacts models of CCE.

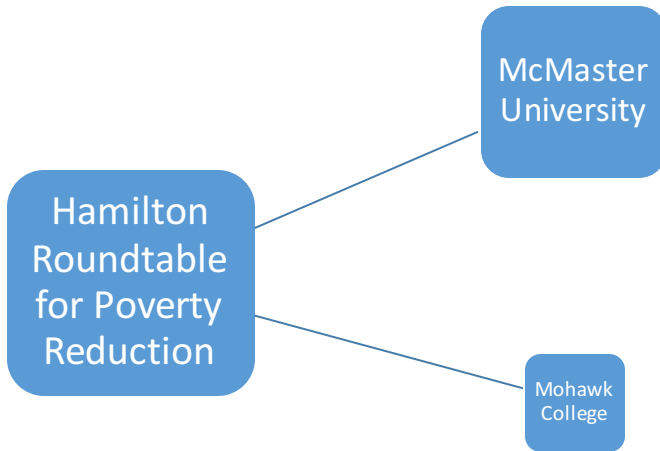
Questions being explored by CCE partners at Station 20 West:

- Can this model be duplicated in other cities?
- What would a research shop look like?
- How does community-campus engagement support innovative community capacity building?
- How does co-location of partner organizations affect service? How do synergies develop among them (or not)? How does the university's presence impact the community enterprise?



#### **MODEL 4: A UNIVERSITY-BASED CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

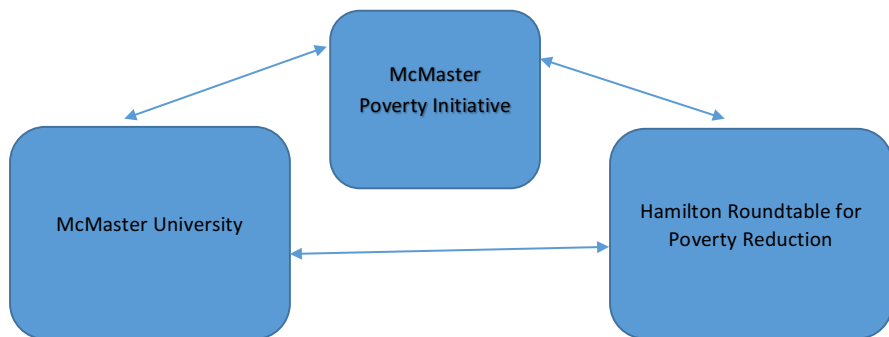
**YEAR 1:** The model of Hamilton's first year of its project within the Poverty Reduction Hub shows that this relationship was established when the Internal Poverty Roundtable initiative of McMaster University sought out community partners for research and found an answer with the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (HRPR). The McMaster Community Poverty Initiative (MCPI) was formed in 2007 by concerned faculty, staff and students in the Faculty of Social Sciences who were interested in expanding McMaster's role in addressing local conditions of poverty. Through the HRPR's network the project further reached out to a local post-secondary institution, Mohawk College, who themselves had initiated a Neighbourhood Access Project. This program breaks down barriers to post-secondary education by distributing financial credit to students who have participated in community service. The HRPR also joined with the City of Hamilton in dedicating resources and research work toward a vision of making Hamilton the 'best place to raise a child'.



**YEARS 2-3:** In the second year the partnership structures shifted: Mohawk College withdrew from the initiative, and McMaster University became a much larger institutional partner, equal in contribution and activities with the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction. The smaller, independent circles located within the university indicate the numerous *informal* relationships that the HRPR further established with various groups on campus, none of which coordinate their activities, but whom are independently working on or researching poverty issues in Hamilton, and who are connected through individuals at HRPR. Of important note in the second year of the project, a member on the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction transfused boundaries by finding employment with McMaster University as the Community Development Coordinator, effectively creating a formal link between community and campus. The Hamilton group found, as a lesson of previously stalled talks, that personal relationships are very important to the success of the project, with the ability among individuals to understand and navigate resources in both worlds being extremely beneficial. This Community Development Coordinator brings community knowledge and insight in establishing relationships within the university institution, is more able to determine the hierarchy of decision-making, and has more formal access to students and other resources offered by the university.

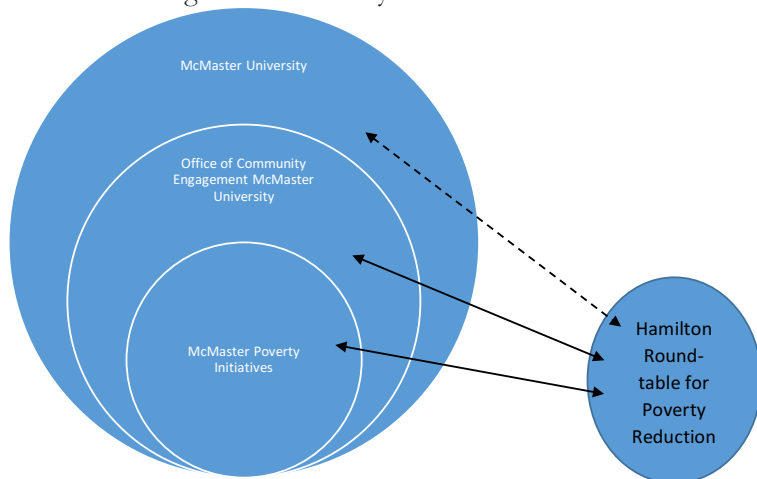
One of the notable outcomes of this new partnership was a Living Wage research project by a graduate student in the DeGroote School of Business at McMaster. The project involved a 132-person survey in downtown Hamilton on attitudes toward Living Wage policies, as well as a literature review (based in business literature). The research compared labour force attachment between minimum wage (approximately \$9/hr at the time) and living wage (approximately \$15/hour at the time), and found higher affective commitment, lower rates of turnover, and higher rates of organizational citizenship behavior (Zeng, 2014) for employees earning a living wage. This research took place over the course of a full year and served to strengthen the partnership between McMaster and the Hamilton Roundtable. The research was used by the Hamilton Roundtable in its work with employers (including McMaster Univer-

sity) to show the benefits of paying a living wage. The Hamilton Roundtable reported that having this research come out of the School of Business was especially helpful.



**YEAR 4:** While the McMaster Community Poverty Initiative continued making progress with community partners addressing poverty, there was a broader strategy emerging across the McMaster campus; the senior administration wanted to build a mechanism that would result in more capacity for community engagement. The Network for Community-Campus Partnerships was created in September 2013 to provide a shared framework for McMaster to support its goals related to community engagement, and a formalized Office of Community Engagement was established and built into the base budget. This office has demonstrated success in building partnerships across Hamilton and across academic disciplines, supporting efforts related to city-building, health inequities and poverty reduction (<http://macconnector.mcmaster.ca/macconnect/about/about-us-home>).

Community engagement at McMaster University is defined as valuing the expert knowledge and passion that members of the community (both local and global) have about their communities and issues affecting them; fostering ongoing collaboration between university and community partners to better understand and consider the issues identified as priorities by local and global communities; and performing research, teaching and service with community members and partners for the public good within the local or global community.





\*The dotted arrow in the above diagram indicates that while formal communication channels continue between the MCPI and the Office of Community Engagement, HRPR still occasionally makes independent links with other individuals and departments at McMaster University.

### A SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF MODELS OF CCE IN THE POVERTY REDUCTION HUB

	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
<b>MODEL 1:</b> University reaches out to community partner on project-specific basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds on established trust between partners, recognized history of mutual benefits</li> <li>Institutionalized relationship supports ongoing work amid potential changes</li> <li>Ability to find resources to carry out the program and mobilize CFICE funds to evaluate its impact on poverty reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be vulnerable if there is not a consistent contact from the post-secondary institution</li> <li>May be vulnerable if university contact does not come from community-driven CCE</li> <li>Years 3-5 of the Saint John Model would be challenging to replicate due to the number of organizations involved in the collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May work better in smaller urban areas where it may be easier to get to know individuals in local community organizations</li> </ul>
<b>MODEL 2:</b> Broker facilitates the community-campus relationship (through a boundary spanner or broker organization)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for more entrenched, sustained relationships between communities and academic institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boundary spanner model vulnerable and dependent on the faculty champion</li> <li>Vulnerable to the community organization losing its core funding</li> </ul>	

	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
<p><b>MODEL 3:</b> Centre for engagement where community and campus are co-located</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for deeper relationships between community and campus partners with regular in-person engagement, strengthened over time</li> <li>• Increased focus on and understanding regarding community activities and needs</li> <li>• Greater possibility for a community-driven CCE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-location within a dedicated physical space requires sustained commitment and funding from community organizations and academic institutions</li> </ul>	
<p><b>MODEL 4:</b> University-based centre for community engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for significant resource support for fostering community-campus partnerships from the academic institution</li> <li>• Potential for community-driven CCE</li> <li>• Potential to support projects across academic disciplines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable to changing institutional mandates and budget priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal relationships and the ability to understand and navigate resources in both worlds were important to the success of the Hamilton project</li> </ul>

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL MODELS OF CCE**

This discussion of models of CCE within the Poverty Reduction Hub of CFICE has highlighted how varied relationships between communities and campuses within specific contexts have influenced progress on poverty reduction efforts, relations of power between partners and modifications to project governance over time. For example, two of the models built on a strong pre-existing history that could be leveraged to build a stronger partnership. In other cases, there were weaker or more vulnerable relationships which meant that the collaboration did not reach its full potential. In all cases, both communities and post-secondary institutions benefited from these reciprocal relationships, and meaningful project outcomes were achieved.

Overall, we learned that there are many pathways into both the campus and the community experience. Within these contexts campus and community partners can bring resources, knowledge, expertise and connections that can be employed toward shared and lasting outcomes. Drawing on these insights, we conclude this

chapter by offering a series of prompting questions and suggestions to guide community-based organizations that are interested in connecting with post-secondary institutions in joint learning, research and/or knowledge dissemination endeavors.

Consider existing relationships with the university/college in question:

- What are groups currently doing in the university/college?
- Is there a pre-existing group with similar interests?
- Who is doing research in this area? Can you identify specific staff or students involved?
- Is there an established broker group or individual to help facilitate the relationship?
- Do you or your organization already have an existing point of contact, or the ability to build on a pre-existing relationship with someone within the institution?

Explore potential network connections and influence:

- Are the partnering university/college faculty well connected in their field?
- Can you identify key players from both sides of the partnership that have integral influence (e.g. resource mobilization) on the project? What are the longer-term implications of these individuals' priorities?
- Are there relevant key decision-makers who are receptive to the poverty reduction movement (e.g. President, CEO) with whom you can build a relationship?
- Can you enlist a *dedicated* faculty member to drive the research, especially an individual who has significant power in their institution (e.g. the Dean)?
- Can you create space for or take advantage of individuals crossing boundaries between community and campus, speaking both languages and able to navigate both organizations?

Think about how the efforts/needs of your organization may appeal to the priorities of the university/college:

- Emphasize the 'fit' between their mission statement (as advertised to students and prospective students) and your research project.
- Leverage the interests of the institution to fit the process/goals of the project. Each organization benefits from projects in a different way. Identify how academic partners could further their own goals within projects. It is often helpful to create a diverse range of options.

Formalize the partnership (e.g. through a memorandum, third-party broker, etc.):

- This is helpful in stabilizing conditions for the community partner or students who often have high turnover rates.
- Employ a CCE broker to facilitate conversation or research between the community and campus partners.

*In general, ask yourself: Do you feel that this campus is ready to champion the community?*

Consider key factors before initiating CCE:

- How project stability may be maintained through formal agreements (as mentioned above – as personal relationships change, so does the nature of the partnership)
- Potential power imbalances between community and campus partners
- Potential tensions between institutional policies and aims and the community's ability to engage students in the work
- Opportunities to leverage relationships to create institutional change
- How to develop relevant and legitimate research projects for communities (rather than focusing on shorter-term and over-researched issues)
- Consideration of resource needs (e.g. human, financial, time resources), as CCE is often undertaken 'off the side of the desk' by partners

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# UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION: ACHIEVING SOCIAL CHANGE

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## **INTRODUCTION: SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK**

With a population of 126,202 in 2016, the Saint John Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is the fourth largest urban region in Atlantic Canada and the second largest urban area in the Province of New Brunswick (Statistics Canada, 2016). Moreover, with its port facilities, pulp mills, oil refinery, brewery, liquefied natural gas terminal and other industrial activities, Saint John is the industrial heart of New Brunswick. In addition to a strong industrial base, information technology and financial services play an important role in the urban economy.

Despite this diverse labour force, the city's unemployment rate was nearly 10 per cent in June 2016—well above the national average of 6.9 per cent. The municipality of Saint John, at the core of this CMA, has experienced economic challenges, population losses in most census periods since the 1970s and has been observed to rank very high on national indices of poverty (Davies & Murdie, 1993, p. 62; Hatfield, 2005, p. 13; Canada Without Poverty, 2016, p. 4-5). Seldom highlighted in the regional and national literature are the various attempts to address the challenges associated with highly concentrated pockets of poverty in these urban settings. This chapter describes the efforts of a unique university-community collaboration that attempts to address some of the challenges faced by residents of central city neighbourhoods that are characterized by high rates of poverty in Saint John, New Brunswick. It will also explore how a Collective Impact (CI) approach has been used in the city to increase its impact in reducing generational poverty.

Local studies have identified five priority neighborhoods in the City of Saint John based on a range of variables including income, education, labour force participation, incidences of single parent families and various measures of poverty (Human Development Council Saint John and Vibrant Communities Saint John, 2005). The neighbourhoods identified are Crescent Valley, the Old North End, the South End, the Lower West Side and Waterloo Village, all located within the central core of the municipality of Saint John. These neighborhoods are the focus of many of the initiatives that have been directed at poverty reduction in the Saint John CMA. Furthermore, to help inform the Canadian poverty reduction strategy, the Government of Canada is conducting extensive case studies in six communities, Saint John being one, as part of its “Tackling Poverty Together” project (Tackling Poverty Together, 2016).

### **POVERTY REDUCTION IN SAINT JOHN**

The experience of poverty in Saint John highlights extreme contrasts depending upon the neighbourhood in which one resides. The Saint John CMA poverty rates compare to national averages; however, when examined by sub-district, great divides in social and economic conditions emerge. Saint John’s bedroom communities of Rothesay, Quispamsis and Grand-Bay Westfield are among the wealthiest in New Brunswick, while the city’s inner core records some of the highest concentrations of poverty in the province (Statistics Canada, 2011).

For the past 15 years, Saint John multi-sector leaders have been working together and building on the assets that exist in the community to improve the lives of people living in poverty. In the mid-1990s, two initiatives commenced to address poverty. The Urban Core Support Network (later renamed Women’s Empowerment Network) facilitated the identification of policy barriers affecting individuals living in poverty, particularly women. The Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCA-PI) was formed by business leaders, dedicated to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty by working together with community organizations and residents. Later in 2005, Saint John became one of the 12 trail builders (Vibrant Communities Saint John) involved in a national partnership to develop and implement local poverty reduction strategies, led by Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation (Carlton & Born, 2016; Vibrant Communities, 2010). The collaborative nature of the Saint John community has enabled the city to achieve some significant impacts in reducing poverty; yet, as is the case with solving complex social issues, it is a long journey with many learnings and adaptations.

In addition, ground-breaking research emerged in 2005 which clearly highlighted the disparities of poverty across the city. Poverty and Plenty was a statistical snapshot of the quality of life in Greater Saint John. This research was the result of a collaboration among Vibrant Communities Saint John, the Saint John Human Development Council (local social planning agency) and the University of New Brunswick in Saint John (UNB Saint John). Supported by a Community University Research Alliance project (CURA), this research highlighted that poverty was concentrated in a number of Saint John neighbourhoods; thus, strategies and actions began focusing on these areas.



A follow up study entitled Poverty and Plenty II was conducted in 2008 using 2006 Census data for an updated statistical picture of Saint John (Vibrant Communities Saint John, 2008). This study continued to promote a greater understanding of the scope of poverty in Saint John. For example, the City of Saint John's child poverty rate was 34 per cent; however, in the low-income neighbourhood of Crescent Valley, it was 77 per cent. Labour force participation was 62 per cent in the city, while in the same neighbourhood of Crescent Valley, it was recorded at 34 per cent (Vibrant Communities Saint John, 2008, p. 4-6). Although the Statistics Canada Census (2006) highlighted that progress had been made in reducing the overall poverty rate in the city from 27 percent to 20.8 per cent between 1996 and 2006, Poverty and Plenty II clearly highlighted that there was a long journey ahead.

### **COLLECTIVE IMPACT: INCREASING IMPACT IN SAINT JOHN**

The Collective Impact (CI) approach was a concept first articulated by Kania and Kramer in 2011 and further expanded upon by Cabaj and Weaver in 2016. This approach was initially adopted by many communities, particularly within the United States, to address complex societal problems such as poverty.

CI is centred around five components:

- a) developing a common agenda: agreeing on a shared vision for change
- b) shared measurement: setting targets and indicators that will help us understand the difference we are making
- c) mutually reinforcing activities: partners aligning activities to increase impact
- d) continuous communication: engaging and sharing information between partners
- e) a backbone structure: which provides support in the process through coordination, communication and evaluation.

CI calls for constant communication and coordination as partners move from more isolated actions to aligning services and leveraging resources towards shared goals.

In 2013 community partners came together to establish a new approach for the community to help address poverty in Saint John. This group used a CI model as their inspiration to create change, and in 2014 Living SJ emerged. It was recognized that tackling generational poverty requires not only multi-sector leadership to drive comprehensive change, but also an approach that enables partners to work differently together.

The Living SJ CI approach was a catalyst for bringing together senior leaders, or influencers, representing business, government, non-profits and neighbourhoods to develop a common agenda for solving generational poverty. With support from multi-sector leaders, the community of Saint John came together to identify critical community needs, with suggestions on major improvements. Comprehensive research on key issue areas provided a contextual backdrop for extensive consultations in a community engagement process involving government, academic, non-profit and neighbourhood leaders. Four priority areas were identified: close the education

achievement gap, improve the health of residents through neighbourhood-based models of care, connect low-income residents to employment through education and training, and transform low-income neighbourhoods into vibrant mixed-income communities. Targets were defined around each priority area, and the Living SJ Social Renewal Strategy was drafted and released in December of 2014 (Living SJ, 2014).

The Living SJ partnership includes a leadership team, four CI teams developed to devise action plans to drive change forward around priority areas and two backbone staff. There is a network of over 100 partners from three levels of government, the private sector, non-profits and neighbourhoods.

## **CFICE IN SAINT JOHN**

Community-First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE), a seven-year action research project that began in 2012, helped to further accelerate the pace of Saint John's poverty reduction efforts and build stronger connections between the University of New Brunswick (UNB) Saint John campus and the Saint John community.

A long history existed between the campus and the Saint John community. UNB Saint John was established just over 50 years ago, in response to a demand from the local community to have a university in Saint John (McGahan, 1998). In recent years, the university has endeavoured to build upon the connections with the community and find ways to strengthen those ties. In many respects, the Saint John Campus could be characterized as a "community" university.

The CFICE initiative in Saint John identified four distinct projects to be undertaken in partnership. Each project was unique in their project lead, participants and research methodologies; however, all related to the overall theme of poverty reduction. A series of tools and knowledge projects were developed, including websites, infographics and an online searchable database that contains hundreds of records on available programs for residents in the areas of academic, basic needs and life enrichment (Living SJ, Cradle to Career). In addition, there were two foundational projects: Evaluation of Saint John's Collective Impact Approach and Research on The Promise Partnership Programming.

## **CFICE FOUNDATIONAL PROJECTS: EVALUATION OF SAINT JOHN'S COLLECTIVE IMPACT APPROACH**

One of the features of Collective Impact (CI) is the process of ongoing learning and adaptation. In their recent article on CI, Cabaj and Weaver (2016) revisit the five principles of CI and highlight that the process of robust learning and evaluation is what is really foundational to community-wide change efforts. CI is about laying the foundations for strategic learning that enables the partners to evolve their strategy together.

As CI initiatives progress, there are different areas of focus and different questions for evaluating progress (Tamarack Institute, 2016). Living SJ shifted from the pre-start-up phase of generating ideas and hosting dialogues, in which the community was engaged in identifying priorities and targets for reducing poverty, to initiating action with the establishment of a backbone leadership team and CI teams. By the end of the first year in 2015, it was organizing for impact. At this point, Living SJ

partners agreed to take stock of the progress that had occurred with each priority area and evaluate the CI process in Saint John.

With CFICE funding, an external developmental evaluator was hired to identify the extent to which the Living SJ network was following principles of CI as well as its progress towards targets (Imprint Inc., 2016). The evaluation enabled partners to reflect on their progress to date and adjust/adapt their strategies to increase impact. The evaluation supported knowledge transfer with other communities learning about the process, challenges and experiences including another Atlantic province in earlier stages of their CI process.

The evaluation consisted of interviews with organizations engaged in moving the priority areas forward, focus groups with each of the CI teams, interviews with Living SJ staff, and review of updates and reports. The learnings from the process were both rich and encouraging. When organizations were surveyed about the extent to which their involvement with Living SJ changed how their organization approached its poverty reduction work, 75 per cent responded that it either significantly or moderately impacted them. There were clear examples of organizations aligning resources more strategically and funders aligning their granting approach with Living SJ priorities. There were also emergent innovative programs working towards targets. Network changes were also evident, with over 100 individuals collaborating from diverse sectors.

Essential to the evaluation was the identification of the risks which impacted the direction of Living SJ. The strategy was initially set up with four collective impact teams: education, health, employment and neighbourhoods, and each team shared feedback about challenges they were encountering. The neighbourhood CI team highlighted their lack of integration to the whole strategy. While there were clear actions and targets for education, health and employment, the neighbourhood target to transform low-income neighbourhoods into vibrant mixed-income communities was a long-term outcome that in many ways relied on the other teams to be successful in their priority areas.

What emerged from the evaluation process was a rethinking of the role of the neighbourhood CI team, and from this evolved one of the most significant learnings and adaptations: a remodelling of Living SJ. The neighbourhood CI team shifted as a separate team into the centre of the work of Living SJ. Lifting families out of poverty touches upon each and every CI team. If as a community, Saint John is able to achieve its education, health and employment targets, it will improve the quality of lives of families and begin to build robust neighbourhoods. The model redesign was visually represented in the redesign of infographics between 2014 and 2016 (Living SJ, 2014; Living SJ, 2016).

An outcome of this shift was to more meaningfully engage individuals with lived experience. Resident leaders are now playing an increasingly engaged role on all of the CI teams as well as additional members sitting on the leadership team. In the recent 2017 HUMA (Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities) hearing in Saint John as part of Tackling Poverty Together, the Living SJ presentation was jointly shared by

the Executive Director of Living SJ and a community organizer with lived experience. Ensuring that the Parliamentary committee was able to hear from someone who has experienced the complex challenges of poverty was a priority. The year one evaluation demonstrated that Living SJ is on track with its commitment to CI in a real, measurable way. It provided a roadmap that continues to guide Living SJ to adjust, adapt and work towards achieving the goal of ending generational poverty.

### **RESEARCH ON PROMISE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMING**

In 2010, building upon the CURA project led by Dr. Robert MacKinnon at UNB Saint John, the office of the Vice-President established a unique community outreach initiative working with youth in two of the low-income neighbourhoods that had been identified in Poverty and Plenty and Poverty and Plenty II. The initiative, called The Promise Partnership, is aimed at reducing poverty through educational outreach programs.

The Promise Partnership at UNB Saint John connects the university with the Saint John community to help alleviate the academic achievement gap associated with poverty (Lee & Burkam, 2002). This initiative provides educational support and opportunities to youth in two Saint John neighbourhoods that have been identified as having high levels of poverty and low high school completion rates. The Promise Partnership programs employ instrumental mentoring as a primary mechanism of change. Close ties with the community enrich the university experience for UNB Saint John students by providing meaningful hands-on learning, volunteer and personal growth experiences.

As standard practice, The Promise Partnership undergoes regular process and outcome evaluations to ensure best practice adherence and program effectiveness for meeting primary goals. The CFICE research project allowed The Promise Partnership to expand beyond primary outcome evaluation to investigate potential secondary effects of campus-community engagement. The current project contained two segments. The first segment concentrated on UNB Saint John mentors' attitudes and perceptions. Research has shown that individuals' attitudes about people living in poverty directly impacts willingness to help poverty reduction initiatives and beliefs about welfare and welfare reform (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson & Tagler, 2002). The second segment sought to elucidate perceptions of the importance of education held by the parents living in the identified low socioeconomic areas. Research has indicated that the attitude/perception of parents within low socioeconomic communities has a strong mediating effect on youth educational achievement (Hill & Craft, 2003).

The CFICE project received approval from the UNB Saint John Ethics Committee. Questionnaire packets containing validated questionnaires were administered to 112 UNB Saint John students (56 Promise Partnership mentors; 56 UNB Saint John students who were not mentors as the control group) and 110 parents of school aged children living in poverty (55 with children involved in Promise Partnership programs; 55 from a community not being serviced by The Promise Partnership as the control group).

As described above, the first research segment focused on student volunteers at UNB Saint John. The survey research showed that all university students reported that they were motivated, or could be motivated, to volunteer by their concern with career-related benefits that could be obtained from volunteer experiences. This emphasis on career motivation has not been shown in previous research when looking at volunteers who are not university students (Nichols & King, 1999; Bussell & Forbes, 2001). This difference has implications for recruitment of university students as volunteers. As a result of this finding, The Promise Partnership devised a new recruitment strategy that emphasized career skills building, resulting in a 50 per cent increase in volunteer recruitment.

UNB Saint John Promise Partnership mentors displayed significantly higher scores on leadership skills, civic action and social justice than UNB Saint John students who did not mentor. Additionally, the UNB Saint John mentor cohort demonstrated more positive views of people who live in poverty and were less likely to attribute poverty to individualistic causes. One of UNB's strategic priorities is to build a better New Brunswick and leaders of tomorrow. That extends beyond classroom education and involves creating knowledgeable and compassionate leaders. The UNB Saint John student component of the CFICE project indicates that The Promise Partnership at UNB Saint John is helping to support the leaders of tomorrow by providing diverse experiences and enhancing the student volunteers' understanding of a complex societal issue.

Early contact with the university through youth programming was successful in helping to increase parental support for academics. The second research segment found that significantly more of The Promise Partnership parents (88 per cent) held positive views about university compared to the control parent cohort, with 48.8 per cent of parents stating that their child's involvement in The Promise Partnership programs changed their perception and opinion about universities. Sixty-two per cent further indicated that prior to their child's involvement with The Promise Partnership, they did not know much about the University and did not know it cared about communities like theirs. Moreover, 46 per cent said that their child's involvement has made them and their children believe that university could be a realistic option for them. This result was further demonstrated with significantly more Promise Partnership parents (56.1 per cent) stating their belief in their child's abilities to obtain a university degree compared to control parents (30.2 per cent). Furthermore, 96 per cent were confident their child would graduate high school compared to 83 per cent of control parents.

The control parents wrote significantly more negative opinions about university compared to The Promise Partnership parents, and 63.2 per cent of those comments referred to prohibitive costs and exclusivity they associated with the university. In contrast, only 5.5 per cent of The Promise Partnership parents made a negative comment, all of which focused on debt accumulation associated with attending university.

Previous research predominately delineates differences in post-secondary educational support based on socioeconomic status as arising from mistrust of edu-

cational institutions and stereotype threat (McDermont & Rothenburg, 2000). However, misinformation about availability and cost of university can be a key factor in creating the perceived lack of parental support for post-secondary education in low socioeconomic families (Usher, 2005). Applying those principles, the research investigated the parent cohort's ideas on the cost of university and the expected pay increases associated with having a university degree (Figure 1). If calculating the cost/benefit of attending university, using the numbers that the control parents believed to be true, attending university would result in a \$96,328.35 financial loss. Based on misinformation, low-income families are making the decision to not encourage their children to attend university. These misconceptions were not evident in The Promise Partnership parents. Making accurate information available could help increase parental support for education in low socioeconomic families.

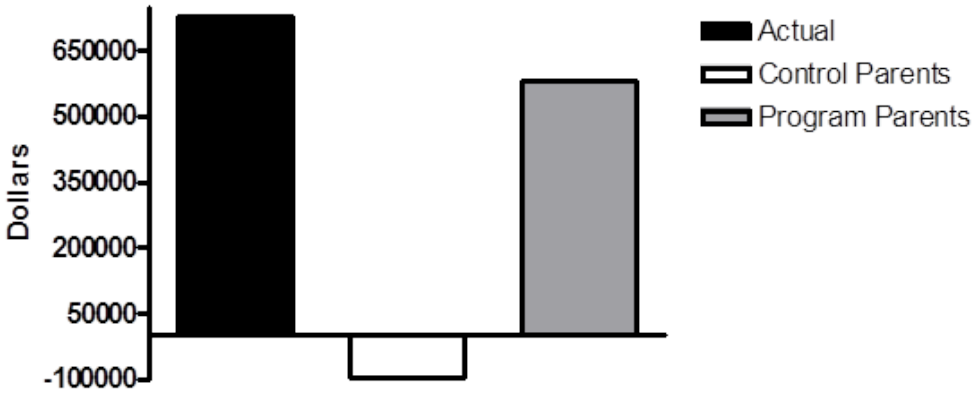
A notable result from this study was that parents reported a desire to assist their children with early literacy but stated a lack of ability or knowledge to help. From this finding, The Promise Partnership created a new six-week program called Bonding with Books. This program concentrated on increasing parents' concrete literacy knowledge and providing them with materials and hands-on learning practices to allow them to help their early learners. Subsequent evaluation of Bonding with Books programming showed that it was successful in significantly increasing parents' self-efficacy and concrete literacy knowledge.

Combating the poverty cycle is an ongoing and complex challenge. However, altering perceptions of the importance of education is a necessary step in facing this challenge. It is encouraging to see the opinions on university expressed by the parents in the target neighbourhood of Crescent Valley. Likewise, it is a promising finding that the mentors expressed more positive opinions of those who live in poverty, since discrimination toward those from low-income backgrounds is one of the hurdles in overcoming poverty cycles.

This research would not have been possible without the support of the community and campus. The community includes Vibrant Communities Saint John, Crescent Valley Tenants Association, the Family Resource Centre, and the Anglophone South School District that provided the link to the parent participants. Their assistance in allowing us into their communities and creating the connection between the UNB Saint John campus and those communities to which we do not yet provide programming was essential. Research looking into low socio-economic parent perceptions of and support for education are habitually hampered by an inability to effectively engage these parents in participating. The inclusion of community groups and places that have already built access and trust to these communities was crucial to participant recruitment.



## Perceived Returns on Investment of Attending University



### CONCLUSION: BEYOND CFICE: COLLECTIVE IMPACT AT WORK

Although the CFICE Poverty Hub work has concluded, the partnership between the Saint John community and university continues to flourish. Building on a history of previous collaborations was an advantage. With each project, community and campus partners took time to learn from one another. This reciprocity levelled the playing field and enabled partners to work together by leveraging their strengths to achieve shared goals.

A key principle of CI is building a common agenda, and over the years this common agenda has proved significant. Community-campus engagement and multi-sector collaboration require that partners have a common vision for the ultimate social change in their community. Partners work together, through mutually reinforcing activities (as opposed to duplicating efforts), to achieve that change. The two CFICE projects described in detail began with partners identifying shared long-term goals and outcomes. In the case of The Promise Partnership, these shared goals were increasing educational outcomes and opportunities for youth in Saint John, and through the CI evaluation, it was identifying strategies for partners to work more effectively together in reducing poverty.

In addition to building a foundation of trust and establishing a common agenda, communication through the process is critical, which means taking the time to deconstruct the jargon that is taken for granted in different sectors, ensuring that language is clear and developing messaging that is relevant for everyone. This shared learning is significant for both campus and community.

Examples of CI between the campus and community are ongoing and developing. In 2015, the University and the New Brunswick Community College campuses in Saint John and St. Andrews (known as the Southwestern Regional Collaborative Group) applied for funding for three unique projects with a focus on poverty reduction. One of those projects focused on researching differential funding models (the model of funding schools equitably based on socioeconomic circumstances, as op-

posed to equally, as one size fits all) in Canada and abroad. The goal was to provide a case for the Province of New Brunswick to adopt a differential funding model, based on the needs of students requiring additional academic support in order to succeed. The findings influenced the Province to include in their 2016 New Brunswick Education Plan a commitment to learn more about differential funding (Province of New Brunswick, 2016).

Again, in 2016, the Regional Collaborative group, with the support of Living SJ, applied for funding for an education/training course (called Poverty 101). Such a course could be delivered to service providers in the fields of education, social services, health, protection services, etc. There are many groups working with individuals living in poverty that could benefit from better understanding the complexities of poverty and promising practices for meaningful engagement with individuals from low-income households. The university and community college are interested in having the course (or modules) impact curriculum development for students studying in helping-related professions and as training for staff and volunteers who are involved in community outreach programming.

By working together, with a shared vision for change and alignment of resources (human and financial), Living SJ and UNB Saint John are contributing to innovative approaches to poverty reduction. The collaborative efforts are impacting the issues; engaging students, faculty and staff in the community; and influencing youth and their families in the pursuit of post-secondary education. University and community collaboration has the potential to achieve significant social change.

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# ON A PATH OF TRUE RECONCILIATION: INVESTING IN A POVERTY-FREE SASKATOON

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## INTRODUCTION

The site of this research study within Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis—Saskatoon, Saskatchewan—is located along a bend in the South Saskatchewan River, 346 km north of the Canada-US border, 224 km from Alberta and 344 km from Manitoba (City of Saskatoon, 2017a). The largest city in the province, Saskatoon lists 246,376 residents; the larger metropolitan area is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017). Both the City and the census data indicate that the population in Saskatoon is growing.

The City's municipal boundaries are within Treaty 6 territory, home in 2016 to 29 First Nations Reserves, or more than 40% of the reserves in Saskatchewan (Government of Canada, 2014). The Saskatoon Tribal Council is comprised of seven surrounding reserves: four in Treaty 6 (Mistawasis First Nation, Muskeg Lake First Nation, Muskoday First Nation, One Arrow First Nation); two in Treaty 4 (Yellow Quill First Nation and Kinistin Sauleaux Nation), and a reserve that is not a treaty signatory (Whitecap Dakota First Nation) (STC, 2017).

The municipality of Saskatoon is divided into 64 neighbourhoods (City of Saskatoon, 2017b), grouped into 10 wards (City of Saskatoon, 2016), and dissected by the South Saskatchewan River. In a city that claims to be a city of bridges, the division is more than a physical, geographic divide. Neighbourhoods on the west side of the river represent some of the most vulnerable, highest disparity, and most diverse communities (Engler-Stringer et al., 2016).

## SASKATOON INNER CITY: OUR CORE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Saskatoon's Inner City, or Core Neighbourhoods, located on the west side includes neighbourhoods in Ward 2 (Riversdale, King George, Pleasant Hill, Westmount and Caswell Hill) (City of Saskatoon, 2016; see Table 1 for neighbourhood profiles).

**TABLE 1 SASKATOON AND CORE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILES\***

NEIGHBOURHOOD	2016 POPULATION	ETHNIC DIVERSITY (HIGHER = > DIVERSITY)	% HOME OWNERSHIP	MEDIAN PERSONAL INCOME	AVG SALE PRICE (HOUSING)	2 <sup>ND</sup> MOST COMMON LANGUAGE
Saskatoon	262,900	0.61	66.3%	\$39,190	\$395,896	German
Caswell Hill	3702	0.70	63.3%	\$33,750	\$256,627	French
King George	2172	0.37	73.1%	\$30,420	\$206,501	Cree
Pleasant Hill	5494	1.47	28.5%	\$21,620	\$182,687	Cree
Riversdale	2741	0.89	40.9%	\$20,910	\$227,376	Chinese
Westmount	2801	0.62	64.2%	\$31,450	\$244,081	Tagalog
<b>Core Neighbourhoods</b>	<b>16,910 (6.5%)</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>\$27,630</b>	<b>\$223,454</b>	<b>--</b>

\*Based on City of Saskatoon (2017b)

As the infographic below shows, the average cost of a “Market Basket Measure” of specified goods and services for a modest, basic standard of living covering housing, transportation, food, child care, health, and incidentals (HRSDC, 2011) for a family of four (2 adults and two children aged 9 and 13) in Saskatoon is \$5,000. Of course, not all families represent the average. For example, some Indigenous and immigrant communities live in multi-generational settings, and monthly averages fluctuate based on, for example, number of dependents living in the household, disability issues, lone parent households, and age differences. The differential capacities of families (minimum wage earners typically spend 73% of income on shelter and child care) in the Core Neighbourhoods and the rest of Saskatoon have raised interest in multijurisdictional policy and other responses to poverty. In the context of the shifting economic conditions in Saskatchewan, community, human service sectors, and governments have been working to address and reduce poverty, recognizing that the complexity of poverty in Saskatoon knows no geographic boundaries—though poverty is disproportionately experienced by those living in the Core Neighbourhoods, the site of this research study.

## **BUILDING A COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE CENTRE—STATION 20 WEST—IN THE CORE NEIGHBOURHOODS**

If neo-liberal globalization has been associated with offloading of government responsibility and privatizing of public goods, it has also encouraged people to work together in innovative ways to address high levels of inequality and poverty. In the Core Neighbourhoods, socio-economic disadvantage correlates with high crime, low political participation, unemployment rates 50% above the national level, a rate of HIV 60% higher than the national average, and infant mortality rates 1.5 times higher than in other city neighbourhoods (Opondo & Marko, 2012). Opening in 2012 as a result of an unprecedented community effort to secure alternative funding after the 2008 provincial government withdrawal of funding, Station 20 West is a Community Enterprise Centre (CEC) in the heart of the Core Neighbourhoods, providing a single location to access the following services:

- Housing, employment, and economic development programs—Quint Development Corporation
- Working with children, families and communities to improve access to good food and promote food security—CHEP Good Food Inc.
- A Mothers' Centre—where women meet to support one another
- The KidsFirst program—a home-based early childhood development program
- A Neighbourhood Health Centre—the Saskatoon Health Region
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan—a woman-centred non-profit committed to working for and with criminalized women and their families
- Office of Community Engagement and Outreach—University of Saskatchewan
- The Boxcar Café—A small café and catering operation serving simple food made with local ingredients, and providing employment and training opportunities for people in the community
- A large multi-purpose room and smaller rooms available to rent for community events and meetings

Station 20 West is part of a larger neighbourhood revitalization site that includes 55 affordable housing units and a Saskatoon Public Library branch—the Library on 20<sup>th</sup> Street, recently renamed in honour of Cree language advocate Freda Ahenakew (The 20<sup>th</sup> Street branch, 2016).

In its strategic resistance to neo-liberal globalization, Station 20 West has a vision to contribute to social and economic equity in the Core Neighbourhoods by working through a collaborative community development approach to improved ac-



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cess to healthy food, collective cooking groups, nutrition education and community gardens, jobs and affordable housing, in-home supports for vulnerable families, improved support for health and wellbeing, education opportunities, community-based research, peer support, and new learnings for mothers and other residents of the neighbourhoods (Station 20 West, 2017).<sup>1</sup>

This community-based research project examines the impact of community-campus engagement (CCE) in the context of these community wellness and poverty reduction efforts at Station 20 West Community Enterprise Centre, designed to improve quality of life, increase food security, and reduce income and health disparities in the inner city of Saskatoon. In this chapter we discuss the project purpose, players, process, and productive outcomes and learnings.

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1 An informative video about building community capacity through neighbourhood-based initiatives like Station 20 West is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Td54IbG-Mp-M&feature=youtu.be>

# The Costs of Living for families in Saskatoon



on average, families in Saskatoon spend about \$1,200.00 per month on shelter



on average, families in Saskatoon spend about \$500.00 per month on transportation



on average, families in Saskatoon spend about \$900.00 per month on food



on average, families in Saskatoon spend about \$1,000.00 per month on childcare



on average, families in Saskatoon spend about \$145.00 per month on health related expenses



on average, families in Saskatoon spend about \$1,200.00 per month on other family expenses (including clothing, recreation, entertainment, & other unexpected costs)



on average, families in Saskatoon spend about \$5,000.00 each month making ends meet

Note: for the purpose of this report family is defined as 2 adults (working 35hours/week) and 2 children (1 school aged and 1 in childcare)

## What does this actually look like for a Saskatoon Family?

minimum wage earner (\$1,500/month/earner)	73%	of income spent on shelter and childcare	\$400	money left for all other expenses listed above
living wage earner (\$2,000/month/earner)	55%	of income spent on shelter and childcare	\$900	money left for all other expenses listed above
SK avg wage earner (\$2,800/month/earner)	40%	of income spent on shelter and childcare	\$1,700	money left for all other expenses listed above

Source: Community View Collaboration (2016)

## WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT?

In addition to Station 20 West (Len Usiskin, Manager, Quint Development Corporation, and Yvonne Hanson, Executive Director, CHEP), the following are active partners in the project:

- The University of Saskatchewan’s Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR; principal investigators, Isobel M. Findlay and Suresh Kalagnanam) with a mandate to facilitate “partnerships between the university and the larger community in order to engage in relevant social research that supports a deeper understanding of our communities and reveals opportunities for improving our quality of life” (CUISR, 2017).
- University’s Office of Community Engagement and Outreach at Station 20 West (Lisa Erickson, manager) that aims to “strengthen and build community-university relationships in Saskatoon’s inner city aimed at growing social, educational, economic, and health equity through research and experiential learning. They strive for deep collaboration and co-creation of knowledge, and prioritize projects that are community driven and meaningful for the communities with which we work” (Community Engagement and Outreach, 2017).
- The Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership (SPRP) (coordinator, Colleen Christopherson-Côté), a multisectoral collaborative collective impact initiative that is committed to monitoring and reporting on indicators of community poverty in order to know how people’s lives are impacted. The SPRP works to catalyze energy, convene partners, and coordinate action regarding policies and practices that address poverty.

SPRP spells out the implications of its definition of poverty reduction: “Creating conditions which enable all members of our community to develop their talents and abilities, to have the choice to actively participate in economic, cultural and social life and to enjoy a good standard of living on a sustainable basis” (SPRP, 2017):

1. Our community members are individuals, families and groups who live in Saskatoon and reflect diversity in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, life stages, ethnicity, culture, abilities and socio-economic status;
2. Choice and active participation refers to one’s ability, confidence and the means to take part in the community’s economic, cultural, social, political and civic life in order to create a sense of belonging;
3. Economic resources are the total monetary and material assets that community members have control of to meet their needs

- (including: wages and salaries, income transfers, and the value of the assets or earning from other sources);
4. Cultural resources are the sum of the values, beliefs and practices including all historical and social experiences shared by a group of people;
  5. Social resources are both the non-monetary and non-material assets that community members have control of to function effectively at home, at work and in their communities including access to services, social supports and the capacity to build social connections and relationships;
  6. Quality of life is an individual's perspective of their position in life and in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.

SPRP vision and plans are accountable to the community and its partners; its work rooted in reciprocity and trust is transparent, evidence-based and represents the community diversity, including a commitment to the inclusion of colleagues with lived experience of poverty with joint decision-making at all levels of the work. SPRP work is grounded in three foundational elements:

1. *A city that bridges: building a connected and cohesive community*
2. *We are all Treaty people: a community on a path of reconciliation*
3. *Nothing about us without us: fostering an inclusive & diverse community*

### **WHY DID THE PROJECT HAPPEN?**

The project builds on the foundational work of all the project partners (CUISR, Station 20 West, the Office of Community Engagement and Outreach, and SPRP) and their long-term formal and informal ties with those working on collaborative, multi-sectoral initiatives to reduce inequality and poverty and increase quality of life.

It builds on longer-term research to evaluate Station 20 West's particular investments in a community economic development approach to social and economic equity, engaging the community in its own development while pooling capacity for collective impact. Station 20 West presented a unique research, practice, and policy opportunity to understand how innovation emerges, changes, and impacts communities.

Added incentive for the study came from the goals of (and funding from) the Poverty Reduction Hub (co-led by Carleton University and Vibrant Communities Canada) of Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE), an action research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada "to strengthen community-based non-profits, universities and colleges, and funding agencies to build more successful, innovative, prosperous, and resilient communities" (CFICE, 2013).

CUISR aligns with and embodies CFICE goals in its seventeen-year record of CBR (Jeffery, Findlay, Martz, & Clarke, 2014), unique governance model (50%

community and 50% university), strategic research to improve quality of life, and its innovative indicator and measurement tools. A 2011 external review of the institute commended the “trusted entry point into the University” and “economic growth agent for community-based organizations” for its democratization of university research and multidimensional impacts on community (Fontan, Hyde, & Dell, 2011).

During the course of the project, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s insistence on *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* and its *Calls to Action* intensified our decolonizing methods and guided thinking about the systemic factors that needed to be addressed for an end to poverty costing Saskatchewan alone \$3.8 billion each year (Plante & Sharp, 2014) and its health and other consequences. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission principles and calls to action reinforced that ending poverty is about ending discrimination and the systemic barriers that reproduce inequality and poverty impacting Indigenous communities disproportionately—adding to costs to the justice system, health and education, social services, and undermining economic, educational, and other opportunities. If the Indigenous population could reach the same level of education and social well-being as their non-Indigenous counterparts, Canada’s GDP could be expected to rise by \$401 billion by 2026 (Kar-Fai & Sharpe, 2012; Sharpe & Arseneault, 2010). Saskatchewan alone could realize \$6.7 billion in GDP (Howe, 2012).

#### **WHAT QUESTIONS WERE ASKED?**

- How well does community-campus engagement (CCE) support innovative capacity building that can make our community more inclusive, strong, and sustainable?
- How does co-location of partner organizations affect service, how do their different mandates affect outcomes, and how synergies develop among them or not?
- How does university presence impact the community enterprise model?
- How we can best measure the impacts and outcomes of innovations for knowledge, frameworks, and tools that can be used to urban centres across Canada?

#### **HOW WAS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED?**

Participatory action research—research by the people for the people—is the guiding approach of CUISR’s decolonizing, Indigenizing research principles (Findlay, Ray & Basualdo, 2014). CUISR and partners share the University of Saskatchewan’s commitment to Indigenization.

Focus groups and interviews were held with service users; co-locators; university faculty, students, and staff; and community partners in the first year (summer and fall 2015) to evaluate the impact of the co-location model, university presence, and CCE on Station 20 West’s poverty reduction efforts. To complement focus group and interview findings, a survey was conducted during the May 16, 2016 YXE Connects event at City Centre Church, a one-stop shop for vulnerable members of the



community to access services (housing, health and personal care, legal, employment, food, clothing) in one place, on one day.

If there are study limitations, there are also strengths based on the best traditions of CCE, whereby the research built on a complex set of interrelationships over many years among the team. The team's regular meetings and iterative process of review and reflection in the Station 20 West space, along with participation in local, regional, and national conversations, contributed importantly to our collective learning and results, to strengthening the work of the Office of Community Engagement and Outreach, and to engaging students and broadening their awareness of CBO realities and the value of social enterprise and social economy. Democratized and intercultural research committed to (a) rethinking performance metrics and reward systems and (b) expanding what counts in community and university proved an important site of learning, building relationships and capacity at the same time. While the study built on pre-existing relationships, it also expanded and refined them in the process of interrogating assumptions and rethinking values related to who and what counts and why.

#### **WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT COMMUNITY-CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT AT STATION 20 WEST?**

Among discussions specific to the role and impact of co-location, the presence of the University's Office of Community Engagement and Outreach was of particular interest to participants. What does the presence of the University's Office bring to the community? Does it have potential for different relations with community among the various co-locators? Many felt that it was important to understand how the university presence impacted the research relationship and cycle and to further define the responsibilities of the university within its unique co-location position. In asking and answering the questions, there was significant slippage as people found it difficult to confine comments to the Office rather than the larger institutional presence. Indeed, some study participants insisted that evaluating the Office meant evaluating how well the larger institution resourced, supported, and promoted it.

Participants discussed the Office's multiple roles as buffer managing tasks and relationships; bridge between community members, organizations, co-locators, and the university; guest and host in the community; and ambassador, even advocate, for it. Whether it was food security, housing and homelessness, or social determinants of health, the Office had opened doors by building relationships with Indigenous organizations and communities. As a result, CCE is educating the broader community and making visible that which is too often invisible to those for whom the Core Neighbourhood is unfamiliar territory while helping demystify the university and enhance its accessibility to community members, including women and youth, for whom it seemed another, unattainable world.

There was unequivocal recognition of CCE innovation within a co-location model in what was described as a "knowledge hub". It was importantly about physical space, about food helping shape relationships, and a "safe space" for learning together, for critical reflection on the food, health, educational, and economic systems, and for reimagining a sustainable vision of what could be. It was about people joined by

a shared commitment to social justice. Rejecting the charity model that stigmatizes people as dependent and undeserving, those engaged in the co-location “knowledge hub” commit to a community development approach that recognizes the historic barriers and consequences to support people developing their own solutions.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Our findings underscored the importance of the following factors:

- Managing effectively the multiple roles—buffer, bridge, guest, host, and ambassador—of the Office of Community Engagement and Outreach is key to CCE success.
- Resourcing, supporting, and promoting the Office and CBR is a critical responsibility of the university.
- The Office legitimacy and stability is the foundation of trust, relationship building, and capacity building at the heart of innovation for strong, sustainable communities.
- The Office legitimizes service provider and user initiatives, shining a light on what shapes people’s lives, helping attract investments in the community, and extending people’s imaginative horizons to recognize educational, employment, and other possibilities.
- CCE helps outsiders understand the Core and the Core understand itself.
- The “knowledge hub” that is CCE at Station 20 West helps reconcile different worldviews, democratize knowledge, and decolonize frameworks for transformative outcomes.
- CCE demystifies and humanizes the ivory tower in ways potentially enabling to all.
- The Office helps nourish that safe, ethical space where Indigenous peoples and allies can work together.
- The Office has pushed boundaries in overt, covert, and creative ways that sustain critical thinking, expanded educational opportunities, and social innovation.
- The Office mentors for “solidarity-making or ally work” at the heart of good CCE.
- The Office helps navigate university bureaucracy and undue burdens on CBOs.
- The Office also helps address ongoing challenges of ethics, equity, and power imbalances and academic and administrative research hierarchies that prioritize peer-reviewed articles in top journals and undervalue the rigour of CBR and PAR.

Our findings also highlighted the following ongoing challenges and opportunities:



- Transition-to-university support and accessible classes in the community are valued by external stakeholders.
- Community-based organizations continue to feel burdened by university stakeholder requests to support community-engaged research and learning.
- Scholars crave tools such as checklists and guidelines for CCE in the context of the Core Neighbourhoods.
- Institutional barriers and challenges, such as rigid ethical criteria and inequitable institutional support for external sites, interfere with and sometimes undermine CCE.
- Fear and privilege of some students and scholars (and risk of voyeurism and affirming stereotypes) collide with the reality of the lived experience of people in the Core with the potential for transformative learning experiences.
- The perceived lack of substantial and sustained institutional support for CCE causes external stakeholders to wonder about the sustainability and duration of the university's commitment.
- Knowledge translation and mobilization need to be prioritized and supported, not delegated or off-loaded, to ensure the work is accessible and relevant.

“A lot of lip service is paid to this notion of knowledge translation, which in reality does not go very far. Where’s the engagement, the uptake, within the community that you’ve studied, and the responsibility researchers have?”—co-locator

A community partner had seen first-hand “how the S20W Office facilitates CBR. It’s poised to make a social impact. For my purposes, academic research isn’t worth anything unless it has a social utility or community impact.”

“I love that there’s research happening. The quest for digging deeper, asking those difficult questions and that thirst for knowledge, why people do what they do, how they do—I love that stuff.”—co-locator

It’s about “living in these different worlds, different worldviews, and different epistemologies in terms of how we approach research. ... For instance, if you’re working with Indigenous communities, ... there’s so much of this research design that is founded in place-based, decolonizing practices.”—University participant

“[The Office] knocks down the ivory tower notion and puts it in an everyday-scape, takes away some of the mystique of what the University is supposed to be about, for some people.”—co-locator

A co-locator noted “how respectful researchers were in acknowledging that there are many ways of knowing. Like, you don’t have to be ‘book smart’ to really have something to offer; you don’t have to have had a formal education to be able to tell a story that’s compelling.”

“[The Office has] found a way to support some staff and some researchers that are pushing those boundaries, but working within that system in a way that is both overt and covert, looking at it really creatively. So the trust in their staff is something that has been really beneficial for that office, and as co-locators as well, indirectly.”—University participant

“For a lot of the people who’ve used our respective services, thinking about University and thinking about continuing their education is the furthest thing from their mind. And yet, here we are in a building where we can sow the seeds that maybe that’s possible. That’s really powerful.”—co-locator

“The importance of the Office goes beyond what any text on the S20W website could readily capture: You see these things happen that are synergistic and you can’t necessarily always pinpoint them but the ripple effect is happening. For example, in terms of navigating, it’s not just about the Office helping people navigate, but it’s also the University understanding how members of the Core navigate their lives for success however they define it.”—University student

### **PROFESSORS OF POVERTY: THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION**

*Dr. Vanessa Charles, PhD (hon.)*

Professors, in general, are people that have extensive knowledge and are learned in a specific field. That knowledge has generally been gained through formal education. These professors are extremely gifted in their expertise.

Professors of Poverty are equally gifted and knowledgeable, though their education is delivered through their lived experiences. They have knowledge of the complexity of poverty as it relates to their lives. This knowledge is a unique gift and cannot be replicated or taught through the use of textbooks, lectures, or even research.

A professor of Poverty once said, “You cannot learn what my life is like by reading or taking classes; you can learn my life by crawling into my skin and living my life.”

Many of the Professors of Poverty have extensive knowledge of what it is like living with unsafe housing, lacking food, living with physical and mental health limitations, the experience of family violence, and the general feeling of isolation and the inability to “fit in” with community.

Most community members do not know a great deal about these aspects of poverty, having never experienced them. It is critical in poverty reduction work to include the voices and experience of Professors of Poverty so that policies, practices, and projects reflect the actual circumstances and not the perceptions of those with no experience.

## **WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CO-LOCATION ON CCE AT STATION 20 WEST?<sup>2</sup>**

First, we learned that in the context of Station 20 West, it is impossible to untangle co-location from location, the parts from the whole, and people from passions and place. The co-location model was widely associated with innovations in providing multiple points of access to various organizations, reducing the cost of access and inclusion, as well as facilitating community partners and the University in informal collaboration, relationship building, and resource sharing—all fuelled by social justice, “a thread that ties us all together.” Indeed, the 2008 funding withdrawal created synergies that taught people they could be the change they wanted.

Station 20 West is much more than a building, a written text of principles and values, or an enterprise: it is understood as “a place of hope,” “a place of healing,” or “a centre of learning and reconciling.” It is a place with decolonizing responsibilities associated with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action, but without a Centre for Elders that some study participants thought would add to the many innovative projects already hosted at Station 20 West. Those initiatives include engaging elders, knowledge keepers, and cultural advisers and sponsoring professional development events for co-locators, including a presentation by Commissioner Marie Wilson. Also, most co-locators are active partners with Reconciliation Saskatoon.

Respect and reciprocity in a “culture of learning” was decisive in validating different worldviews and supporting researchers’ growth by sharing their knowledge. It helped researchers deepen their analyses and make theory more relevant while enabling co-locators to reflect more deeply and enrich their practice. CCE proved for many an important part of social innovation, changing relationships, thinking, programming, and policy, building capacity for a “more successful, innovative, prosperous, and resilient” community.

That culture of learning underlined the costs of ongoing colonial legacies and ongoing violence felt disproportionately by Indigenous peoples. It underlined too that sustainable futures for all of us depended on ending Western knowledge monopolies, methods, and hierarchies that have misshaped us all and respecting different knowledges and worldviews to ensure “cognitive justice” (De Sousa Santos, 2007). Equally important to moving forward together effectively is understanding our shared histories.

Despite the successes of the co-location social enterprise hub, there were governance challenges in managing this “solidarity community” even with a shared vision. If Station 20 West has profited throughout its history from the engagement and contributions of diverse stakeholders, these stakeholders do not always feel they are well represented in the governance or able to have a say in decision-making. In part this was a legacy of the historical constitution of the board by the founding

2 Note: quotations in this section are from study transcripts reproduced in the following technical report: Findlay, I.M., Sunny, S.R., del Canto, S., Christopherson-Côté, C., & Erickson, L. (2017). Impacting community strength and sustainability: Community-campus engagement and poverty reduction at Station 20 West. Saskatoon: Community-University Institute for Social Research.

partners and in part by the overarching challenges of representing the diversity of community interests in such a complex set of relationships. In part too it was a function of stretched organizations meeting their mandates, representing their particular constituency, and being so focused on the work to be done that there was little energy or appetite for reflecting on larger governance issues. Station 20 West plans to address governance issues as part of its strategic planning.

Overall, YXE Connects survey participants, many of whom had helped mobilize and promote Station 20 West, underlined the success of Station 20 West in imparting a sense of security and belonging within the community as well as bridging the realms of community and academia. Still dismayed by the withdrawal of Station 20 West funds by the government in 2008 and at the closure of the Good Food Junction Co-operative grocery store in 2016, participants recommended expanding the range of services, especially for youth and people with disabilities, and promoting the remarkable story of Station 20 West more broadly to the public.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- Synergies develop in planned and less planned, formal and informal, direct and indirect ways.
- Relationships, respect, and reciprocity are key resources building equity.
- Community ownership and engagement are critical to Station 20 West success.
- Social justice is the thread that ties people together.
- People, passions, and place importantly converge in this “symbol of hope.”
- Reconciling diverse cultures, “honouring the truth” is at the heart of “a place of healing” and “centre of learning and reconciling.”
- “Cognitive justice” is the foundation to socio-economic justice.
- Cultural capacity and ceremony are critical.
- Collaborative learning in “a safe space” reduces isolation while building trust and capacity.
- Food nourishes healthy bodies and minds, healthy individuals and communities.
- The university’s presence further strengthened the work of CBOs, facilitating access to resources, education, and employment opportunities.
- The University Office and CCE is at the heart of a “culture of learning,” deep listening, critical thinking, democratized knowledge, and social innovation.
- Governing a “solidarity community” and doing justice to the community’s diversity is a work in progress.

- The co-location model has decolonizing responsibilities and an impressive record of innovative projects that truly respect relationship building.

Our findings underscored the importance of attending to the following:

- Nurture co-locator engagement and collaboration intentionally.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations regularly.
- Plan for conflict and how to handle it.
- Think about space and design and the impact on accessibility and community.
- Realize that the parts and the whole are tangled and messy in a co-location context.

“A really diverse assemblage of co-locating partners, all of whom have a thread that ties us all together, and that’s social justice.”—co-locator

“I have probably three or four mentors from this facility, particularly Aboriginal mentors. Because I need a safe space to ask questions and learn, three or four people from this facility have stepped up to offer that to me.”—community partner

“It was a bit of chaos that went into the development of S20W, and we were having to, just to make it happen, having to make choices that, in a perfect world ... how much space we would have, who the co-locators would be and all the rest of it. I just want to put on the table it wasn’t just a big grand design.”—co-locator

“It feels luxurious to have those casual conversations and have a relationship that is supported by those because so much of my communication outside of co-locators is by email or phone. There’s something a little bit different about nurturing a relationship face-to-face.”—co-locator

“For a good understanding of S20W, I might not necessarily go to the principles but say that it’s unique in that it’s not just a building with a bunch of organizations housed; it’s that it’s a bunch of like-minded organizations doing good work in the community supporting community residents.”—co-locator

“The nutritionist carries the organizational memory from one organization to another so there’s more transparency.”—co-locator

“Each organization has independent autonomy over their day-to-day, and then, at monthly meetings, there’s opportunities to share information and see where synergies can be created.”—co-locator

“Synergies matter. I think it’s really valuable. My guess is that it involved expanding the vision of what could be than what would normally come up when you think of partnering with the Mothers’ Centre.”—co-locator

“I think it’s [synergies] really valuable. My guess is that it involved expanding the vision of what could be than what would normally come up when you think of partnering with the Mothers’ Centre.”—co-locator

“Capacity building for staff, especially through the Office of Community Engagement [and Outreach], opportunities to learn to increase your own capacity and knowledge and that helps your practice when working in your own organization.”—co-locator

“The team as ‘well oiled.’ Most people that are doing community development, community-engaged type work, they understand the principles of community engagement. The majority of the people here in the building have that capacity. They listen deeply when they need to listen deeply, they are responsive when they need to be responsive.”—co-locator

## WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT MEASURING THE IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES OF INNOVATIONS?

Phase two will build on this preliminary sketch of metrics and measurement tools.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- Qualitative data importantly complement and flesh out quantitative measures and can equip partners with a refreshed and current narrative.
- Metrics need to capture direct and indirect, intended and unintended, short- and long-term impacts within the university and the larger communities.
- Statistics on immunization rates, housing affordability, inclusive employment, funding increases, economic activity, cultural events, educational attainment, numbers through the doors matter.
- Stories of legitimacy, security, belonging, engagement, and efficacy matter.
- Democratized and intercultural research produces effective performance metrics and reward systems, expanding what counts in community and university.

### CONCLUSIONS

The study building on earlier work by the research team and profiting from local, regional, and national conversations reinforced the extent to which the story of Station 20 West did not emerge overnight but grew importantly out of community ex-

pressed needs and desires and social innovation over a decade or more and, in the face of government withdrawal of funds, a historic expression of popular resolve to innovate and drive the change to build an inclusive, healthy, sustainable community. Co-location of services engaged diverse community members in an inclusive, holistic development process to address the root causes of poverty and the determinants of health (consistent too with the mandates of each of the study partners). It is pre-eminently a story of people, passions, and place committed to social, economic, cultural, educational and health equity.

The role of CCE within the community social enterprise in building human and social capital has driven fundamental rethinking about the social context, constitution, and consequences of economic activity, highlighting Station 20 West investments in and impacts on diverse community potential, and what they mean for how sustainable development is or could be done. The process recognizes and affirms the importance of community innovative capacities and of democratizing research to engage, learn from, and reward those whose lived experience is most impacted by the knowledge (“Nothing About Us Without Us”). It nourishes a culture of inclusion honouring the voices of what Tamarack calls content and context experts (Attygalle, 2017). The process makes clear that there can be no end to poverty without reconciliation and no social justice without “cognitive justice”.

The study itself proved an important site of learning, relationship and capacity building, identity formation, and community (academic, activist, artistic) renewal. Incorporating the voices of participants importantly respected their expertise and engagement. And while there are yet opportunities unexplored in strengthening the bridge between the University and the communities it serves, CCE at Station 20 West provides hope of a future built on inclusive, holistic knowledges.

#### **KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE PROJECT**

- Without reconciliation, there can be no end to poverty; reconciliation forces us to think about how inequality produces and reproduces poverty and how much waste poverty causes—the human life, human potential, etc.
- The expertise in the community does not get recognized and rewarded equitably. We continue to depend on the expertise of lived experience, but institutions make it hard for us to reward them appropriately.
- CCE is part of the reconciliation story. People, place, and passions are important, as are safe spaces.
- Reconciliation and poverty have potential to be studied more extensively. Resources (funds, human capital, time) and priorities are to be highlighted.
- A significant consideration was how to share findings in a way that is constructive and tactful (proper context), abiding by good principles of engagement. There is a need to be mindful



of the impact of the findings and the importance of how the findings are framed and how they may be used.

- This partnership continued into Phase 2 but, more importantly, this partnership is bigger than the project. The second phase explored potential opportunities for expanding the project advisory committee.

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# USING CAMPUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

AMANDA LEFRANCOIS

## INTRODUCTION

The city of Windsor is one of the southern most cities in Canada, lying between Detroit and the rest of the country. Windsor's American neighbour, Detroit, is a city experiencing both urban and financial crises. While not at the same crisis levels as Detroit, Windsor has not experienced the same level of economic prosperity in relation to the rest of Canada. With 73,910 people living in poverty (23.7%; WeReality, 2015), the proportion of the population of Windsor-Essex County living in poverty is significantly higher than the provincial (13.9%) or the national (14.9%) averages (Prieur, 2014). The disproportionate poverty figure comes with an additional cost to the Windsor-Essex community; in 2014, United Way of Windsor Essex County reported that the total cost of poverty in Windsor-Essex County was between \$459 million and \$629 million annually, with the Windsor-Essex County community funding 65.2% of the average total cost.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Poverty in Windsor-Essex*

Poverty and the effects of poverty are complex and affect individuals differently. *Reality Check* (City of Windsor, 2015) gave a snapshot of poverty rates in Windsor-Essex, showing staggering results: 34.1% of lone parent families, 30.3% of non-family persons, 22.1% of children and 14.1% of couple families were experiencing poverty in the region. While 6% of seniors in Windsor-Essex were experiencing poverty, the

poverty rate among seniors in Ontario has risen faster than the national average since 2007. Though poverty can affect anyone, it is disproportionately experienced by lone parent families. More specifically, 41.8% of female-led lone parent families live in poverty (Prieur, 2014), and approximately 1 in 5 (19,410) children and youth live in poverty (CCSD, 2015). Windsor posted the highest proportion of the low-income population living in very low-income neighbourhoods compared to the rest of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2015). Given the region's consistently high incidence and concentration of poverty, and the negative effects poverty has on children, families and individuals, more attention to effective approaches for reducing poverty are needed.

Rather than focusing on reducing the symptoms of poverty through a charity model, the region must focus on the root causes by challenging poverty at the systemic level through advocacy, research and policy development. By working at the systems level and creating a shift in policy, the Windsor-Essex community can address the root causes of poverty and move toward greater income security. All individuals, organizations and levels of government have a role to play in working for a more prosperous and equitable Windsor-Essex County. Currently, Pathway to Potential is a leader in the community, mobilizing a shift from a charity model toward a systemic approach that tackles the root causes of poverty in Windsor-Essex.

### ***Pathway to Potential***

Pathway to Potential (P2P) is a comprehensive, community-based network comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders that are committed to reducing and preventing poverty in Windsor-Essex County (City of Windsor, 2016). P2P's mission statement – "Together we will reduce poverty and ensure the social and economic wellbeing of residents who live in Windsor and Essex County" – indicates the need for a collaborative effort when thinking about moving the needle on poverty. While there is no universally accepted definition of poverty, P2P defines poverty as resulting from "barriers to social and economic resources that prevent well-being and access to opportunities in the community" (City of Windsor, 2016). Understanding that poverty is a complex societal problem, P2P advocates for removal of systemic barriers that prevent wellbeing and access to resources within the community. During the development of P2P's strategic priorities for 2015-2018, four priorities were identified: (1) literacy and lifelong learning; (2) income security and equality; (3) employment and training; and (4) food security. While these priority areas are P2P's primary focus, it also plays a supportive role in other community initiatives that are integral to the reduction and prevention of poverty. P2P aspires to see a Windsor-Essex County that is a thriving community where every individual and family has access to quality opportunities and the resources needed for economic and social wellbeing.

### ***University of Windsor and Poverty***

The University of Windsor (U of W) recently celebrated its 150th year, where it has been part of the lives of more than 90,000 alumni and has contributed to the wellbeing of the Windsor-Essex community in many ways (University of Windsor, 2010). The U of W's mission – "Enabling people to make a better world through education,

scholarship, research and engagement” (University of Windsor, 2010, p. 8) – drives the university’s role in helping to create a stronger community rich with knowledge. The U of W has made engaging the community one of its five strategic priorities – “Engage the community in partnerships that will strengthen the economy, quality of life, and well-being of the Windsor-Essex region” (University of Windsor, 2010, p. 11) – though there still is room for the U of W to create a space to focus specifically on reducing poverty in Windsor-Essex County. There is no mention of improving the wellbeing of the community through poverty reduction in any of the U of W’s strategic priorities or objectives. Given Windsor-Essex County’s current unemployment rate of 7.2% (Statistics Canada, 2016), and the U of W’s commitment to engaging community for a stronger economy and greater wellbeing in the region, there is a clear opportunity for this anchor institution to make reducing poverty rates a priority.

A scan of the various community engagement groups at the U of W uncovered dozens of unique groups focused on connecting students at the university with a variety of community service organizations. Of the 23 groups reviewed, only three had a mission related to poverty reduction: Empower Equality; Right to Play; and UNICEF Windsor. Further research indicated that Empower Equality is no longer operating, and the remaining groups focus exclusively on children and youth in poverty. Right to Play focuses specifically on empowering children and youth to overcome the effects of poverty, and UNICEF Windsor focuses on the health, education, and equality needs of children experiencing poverty. While these resources are indeed needed within the community, there is a lack of support on campus for the general population experiencing poverty in Windsor-Essex, and there are no programs seeking to advance a social justice mission to reduce poverty.

A recent program, Community-University Partnership (CUP) for Community Development, Research and Training, was developed with a goal to address the issues of community resilience, revitalize low-income neighbourhoods and create a supportive, healthy environment for residents of Windsor-Essex (CUP Runneth Over as U of Windsor Social Work Partnership Marks Five Years of Success, 2010). The CUP Model has four primary pinnacles: (1) university civic engagement; (2) community/resource engagement; (3) interdisciplinary field education/experiential learning; and (4) student/tenant partnerships and leadership development – and new programming was established for the community’s most vulnerable tenants. While CUP has received numerous awards for their contribution to the community (University of Windsor, 2012, July 16), its mandate does not include a systemic approach to poverty reduction.

### ***History of P2P and University of Windsor***

Throughout the past decade, P2P has developed a strong working relationship with the University of Windsor. Over 150 students have been involved with various P2P projects and internships, including community-based advocacy and research projects, contributing more than 15,000 hours to achieving P2P’s goal of a poverty-free Windsor-Essex County. In October 2008, P2P was officially launched, with the University of Windsor’s School of Social Work as one of the founding partners and a member

of the steering committee and roundtable. Later the following year, the Centre for Business Advancement & Research (CBAR) at the U of W produced a communications and awareness plan for P2P. CBAR also created a report for P2P and the United Way Windsor-Essex, discussing the feasibility of starting a social enterprise in Windsor-Essex.

During 2011, several P2P projects came to fruition that utilized U of W students. One project produced a report outlining opportunities for P2P to strengthen research capacity. Another involved a PhD student working under the supervision of a professor for *Civic Engagement: Promoting Social Justice*. An anthropology class produced a report titled, “Speaking of Poverty: Conversations in Southwest Ontario,” after interviewing individuals with lived experiences of poverty. Students from Communication Media and Film studies created a short documentary on P2P’s “Do the Math Challenge” advocacy project, highlighting the inadequacy of social assistance. Throughout 2012, the director of P2P, in collaboration with Professor Gemma Smyth, a professor at the University of Windsor’s Faculty of Law (Windsor Law), developed a Law and Poverty Policy Supervised Research opportunity. This supervised research opportunity allowed two students to complete projects in the areas of social assistance and internationally trained professionals.

Several successful initiatives took place in 2014. First, P2P launched its living wage campaign, advocating for employers to sign on as living wage champions throughout Windsor-Essex County. Graduate students in Applied Social Psychology completed a program evaluation guide for P2P’s living wage campaign. To date, 26 employers have signed on as living wage champions, which is one of the highest numbers in the province. P2P partnered with Enactus Windsor, a group of motivated students at the University of Windsor who are determined to position their team to become a major catalyst for economic change (Enactus Windsor, n.d.), and created Windsor SOUP. Windsor SOUP’s mission is to help innovative projects in Windsor-Essex County gain micro-funding through a public dinner that offers the community an opportunity to celebrate unique projects in Windsor. Individuals who participate in Windsor SOUP have the opportunity to come together as a community to allow for unique collaborations of non-profit projects within the community. To date, over 20 social innovation initiatives have received funding through Windsor SOUP. P2P also partnered with Windsor Law and received funding to hire four law student externs for the 2014 summer for a Law and Poverty Policy Externship Pilot. These students were the pilot class for Policy 101 and Policy 102, workshops that were developed for P2P by Dr. Suzanne McMurphy, a University of Windsor Sociology professor.

In September of 2014, the director of P2P received the Community Leadership in Justice Fellowship from the Law Foundation of Ontario to develop a Social Justice Externship Program for law students. The Report built on the 2014 Law and Poverty Policy Externship Pilot that provided law students with a unique opportunity for experiential learning in research and the development of policy initiatives in a non-traditional field placement. Students were involved with various projects, including living wage, food security, affordable transportation, and social enterprise.



Students also helped to coordinate two candidate engagement sessions on related issues in the lead-up to the municipal election. Students who completed this externship were very positive when reflecting on their experience in the externship. The final report written for the Community Leadership in Justice Fellowship (Vasey, 2015) recommended hiring a full-time Externship Director to facilitate expansion of what was viewed as a positive and necessary program to strengthen partnerships between Windsor Law and the Windsor-Essex community. Windsor Law has committed to hiring an Externship Professor based on this recommendation.

In October 2014 and November 2015, P2P received funding under Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE), a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant to develop a campus-community engagement (CCE) model that builds capacity for effecting policy change related to poverty. (See the section titled *Current Project* for additional details.)

Though the U of W and P2P have collaborated continuously since P2P's inception, there still exists a gap between the university and surrounding community when it comes to poverty reduction. The programs available at the university are not actively attempting to reduce poverty within the region, and the programs that have poverty-related mandates do not generally address systemic barriers. To address this gap, with a vision of implementing a lasting model of community-campus engagement that addresses the complex problem of poverty, a review of relevant definitions of CCE, best practices, and review of existing CCE models throughout Canada was completed.

### ***Relevant CCE Definitions***

**Campus Community Engagement (CCE):** CCE consists of a partnership between community-based organizations and institutions of higher education with a goal to mobilize the strengths and resources of both, ensuring mutual benefit (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Curwood, Munger, Mitchell, MacKeigan, & Farrar, 2011). Commonly utilized resources from colleges and universities include students, staff, faculty, funding, knowledge and experience, and community-based organizations commonly contribute by helping to define the issues within the community, providing access to difficult-to-reach populations, and offer additional in-kind experience and contributions. In order to be successful, CCE must involve a partnership between community members and the individuals from the higher education institution (Baum, 2000). These partnerships are essential in working toward shared goals (Green, Daniel, & Novick, 2001). There are several forms of CCE within the literature, but the most common forms are described below.

**Community Service-Learning (CSL):** The Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning (CACSL) defines CSL as educational approaches that integrate service in the community with intentional learning activities (Gemmel & Clayton, 2009). In successful CSL models, both the educational institution and community organization work together toward outcomes that are mutually beneficial (Gemmel & Clayton, 2009). In order to develop a successful CSL program, there must exist a reciprocal collaboration between faculty and staff (at the institutional level), stu-

dents and community organizations/members. Collaboration may result in various outcomes and activities that benefit the community, institution and students involved. Communities may benefit from CSL as the members and organizations in the community are able to share and integrate their expertise with individuals from the institution, fostering a greater understanding of community-based issues. Enhanced understanding may result in short-term change, long-term change, or both. Benefits to the institution may include an enhanced reputation (increasing awareness, relevance, and philanthropy), increased student engagement and retention, and importantly, a fulfilled institutional mandate/mission (Gemmel & Clayton, 2009). CSL efforts succeed in more than enriching student learning experiences; students involved in CSL experience feelings of excitement to create real and lasting change within their communities, while enhancing their specific skill sets and professional development (Gemmel & Clayton, 2009). In the development of the current CCE model, integrating aspects of CSL is vital for success.

**Community-Based Research (CBR):** Community-based research is a collaboration between academic researchers and community members to jointly create and implement initiatives aimed at meeting a community need as defined by the community, through multiple sources and methods of knowledge, discovery and dissemination (Schwartz, Weaver, Forster-Gill, & Pei, 2013; Strand, 2000). Strand (2000) explains that CBR is different from traditional academic research in that the former is conducted *with* the community as opposed to *on* the community. Essential to CBR is the inclusion of community members throughout each stage of the research process. The researchers involved should recognize and appreciate the knowledge and experiences of the community members with whom they are working. Critical to CBR is that it meaningfully contributes to the lives of individuals living within the community.

**Experiential Education:** The Association of Experiential Education defines experiential education as “a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill and value from direct experience,” and that takes place when “carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis” (Luckmann, 1996, p. 7). Experiential education is derived from experiential education theory, which consists of four stages: (1) a concrete experience; (2) either conscious or unconscious reflection on that experience; (3) abstract conceptualization (understanding principles inferred from experience); and (4) active experimentation (applying the learning to new situations) (Kolb, 1984). Many disciplines utilize experiential education initiatives both inside and outside the classroom (Campbell, 1999).

**Community-Based Experiential Learning (CBEL):** Community-based experiential learning is an all-encompassing term that includes community-based pedagogical practices. CBEL acts as a guiding principle allowing students the opportunity to apply academic knowledge to the issues surrounding them (University of British Columbia, 2016). The most effective CBEL provides learning experiences that are collaborative; all parties take place in the teaching and learning process. Some key objectives of CBEL include developing partnerships with community members, providing community-based learning opportunities for students, and instilling a sense of

commitment to awareness and action to social issues within the community (Huron University College, 2016).

### ***Existing CCE Models across Canada***

Many universities across Canada have implemented CCE models. Of particular interest to P2P are the universities that have poverty reduction as a priority within their CCE model. Below are examples of various universities that focus on poverty reduction within their mandate. Following the poverty reduction examples are more general models of CCE within Canadian universities.

**Carleton University.** Carleton University has a long history of CCE through community research and volunteerism (CFICE, 2016). Within the Educational Development Centre, the Community Engaged Pedagogy (CEP) program utilizes an experiential learning approach that calls students to action, reflection, and engagement with the community. The goal of the CEP program is to have students participate in activities to foster relationships between academic life and the larger society.

Carleton University also initiated Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE), which is an action research project aimed at strengthening the relationship between community-based-non-profits and post-secondary education facilities to build more innovative and prosperous communities throughout Canada. The CFICE project aimed to answer the question: “How can community campus partnerships be designed and implemented to maximize the value created for non-profit, community-based organizations?” (CFICE, 2016). Within the CFICE project are five separate sector-based hubs that work autonomously in the areas of Poverty Reduction, Community Food Security, Community Environmental Sustainability, Violence Against Women and Knowledge Mobilization. As part of the Poverty Reduction hub, P2P is working to develop a CCE model to address the multiple overlapping causes, evolving manifestations and symptoms of poverty within our region.

**McMaster University.** In 2007, McMaster University formed the McMaster Community Poverty Initiative (MCPI), which is a group of students, faculty and staff who are committed to three priorities: conducting research, advocacy and education surrounding poverty reduction within their community (McMaster Community Poverty Initiative, 2016). MCPI’s vision is to further understand the consequences of poverty and how it affects individuals differently according to demographics (race, gender, class, immigration status, ability, etc.) to better inform and advocate for the systemic changes needed for its elimination.

The work of MCPI is guided by individuals with lived experiences of poverty. MCPI members partner with other local committees such as Hamilton Organization for Poverty Elimination, the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction and Living Wage Hamilton. In 2013, the MCPI was awarded the McMaster Synergy Award, which recognizes “excellence in building cross-faculty partnerships” (McMaster Community Poverty Initiative, 2016). The MCPI operates with a coordinator and steering committee that organize events, conduct research, advocate and provide resources to those who are concerned with eliminating poverty in the Hamilton region. The MCPI is funded by the Provost and Office of the Vice-President – Research.

**Wilfred Laurier University.** The Poverty Reduction (PR) Research group is one of four separate research groups within the Centre for Community Research, Learning, and Action at Wilfred Laurier University. The PR research group consists of students, faculty and community members with a shared goal of addressing poverty through conducting community-university research partnerships that will ultimately inform social policy (Poverty Reduction Research, 2016). The mission of the PR research group is to “shift social policy through community-engaged research, policy analysis, knowledge mobilization and advocacy.”

The main initiative of the PR research group is the Poverty Policy Project (P3), which is a research project conducted by doctoral students in the Community Research and Action (CRA) course in Laurier’s Community Psychology program, who are also in partnership with Opportunities Waterloo Region. P3 was designed collaboratively between students and faculty to create a community-based participatory research study that focuses on the role of policy in poverty reduction. The PhD program includes a three-year community engagement and action component for each student in the curriculum. Opportunities Waterloo Region agreed to commit to the project for ten years, and partnered with the innovative service learning initiative. Opportunities collaborates with government (for consultation), businesses, voluntary sectors, and individuals with lived experiences in poverty to change societal attitudes toward poverty, inform policy and advocate for the systemic removal of barriers associated with poverty.

**The University of British Columbia.** The University of British Columbia (UBC) has a Centre for Community Engaged Learning where students, faculty, and community partners work through local and international complex social problems. The programs available within the Centre put students in the community for a hands-on experience to gain valuable and educational experiences. Resources are also available for faculty and departments to enhance the learning and teaching process. For community partners, resources are provided to facilitate relationship-building with students and faculty, and to create successful research projects.

Since 1999, The Learning Exchange has connected UBC and the community in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (University of British Columbia, 2016). UBC views learning as a “two-way street,” inspiring others to not only learn, but teach as well. Central in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, The Learning Exchange is accessible to the community, student population, and individuals interested in being involved with unique learning opportunities. For the community, there are several learning opportunities available including ESL conversation groups, computer skills development, and education about how to use the Internet. Students are able to volunteer at The Learning Exchange or can be involved as a required part of an academic course. Faculties have resources available to develop CBEL tools and implement them in the classroom.

**University of New Brunswick.** In 2009, the University of New Brunswick (UNB) created the Promise Partnership. The Promise Partnership helps UNB Saint John realize aspects of its strategic plan, “to provide exceptional opportunities for our students, while building a better UNB and a better province – to be leaders in

community engagement” (University of New Brunswick, 2016). Working with teachers and staff at a local high school, students are assigned a UNB mentor to help with academics taught in the classroom. The Promise Partnership has established itself as a diverse and effective tutoring and mentorship program that is lead by educational professionals.

**Dalhousie University.** Within the College of Sustainability, Dalhousie University emphasizes community-based learning in the Environment, Sustainability, and Society (ESS) curriculum. The ESS is focused on bringing together thinkers and problem solvers to work through and take action against the most urgent global issues (Dalhousie University, 2016). The ESS has fostered many partnerships and new relationships between Dalhousie University and municipal, provincial and federal governments, businesses and the non-profit sector.

**Huron University College.** The Community-Based Learning Office supports Huron’s mission of “combining rigorous learning with the exploration of new territory” by connecting the classroom to the community and vice versa (Huron University College, 2016). Students are able to participate through their course material in CBEL, CBR and independent study, which benefit both students and community partners. Benefits to the community may include enhanced human resources, new knowledge and connection to policy makers through the academic institution, and students may bring enthusiasm and energy to the community organization. Benefits to students may include a greater engagement in the classroom, critical thinking skills, increased understanding of how course content relates to surrounding community and increased sense of personal efficacy.

## **THE CURRENT PROJECT**

P2P developed this project as part of the CFICE initiative. The purpose of the project was to explore and develop opportunities for leveraging and coordinating resources within and between the local community and university to build the local poverty reduction strategy’s capacity for research, evaluation and policy influence. The project involved consultations with key stakeholders, a comprehensive scan of resources and research on relevant CCE models.

### ***Methodology - Phase I***

Phase I of the current project spanned from March 2014 to November 2015. Within Phase I, three focus groups were conducted to discuss poverty within Windsor-Essex County, the university’s role in a model of CCE and how a CCE model would function if implemented. Research on relevant CCE models was conducted and the culmination of Phase I included the Charity is Good, Justice is Better: Mobilizing Campus and Community Against Poverty workshop.

**Focus Groups.** Three focus groups took place at the P2P office. The Research Evaluation Working Group (REWG) collectively agreed that the focus groups be held separately in order to gather rich data from all three sources. The first focus group consisted of four students from the University of Windsor’s law and social work disciplines. The next focus group had eight participants with shared experiences

of living in poverty. The final focus group consisted of three faculty members from the U of W in the Faculty of Law and Odette School of Business. While the sample size of the three groups was limited, useful qualitative data was achieved from each of the separate groups. Each focus group was approximately 90 minutes in length and had an unstructured interview style. The informal conversation included open-ended items to allow for free-flowing discussion between participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). The items were developed by the REWG and a research assistant from P2P completed interviews (Appendix A). Following the interviews, a research team from P2P transcribed recordings to code responses and identify themes in responses.

**Student.** There were several main themes that were identified in the student focus group. First, students identified the major issue surrounding poverty in Windsor-Essex as a lack of access to basic resources. Second, the student group did not think campus was “doing enough” in the area of community engagement, and relatedly, that the existing student groups on campus were disengaged. There was an identified disconnect between the decision makers at the U of W and the students. Further, the group had feelings that the U of W did not want to be involved with the community. However, the students identified a need for a student group addressing the issue of poverty.

**Community.** The community focus group identified a lack of access to resources as the major poverty issue in Windsor-Essex. Similarly, the community members found there was a lack of education about how to gain the resources that were available. Another major discussion surrounded a lack of connection between the community and university. Members of the community felt the U of W is not accessible for their needs and the group highlighted a need for an advocacy bridge between the two. By advocacy bridge, the community members were referring to an entity that would act as a broker/liaison on their behalf to better access the U of W’s resources. Another interesting issue discussed was the lack of a mentorship program for community youth. There was consensus that the U of W has a part to play in mentoring at-risk youth within the community.

**Faculty.** There were two main themes identified in the faculty focus group. The group identified the major issue surrounding poverty within Windsor-Essex as a gap between resources and accessibility. The faculty discussed a need for the U of W to provide someone to act as a connection between the university and community to ensure the members of the community have better access to the university’s resources. The other main theme was a need for more instances of place-based learning. One faculty member in particular suggested a mentorship model for students working with the community to ensure ethical behavior on the students’ part. It was also suggested that a contract between both the student and community members/organization the student is working with would assist in creating a sense of responsibility for all individuals involved.

**Main themes.** Across all three of the focus groups, the main theme noted was the perception of a lack of access to resources within Windsor-Essex. Participants in the focus groups discussed that while resources may be available, it is the lack of access that proves challenging for individuals, especially concerning transportation.



Having a “point-person” to connect community members to resources on campus was also addressed across the focus groups. Additionally, an idea presented across the faculty and community groups was the need for a mentorship-model for campus and the community. Individuals felt the students going into the community had a need for mentorship, and that students in the community would benefit from having a university student as a mentor as well. The main themes across the focus groups helped inform the development of the culminating workshop, *Charity is Good, Justice is Better*, where the focus was highlighting the importance of a justice-based approach to local poverty reduction.

### ***Charity is Good, Justice is Better Workshop***

On October 2, 2015, P2P hosted an event at the U of W titled *Charity is Good, Justice is Better: Mobilizing Campus and Community Against Poverty*. The workshop brought together students, faculty and members of the community with the shared goal of CCE and action efforts to fight local poverty. Nearly one-third of individuals who signed up for the event were students and three out of the ten panelists were students at the U of W.

The morning focused on updating participants on the challenges of poverty in Windsor-Essex, the U of W’s responsibility to address poverty and research on CCE. An important point of discussion surrounded the U of W’s strategic priority: “Contribute to the economic and social well-being of Windsor-Essex.” By making this a priority, the U of W stated its commitment to the community, though this sparked much discussion and debate about its current role with poverty on campus.

***Panel Highlights.*** The panel discussion offered ten varied perspectives from students, faculty, and community members on theory and practice of CCE, student experiences of CCE, poverty and social change and the university’s role in CCE. One student, a former P2P intern, described her positive experience with CCE as fortunate, especially when compared to other classmates who were not given the same opportunities to learn from their community as those offered through an internship with P2P. It was suggested that the U of W could implement more internships and campus volunteer opportunities to strengthen CCE.

***Culture of Community-Campus Engagement.*** Members of the panel highlighted the many institutional barriers and pressures keeping U of W students, faculty, and staff from interacting with the broader community in meaningful ways. For example, when students and individuals involved in academia interact with people with lived experiences with poverty, there may be an element of empathy missing. To deal with the policy and impact on ground level in the community takes much energy, and it is difficult to integrate community timelines and priorities into U of W curriculum. Research interests at the U of W may not align with community needs, and creativity in projects can be stifled by the U of W’s preoccupation with liability and risk.

***Students’ Experiences with CCE.*** U of W student panelists described their personal experiences with CCE and agreed there exist both positives and negatives. Interacting with members of the broader community is part of CCE and is invaluable experience that cannot be obtained through course-based curriculum. However,



some students do not have a choice regarding their placement agencies, and some believe there is a lack of investment in systemic issues while there is overemphasis on individual/micro issues. Student panelists were passionate about reducing poverty in Windsor-Essex and believe there is a need to use U of W resources to address the systemic issues surrounding poverty in the region. Another opportunity for student engagement includes having community organizations continue to work with students after completion of placements. Frequently organizations are reluctant to work with students due to frequent turnover.

***Role of CCE models in effecting systemic change on poverty.*** In order for the CCE model to effectively create systemic change on poverty, panelists felt it was important to find allies within the university, as people are the most important resources to mobilize against local poverty. Fostering strong relationships between people on campus and lived experiences of poverty is vital to a successful CCE model. The culture of a perceived dichotomy between campus and community needs to be changed as it presupposes that campus is not a part of the community. An accessible space needs to be created where systemic issues related to poverty can be discussed.

***What Role the University of Windsor should play in CCE.*** The panelists agreed that the role U of W should play in CCE includes a need for more immersion between campus and community. Specifically, more community issues should be brought into the classroom and more U of W faculty and students should be involved within the community to deconstruct false dichotomies. Further, individuals should be prepared before entering the broader community so as to not engage as “tourists.” In order to accomplish a greater connection between campus and community, the model has to be flexible and focus on sustainability. There is an opportunity to develop a model of CCE that works to address poverty at the systemic level in Windsor-Essex, but a commitment from the U of W and community is needed.

***Breakout Sessions.*** Interactive breakout sessions occurred on various topics including: implementing a living wage, making poverty a federal election issue, neighbourhood renewal strategies, food justice, missing and murdered Indigenous women and activism 101, as well as a roundtable discussion on building an equitable model for antipoverty CCE. Highlights of the breakout sessions included individuals planning to attend the Sisters In Spirit vigil for missing and murdered Indigenous women at Dieppe Park on October 4<sup>th</sup> 2015, Voices Against Poverty planning an event for the Vote to End Poverty campaign, and planning for more advertising in the West-End area for neighbourhood renewal strategies.

***Roundtable Discussion.*** In addition to the breakout sessions, there was a roundtable discussion on how to build a CCE model that supports systemic anti-poverty work. Thirteen individuals participated in the session. Participants included community residents, students, faculty and staff. The roundtable discussion was co-facilitated by the Director of P2P and Faculty of Law Professor Gemma Smyth. A research assistant for the Windsor-Essex CFICE project presented an overview of research at the outset of the session as a jumping off point for discussion. During the discussion, the lead for the CFICE Poverty Hub provided insights on CCE generally as well as examples from the Carleton experience.

There was broad agreement among participants that there is a clear need for a coordinated CCE model that supports systemic antipoverty work. There are many pockets of experiential learning happening at the U of W, however there is a bigger opportunity to coordinate campus resources for greater community impact. Coordinating existing experiential learning activities into a larger model of CCE could be beneficial to both campus and community, as it would be more efficient to have one point of contact to navigate and connect relevant resources. In order for the model to be successful, effective coordination, communication, and strong relationships are essential. It also is vital that the broader community voice not get lost in bureaucracy of CCE. In short, the participants agreed the CCE model should be inclusive, democratically run, and be open to building unlikely partnerships to strengthen community impact.

**Workshop Survey Results.** After the event, participants completed a survey on their opinion of the effectiveness of the workshop ( $n = 29$ ). Nearly 90% of respondents agreed that the workshop was informative and useful; two-thirds of respondents developed a greater awareness of how campus-community initiatives can strengthen local efforts to fight poverty; because of the workshop, two-thirds of respondents felt confident in advocating for campus-community initiatives to fight poverty; eight out of 10 respondents gained a greater appreciation for campus/community due to their efforts to reduce poverty; and nearly three out of four respondents learned about the university's responsibility to address poverty. Due to the success of the first workshop, a second event is currently being developed to further understanding of CCE and action efforts to fight local poverty.

### **Results from Phase 1**

Given the valuable information collected from the focus groups and workshop, two main models to build capacity for poverty reduction through CCE were explored: (1) a Social Justice Leadership Program, and (2) a Social Action and Innovation Lab. Through the Social Justice Leadership Program, P2P hopes to engage high school students who can offer unique and creative ideas to address poverty within the community. The students involved will build local capacity for systemic poverty reduction, rather than utilizing the charity approach when developing their action projects. Postsecondary student mentors will be paired with high school aged youth to engage in their community-based action projects in an interdisciplinary setting focused on systemic approaches to reducing poverty. This model will foster leadership opportunities for all individuals involved, support youth involvement within the community, and prepare students for the modern workforce by fostering transferable skills in creativity and innovation.

The Social Action and Innovation Lab ("Lab") will connect students and faculty from the U of W with community groups to support community-based research that advances social and economic justice. The Lab will be a space for the U of W and the community to come together to develop the capacity to effect systemic change in order to meaningfully address the root causes of poverty in Windsor-Essex. During the focus groups and Charity is Good, Justice is Better event discussions, this need for

systemic approaches to poverty was a recurrent theme that supported the exploration of models like the Social Justice Leadership Program and the Lab.

Both the Social Justice Leadership Program and Lab will be informed by the feedback provided through the focus groups and Justice is Better event. The Social Justice Leadership Program will work to foster strong relationships between people with lived experience of poverty and people in the university, using a mentorship model and a contract component to address ethical concerns while working with the community. P2P envisions having a “point-person” to connect the community with the available resources in the Lab who will coordinate campus resources for greater community impact. Through the Social Justice Leadership Program and Lab, P2P hopes to drive social change in Windsor-Essex.

### ***Methodology - Phase II***

Phase II spanned from November 2015 to May 2016. Highlights of Phase II included two stakeholder engagement sessions, further development of the two models of CCE, and planning for a second workshop to take place in the winter 2016 semester.

***Stakeholder Engagement.*** Two stakeholder engagement sessions took place on campus at the U of W to seek input from students and faculty on P2P’s proposed CCE models. The individuals involved were presented with an overview of poverty in Windsor-Essex, highlights of the relationship between P2P and the U of W, the CFICE project and the Social Justice Leadership Program and the Lab. Attendees were asked for their concerns and opinions in a non-structured manner. The conversation-style engagement sessions both resulted in positive responses to the two initiatives.

***Social Justice Leadership Program.*** The members of the stakeholder engagement sessions were highly interested in the idea of the Social Justice Leadership Program and offered several ideas for consideration. First, there was discussion of the reach of the program and if the program would extend into the rural areas of Essex County or be primarily based in the city of Windsor. If the program were to be Windsor-based, members hoped to incorporate interested students from the county by building transportation costs into future grants. After discussion it was decided that the program would be piloted within the city and when able, would extend to the county. Another discussion took place around the time commitment for students. Members debated the amount and intensity of the time involved (for example, if a student wanted to do a workshop that would be less time-intensive than a larger, more involved project). Given one of the goals of the program is for students to be able to complete their 40-hour mandatory community service hours, taking into consideration the amount of time projects take is important. The research team used this information when developing the Social Justice curriculum.

Rich conversation arose from discussing opportunities that students would gain from being involved with the program. Both the university students and the high school students would gain valuable leadership, communication, social justice and advocacy skills from being involved. In addition to completing their 40 hours of community service, members saw a positive outcome as the meaningful contribution

the high school students would make in their community, which would contribute to a sense of pride with where they were living, and hopefully would result in greater youth retention in Windsor-Essex. It was useful to discuss the problem of out-migration given the high level of young people leaving the region. Having students realize their potential and how they may improve their community would be an added benefit of the Social Justice Leadership program. Another interesting idea was to have the students give a culminating presentation at the end of the curriculum. Through this presentation students would gain public speaking skills, the university mentors would have the opportunity to supervise the creation of the presentation, and community members would be given the opportunity to hear about the positive impact of the projects on the community. Evaluation was another important consideration for the program. It was suggested each student would be responsible for their project by evaluating how they see themselves as effective within the community, and how effective they see their project being. Further, the community members would also complete evaluations for how effective they thought the students were, and how effective they thought the project was. Relatedly, the students and community members would complete a “contract” to establish a negotiated learning agreement.

***Social Action and Innovation Lab.*** As with the Social Justice Leadership Program, the members of the stakeholder engagement sessions were very interested in the idea of the Lab. A major discussion surrounded the location of the Lab: on campus or in the community? Community members have expressed feeling intimidated when coming to the U of W campus, and that they do not feel welcome, so it is important to find a space that is accessible and welcoming for all individuals. Further, the downtown core and west-end of Windsor are seen as separated, so no consensus arose as to where the location should be. A possible solution to this issue was to have satellite locations housing different agencies. Identified benefits of having satellite locations were that there would be several access points to reach the community and it would help address transportation barriers. There was consensus that the Lab would need to incorporate community members’ consultation throughout the process. The research conducted through the Lab would impact the surrounding community, so it was deemed crucial that community members would have input into what types of projects those might be.

A suggestion made by members was to include an inventory of all faculty and courses that might be interested in being involved with the Lab. An inventory would allow students, community members, and faculty to be able to quickly and efficiently discover individuals who might have similar interests. One member discussed a previous initiative, Community Partners for Applied Research and Consultation (CPARC), which is a “collaborative community research venture... [that] promotes civic engagement and dynamic partnerships by linking the community with faculty, resources, expertise, and research” (About Us, n.d.). This initiative is no longer active, despite members of the session agreeing that there was a need for some sort of Centre to take on research projects for agencies. One reason cited was that projects did not develop because the researchers involved were “too busy.” In order to ensure commitment, it was suggested that an application process could determine what role

the individual would be interested in (researcher, data collector, advisory capacity, volunteer, etc.), and amount of time the individual would be willing to commit to the Lab. An alternative solution was to find a way to compensate faculty for participation, especially if the person is dedicating time to supervise students and/or research projects. Additional ideas for the Lab included an introductory training session to have everyone on the same page in terms of poverty in Windsor-Essex and the role of the Lab. Existing interns could provide mentorship to incoming students, which would also serve to provide the interns with supervisory experience.

### **Results from Phase II**

**Social Justice Leadership Program.** Based on the feedback from the stakeholder engagement sessions, P2P updated the Social Justice Leadership program curriculum. To ensure all students are “on the same page,” students will complete a mandatory orientation that highlights poverty in Windsor-Essex, gives students an opportunity to learn about principles and expectations of community engagement, and provides time to brainstorm community action projects they might be interested in being involved with. Students will also complete Poverty 101, Policy 101, Public Speaking, Media Literacy, Conflict Resolution, and Anti-Oppressive Practice sessions as part of their training. The majority of the curriculum will be the Community Project piece, which will include the design, implementation and evaluation of their community project. Students will be working closely with their university mentor, and with community members and other P2P staff when necessary.

For evaluation, students will be given a pre-post test to assess whether the Social Justice Leadership curriculum changed their attitudes toward poverty and civic engagement. P2P will use the Attitudes toward Poverty – Short Form to assess whether curriculum is “sensitizing students to the structural causes of poverty, and thus boosting the likelihood of their becoming professionals that are committed to poverty reduction efforts” (Yun & Weaver, 2010, p. 184-185). Higher scores on the scale will demonstrate a shift in youth thinking from the individualistic causes of poverty to structural causes of poverty. It is hypothesized that this shift from a charity approach to a systemic, justice-based approach will likely result in an increase in poverty *reduction* efforts as opposed to the poverty *alleviation* efforts.

**Social Action and Innovation Lab.** Input from the stakeholder engagement sessions will help to inform the development of the Lab, which would eventually culminate in a shared space where both campus and community members would be able to access resources and collectively work to reduce poverty in Windsor-Essex. The Lab will offer a number of resources and training sessions to students, faculty and community members. Social action consulting would be available to those interested, which would consist of best practice and innovative models to strengthen social action and advocacy campaigns (community mobilization; coalition building; media advocacy; etc.). The Lab would also facilitate education and training sessions and workshops to provide accessible materials in the areas of policy (how to write a policy brief; Policy 101 and 102; research and use of data, etc.), social justice (Poverty 101 and 102; anti-oppressive practice, etc.), leadership (public speaking; personal

narrative; dispute resolution for social change, etc.) and advocacy (public education; political will campaigns; advocacy campaign development, etc.). Additional services would also be provided through the Lab given the community need (for example, forming community networks, mentorship facilitation, etc.).

## NEXT STEPS

P2P is currently developing a focus group (Appendix B) to administer to high school students to help inform further development of the Social Justice Leadership program. A research team has identified key questions to ask the students to gather information about the program's goals and intended outcomes. Further, P2P is also in the process of conducting a needs assessment for the Social Action and Innovation Lab. Currently, an electronic survey is being developed to send out to various community agencies and students and faculty from the U of W who may be interested in being involved with the Lab to inform its development. At the end of the survey, participants will be asked if they may be contacted for a more detailed discussion on their responses to the survey. P2P will connect with those who indicate that they are willing to be contacted for more in-depth discussions to inform the development of the Lab.

At this time, P2P is in the process of seeking funding for a staff member to coordinate the two initiatives. Applications for grants are being completed with the goal of P2P securing funding within the next year to pilot the Social Justice Leadership program and Social Action and Innovation Lab. Significant planning has been undertaken in relation to both projects and it is hoped that, with community buy-in and adequate funding, both initiatives may become a reality and CCE will begin to move the needle on poverty in Windsor-Essex.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **FOCUS GROUP ITEMS**

**Overview:** Participants were given an overview of the Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) project; an overview of Pathway to Potential's role in the local poverty reduction strategy; and an overview of Campus Community Engagement (CCE).

Participants were then asked to identify themselves as faculty, students, university administration, or members of community-based organizations, and, if applicable, what university department they were in.

**Question/Theme 1:** What are the key issues relating to poverty as you see them in the Windsor/Essex area?

**Question/Theme 2:** What do you see as the university's role in strengthening the local poverty reduction strategy (by 'University' I mean all aspects of the university, not just the university as an institution)?

**Question/Theme 3:** What resources already exist at the university and in the community which could be coordinated into a broader Campus Community engagement model which could strengthen the local poverty reduction strategy?

**Question/Theme 4:** What would the administration of such a CCE model possibly look like? What would be the role of a.) Academics (both faculty and students) at the university b.) The university as an institution, and c.) Community members, especially low-income community members who are the most important stakeholders in such a project? d.) Community based non-profit organizations?

**Question/Theme 5:** What are the potential problems that you see in forming a CCE committee composed of both university faculty, staff and students, and members of community based organizations?

**Question/Theme 6:** What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of these groups working together to strengthen the local poverty reduction strategy? What are the strengths and weaknesses of different university academic departments in working to strengthen the local poverty reduction strategy?

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**APPENDIX B**

**FOCUS GROUP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Brainstorming Session (Part 1): Questions**

(Provide an overview of project)

Does this sound like something you would be interested in participating in?

Any suggestions/comments/questions/concerns so far?

What does the word poverty mean to you?

What do you think causes poverty?

Are you willing to help recruit interested participants? (From your group of friends or your school and/or other activities)

How many community hours have you completed so far? What types of activities did you do to complete the hours? What grade are you in?

Do you learn about poverty in school? If yes, what do you learn or have you learned?

# SHIFTING SOCIETAL ATTITUDES REGARDING POVERTY: REFLECTIONS ON A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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THERE IS A BURGEONING LITERATURE on community campus partnerships in general, while there is less literature on the benefits to the community of being engaged with campuses (Johnson & Rounce, 2007; Flicker, 2008; Schwartz, 2010) and that critiques the community-campus relationship (Dempsey, 2010; Peterson, 2009; Israel et al., 1998); there is even less on the ability of these partnerships to have an impact on a policy issue like poverty reduction (Porter, et al., 2008). One study did find that authentic community-campus partnerships are transformative at the societal (including “looking towards achieving social justice”), institutional and personal level (Seifer & Connors, 2007, p.13). Community engagement can be seen as an ideal mechanism for addressing the negative social impacts of neoliberal economic policies (Dempsey, 2010). This project is part of a larger SSRHC-funded research project to examine the benefits of university engagement for the not-for-profit sector. Vibrant Communities Canada has been working to reduce poverty since 2002 (Cabaj & Kearney, 2013) and has engaged in numerous projects with university partners.

Vibrant Communities Canada, the community co-lead organization for the Poverty Reduction Hub, is a pan-Canadian initiative through which 13 communities have experimented with new and innovative approaches to poverty reduction. These approaches emphasize collaboration across sectors, comprehensive thinking and action, building on community assets and a long-term process of learning and change. Universities and colleges are among the collaborators who have been involved with the community to reduce poverty. Vibrant Communities Canada, as part of its work,

engaged in an environmental scan of its community partners to determine which of the community-based projects involved community-campus partnerships broadly defined to include community-based research (CBR), community service-learning (CSL), student placements and other community projects in which students are involved. Specific projects were chosen to represent communities across Canada, including different models of community-campus engagement, urban and rural communities and engagement that involves colleges as well as universities. Models of community-campus engagement were conceptualized and validated by community partners including the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Vibrant Communities Saint John and Opportunities Waterloo Region as an accurate depiction of how their campus-community relationships were structured. This chapter provides a snapshot of one of the Hub partners' results after one year, specifically the Opportunities Waterloo and Laurier University collaboration to explore the stigma towards people living in poverty.

### PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY

Poverty reduction is a complex concept. We are working from the definition of poverty reduction employed by the lead community organization, Vibrant Communities Canada. To begin, their definition of poverty explores the following concepts and questions:

- It is difficult to frame: Is poverty just a lack of income or does it also include poor education, jobs with meagre benefits, insufficient education, hope and self-esteem?
- It has multiple joined up root causes: Income is affected by decent housing and ability to get good housing is dependent on income.
- It involves multiple stakeholders: No single organization or sector has authority, resources or leverage to address the causes of poverty on their own.
- It has unique manifestations: There are different levels of poverty (e.g. homelessness to working poor), demographics (e.g. youth, seniors, immigrants) and local contexts (e.g. Fort McMurray in Alberta, Regent Park in Toronto).
- It evolves: As demographics, economies, policies, etc., change, the manifestations of poverty and possible solutions also change.
- It is not clear when poverty is reduced: When is someone out of poverty? (Weaver & Cabaj, 2009).

In Canadian society, impoverished people are often stigmatized and discriminated against. For example, people hold stereotypes about what individuals in absolute poverty are like, such as lazy and irresponsible, or about what they look like, and easily derogate and blame them for their own ill-fated circumstances (Buch & Harden, 2011; Cozzarelli et al., 2002; Schneider & Remillard, 2013). Moreover, impoverished

people are often seen as “dissimilar” from the general population and collectively regarded as an “outgroup” (Krumer-Nevo, 2002). Such behaviours and cognitions allow people to psychologically distance themselves from those living in poverty, a powerful tool used in emotion regulation (Koenigsberg et al., 2010). Specifically, stereotyping and blaming help people manage the negative feelings (e.g., guilt, distress) that they experience when confronted with examples of poverty. It also helps people rationalize the choice to not help those in poverty and maintain the belief that the world is fair and just. Because stigmatization, discrimination and other forms of distancing from the poor are considered causal factors in the perpetuation of poverty (Phelan et al., 1997), it is important to understand what these attitudes are and how they are formed to effectively challenge them. It is also the case that such stereotypes result in people not being able to recognize less obvious forms of relative poverty such as food, housing and work insecurity (Callan et al., 1993). In fact, early findings from our community-university partnership research indicate that Canadians may actually be poverty blind.

### **OPPORTUNITIES WATERLOO REGION: A CHANGE ORGANIZATION**

Opportunities Waterloo Region (Opportunities) works toward engaging various sectors of the community (e.g., business, government, non-profits and individuals) to develop and implement community-owned solutions to problems of poverty. Opportunities also targets larger ‘big picture’ initiatives concerning social policy, systems and societal attitude change.

### **SHIFTING SOCIETAL ATTITUDES RESEARCH**

The idea to address societal attitudes regarding people living in poverty was initiated by Opportunities in 2008 at the Opportunities’ Leadership Roundtable. The group realized that the widespread societal stigmatization and discrimination of those in poverty could be having downstream effects on public policy decisions. Particularly, if the development of social policy was being guided by inaccurate beliefs and attitudes, then such policies—once enacted—would only perpetuate cycles of poverty instead of combat them. After realizing the scope of the problem, the group conceded that national partners would have to be engaged if they were to have success in tackling this problem at the societal level.

As a result, Opportunities’ staff brought together representatives from 26 organizations from across Canada to compose the larger group. A working group charged with the task of developing a specific plan for moving forward finalized a concept paper in 2009 with the stated goal of identifying current deep-seated implicit attitudes toward Canadians living in poverty and working toward shifting those attitudes. The group believed that by shifting current attitudes, society could collectively begin to engage in new behaviour that would direct policy makers and politicians to enact legislation to significantly reduce the poverty level in Canada. A nationwide shift in attitudes regarding poverty was identified as the research and action goal to produce deep and durable change in Canada.

The concept paper includes a three-phase action plan. Specifically, phase one focuses on researching and examining current deep-seated attitudes that people have towards those living in poverty. Phase two research focuses on examining national and international best practices related to shifting attitudes and behaviours. Finally, phase three focuses on designing and launching a comprehensive, long-term, multi-faceted national initiative to shift current attitudes regarding poverty in Canada. The concept paper was used to promote the project and to approach potential funders to tackle phase one. Although funding was sought, no applications were successful, and the research project had to be put on hold.

### **BENEFITS OF A LONG-TERM COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

In 2011, the Executive Director of Opportunities, Mary MacKeigan, approached her academic partner Dr. Terry Mitchell, Director of the Centre for Community Research Learning and Action (CCRLA) at Wilfrid Laurier University, with the idea of conducting research on societal attitudes. Mary and Terry had previously formed a community-university partnership in 2008 with the intent of developing an experimental ten-year partnership to address poverty reduction with an initial focus on policy. In the beginning of the partnership, initial meetings revealed that both parties were equally passionate about collaborative practice and social change. Clear roles, responsibilities and efficient communication pathways also marked the partnership. The first collaborative research project conducted by Opportunities and the Centre for Community Research Learning and Action (CCRLA) focused on social policies with the Awareness of Low-income Voices (ALIV[e]) group acting as an advisory body. The results of this project were presented to the ALIV(e) group and then to Regional Council as a joint university-ALIV(e) presentation. Furthermore, collaborative reflections on the challenges and learnings of embarking on a long-term community-university partnership were published in the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning (Curwood et al., 2011). A joint presentation of these learnings was also delivered at CU Expo 2011 (Mitchell, 2011). The active collaboration of a community and university partner in academic conferences and publication actualizes the goals and demonstrates the calibre of this partnership.

Despite challenges, changes, disruptions, transformations and both academic and community successes, the community-university partnership—though dormant in 2011—had established committed and positive relationships. Based on the strong relational aspect of the partnership, the community partner was able to approach the university with a research focus and ask if and how the university might support a research project on shifting societal attitudes. Terry, though ending her term as Director of CCRLA, agreed to continue to support the objective of a long-term community-university partnership and to follow through with designing a study that would address Opportunities' research objectives. While the university largely conceptualized the first research project, the second research project was both initiated and conceptualized by the community partner. Mary and Terry agreed to design a study that could be incorporated into the university academic year to examine deep-seated attitudes towards people living in poverty. Terry then invited a faculty colleague Dr.

Colleen Loomis to collaborate in the partnership and to involve both her fourth-year psychology students and Dr. Loomis' second year students.

### **STUDY SOCIETAL ATTITUDES: A PILOT**

The study that evolved from this partnership was designed to examine students' deep-seated implicit attitudes towards people living in poverty by examining their responses towards images of men, women, children and families who are depicted in the media as living in either absolute or relative poverty (Callan et al., 1993). In the study, 162 Wilfrid Laurier University undergraduate students who were enrolled in a second-year psychology class participated. Their implicit attitudes toward people living in poverty were assessed in two ways. First, participants were shown a series of images that depicted either relative poverty (e.g., the working poor, those living on social assistance) or absolute poverty (e.g., the homeless and/or individuals lacking basic necessities). Importantly, these images were not labeled as images of poverty or explicitly described as such. Participants were then given five minutes to write a story answering four questions: Who is this? What led up to the event? How do you feel about them? What happens next? The content of their stories was analyzed for key themes that would reveal their unconscious beliefs about people in poverty, pathways into poverty and pathways out of poverty.

Participants' implicit attitudes were also assessed using word associations. Specifically, participants rated themselves and others on characteristics that were either positive (e.g., happy) or negative (e.g., dishonest). The ratings were then scored in such a way that higher numbers indicated more negative ratings and social distancing from the target. Participants' social dominance orientation (Pratto et al., 1994) was also assessed as a potential moderating factor. Social dominance refers to the degree to which an individual prefers a hierarchy within a social system and the domination of 'inferior' groups by 'superior' groups. It was expected that people high in social dominance might be especially motivated to distance themselves from those in poverty.

### **RESULTS**

When examining participants' stories, it was found that overall participants believed that people become impoverished because of either internal or external factors. Moreover, these beliefs had implications for how much sympathy and compassion participants had for the individual they were writing about. Specifically, participants expressed more sympathy and compassion toward those who they thought were living in poverty due to external (vs. internal) factors. Likewise, if participants believed that an individual was living in poverty due to internal factors, they expressed less understanding, more criticism and exhibited more blame.

With regard to social distancing, it was found that people distanced themselves from those in poverty (and especially if they are high in social dominance orientation). As expected, distancing was found to be a protective strategy that allowed people to maintain the belief that the world is fair and just, absolve themselves of responsibility for their inaction and manage their negative emotions (e.g., guilt, dis-



tress, hopelessness). However, when people were aware and recognized the systemic factors that contribute to poverty, they expressed more sympathy and compassion for the impoverished. It was also the case that when individuals were made aware of the societal pathways into poverty (e.g., mental illness, addiction, structural and systematic barriers, racism, sexism, classism) through education, their attitudes shifted. In light of these research findings, it was concluded that education is a powerful tool that can be used to encourage people to reflect on their own attitudes regarding poverty in Canada and work toward shifting these attitudes.

### **REFLECTING ON SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS**

Historically, community-university partnerships often fall victim to problems of closure. Once university researchers finish a study or the school term ends, or a lead member moves on to another position, correspondence often ceases and the products of the partnership are rarely fully reflected on and/or translated into meaningful outcomes for the community partner, which is why a central tenant of successful community-university partnerships is first establishing a level playing field where both parties are given space to share and learn from one another. Although challenging, it is essential to maintain communication pathways and ascertain shared interests and intentions so that both parties remain equally committed. Although Terry stepped down from her position as director of CCRLA in 2012 and the university dismantled the initial academic structure she envisioned for the community-university partnership, she remained committed to the partnership with Opportunities. On both of these projects, student engagement was another critical key to success.

The community-university partnership has, in large part, been successful because of the strengths of the community partner. Mary MacKeigan demonstrated remarkable flexibility, generosity of spirit and understanding of and patience with university culture. She has been able to endure various iterations of the research and the partnership and to provide important and meaningful learning opportunities to a diverse series of both undergraduate and graduate students. Our faculty colleague, Dr. Loomis, also supports the growth, stability and productivity of the partnership. In particular, she adds the strength of quantitative analysis to Terry's strengths in community-based research and qualitative analysis. As previously mentioned, Terry and Mary have co-presented at C2U Expo 2011 in Waterloo, Ontario, on a panel on community-university engagement hosted by McMaster University's President in Hamilton, Ontario, and with students and faculty colleague Dr. Loomis at community forums. The presentation upon which this article is based was presented at C2U Expo 2013 in Cornerbrook, Newfoundland. Members of the ALIV(e) group also present annually to Terry's graduate class, and Mary has been presenting to large undergraduate classes. This type of mutual benefit has created enormous learning opportunities for Laurier students above and beyond their participation in the research project itself.

Committed to the partnership, the community partner, faculty members and graduate students are now analyzing the second round of data from the societal attitudes study, working on publications and planning the third round of data collection for September 2013. This level of engagement and personal investment on the part

of faculty members, students and the community partner has invigorated the partnership and ensured the sustainability of this long-term community-university research alliance for poverty reduction.

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# MODELS OF COLLABORATION: DOES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH UNIVERSITY/ COLLEGES HAVE AN IMPACT ON POVERTY REDUCTION?<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

The field of community-engaged pedagogy and practice has seen an increased interest in investigating the ethical integrity of community-campus engagements (Ostrander, 2004). Bringle and Hatcher's (2002) research into best practices for service learning provides recommendations for equitable partnerships. Marullo and Edwards (2000) present academics and community members with a list of questions to measure whether the partnerships for community service-learning are based on a charity model or, as the authors suggest, the more desirable social justice model. There is a concern that some community-campus engagements are structured in ways that the academic institution benefits more than the community. Mulroy (2005, p. 37) examines two case studies at large American universities involved in civic engagement projects collaborating with low-income neighborhoods to build community capacity, noting that academic institutions hold a powerful position in poverty reduction: "A key role for the academy, as a member of the formal community, is its potential to link resources that could increase capacity in informal communities experiencing disinvestment and decline".

To ensure that this potential is not wasted, it is important to understand the dynamics of community-campus partnerships. While certain researchers have found that some of the most effective partnerships are "understood and practiced in a dynamic and developmental framework" (Ostrander, 2004, p. 75), it is important to

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1 This chapter was originally written in the first year of the CFICE project, 2013.

have a common understanding of engagement. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2006), in their *Elective Community Engagement Classification*, defined community engagement as,

the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. (Saltmarsh et al., 2009)

## **METHODOLOGY**

Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) Poverty Reduction Hub co-leads Karen Schwartz (Carleton University) and Elizabeth Weaver (Vibrant Communities Canada) created a preliminary set of questions directed at examining the impact of community-campus partnerships on poverty reduction, and at gaining more information on best practices for establishing and maintaining equitable partnerships. These questions were then presented for feedback to the rest of the partners of the CFICE Poverty Reduction Hub. Comments and changes were integrated, and a second round of feedback was collected from other academic and community hub partners, which included key members from Vibrant Communities Canada, Carleton University, McMaster University, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Opportunities Waterloo Region, Wilfred Laurier University, University of New Brunswick Saint John and Vibrant Communities Saint John. The questions were then finalized and formatted into an online survey. This research obtained ethical approval from Carleton University's Research Ethics Board.

The use of online surveys has seen a significant increase. With expanding access to the internet and high levels of worldwide usage (Kaye & Johnson, 1999), wider communities of researchers both academic and corporate have made use of this technology that can reach millions of participants (Evans & Mathur, 2005). As with any research instrument, online surveys have their own unique set of strengths and weaknesses. According to Evans and Mathur (2005), some of the key strengths include global reach, flexibility, speed and timeliness, convenience, ease of data entry and analysis, question diversity, low administration cost, ease of follow-up, controlled sampling and others. There are also drawbacks to using online surveys; Deutskens, de Ruyter and Wetzels (2006) state that some of the criticisms stem from the quality of responses. They explain that critics have implied that the precision and wholeness of the data obtained through online surveys is not as rigorous as traditional face-to-face or mail-in surveys.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

For this research, the use of an online survey was seen as an effective tool of measurement due to the Canada-wide sample population and the relatively easy usage and access that an online format would provide. The survey was designed for the participation of all people who are engaged with Vibrant Communities across Canada, either as a community member or a member of an academic institution that is engaged

in or has been involved in community-campus partnerships. The survey was created using the Canadian online survey company Fluid Survey.

### **PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT**

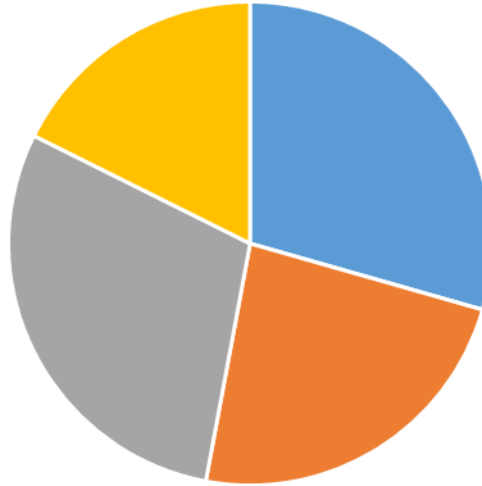
Participants were located across Canada and affiliated with Vibrant Communities Canada, their partner organizations as well as universities and colleges with whom they have collaborated. The participants were recruited in many different ways; firstly, Vibrant Communities Canada sent letters of invitation to their partners and to members of their poverty roundtables, with approximately 100 partners on their mailing list. Secondly, campus partners were sent letters of invitation, which included a link to the survey. Thirdly, the participants were recruited through various online publications produced by Vibrant Communities Canada, all found on the Vibrant Communities website. An online link was posted on the blog in 'Cities Connect' that can be found on the Vibrant Communities website (Forester-Gill, 2013). The Carleton University Research Ethics Board met with the authors to discuss the ethical considerations surrounding the use of social media and linkages to personal information. These ethical considerations were made explicit in all of the recruitment strategies on social media, which included links via Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Vibrant Communities Canada and CFICE managed the social media accounts.

### **SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

Simple descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data collected, and thematic analysis was used for the qualitative responses. The survey consisted of 18 questions: a mixture of yes/no, multiple choice, Likert scale, checkbox grid (multiple choice with multiple answers) and qualitative responses. The survey was 'live' online for 12 weeks between the beginning of March 2013 and the end of May 2013; the average time taken to complete the survey was 28 minutes and 12 seconds. During this period there was a very low response rate: of the 32 participants that consented to participate (on the first page of the survey), only 16 met the inclusion criteria of being located in Canada and continued with the survey. However non-statistically significant the responses, this research, being exploratory, was able to provide insights into improving the questions and the recruitment tools.

Three main themes were analyzed arising from the data: demographics, poverty reduction and community-campus partnerships. Of the total 16 responses, 10 participants (62%) stated they were from Ontario, three (19%) were from New Brunswick, two (12%) were from British Columbia and one (6%) participant stated they were from Saskatchewan. The table below shows the organizational affiliation of the respondents.

## Respondents- Group Membership



■ Community Organization   ■ University   ■ Vibrant Communities   ■ Other

Community Organization

University (Staff/professor/member)

Vibrant Communities (staff/coordinator/chair)

The proportion of members of the community (i.e., community-based organizations such as Vibrant Communities) outweigh the members of the campus, with 11 (65%) being in the role of community and six (35%) being a member of an academic institution.

When asked how participants would define poverty reduction, there were 14 responses. Within those responses, four themes emerged:

- structural change at the policy level;
- removal of barriers to economic sustainability, such as health-care, education, childcare, transportation and stigma;
- basic needs and resources for those living in poverty; and
- empowerment programs and initiatives to prevent poverty and enable people to break the cycle of poverty.

It was important for Vibrant Communities Canada to assess their own definitions of poverty. Participants were asked whether the Vibrant Communities approach to poverty reduction is valuable to their community or the work that they do. The Vibrant Communities approach was described as including several different factors:

- individual levels to actually reduce poverty rather than ease the problems of living in poverty;
- “comprehensive thinking and action,” which looks at the multiple root causes of poverty;



- a “multisectoral collaboration,” which works with individuals and organizations in four sectors (business, government, non-profit organizations and low-income residents);
- “community asset building,” which builds on strengths rather than community deficits; and
- “community learning and change,” which focuses on long term commitments (Cabaj & Kearney, 2003).

There were 16 responses in total, with nine (56%) agreeing, five (31%) somewhat agreeing and two (12%) choosing ‘other’.

Vibrant Communities Canada uses a ‘poverty matrix’ tool to understand the levels of poverty within different communities:

the Poverty Matrix has been prepared by Tamarack –An Institute for Community Engagement as one of a growing bundle of tools to support the work of local organizations that are facilitating and leading broad-based local efforts to reduce poverty (we call them “convenors”). (Cabaj, 2004)

The majority of participants 10 (62%) stated that they had never used the ‘poverty matrix’ tool, and six (38%) had used the tool. Out of the six participants who responded positively to the previous question, three (75%) stated that they are currently using the matrix, and one (25%) stated that they are not currently using the matrix. When asked whether the ‘poverty matrix’ adequately reflects the scope of poverty within their own community or the work that they do, eight (75%) somewhat agreed, four (29%) agreed, one (7%) stated that they were neutral and one (7%) somewhat disagreed.

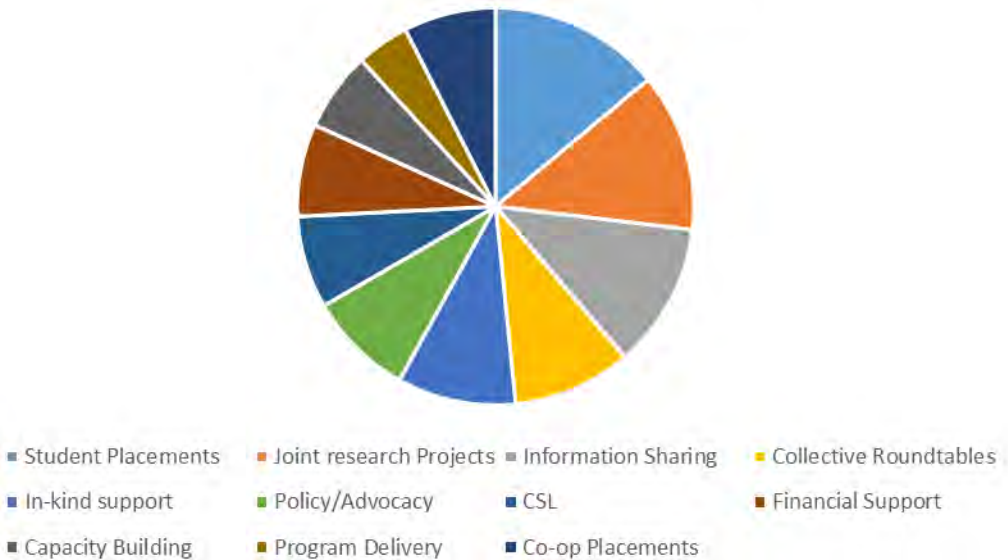
Participants were asked what kind of work they do within their community to reduce poverty. There were four categories to choose from:

- 10 (77%) chose strengthening organizations (i.e., pathway interventions, employment, income, training and education, housing);
- 10 (77%) chose strengthening community (i.e., asset accumulation, personal, physical, human social, financial, natural);
- 6 (46%) chose social systems (i.e., sustained poverty reduction);
- 4 (31%) chose strengthening individual households (i.e., foundational interventions, food, safety, security, child care, transportation); and
- 4 (31%) chose ‘other’.

In the ‘other’ category, participants were free to provide their own responses. Some of these responses included social policies and shifting societal attitudes, collaborative research, working on the living wage campaign and supporting the development of community organizers and activists who advocate and work to eliminate poverty.

The vast majority of the respondents had experience with a community-campus partnership (of the 14 responses, only one (7%) stated that they had not). These experiences included (respondents were allowed to check as many as applied): student placements (13, 93%), joint research projects (12, 86%), information sharing (e.g., expertise, brainstorming, presentations, workshops on campus or within your organization) (11, 79%), collaborative roundtables (9, 64%), in-kind support (e.g., providing meeting space, sharing equipment, printing materials) (9, 64%), policy/advocacy (8, 57%), community service learning (7, 50%), funding/financial support (7, 50%), organizational development/capacity building (6, 43%), program delivery (4, 29%) and co-op placements (1, 7%). See the figure below for a visual summary of these findings.

### Community Campus Partnerships



As one aspect of our research questions focused on how these partnerships begin, we asked participants to identify the initiator for each of the partnerships previously mentioned. Unfortunately, the majority of the respondents chose 'other' when asked who the initiator was. Since the survey did not allow for a text response, it is impossible to know what the respondents meant. However, the second major initiator for most partnerships was the community or collaborative organization (see Table 1 below). The majority of the collaborations (70, 50%) are current partnerships, and 14 (10%) are collaborations from the past. In a follow-up question, complexities arose and it was noted that there are multiple partners who initiate any collaboration.

We hypothesized four different models of community campus engagement. One dimension of the models was who initiated the partnership: the community seeking help for a problem/research question from the university; the university seeking a partnership with a community organization; an organization that acts as a broker for

community-campus partnerships; and an ad hoc model where the initiation is based on the specific project with no defined pattern. One way to interpret the results is that the ad hoc model may be the most frequent manner in which community-campus partnerships begins because the majority of responses fall into the 'other' category. The exploratory study helped us to refine this question so as to aide in future research on our models of community campus engagement.

	<b>THE UNI- VERSITY OR COLLEGE</b>	<b>THE COM- MUNITY OR COLLABORA- TIVE ORGANI- ZATION</b>	<b>ANOTHER ORGA- NIZATION (THAT HAS RELATION- SHIPS WITH BOTH THE ORG. AND THE UNIVERSITY/ COLLEGE)</b>	<b>OTHER</b>	<b>TOTAL RE- SPONSES</b>
With student placements/practicums	6 (46.2%)	4 (30.8%)	2 (15.4%)	1 (7.7%)	13
Co-op placements	3 (27.3%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)	6 (54.5%)	11
CSL (Community Service Learning - where a student works in a community organization or initiative)	6 (46.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.7%)	6 (46.2%)	13
Joint research projects	4 (33.3%)	5 (41.7%)	2 (16.7%)	1 (8.3%)	12
Collaborative roundtables	1 (9.1%)	5 (45.5%)	2 (18.2%)	3 (27.3%)	11
Policy/Advocacy	2 (16.7%)	4 (33.3%)	2 (16.7%)	4 (33.3%)	12
Funding/Financial support	3 (27.3%)	1 (9.1%)	3 (27.3%)	4 (36.4%)	11
In kind support	4 (36.4%)	3 (27.3%)	1 (9.1%)	3 (27.3%)	11
Information sharing (expertise/ presentations/workshops)	3 (25.0%)	4 (33.3%)	1 (8.3%)	4 (33.3%)	12

	THE UNI- VERSITY OR COLLEGE	THE COM- MUNITY OR COLLABORA- TIVE ORGANI- ZATION	ANOTHER ORGA- NIZATION (THAT HAS RELATION- SHIPS WITH BOTH THE ORG. AND THE UNIVERSITY/ COLLEGE)	OTHER	TOTAL RE- SPONSES
Organiza- tional de- velopment/ Capacity building	0 (0.0%)	5 (41.7%)	1 (8.3%)	6 (50.0%)	12
Program delivery	0 (0.0%)	3 (27.3%)	1 (9.1%)	7 (63.6%)	11
Other	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (90.9%)	11

**Table 1,** Question 11: For each of the above collaborative work, we would like to know who initiated the partnership between the community and the university/college.

In investigating barriers to engagement for the university/college, (where again, respondents were allowed to choose as many responses as were applicable) the most frequent responses were ‘faculty and staff time dedicated to collaboration’ (eight responses) and ‘meeting the community’s needs’ (eight responses). The next most frequent responses (seven) were ‘faculty support’, ‘incentives’ and ‘funding challenges’. As for the most noted barriers for the community, eight chose ‘perceived power imbalance’ as the major barrier. The next most frequent responses were six for ‘funding challenges’ (similar to the number chosen as a barrier by universities/colleges), ‘a slow moving process’ and ‘work did not fit into the research agenda/community priority’. The least chosen barriers (two responses) were ‘partner burden’, ‘stress management’, ‘collaboration with campus not part of the organizational strategic plan’, ‘project or collaboration not considered important’ and ‘university ethics process’.

As for benefits, when looking at the most noted benefits for the community/organization, the top three, all with 100% (nine) response frequency, were:

1. participation in an innovative partnership project;
2. can see how the initiative will lead to poverty reduction; and
3. relationship with campus faculty.

The most noted benefits for the campuses, with 100% (nine) response frequency, were

1. providing the opportunity for students to learn skills in the community that they would not otherwise learn in the classroom; and
2. community organization sharing their knowledge and resources.

Eight (89%) agreed with the community respondents that participation in an innovative partnership project was an important benefit. In response to a qualitative question, 10 participants (100% who answered this question) stated that they believed that the community did in fact benefit from working with a university/college. When asked to elaborate on the benefits, six participants provided short answers. The highlights from those answers are:

1. knowledge flow and increase;
2. access to resources;
3. capacity building;
4. providing legitimacy to community work;
5. having the community's voices heard;
6. successful work creating public policy;
7. enhanced skills; and
8. employment opportunities for community members.

Results were similar to what is found in the literature on community-campus engagements, especially noting the time and funding barriers to such partnerships (Hyde & Meyer, 2004; Savan, 2004; Seifer & Calleson, 2004), the benefits of opportunities for students (Eyler, 2001; Hayes, 2006; Strand, 2000), participation in innovative projects (Arches, 2007; Flicker, 2008; Stanton, 2008) and resource sharing. The results suggest that more research needs to be done, especially since this was an exploratory study.

There are benefits and challenges to community-campus partnerships that have been documented in the literature, and our experiential and survey data are consistent with the literature. We are beginning to identify models of community-campus partnerships and hope to better understand which model can maximize the benefits and minimize the challenges. What we can see from our work is that these partnerships can shed light on the stigma that people who live in poverty experience, create excitement that can invigorate and ensure the sustainability of this long-term community-university research alliance for poverty reduction, and in this process move the policy dial on poverty reduction.

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# A PEEPHOLE INTO THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS ON THEIR EXPERIENCES IN THE POVERTY REDUCTION HUB

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## INTRODUCTION

The CFICE Poverty Reduction Hub involved several students as research assistants (RAs). These students were attached to partner universities, community organizations or Hub co-leads. Depending on which aspect of the partnership RAs worked on, they had different roles and experiences, ranging from conducting primary research in the community to coordinating Hub-related activities. The organizations that RAs worked with included non-profits and for-profit businesses.

Because of the range of experiences students had working in the Hub, we have included three case examples each written from the point of view of a different student. These examples are included below—one from an RA who worked for the academic co-lead at the end of the Hub period, another from an RA who worked for a partner university, and one from an RA who worked for the academic co-lead at the beginning of the Hub period—followed by a brief conclusion that summarizes key themes.

### **CASE EXAMPLE 1: AARON KOZAK**

#### ***Macro Lens***

As the Research Assistant for the whole Poverty Reduction Hub, I have been able to get a wide-pan view of community-led projects and their intersections. Much of my work has been on the back-end coordinating Hub-wide initiatives, such as meetings,



reports, proposals and publications. I have also had the opportunity to conduct primary research, such as a case study on living wage initiatives in Hamilton, Ontario.

I have learned a lot about how community-university partnerships are structured and the inherent benefits and challenges associated with this partnership model. I have learned about both bureaucratic and relational structures that impact research projects. For example, universities operate on a different timeline from community organizations—they have more to do with the academic calendar and less to do with the fiscal year—and the large-scale nature of these institutions means that things move slower, with all the layers of approvals to filter through. Because of institutional differences, oftentimes the job of someone in a university is more specific but covers a broader scope, whereas there may only be one or two contact people in a community organization involved in a particular project and thus they wear more hats.

The nature of the institutions also impacts their environments; subsequently, work environments impact how researchers approach their work. Understanding the contexts in which researchers operate—including both structures and motivations—is important to communicate, and thus work, with them effectively.

### ***Dual Identities***

One of the challenges I found working on behalf of the central university is that I became associated with this institution. To people involved with the project, I am a representative of the bureaucratic structure, with all the associations that come along with that. However, I see myself as more aligned with community organizations, and that is where most of my background and interests lie. Indeed, that is why I am working on this project in the first place: I believe in the work that community organizations do, and much of my professional identity is integrated with those environments. This identity struggle is something that I still experience working presently for the government, but being brought on board as someone who has a community-first perspective. When I talk to community organizations and members, I am inherently representing the government, but I consider myself aligned with the community and working for them.

This dual identity also has implications surrounding the financial situation of students. Students often experience various levels of poverty. The status of being associated with a university can create shame for the true financial situation students are in, though, and having a working relationship with people who are employed by the university can create a weird positionality of association with both power and the group (people experiencing poverty) that we seek to empower. Even in practical terms there are barriers: when attending conferences, for example, students must pay money up-front and get reimbursed after the fact, which can take months. We must also be careful to be aware of and comply with all reporting requirements to ensure that we indeed get reimbursed. Sometimes our expenses can total in the neighbourhood of \$2000, which is an awful lot to cover for months, and there have been times where I have had to max out my credit card, line of credit and go into my overdraft while waiting for reimbursements, which not only has the financial impacts of interest payments but also psychological stress.

While I am a representative of the university—both in terms of my work role and my title of student—I am also an active member of my community. Navigating these roles, especially given which parts of self I identify with more readily, can be difficult to reconcile. When working in the community, I may be viewed in an elitist light, but I do not feel like I belong to that academic grouping. In some respects, students are a gateway for communities to interact with the university, and perhaps this connection makes university-community partnerships less daunting for all parties. Students act like a door with a welcome mat, providing a soft access for representatives more entrenched in both community and academic institutions. There is some danger in having students, who differ in their training and experience levels, as being the face of partnerships, but perhaps the connections that students can forge can make an impact on the inherent power imbalances between university and community.

### ***Partnership Models and Designs***

My experiences with CFICE are largely through working with my supervisor, the academic co-lead of the Hub. We have regular meetings where we do a lot of planning and organizing. I've gotten a sense of what it means to do research both from an academic and community perspective and the different motivations therein. I have been able to take this high-level knowledge and use it to my advantage when organizing my own research designs. For example, I have designed and carried out research for community health centres and most recently the federal government, and I have organized large-scale projects in the creative arts community, all of which have some sort of partnership model. My biggest take-away from working for CFICE has probably been seeing how various pieces can fit together to carry out large projects and the collective impact of groups of people working towards a common goal. It has also shown me how important relationship-building and networks are to increase the impact research can have on the populations it serves.

I am not sure I can suggest specific best practices for community organizations to work with student researchers, other than to take the time to get to know the students: what are their motivations, their background, their skills? Putting the pieces together to conduct research can be tedious at first because it might not feel like you are doing anything, so understanding what students are interested in can be helpful as a bridge to get them to sink their teeth into the project. Research can also feel overwhelming at first—especially research involved in large-scale projects—because it is difficult to see how everything fits together. When feeling like a cog in a machine with little potential impact, it can be difficult to be motivated to think creatively, which is important to get the most out of research.

Putting in time at the beginning of the process to break the ice and figure out how students see themselves in the big picture can pay dividends down the road by increasing the ceiling of what students can contribute. A lot of maximizing the benefits for everyone involved is building comfort for people to do good work, and first impressions are extremely meaningful—both in terms of relationships and the project—to set the tone. Ensuring that students have the resources they need and

feel like they are contributing is important, as well as the understanding that students might be unlikely to voice concerns or admit that they don't know something at first.

The job market is incredibly difficult for students and new grads, and many student researchers will feel privileged to have a job at all, much less a relatively high-paying one that has some prestige associated with it. (Although some students of course might not have had the experience of the tough job market yet and could still be disillusioned.) With students who are new and want to make a good impression, extra time might be beneficial to check in with them and provide as open of an environment for dialogue as possible. Asking them once might not be enough.

Of course, taking the time to check-in is not always a reality in busy community organizations that are understaffed and overworked. We all do our best. Whenever possible, though, we need to remember that all our work is about relationships—for our teams, our partners and the people with lived experience—and our goal of making the best lives possible for all of us can get lost in the shuffle. Keeping kindness at the forefront of our interactions can be helpful to remember when we are bustling through our days and our very important work.

#### **CASE EXAMPLE 2: ZHAOCHENG ZENG**

##### ***An Exciting Path to Interdisciplinary Research***

I started to participate in the living wage research project as a research assistant in summer 2013. At that time I was a PhD candidate in Business Administration at McMaster University, doing research in entrepreneurship, organizational behaviors and human resources management. Before I joined the project, I had limited experience in the living wage area. This is quite common since living wage is usually not the focus in business schools. Because of this, when my supervisor Professor Benson Honig and I were invited by the CFICE group to participate in the living wage research in Hamilton, both of us were surprised, but at the same time, excited. Although there is an extensive body of literature on living wage issues, the effects of living wage are mostly examined from a social fairness/justice perspective. Many scholars investigate the relationships between living wages and certain outcomes such as poverty reduction, the social welfare system and economic development. However, research seldom incorporates a business perspective in this field. My goal in CFICE was to introduce a business perspective to the living wage research in Hamilton and to investigate the potential benefits of living wage policies for both business owners and employees.

##### ***Collaboration and Organization***

CFICE provided me many resources to conduct the research. There was a small committee at McMaster University serving as a bridge to connect the project research assistants and the local communities in Hamilton. The project coordinators in this committee worked closely with CFICE and helped facilitate the ongoing research. For example, when I studied the potential benefits of a living wage policy for employers, I needed to conduct qualitative interviews with living wage employers in the Hamilton area. The project coordinators introduced me to directors working in Workforce

Planning Hamilton and Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, who had extensive connections with local businesses. They provided me with contacts of local employers and encouraged me to get in touch with them for our research. Although not many employers were willing to participate in our project as they were hesitant to discuss living wage implementation in their companies, the research cooperation of the project coordinator was so helpful that it gave research assistants opportunities to engage with the local communities.

The CFICE group was supportive of my work. Originally, I planned to do an employer study to look at the influences of the living wage policy on employers' businesses. I designed the interview questions, acquired the contacts of employers and invited them to participate in the study. I was very confident at that time that I would get many responses from employers. But things turned out to be below my expectation. Although we invested many efforts in inviting employers to take part in the research, we received few interviews. Some employers did not reply to the invitation emails, while others were hesitant to share their opinions on living wage implementation with researchers. We had been working on the employer study for more than half a year before we realized that we might have to pivot to a different research direction rather than getting stuck with the employer study. I remembered that the project coordinators encouraged me to submit a new research proposal to CFICE to get funding for the new study. I submitted my plan, which was to examine the effects of living wage policies on employees' attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. CFICE highly supported my work by allocating funds for the new research. With the help of CFICE and the project coordinators at McMaster, my supervisor and I successfully conducted the living wage employee study in Hamilton. Our research discovered important findings and was well-received by the local community. We also published our results in an article in the *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* and a book chapter in the *Handbook of Community Well-Being Research*.

Besides providing students with research funding and necessary resources, CFICE also sought to facilitate communication and information-sharing within the organization, especially among similar research projects in different locations. I was responsible for conducting the living wage research in the Hamilton area, while other research groups were doing living wage studies in other areas such as Windsor, Waterloo and Saskatoon. Over four years, CFICE organized three Poverty Reduction Hub conferences and provided travel funds for research assistants to attend. These were valuable opportunities for me. In these conferences, I had a chance to meet with people working in different projects for CFICE, shared my research with them and received feedback. I remember several years ago in the conference in Saint John, the Poverty Reduction group had a great discussion on the effective building of cooperation between local universities and communities on promoting a living wage. The discussion was impressive and insightful, through which I learned different models of establishing the university-community link. I find such conferences so helpful for student assistants as they broaden our horizons and expose us to diverse experiences accumulated within CFICE.

Besides holding conferences, CFICE facilitates the communication within the group through the use of a wide range of methods including, for instance, webinars and newsletters. The information provided by these webinars and newsletters is very useful. We can keep track of the studies conducted within CFICE and the relevant news related to living wage issues. I like reading those materials very much.

CFICE is eager to hear the feedback and comments from its research assistants and always tries to incorporate the feedback into the improvement of the organization's management. I remember that I was interviewed three times by project coordinators or administrative assistants in CFICE. In these interviews, I was asked about my experiences working in the research project and my suggestions for the organization. I highly appreciate these interactions and the opportunity to add my voice. I also believe that this is very helpful in terms of building a dynamic communication with research assistants.

Over the four-year period, I had a great time working as a research assistant in the CFICE project. This work not only developed my expertise in conducting research in the living wage field, but also enabled me to build valuable connections with local communities and other living wage researchers and activists in CFICE. The experiences I accumulated during this process have become a significant part of my PhD study. Although I have finished my research assistant work in CFICE, I am always happy to be part of the CFICE family and look forward to new research opportunities with CFICE in the future.

### **CASE EXAMPLE 3: NATASHA PEI**

#### ***A Pathway from the University to the Community***

Becoming a research assistant with CFICE was one of the most rewarding experiences of my education. Community-campus partnership was a new research concept to me as I entered Carleton University's Masters of Social Work program, though I was already looking for an outlet that would allow me to contribute to broader systemic changes in poverty and homelessness.

Both the CFICE Research Assistantship and Social Work Community-Based Research course allowed me to explore root causes of and innovative solutions to poverty from a community point of view; and by working closely with Vibrant Communities organizers, CFICE allowed me to foster professional connections in my field that would otherwise be unlikely.

Over the year I worked with our community partners in the Poverty Reduction Hub, I learned about the national poverty reduction and living wage movements, the challenges the network experienced in evaluating complex social issues and innovative responses, and the collective impact model of collaborative work and theory of change.

As my first experience with primary research, working alongside Dr. Karen Schwartz to explore models of community-campus partnerships that put the community's needs at the forefront, and at the same time, learning about community-based research (CBR) theory and practice in the classroom, were extremely helpful and

complementary activities to get a more rounded exposure to the various forms that CBR takes. Working on the Living Wage project challenged my instinct to suggest alternative approaches, and I learned what it meant to help the community progress on the goals that it had already defined were important to them.

The way the leadership of the Poverty Reduction Hub was assembled, I was included in activities like a third co-lead. I had a lot of opportunity for interaction with the community partners and was ultimately asked to apply for a position with them. As the current Community Animator of Vibrant Communities Canada, I have become the new community research partner on behalf of Vibrant Communities Canada, and I was able to continue the work of the Poverty Reduction Hub and work on shaping the research in Phase II of CFICE, as well as jumping into a leadership role for the living wage research through the Community-Based Research course.

### **Challenges**

As a student, I experienced several challenges. Some of the largest challenges included:

- **The power imbalance** – the awkward role of a student associated with the university that is working under the community co-leads. There is a lack of research that deals with students navigating the privilege of the institutional name but not having the position or authority for decision-making within that institution.
- **Funding** – the funding structure and timing, with funding for students flowing through Carleton University’s regular Business Centre and payroll, created large gaps between pay cheques that coincided with expensive conference seasons and required all payment by students upfront, before reimbursement. The lack of available quick-funding to support students with travel purchases was a big barrier.
- **Soloing** – students are often very task-oriented in the Research Assistantship. While the researchers have the lay of the entire project, students often have just 1-2 items that they are responsible for completing. When trying to create pathways for students from the university to the community, it is more ideal for them to be able to see the big picture, and do more quality work, when they are able to connect the work to the bigger goals and objectives of the overall project.
- **Timeframes** – the timeframes that the community and the student had in mind for the work were different but also challenging as students tend to complete RA work outside of regular business hours that community members adhere to. While the flexibility is ideal for students who have irregular class schedules, it was a challenge as a student to participate in meetings where decisions were deliberated and made.



## *What's in a Name*

One of the most interesting challenges I faced with the CFICE project was identifying where I fit within the bigger picture and what my contribution could look like. While most of the work I did with CFICE as a student was done solely with the Poverty Reduction Hub co-leads, in 2014 a group of RAs got together to talk about common experiences and support one another.

We discovered many commonalities once we got to talking. The most notable was that we all defined our primary role as the intermediary between the university and community partner, but the role took on different nuances depending on the nature of how the community-university partnership was structured. Some of the titles we used were Navigator, Translator and Protector. In each case, we as students were assisting with the research and putting it into terms that the community partners could use. As students, many of us were involved with our communities just prior or were still involved and very much considered ourselves part of the community, while moving through the university for a brief moment in time and learning both languages and timelines at the same time.

I believe this is one of the greatest strengths of student research assistants. As one community member reflected during our Hub evaluation, “the further along in their studies the students get, the less comprehensible the work becomes.” The fresh eyes, feet on the ground in the community, and knowledge of various media for knowledge mobilization was a strength that I felt I brought to the table and that I have seen many other RAs bring to the work.

The additional opportunity to do research in the community, above and beyond regular course requirements, was the primary reason for my satisfaction with the degree that I completed through Carleton University and my employment success in the community after graduation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although our experiences were unique, we were all pleased to be able to garner experience working with organizations outside of the university. RAs are often ciphered to focus on specific projects without seeing the whole picture, but when operating from a Hub-wide perspective, the structure can become clearer over time. The experience of being both a representative of the university while not having much decision-making power in that institution can create an awkward relationship between the student and community organizations, and this precarious status can be further heightened by the lack of financial resources that exists to offer students money up-front for things like travel. The different schedules that students operate on can hamper communication and deadlines when working with community organizations, but students can also act as a facilitator between the university and community by nature of their dual roles.

The experience we accumulated from the CFICE project also contributed to our growth in conducting interdisciplinary research. Students are exposed to a wide variety of research topics where different sets of knowledge are required, including



social work, economics, business, community development or even agriculture. These opportunities to participate in interesting and meaningful research topics not only broaden students' horizons, but they also enable students to practice different research knowledge/skills they learned from the classroom. These chances are valuable for students, especially for RAs.

For the most part, we have enjoyed our experiences working for the CFICE project, viewing it as valuable for our education and career. When working with students who see the value in the work they're doing—from a bigger picture as well as from a task-oriented perspective—the experience can be most valuable for all parties involved: students, community organizations and universities.

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# POVERTY REDUCTION HUB EVALUATION

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## **PART 1 - POVERTY REDUCTION HUB THEORY OF CHANGE**

The Poverty Reduction Hub conducted a number of different forms of evaluation. Our community partners suggested two of the forms of evaluation: capturing most significant change stories and evaluating the collaborative effort against our Theory of Change (ToC). In addition, the evaluation committee of the broader CFICE project created a questionnaire that each hub administered to their partners. This chapter will report on the ToC and the CFICE evaluation. (Liz Weaver describes within the Introduction chapter of this book, under the sub-heading ‘Indicators of Success’, many of the things that we learned from the most significant change stories.) The different forms of evaluation reflect the tensions between campus goals of examining the mechanics of community-campus partnerships and the community goals of examining ways to have an impact on policy that affects poverty. The results of the different forms of evaluation reflect these goals. The different forms of evaluation also reflect the governance structure of the project. An evaluation committee (outside the hub structure) made up of academics, research assistants and the community members who were located on campus or who had the time to commute to campus created the CFICE evaluation. The hub level evaluation was driven by our community partners and carried out in the community at a local level.

The Hub created our first ToC in March 2013, and during annual face-to-face meetings, the Hub partners revised the original ToC. Ted Jackson, the original CFICE principal investigator, defines Theory of Change as a “model that specifies,

usually visually, the underlying assumptions, influences, causal linkages and expected outcomes of an intervention, policy, program, or project” (Jackson, 2013).<sup>1</sup> This tool enables the community and university to co-create knowledge when all stakeholders are involved in creating and updating the ToC. This enables the ToC to reflect the project as it develops. Banks, Herrington and Carter (2017, p. 2) have coined the term co-impact referring to the “generation of change as a result of individuals, groups and organizations working together”. ToC as a tool can also reflect co-impact.

This important tool is widely used by Vibrant Communities, the Hub’s sponsoring community organization. The Hub’s co-lead Liz Weaver wrote,

Some might consider the theory of change approach similar to strategic planning where an organization develops a vision, mission and strategies to guide the work. A strategic planning process often is more internally focused where the organization is considered as the primary driver. If truth be told, an organization does not exist by itself but rather in the context of a community or a system. This means, of course, in effective strategic planning, you need to consider both the internal and external forces impacting the organization and of course the strategies which will ultimately be selected. A theory of change approach enables you to consider the community context first. If done well, participants are asked to consider the 'community' change they would like to see and how the organization and/or collaborative is positioned to help drive that change forward. It also recognizes that there will be other forces at play in this change process. (Vibrant Communities Webinar, November 6, 2012, <http://vibrantcanada.ca/blogs/liz-weaver/what-change-you-want-see>)

All areas of the ToC were expanded upon as the Hub had a clearer idea of 1) issues that it was addressing, 2) community and university needs and assets, 3) desired results, 4) influential factors, 5) strategies and 6) assumptions. In this project, we annually reviewed our progress on the ToC. In 2016, the Poverty Hub did a deeper dive into and engaged in a strategic renewal of the ToC. At this time (June 2016), we had acquired better ways to leverage SSHRC funding and were becoming more efficient (i.e., the community and university needs and assets). Our conception of the problem of poverty had not changed, but we were digging deeper into the models that we had created and noted how they evolved over time. (These models are discussed in Chapter 2 of this book). Three years into the project, we felt that we were making progress toward one of our stated outcomes—significant change—in three areas of policy related to living wage (see academic articles produced on this subject by hub members),<sup>2</sup>

1 2013 Accountability and Learning for Action webinar, <https://carleton.ca/community-first/2016/theory-of-change-webinar-presentation/>.

2 Schwartz, K., Weaver, L., Pei, N. & Miller, A. (2016) Community-Campus Partnerships, Collective Impact & Poverty Reduction, *Community Development*, published online DOI: 10.1080/155575330.215.1128955; Pei, N., Feltman, J., Ford, I. & Schwartz, K. (2015). “Best Practices for Implementing a Living Wage Policy in Canada: Using community-campus partnerships to

neighbourhood revitalization (see Chapters 3 and 4) and the stigma of poverty (see Chapter 6). One of the outcomes that we refined involved increasing our knowledge about how enhanced relationships change academic and community institution policies and procedures, including the notion of disrupting the status quo and innovating. This is reflected in Chapter 4 and the model of incorporating the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into Station 20 West's policies.

We realized three years into the project that there were other factors influencing our work. These new factors included the importance of nurturing relationships so that they survive staff changes and identifying the important roles that various partners play. We also recognized the role that student research assistants play in keeping a long-term project moving forward. A key challenge in collaborative efforts is that much of this work is done off the sides of stakeholders' desks, so student RAs provide an invaluable role in keeping the work on track and on task. (The students reflect on their roles in Chapter 7). Lastly, we acknowledged that the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action had to be imbedded in our work (see Chapter 4). This is important from a ToC perspective – at the start of this project, the 94 calls to action were not available, and as the reconciliation work moves forward, it provides an external influence or force on the ToC that the collaborative now had to consider. In comparing the work of the Poverty Reduction Hub with other CFICE hubs, we realized that one of the strategies that worked most effectively for us in transferring the research funds directly to the community and allowing community partners to drive the direction of the research was our intentional work with multi-sectoral roundtables rather than single-sector organizations. Our assumptions did not change in the first three years of the project: we still assumed that community-campus partnerships can have an increased impact on policy, community and the university rather than working separately. We also articulated the importance and necessity of equalizing power between the university and the community and the need to respect the unique knowledge and expertise of both.

In hindsight and in considering the more formal evaluation which will be discussed below, one limitation of a ToC is that it does not automatically lead to the development of a governance structure or communication strategy, which would have been helpful to the Hub. The overall Hub model discussed in Chapter 2 addressed governance but did not adequately address communication. Lastly, while valuing the voices of those with lived experience was likely an unarticulated value, not having this ethic clearly articulated in the ToC led to some deficiencies, which ended up appearing in the formal evaluation. The ToC provided an organizing framework, and annual reviews of the ToC enabled the Hub to assess what was shifting in real-time and how to advance the work within the revised ToC. The ToC also highlights challenges, including communications frameworks, commitments made to the collaborative effort, and the lack of inclusion of people with lived experience. However, it must be noted that in Chapter 3 our partners in St John, New Brunswick, discuss how their collective

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further the community's goal", *The Engaged Scholar Journal*, 1(118).; **Schwartz, K.**, Weaver, L. Pei, N., **Kozak, A.** (in publication). "Using Collective Impact to Move the Needle on Poverty" in *Community Development Applications of Collective Impact*, ed Walzer, N. & Weaver, L. Taylor & Francis Publishers.

impact process led to the development of an increasingly engaged role for individuals with lived experience on their leadership team.

It is very important to celebrate the policy shifts created by the Hub’s financial investment in our partners’ work. While these are further discussed in subsequent chapters, the table below provides a general list:

<b>POVERTY REDUCTION HUB PARTNER</b>	<b>IMPACT OF PROJECT/POLICY INFLUENCE/SOCIAL ACTION</b>	<b>CHAPTER WHERE DISCUSSED</b>
“Tackling Poverty Together”, Living St John, St John, New Brunswick	Collective impact enabled them to align resources more strategically, and funders aligned their granting approaches with Living St John priorities. This enabled increased funding to target areas.	Chapter 3
Station 20, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	Co-location of services engaged diverse community members in an inclusive, holistic development process to address the root causes of poverty and the determinants of health.	Chapter 4
Pathway to Potential, Windsor, Ontario	Social Justice Leadership program to involve high school students, paired with university students, in working to address poverty in their community; Social Innovation Lab to support CBR that advances social and economic justice.	Chapter 5
Opportunities Waterloo, Waterloo, ON	Shifted societal attitudes regarding people living in poverty.	Chapter 6

POVERTY REDUCTION HUB PARTNER	IMPACT OF PROJECT/POLICY INFLUENCE/SOCIAL ACTION	CHAPTER WHERE DISCUSSED
Hamilton, ON	Increased number of organizations becoming living wage employers.	<p>Where discussed beyond this book:</p> <p>Pei, N., Feltman, J., Ford, I. &amp; Schwartz, K. (2015). Best Practices for Implementing a Living Wage Policy in Canada: Using community-campus partnerships to further the community's goal. <i>The Engaged Scholar Journal</i>, 1, 87-106.</p> <p>Schwartz, K., Weaver, L., Pei, N. &amp; Miller, A. (2016) Community-Campus Partnerships, Collective Impact &amp; Poverty Reduction. <i>Community Development</i>, 47(2), 167-180.</p>

## PART 2: POVERTY REDUCTION HUB RESPONSES TO CFICE YEAR 4 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This section contains information about answers from the Poverty Reduction Hub to the Year 4 Common Evaluation Questions developed within CFICE. The Evaluation committee of the broader CFICE group designed the questions, and each hub was asked to have their community and university partners respond to these questions.

### METHODOLOGY

The Poverty Reduction Hub held two days of meetings in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, during which we conducted focus groups to answer the CFICE Year 4 Common Evaluation questions. The participants saw the questions before focus groups were held, so they had time to think about their responses. We asked all questions in order in four focus group sessions. Two of these sessions were held on June 16, 2016, and the other two sessions were held on June 17, 2016. Each of the four question rounds took place in three different roundtables, each with a note-taker and a group facilitator. The Academic Co-Lead (Karen Schwartz), the Community Co-Lead (Natasha Pei) and the Hub Research Assistant (Aaron Kozak) facilitated groups. Including the facilitators, there was a total of 14 participants.

The participants consisted of six project co-leads, five RAs and three other researchers in a supportive role. They represented three provinces: Ontario (Ottawa, Hamilton, Windsor), New Brunswick (Saint John) and Saskatchewan (Saskatoon). Because the meetings were held in Saskatoon, there was much more representation

from that group than from other Hub projects. The group from Saskatoon met and reviewed the questions before the focus group meeting. They had formulated group answers to the questions, which they presented, at times adding additional commentary. The other Hub projects had at most two representatives present, while the Saskatoon group had six representatives.

After the focus groups, notes from each of the tables were collected and organized by question. These notes were edited slightly for clarity, anonymity and to take out any information deemed extraneous to the discussion. Responses to each of the questions were analyzed using content analysis by two research assistants (Aaron Kozak and Amanda Lefrancois). Both research assistants went through each of the questions independently to identify key themes. After identifying key themes separately, they met to discuss their findings and to agree on overarching themes for each question.

The quotations selected to represent the themes were chosen randomly from a set of potential statements that was representative of the themes. The quotations were then cross-checked to ensure they were not anomalies compared to the other responses organized under that theme. However, there were not many excess quotations per theme, due to the granular level at which themes are discussed within this report and the small number of focus group participants. The data presented in this report is based on the findings from the content analysis for main themes by question that were identified and agreed upon by these two researchers.

Following the focus group, the two researchers interviewed two project co-leads who were unable to attend the in-person focus groups. These two project-co-leads were asked the same questions in the same order as the focus groups.

## OVERARCHING THEMES

When analyzing the content of the focus groups, we discovered a number of themes which we grouped together, noting their frequency.

THEMES
Networking and Relationship Building
Funding and Resources
<i>Research Assistants</i>
Increased Capacity for Research and Reflection
Power
<i>Space</i>
<i>Bureaucracy</i>
Community Inclusion
Centralized Processes and Organization
Communication
Change



We found that some of the themes significantly overlapped. For example, although “communication” and “centralized processes and organization” are two distinct themes, some responses could reasonably have fit into either category. In these cases, we noted the response in the category with which we believe it fit best. There are also a few instances of categories that were mentioned a few times as independent entities but were also mentioned in relation to a more overarching theme. For example, when discussing power, three participants discussed it specifically in relation to bureaucracy. For these examples, we italicized the category and right justified it so it stands out. The most commonly mentioned theme was the centralized processes and organization provided by the CFICE Poverty Reduction Hub, followed by the networking and relationship building that it facilitated. Issues of power were also raised often, though these mentions were both in relation to perceived power issues as well as equal distributions of power.

**Note:** we did not include the two interviews that were conducted after the focus groups in this table of themes. Instead of coming up with new themes based on these responses, we fit them into the pre-existing question-specific answers to the evaluation questions. In a couple of instances, the interview responses did not align well with the responses articulated in the focus groups; in those cases, we added a new paragraph to discuss those responses.

## LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations to this data. Firstly, participants discussed issues related to their own particular projects, working with partner organizations, working with CFICE and the issues of conducting poverty-related research in general, and these discussions often occurred interchangeably. It is difficult to determine the context from where these comments originate, partly due to the wording of the questions and partly due to the natural flow of conversation that occurs in focus group settings with people who have familiarity with each other.

Furthermore, several projects were not represented in these focus groups because partners were unable to attend these meetings. Because the perspectives of many past project leads are not represented, there are gaps in the information captured by these focus groups. Efforts were made to obtain information from key partners whose views are not represented in the data, though only two additional key partners were able to provide this information following the focus groups.

Although some participants mentioned that there was a lack of lived experience among members of the Poverty Reduction Hub, there are some limitations to that assessment. Because of the shame and stigma associated with poverty, people with lived experience may not volunteer information about their financial situations, so some of the research partners may have lived experience of poverty but do not feel comfortable sharing this information.

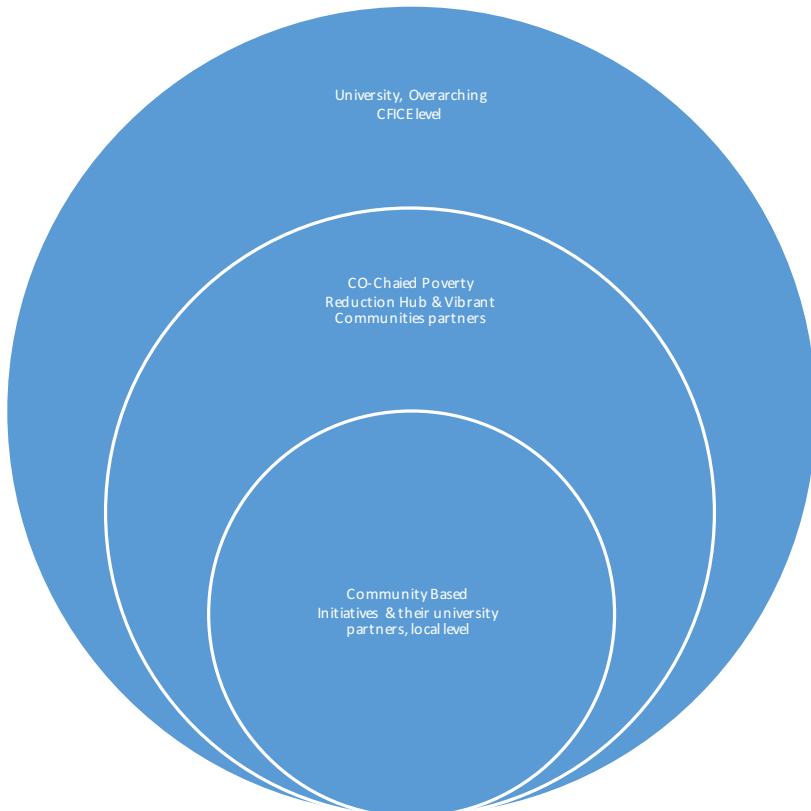
Furthermore, it can be difficult for people who experience poverty to become involved in a project such as CFICE due to lack of time, energy and finances. For example, to attend conferences and meetings in-person, members of the Poverty Reduction Hub had to have the money up-front and endure a lengthy reimbursement

process. If people do not have money up-front or are unable to wait for the reimbursement process, they are barred from participating in face-to-face meetings, such as the one used to conduct the focus groups that formed the basis of this evaluation.

Another limitation of this research is that, for some participants, it had been a long time since they were involved in the Hub. In these cases, they may have had difficulty answering the questions. Furthermore, some organizations dissolved since their participation with the Hub, which has an impact upon how these participants answered the questions. Additionally, there were many people whose organizations dissolved since their participation with the Hub who were unable to be reached for participation in this evaluation, which impacts the sample of participants that this evaluation employs.

## **T**HEMES

The original hub community co-chair felt that it is important to reflect on the themes as they apply to the various layers of this project. The first level is the CFICE overarching layer of which all of the thematic hubs were a part; the second level is the poverty reduction hub which was co-chaired and involved our community partners; and the third level involved the local community-based initiatives and their campus partners. We include reflection on which levels with which the themes intersect in the following discussion.



## NETWORK AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

One of the benefits of community-campus engagement (CCE) is that it offers an opportunity to develop new networks and engage in relationships with partners that individuals or organizations may not otherwise have an opportunity to work with (Schwartz, 2010). This is true for university members who do not always have the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions with community members, and for community members who find it hard to penetrate the ivory tower of the university. One of the goals of the CFICE project was to learn how to create positive reciprocal relationships. We wanted to find out whether these relationships are an important part of why partners choose to become involved in CCE.

Creating relationships and networks was one reason why university and community partners became engaged in CFICE. Regarding community linkage opportunities, participants stated that “CFICE was [a] way to create close linkages within [the] community,” and that the “only way to be in the community is to create those relationships between the community and university.”

Having a pre-existing relationship helped strengthen and facilitate working relationships within the CFICE project. Regarding pre-existing relationships and connection-building being a major enabler, participants said that a “little bit of resources can go a long way when [you] have pre-existing relationships” and that “creating the networks that didn’t previously exist was an enabler.” Other participants said that “collaboration between partners” and “commitment” were key enablers. These pre-existing relationships occurred at the local level, where community groups had relationships with their local university, and at the hub level as the partners were all members of Vibrant Communities and met on a regular basis. Because of the pre-existing relationships that occurred at the local level, their other comments appear to reflect on that level as well.

Partners noted a number of aspects of the relationship that they felt were valuable. Regarding the value of a partnership network, participants said the “in person touch-base is so important for relationship building” and that they “have a lifeline if [they] need to reach out to someone.” One participant said that the project has resulted in “increased knowledge and awareness between partners,” while another participant said that there were “more local partnerships through the support of the grant.”

Participants stated that their “goals were to gain engagement with community experience and have a different experience compared to educational courses” and that “CFICE offered personal relationships with people and the ability to navigate. If something came up in community, I could come to [name omitted] to get information about it further.” Another participant stated that their group was able to “come up with a sustainable model for CCE.”

The Poverty Reduction Hub members did not experience many challenges in their relationships; one participant said that there were “no real challenges” other than needing a “committed and strong partner,” but when challenges arose another participant said that “pre-existing relationships helped against challenges”. In general,

participants said that “CFICE has helped build [a] network across Canada regarding community university collaboration” and that it has given them “connections.”

### **FUNDING AND RESOURCES (ESPECIALLY RAs)**

Finding funding to engage in CCE is an important issue, including ensuring equal decision-making in the distribution of funds. Government funding bodies favour funding of students, and do not facilitate transferring funds to the community. The broader CFICE project allowed the Hubs to allocate funds for CCE projects after proposals were reviewed by the Principal Investigator. The initial vetting and help in constructing the proposal took place at the Hub level. The process to access the funds involved the university and overarching CFICE level.

Our partners found that the Hub funding enabled a number of benefits. One participant said that the partnerships “allowed [them] to work smarter.” Being able to hire a student to assist with the research was important; participants stated that “having an RA is an asset” and that “creating pathways to the students get them ready to go to the community to work (internships, involving them in policies).” More generally, participants reported that “money from CFICE was an enabler, especially for research assistantships.” The partners made a number of comments about the benefit of being able to hire a research assistant. Participants said that the “role of RA [was] as connector all around, at times project manager, [which] prevents [us] from dropping the ball,” that the “student RA drove the agenda in terms of keeping everyone on track and created focus group questions” and that “RAs provided research.”

On the other hand, limited resources were a barrier; participants said that as much as they appreciated the resources they received through CFICE, they need to realize that “poverty is so under-resourced that it is hard to make a difference” and that “changes take time and resources, and it is difficult to have both.” Another participant said that there was not enough “funding and resources.” Other barriers included the challenges of being reimbursed for expenses in a timely manner due to university bureaucracy and the rules mandated by the funder (SSHRC). One participant said that “funding was very challenging” and that “a great deal of time was spent by several members of the research team to lobby for monies owed.” Participants said that it was a “challenge to receive funding” and that “SSHRC always has issues with funding.” One participant elaborated that “making sure people are getting reimbursed quickly” was an “ethical issue because we are working with poverty reduction and we are assuming that [the] CBO and students can afford fronting up money.”

All CCE projects exist in a particular context, and the context of poverty reduction work had an impact on the partners’ responses about funding issues. Regarding the broader context of federal, provincial and municipal funding for poverty reduction work, participants said that “controlling finances is really power-based” and that there exists a “huge culture of doing more with less, and there’s fatigue associated with this.” While they were grateful for funding from CFICE, this funding was a small contribution considering the amount of funds required to truly have an impact on poverty reduction.

## INCREASED CAPACITY FOR RESEARCH AND REFLECTION

Many of our partners felt that being part of CFICE and the funds that were available through this project increased their capacity to engage in poverty reduction work and allowed them to reflect on and refine their processes. Many community organizations do not have the resources or capacity to engage in evaluation or other kinds of research without collaborations with the university. As the Hub was primarily responsible for approving the proposals, this feedback applies to the middle Hub level. Participants said “opportunities for applied research within the community and increased research capacity from community perspective [was a] win/win” and that CFICE was a way “to offer an initial evaluation of a novel social enterprise model in Saskatoon’s inner city.” Participants said that there is a “demand from funders for outcome-based assessment, but the community does not have the capacity to engage in this. They need someone to guide them, connect them to evaluation network: this is what CCE does in a reciprocal relationship. It allows for a centralized location to store data, which makes it easier to look at many kinds of data the same time.” Additionally, they said, “funders demand evaluations: they like outcome based assessments, but the capacity to do this does not exist in the community” and that the partnership “gives a chance to think about the bigger picture, and people on the team can ask stimulating questions.”

The project allowed partners to engage in research that they would not have been able to engage in otherwise. Participants said that “building on earlier work of social innovation opened a totally different research area, which [we have] brought into research courses and published teaching cases” and that they have been able “to benefit from the opportunity to assess impact (which had started under other funding).”

Engaging in research with a university partner allows community members to gain a sense of legitimacy by being associated with a university and having the opportunity to talk about the results of their work in a different way. Participants said that their “increased capacity for knowledge translation and exchange, as well as the ability to travel to share the knowledge, are a direct result of this project partnership” and that “there is a ‘legitimacy’ to the work through a SSHRC-funded grant: it provides context and weight to the work.” Another participant said that there was “additional time to reflect and adapt.” Participants said that CFICE “let [me] see different layers to research... [it] broadened [my] focal point” and that CFICE gave them the “ability to conduct important research.”

## POWER

One goal of the CFICE project was to learn about how to equalize power between the university and the community as they work together in partnership. The university is seen as having more power often because they control the research funding. Our partners saw power enacted through bureaucratic hurdles, in accessing funding, within research ethics board approvals, through space issues and in community inclusion. It is challenging to equalize power when the university controls the grant funds.

Participants said that “working with Carleton was difficult... [the] ethics process was really challenging so needs to be streamlined” and that “financial contributions are challenging [because the] academic manages [the] purse.” Regarding power in general, one participant stated that engaging people who do not traditionally have much power can be difficult. Responses to this question varied from referring to a) the organization’s relationship with the host institution; b) other issues surrounding carrying out research particular to the organization; and c) general power issues when conducting research.

The participants did express some ways that power was equalized. Important tools to equalize power that were identified by our participants included: 1) communication; 2) attempting to see oneself in someone else’s eyes; 3) sharing tasks so that they all don’t fall on the individual with the least perceived power; 4) mutual respect for each other’s work; 5) holding meetings off-campus; 6) sharing jargon; and 7) having a clear idea of the roles of all of the Hub members, especially when there was a great deal of turnover. Lastly, empowering the community to decide how the research funds would be used and to guide the research was seen as an important way to equalize power. It appears from the feedback that it is possible to equalize power at the hub (middle) and local levels, and much more of a challenge when interacting with the larger overarching bureaucratic university.

### **SPACE**

Holding meetings on campus rather than in the community was seen as causing an imbalance of power. Periodically the broader CFICE project held meetings with the hubs’ various partners on campus. The Hub held meetings via conference calls or in the community. Participants reported that a “huge power imbalance exists for people to go on campus since it was not easy to find parking” and that when meetings were held in the community “in-kind donations ([such as] meeting space, meals for focus group participants) greatly facilitated the work of the project.” One of the project partners had access to a co-located university and community space. Participants said that the “co-location of the university made it accessible to the public and community partners” and that “access to a community space that is more accessible (physically and psychologically) for community partners to participate in the project, as opposed to campus spaces that are, at best, confusing to navigate and, at worst, perceived as elitist” was important.

### **BUREAUCRACY**

The university bureaucracy created a number of hurdles including not understanding how the university functions or knowing the best way to navigate it. Participants found “it can be confusing [with] so many intersecting parts.” The ethics review board process was noted as particularly cumbersome and problematic; participants stated that “ethics approval is a nightmare between two universities” and “ethics was a big challenge (with Carleton) – [it] took a very long time.” While the process of attaining approval of Ethics Review Boards was daunting, the participants did not feel that

ethical problems surfaced during the project. Participants said that they “didn’t see ethical issues” and that they were “mindful of the potential impact of the findings.”

## COMMUNITY INCLUSION

There is a debate in the literature about what “community” means. This debate also existed within the CFICE project. Within CFICE, at the overarching level, community referred to a very diverse group, including people with lived experience, community organizations, the public sector and an organization that advances community service-learning with offices inside the university. With such a diverse definition of community, it is challenging to identify which communication practices work best with “community”. No definition was specified in the list of CFICE-wide evaluation questions that each hub was given. The McMaster University Centre for Leadership in Learning states, “A definition of community should recognize that although we talk about community as a singular entity it is actually many communities. It may be the university community, the neighbourhoods just outside of the university, the city we are located in, or our provincial, national or global communities. It is important to consider which communities or even which aspects of a community you will engage in your pedagogy.”<sup>3</sup>

The problem of how community was defined, how respondents defined community differently and to which level of the project they were referring was evident in relation to this theme. Community that was clearly defined as people with lived experience drew numerous comments in relation to inclusion and power. Some respondents felt that

“one big problem was that there was no one with lived experience in [the] project management team... consultation with folks with lived experience took place, which is OK but there is a need for financial resources to pay folks with lived experience to be part of management of project and research.”

Other respondents realized that they had not included certain voices and planned “to be involving people with lived experience to test out and check back with communities...[as] more work is being done to ensure deeper engagement with marginalized communities.” It should also be mentioned that participants might not feel comfortable discussing their own lived experiences of poverty in a focus group setting. Others had a different perspective on the involvement of people with lived experience; one participant stated that it is “important to not impose on residents – need to be sensitive about circumstances... being involved in research is not generally a priority for marginalized people”. Still others commented on the richness of the stories that they collected from people with lived experience. One participant said that “telling stories in people’s voices” was important: “[we] have done over 100 interviews with people who use Station 20 and [we] are learning about the community’s resilience, capacity, and their knowledge and analysis of their capabilities.”

3 <https://carleton.ca/communityfirst/2017/10-resources-for-incorporating-cce-in-to-your-courses/>



Most respondents discussed the need to consult more meaningfully with the community, and since half of the respondents worked in community organizations, it can be assumed that respondents were referring to the service-users of their community organization. Respondents stated that there was a “lack of time/scope of [the] project to consult more meaningfully with the community” and that there “wasn’t meaningful inclusion... [the] project just wasn’t set up that way” and that they “did not do well regarding that matter.”

When community was defined as local poverty reduction groups, participants felt that they were included in a meaningful way. Respondents said that the “local poverty reduction group was involved with [a] focus group [and] workshop” and “in other priority areas, the resident leaders were brought to the table for evaluation.” Furthermore, the “local poverty-reduction group...participated in the focus group, working group and had a prominent role in our workshop,” and a group was “created...to disseminate research.”

Having a strong community partner as a backbone organizational leader was seen to be a definite asset; one participant said that having a “strong backbone organization mobilized everyone.”

## **CENTRALIZED PROCESSES AND ORGANIZATION**

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication can be challenging in any large project that spans multiple levels of commitment and multiple years. In this evaluation, participants focused on communication a) between the overall CFICE project and individual Hub community projects, b) within the Hub partners and c) between the Hub projects and the community they serve, though it must be noted that in collecting the data it was not always clear to which the participant was referring. The broader CFICE project communicated to the individual projects in each hub through the CFICE website. The Poverty Reduction Hub communicated through monthly teleconferences and annual face-to-face meetings. These meetings were almost exclusively made up of community, defined as members of the poverty reduction tables, with very few of our academic partners at other universities attending the meetings. Academic partners attended more of the face-to-face meetings than the weekly teleconferences. Communication between Hub partners and the community they served took place according to each organization’s usual communication outlets.

Numerous positive comments were made about how communication flowed within the Hub. Participants said there was a “willingness for partners to come together to be a part of something larger,” the “fit of the project team anchored the work” and that “research and dissemination of information was very important.” Participants said that the “community provides research input and on the ground insight,” “everyone has taken a part in collaboration in community involvement; collectively we have a sense of what we need” and that “feedback was sought from [the] larger group.” Another participant said that the “working group provided oversight.”

There were barriers to effective communication at the level of the overarching CFICE project. Participants said that we “could grow the value of CFICE by [a] really clear communication plan within project” and that there is a “lack of understanding of everyone’s different roles.” Furthermore, participants spoke about communication between Hubs, stating that a “weakness of CFICE was reduced connections between hubs... communication across projects was weak” and that they “need more information. It’s across Canada and hard to keep up to date.” CFICE had five hubs, but the participants in one hub did not interact with participants from another hub. For example, even though poverty reduction and food insecurity are closely aligned issues, participants from these hubs did not necessarily interact closely. Another participant stated that there was “not enough community feedback.”

Barriers to communication can become more prominent during times of transition. Regarding the information gaps in transitional periods, participants said that it is “helpful for [the] CBO to have a training packet or something to explain CFICE rules and regulations” and that the “gap between transitioning people slowed processes.” Most comments related to transitional periods were project-specific (e.g., transitions within the partner organizations’ projects that they worked with CFICE on) and normally did not refer to transitional periods within broader CFICE or Hub structures.

Participants noted strategies for overcoming communication challenges. One participant said that “commitment and trust ruled the day” and that “any issues or challenges are part of the way things are,” while another participant said that the “first phase did not capture a concrete model,” which resulted in the group getting its project extended to receive more input.

Lastly, the issues with communication resulted in concerns about knowledge mobilization. Participants said “there had been a concern about how to appropriately share research results with the community” and that “a significant consideration was how to share findings in a way that is constructive and tactful.” Another participant stated “the one failure is the knowledge mobilization: people didn’t feel that they were being communicated to.”

## **CHANGE**

Change was a theme that many participants discussed, in the form of 1) changing personnel, 2) the project ending and how to continue the work that was begun, 3) aspects of the project that participants would change if they could do it all over again and 4) the possibility of change.

At the local level change involved personnel changes; one participant said that “changes included welcoming in another operations manager for Station 20... [and there were] RA changes as well.” Turnover in members of the project was common amongst projects. The projects that our partners undertook changed in major ways. One participant said that the “big change was [that the] original CFICE project was through Vibrant Communities Saint John, which transitioned to Living Saint John... [but] relationships were already established so [the] partnership didn’t get impacted.” In this example, the community organization structure changed. Of note,

multiple community organizations that were part of earlier years of CFICE folded shortly after their involvement in the project.

Also at the local level, there was a desire to continue the project and create change in their communities. One participant said that they “want evaluation to continue and ensure [the] project continues” and that “the partnership is something that happens because like-minded people/organizations come together... the resources might not necessarily be required for the partnership but will be required to carry out projects and centralize coordination.” Another participant mentioned that they “lost funding so couldn’t continue” with the particular project, though there was intent to continue. The theme of relationships was common in the evaluation, so the comment that the partnership continues through the relationships of the people involved is poignant.

Regarding things that partners would change if they could start the project again, they focused on the overarching CFICE level, with participants stating that they “would want to change the whole structure regarding funding and communication.” They also focused on the local level in relation to their particular project, as participants said that they “should have taken a step back to build capacity for inclusion for people with lived experiences and indigenous voices” and that they wished “to have more focus groups.”

Regarding the thinking that the partnership at the local level might change, participants said that they “plan to complete the current phase... the research being done is worth investing in, and it needs to happen, whether or not CFICE is involved... the partnerships might change somewhat, but the work will continue” and that “this partnership will continue into phase two but, more importantly, this partnership is bigger than the project.”

## **CONCLUSION**

There are many important take-aways from both forms of evaluation in which the Hub participated. Some of these take-aways could be incorporated into the initial planning of future research projects and partnerships, while others are “aha” moments that should lead us to appreciate the strengths of community-campus partnerships.

The strengths of the hub include the following:

- The PR hub consciously equalized power by making all decisions together, including the co-creation of measurement instruments.
- The PR hub was valued as a hub for centralized processes and organization, as a partnership network (particularly in regard to face-to-face meetings), and as offering opportunities for critical reflection and research.
- Enablers for effective CCE included pre-existing relationships (and drawing on pre-existing relationships in helping to re-

solve challenges that arose), ongoing collaboration and connection-building among participants, and having support from a backbone organization (VCC).

- There is a demand from funders for outcome-based assessment, but the community does not have the capacity to engage in this. They need someone to guide them, and connect them to an evaluation network; this is what CCE does in a reciprocal relationship. The PR Hub facilitated this.
- Collective impact is a powerful tool for creating change in reducing poverty.

Things that we have learned that could be integrated into the planning of CCE include:

At the overarching project level

- The need to establish a communication plan in the planning of the project, including communication and interaction between hubs and the sharing of research results.
- The need to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between university REBs prior to starting the project so that this bureaucratic hurdle could be reduced.
- The need to establish reimbursement practices that reduce the length of time that community members are out of pocket.

At the Hub level

- The need to plan for turnover in community co-leads and research assistants so that there is consistency in the work being done.
- The need to consider how to advocate for our community partners who lost funding and closed their doors while a part of the Hub.

At the local level

- The need to plan for how the important local work that is being done will continue beyond the funding provided by CFICE.
- The need to clearly articulate expectations for how people with lived experience will be involved in the decision-making and research results. Having an open discussion about this may make it easier for people to come forward who may be hesitant to talk about their lived experience of, for example, poverty or mental health issues, to play a role in the project.

The “aha” moments include:

- Students/RAs seen as “intermediary between community and institution, a bridge between the two.” They are the “connec-

- tor” in a project and prevent the others from “dropping balls”.  
The importance of a strong backbone organization as a community partner.

Overall, there was variation amongst what Hub partners mentioned as being noteworthy in the focus groups that responded to CFICE’s Year 4 Common Evaluation Questions. This variation further clouds the issue that the small sample size points to and the barriers for some partners who participated in the Hub to attend the in-person meetings in Saskatoon; the participants taking part in the evaluation discussion were only a subset of the partners involved in the Poverty Reduction, and this subset does not necessarily adequately represent the entirety of the partnership. This evaluation, especially with its wealth of direct comments, can provide insight into individual opinions of particular projects within the Hub and how that fits into the larger Hub and CFICE structure, though caution must be made before generalizing these comments to the whole. This evaluation does highlight difficulties inherent in engaging in a Canada-wide multi-partner project, and many of the themes that came out of this evaluation are important to consider when initiating and continuing a project of this nature.

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## Appendix A

### SAMPLE TABLE FROM ONE OF THE FOCUS GROUP TABLES

#### ASPECTS OF PARTNERSHIP THAT DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTED TO VALUE EXPERIENCED

ENABLER	BARRIER
Strong backbone organization mobilized everyone	Data collection is a challenge in over researched population
CUSIR has a reputation in the community so there was trust that was extended to university	Better communication prior to F2F meeting for Hub hierarchy, structure. Report to partners every month on hub activities. Highlighted the need for clear hierarchy of roles and division of labour and need for a strong project manager
Station 20 W being in the community with co-located community resources was an enabler- presence of place in community facilitated focus groups	Qualitative vs quantitative research
\$\$ from CFICE was an enabler, especially for research assistance ships	Community may not faith in university
Station 20 W being in the community with co-located community resources was an enabler- presence of place in community facilitated focus groups	Time, doing work off side of desk, both faculty and community
CUSIR has a reputation in the community so there was trust that was extended to university	Changes in personnel
Creating new networks	Good opportunity to vent
Having an RA is an asset	Ethics approval a nightmare between two universities
SSHRC is focused on student training	In community work there can at times be a hostile relationship between a social justice perspective and a business school perspective. There is a need to respect both perspectives
Students gain the experience of traveling, learn about a nationwide movement, gain connections in CFICE	

## Appendix B

### **PART 3: MIDTERM EVALUATION OF PR HUB (FEBRUARY 2015)**

1) Based on your hub-level or project-level evaluations (e.g. based on preliminary analysis of evaluation data, if possible), what have you learned about the factors that support effective community-campus engagement (CCE) and the barriers that interfere with CCE? If you can easily do so, beside each listed enabler or barrier, please indicate in brackets the project that is the source of this data.

CCE Enablers/Supports	CCE Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique strengths and resources on each side.</li> <li>• A strong community partner and a strong academic partner that are able to support each other. We didn't have to focus much energy on equalizing the relationship because both partners are equally strong in their own respect.</li> <li>• A solid relationship between the partners</li> <li>• A genuine, authentic, personal and professional relationship between the partners.</li> <li>• Intentional dedication of time to the relationship.</li> <li>• Similar working styles</li> <li>• The sharing of knowledge and resources on the part of the campus partner was viewed as an incentive for community partners to engage. Additionally, university partners viewed access to 'community mentorship' as invaluable.</li> <li>• Makes CBR accessible to the community.</li> <li>• Face to face meetings so that all partners have access to the same level of information and decision-making. As well as frequent hub conference calls.</li> <li>• Starting from pre-existing relationships</li> <li>• Partners having a strong sphere of influence and links to the broader community pushes work to be done</li> <li>• Community and Campus partners had a mutual interest in exploring different aspects of policy change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turnover/transitions in students (academic side) and staff (community side) can cause a barrier, a lack of consistency, and the need to reform relationships again.</li> <li>• The involvement of multiple academic partners on the project necessitated receiving ethics clearance from the REB's at multiple institutions. Differences of opinion between the REBs led to delays for community partners.</li> <li>• Academic and community partners often have different priorities. Community partners tend to focus on directly serving the community, while academic partners tend to be more focused on research and academic outputs like conference presentations and publications. . Differences in priorities can strain the working relationship, especially given the high cost of conference attendance</li> <li>• Difference in approaches: action-oriented community v. academic debates</li> <li>• Given that the focus on many community organizations is not research specific, community organizations may have limited time to devote a research project compared to their academic partner.</li> <li>• Funding challenges are felt by both academics and community partners</li> <li>• Academic partners have difficulty finding time and support/incentives from the university</li> </ul>



CCE Enablers/Supports	CCE Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive resources and supports contributed by all partners engaged in the relationship – funding was not the only thing drawing partners to the table</li> <li>• A capacity for innovation and risk taking and a genuine interest and curiosity about CCE</li> <li>• Shared work and commitment to moving the initiative forward</li> <li>• Leveraging academic knowledge, research tools to deepen community capacity ie. Using Human Resource tools for living wage employee surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community partners also have difficulty finding enough time, consider CCE a slow-moving process, and perceive power imbalances in the partnership.</li> <li>• We need stronger overall project management. Having control of the hub has been positive, but not for the overall project. There should be more consistency across hubs, shared goals, etc.</li> <li>• CFICE’s style of communication has been a time drain on community partners</li> <li>• Time frames by which each partner works (academic year versus calendar year)</li> <li>• Language and cultural differences between the campus and community environments</li> <li>• The pressures campus partners feel to produce and present workshops, academic papers etc, where the community partners feel pressure to produce tools and resources</li> <li>• Having to complete multiple ethics reviews in different campus environments and lack of a consistent ethics decision making framework across the campuses</li> <li>• Lack of attention to evaluation for the CFICE project as a whole, there are many interesting lessons that could have been learned in the formative first stages of the project</li> <li>• Based on a survey of VC partners the barriers noted were: 1) from the community perspective- Perceived power imbalance, Funding challenges, Slow moving process, Work did not fit into research agenda/community priority, Communication and leadership challenges and 2) from university-- Faculty and staff time to dedicate to collaboration, Meeting the community’s needs, Faculty support and incentives, Funding challenges</li> </ul>

2) What are your preliminary responses to the overarching CFICE research question? What specific research sub-questions have your hub-level projects helped to address and what are your preliminary responses to these questions? Fill in each part of the chart below (as applicable) with a *maximum* of 3 bullet points per research question.

If you can easily do so, beside each listed point, please indicate in brackets the project that is the source of this data.

<p><i>How can community-campus engagement, including community service learning (CSL) and community-based research (CBR), be designed and implemented in ways that maximize the value created for non-profit community-based organizations?</i></p>	
<p><b>CSL (if applicable):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets outcomes desired by the community:</li> <li>• Provided tangible research and useful outcomes on an issue the community partner was interested in</li> <li>• Students provide the labour that puts ideas into action on tasks that otherwise wouldn't get done.</li> <li>• Needs to be a match between student field of interest and the community research requirements</li> <li>• Needs not to be 'busy' work but efforts that contribute knowledge and resources to the community project</li> <li>• Because these efforts are focused on policy and systems influence and change, it requires a more senior level of student engagement – Masters and PhD</li> </ul> <p><b>CBR (if applicable):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let community partners drive the focus of the research.</li> <li>• The academic co-lead shoulders the screening, management, and training to provide quality, long-term students to work with the community.</li> <li>• The use of evidence-based tools contribute significant to the CBR results and credibility</li> </ul> <p><b>Other (if applicable):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In both cases it's important to build in mechanisms that recognize the contribution of the community partners.</li> <li>• In both cases find ways to ease the transfer of any available funds from the campus to the community.</li> <li>• In both cases, students need to be effectively oriented, engaged and feel that their work is creating added value for the community partner</li> </ul>	
<p><i>How does community-campus engagement take place across various scales, and how might successful partnerships be more widely replicated?</i></p>	<p><i>How do non-profit community organizations define, evaluate and utilize the value created by community-campus engagement?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In creating new community-campus partnerships, groups involved should refer to best practices for how to establish the relationship.</li> <li>• Creating a brokerage relationship would be helpful in replicating CCE</li> <li>• The Poverty Hub has spent considerable efforts trying to understand how engagement takes place across various scales and is developing an emerging practice model for community and campus partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value of community-campus partnerships is often judged by campus based on how the research fits in with their mandate and supports their efforts to support a given community.</li> <li>• Were concrete outcomes reached? Community partners are less likely to participate in CCE again if the outcomes were not reached.</li> <li>• CFICE could add significant value by delving deeper into this question during the last three years of the project</li> </ul>

<p><i>How can non-profit community organizations effectively exercise or share control over the design and implementation of CSL, CBR and other engagement activities?</i></p>	<p><i>What processes of engagement, governance, evaluation, feedback loops and course design on the part of universities and colleges serve to maximize value creation for non-profit community organizations?</i></p>
<p><b>CSL (if applicable):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community organizations can certainly inform campus partners about community priorities and opportunities for meaningful engagement of students</li> <li>Community organizations can point out where different departments are conducting similar research on population groups</li> </ul> <p><b>CBR (if applicable):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community organizations set the focus of the research relationship, set the research agenda including research goals and methodology based on the needs of the community group they serve.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other (if applicable):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicable to CSL and CBR, the only way to have control is to have started with a pre-existing relationship. If one does not exist, a broker in the relationship might help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We don't have the answer to this.</li> <li>It would be useful to understand the shared value of CBR and CSL from the perspective of the university – this is often a more internal process with the community as recipient of students rather than a partner in the design and development of student engagement that adds to research and learning</li> </ul>
<p><i>What types of impacts are generated by community-campus engagement, particularly for non-profit community organizations and the interests they serve, and how might these be captured, both quantitatively and qualitatively?</i></p>	<p><i>How do ethical issues influence the value created by community-campus partnerships, do ethical issues affect engagement strategies differentially, do the partners see ethical issues differently, and what actions can be taken by the partners, separately or together, to address ethical issues?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community partners gain access to unique funding sources, allowing them to focus part of their work on research that is salient and meaningful to them. Without research partnerships and support from institutions, community organization may remain focused on directly serving clients.</li> <li>Each of the hubs should be asked to provide a list of impacts that have been achieved in the projects as well as the impacts of the Hub as a whole</li> <li>The poverty hub has collected impact data from our partners at our annual reflection sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community partners were well versed in the research ethics board requirements and process.</li> <li>Ethics Review processes are a new challenge to community partners and require patience, particularly when multiple campus ethics processes must be navigated</li> <li>A campus advocate is very useful – this person understands the ethics process and can intervene when the process slows down, they can also identify key deadlines that need to be met to move the process forward – our campus advocate has been key to moving the poverty hub projects forward</li> </ul>

3) What initial policy or action innovations/priorities are “bubbling up” from your hub-level conversations for Phase II of CFICE? Why are these actions important to improving the effectiveness of CCE for community, for furthering the work of your thematic hub and/or for bringing the hubs together on a thematic-based policy issue relevant to all or most hubs?

Fill in the first column of the chart with your identified priorities (10 max). Then place an “X” under the applicable category to which the priority corresponds.

ACTION INNOVATION / PRIORITY	PRIMARILY ENHANCES CCE?	FURTHERS POLICY CHANGE IN THEMATIC AREA?	HIGH POTENTIAL FOR CROSS-HUB?
A cross-hub policy piece on a poverty reduction initiative that incorporates learning and best practices from all hubs, giving clear policy recommendations. Ex. Implementing living wage for Carleton University cleaners.	X	X	X
Coordinating Poverty Summit and follow-up: ensuring politicians adopt initiatives stemming from the Summit		X	
Exploring the possibility of replicating Living SJ in other jurisdictions		X	
A handbook on CCE which will include policy changes for campuses and communities	X	X	X
Using research to advance the living wage conversation in Hamilton and nationally through Living Wage Canada		X	X

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## CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

MAGDALENE GOEMANS

THIS BOOK HAS EXPLORED OPPORTUNITIES AND INSIGHTS from the Poverty Reduction Hub of the multi-year, pan-Canadian project known as Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE). Within the varied community-campus engagement (CCE) projects that took place across this hub over several years, community-based organization members of Vibrant Communities Canada and academic partners from post-secondary institutions in several provinces learned together how to build effective relationships toward achieving real progress on poverty reduction efforts.

This book draws from diverse experiences in exploring key learnings about poverty reduction through a CCE lens, and as noted in the Introduction, considers how these partnerships influenced the research, process and results of poverty reduction projects. This collection includes insights from the broad range of individuals and groups involved in CCE projects, including community-based organizations and community members, post-secondary faculty, staff and students, as well as boundary spanners that work in both (and forge connections between) community and academic realms. Chapters also explore learnings at varied scales; Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 describe individual projects that took place within the hub, while other chapters employ broader examinations of CCE and poverty reduction initiatives, including models of engagement across projects (Chapter 2), knowledge gained from hub-wide survey and evaluation activities (Chapters 7 and 9), and first-person accounts of student experiences across the hub (Chapter 8). Through these explorations many facets

of poverty have been highlighted, including context-specific issues and systemic challenges related to education and literacy, housing, employment, food security, health care, parenting and community/neighbourhood development (among others). This book also showcases the varied ways in which poverty reduction efforts manifested within CCE projects, such as through student mentoring (for example, as seen in the Pathway to Potential project in Windsor and Living Saint John), development of opportunities for action centres (as employed in the Social Action and Innovation Lab proposed in Windsor), and efforts to reduce stigmatization by examining perceptions among students of individuals living in poverty (as took place within Opportunities Waterloo Region).

Across the chapters of this book several predominant themes have emerged, not least of which includes the importance of **developing deep and lasting relationships** within community-campus partnerships, to both improve partner experiences *and* effectively push forward local and wider poverty reduction efforts. The projects with which the Poverty Reduction Hub was involved required linked efforts by multiple community and academic partners, which often also brought other stakeholders to the table such as government (at all three levels) and local business (as occurred for example within the work of Living Saint John and Station 20 West). Hub experiences frequently highlighted the many benefits of collaborative efforts toward poverty reduction, which at a basic level included aligned and greater access to resources, enhanced effectiveness among partners and expanded networks (which were all noted as benefits within projects connected to Living Saint John). The development of Station 20 West (which occurred prior to the Poverty Reduction Hub's involvement with the organization) offers a significant example of focused and effective community collaboration and commitment that brought into being the physical space of a community enterprise centre when government funding for the project had been withdrawn.

Project partners frequently acknowledged that respectful and purposeful communication was an essential part of relationship-building, helping to sustain projects through transitions and facilitating less jarring project closures (as occurred for example within Opportunities Waterloo). Meaningful communication among partners also involved sharing and translating diverse languages, and in the words of Living Saint John participants, “deconstruct[ing] the jargon” of often distinct academic, community and other (e.g. policymaking) contexts. These types of actions helped to foster trust among partners, another crucial aspect of relationship-building within CCE work. Trust-building within projects, such as that gained from a history of collaboration among partners, can enhance community involvement and improve access to and recruitment from otherwise hesitant community members. Trust also grows out of a spirit of and actions toward reciprocity among partners, which involves recognizing how partners may learn from each other and better acknowledging the value of lived experience held by individuals living with poverty. Within Station 20 West, this process was also consciously understood to include living daily a path toward meaningful reconciliation with local Indigenous communities.

Another prominent theme across chapters involves the varied ways in which community-campus partnerships were employed to **evaluate poverty reduction project structures and impacts**. Assessments within local projects frequently involved accessing participant perspectives through interviews, focus groups and workshops (e.g. Pathway to Potential in Windsor), or through reviews of project reports. Project results in these contexts were disseminated to communities through formats that included online resources (websites, searchable databases) and infographics (as within Living Saint John). The majority of these projects employed collective impact (CI) as a methodology to engage with partners and evaluate success. In addition, part of their success can be attributed to collective impact and adds to the co-created knowledge related to CI. The hub-wide survey described in Chapter 7 and Poverty Reduction Hub evaluation described in Chapter 9 provide other examples of broader-scale methodologies and perspectives.

Evaluations within the Poverty Reduction Hub focused on varied themes such as aspects of collaboration (e.g. the Collective Impact approach applied within Living Saint John, as well as successful efforts within this initiative to mobilize three levels of government to work together on poverty reduction issues), the impact of specific physical contexts for CCE (e.g. the influence of co-location on partnerships within Station 20 West), and participant responses to programs (as in the Promise Partnership mentoring program through Living Saint John). Assessments demonstrated the effectiveness of programs, for example highlighting within a Living Saint John project how educating student volunteer mentors provided them with greater understanding of and sympathy toward systemic and other issues influencing poverty among local populations. Evaluations taking place within the active stages of projects also revealed how CCE processes could be altered for meaningful change; these alterations sometimes resulted in shifted project structures (for example, blending a separate neighbourhood team within a Living Saint John initiative into involvement in all core aspects of the project, with greater involvement in governance from ‘resident leaders’ with valuable lived experience), or in revisions to programs to address participant needs (some examples: within Living Saint John, making more visible links for student volunteers to potential career-related benefits; within Pathway to Potential in Windsor, considering the resource needs of participants).

Significantly, this book also reveals a prominent theme of **differing relations of power among participants** in CCE initiatives focused on poverty reduction. Issues of concern included reduced power for community partners that manifested in situations where community members experienced significant delays in accessing basic project funding or reimbursement for project expenses, potentially inhibiting their involvement in local initiatives (as mentioned in Chapters 8 and 9). Other, more promising activities are mentioned in Chapter 9, where it is noted that the governance structure at the level of the broader Poverty Reduction Hub prioritized community and campus partners making decisions together, and within references in Chapter 4 to efforts within Station 20 West to employ decolonizing research methods, recognize systemic factors in poverty and inequality, and fuel opportunities for healing in engaging with local Indigenous communities. Station 20 West also offers an example of the



influence of place in mediating potential power imbalances, with this co-located site recognized by community and academic participants as a “safe space” for informal exchange and productive research and learning partnerships. Within an alternative context, Chapter 8 considers the unique position and “identity struggle” of students in negotiating relations of power across community-campus partnerships, as their work spans and connects community and academic worlds, and as they balance financial challenges with rewarding opportunities to share concerns and insights with other research assistants across the hub.

With recent data suggesting that the number of individuals living in poverty in Canada is declining (Statistics Canada, 2019), and with the current federal government pushing forward a poverty reduction strategy based on pillars of dignity, inclusion and resilience in assisting individuals and families in need (Government of Canada, 2018), the initiatives described in this book offer further opportunities to celebrate progress on poverty reduction efforts in Canadian communities. This recognition comes with an acknowledgement of the crucial work still required to address the significant proportion of Canadians that remain living in poverty (with mainstream estimates listed at almost 10 percent of the population) (Statistics Canada, 2019).

This book helps to inspire continuing steps in this process by highlighting poverty reduction efforts that were enhanced within the context of community-campus partnerships. These partnerships often built on previous relationships and involved a wide range of stakeholders that brought together diverse perspectives. The success of these connections often required honest examinations of what participants needed – in terms of material and human resource support, as well as respectful exchange of knowledges and experiences – from these partnerships. They also required that members consider how systemic issues, attitudes and assumptions might affect these partnerships and associated poverty research.

As earlier noted, a significant part of the efforts undertaken by community and academic participants in the Poverty Reduction Hub involved evaluating their own progress on poverty reduction initiatives, including honest assessments of ways in which they have worked together. Insights coming out of these assessments acknowledged differing priorities and perspectives that often exist among community and academic partners, and recognized the complex position of students in negotiating these two realms. These assessments revealed moments where projects valued the lived experience of community members, and other times when they didn't. They also revealed some (but not many) tensions within projects, often stemming from challenges associated with uneven governance within projects or bureaucracy within academic institutional systems. Overall, the community-campus partnerships profiled in this book took many forms that were suited to specific contexts, where participants employed creativity and innovation in building new models of engagement, and where they were not afraid to redirect efforts or modify programs if needed when surrounding contexts were altered. Taken together, the insights emerging from this collection offer fruitful paths toward real progress on achieving greater social sustainability through community-campus engagement. We hope these stories inspire further meaningful steps down this poverty reduction path.

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## Moving the Needle on Poverty

*Snapshots of community-campus partnerships*

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*Moving the needle on poverty: Snapshots of community-campus partnerships* brings together insights from community organizations and academics who have collaborated on poverty reduction projects, offering examples and best practices from their experiences. These projects come from a common belief in the collective impact on social change that working in the same space can create, even though measuring the success of any project on its own remains difficult to illustrate. Lessons learned from this book can help guide researchers, academics, community organizations, policy-makers and others on the benefits of a community-based approach to poverty reduction.

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