

An Institutional Process for Brokering Community-Campus Research Collaborations¹

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ABSTRACT Knowledge mobilization seeks to identify and support authentic research collaborations between community and university so that benefits of the research accrue to both partners. Knowledge brokering is a key knowledge mobilization mechanism that helps community and university partners connect and build relationships in order to share expertise for mutual opportunity. There remains a need to describe in detail the typical knowledge brokering devices and methodologies. This paper presents a detailed description of York University's knowledge brokering service which is based on eight years of knowledge mobilization practice. The process is broken into 5 broad stages: 1) in progress; 2) no match; 3) match and no activity; 4) match and activity; 5) match and project. Stage 5 includes a step to identify the non-academic impacts of the collaborative research project. This process is illustrated using examples from York University's practice in which a match was brokered for 82% of the 342 knowledge mobilization opportunities received between 2006-2014. York University partners with United Way York Region (UWYR) to create a regional approach to knowledge mobilization supports. This paper illustrates the impacts on community and university knowledge mobilization partners following the introduction of a community-based knowledge broker at UWYR.

KEYWORDS knowledge mobilization; knowledge broker; community campus collaboration; engaged scholarship; research impact

An Institutional Process for Brokering Community-Campus Research Collaborations

Knowledge mobilization seeks to identify and support authentic research collaborations among university researchers, students, and community partners so that benefits of the research accrue to both community and campus alike (Hart et al, 2013). Unlike established institutional programs such as technology transfer (AUTM, 2013) that support university-industry collaborations, institutional programs that support community-campus collaborations are only beginning to emerge (Hart, Maddison & Wolff, 2007; Rickenson, Sebba & Edwards, 2011). Where they do exist, they often take the form of an institutional research unit hosting community-campus

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collaborations (Hall & Tremblay, 2012) or may take the form of a service unit supporting engaged research (Phipps & Shapson, 2009) and/or teaching (Hart, Northmore, Gerhardt & Rodriguez 2009) leading to benefits such as social innovation (Nichols, Phipps, Provencal & Hewitt, 2013).

Knowledge brokering is one knowledge mobilization mechanism. In addition to building capacity for knowledge mobilization and supporting knowledge mobilization strategies



Authors Jane and Michael speaking to the students working with the York Region Food Network (Photo: United Way York Region)

for grant applications, knowledge brokering is one of three knowledge mobilization services provided by York University's knowledge mobilization unit (Johnny, Phipps, Jensen & Wedlock, 2014). Knowledge brokering is supported by a help desk similar to that provided by the University of Brighton's Community University Partnership Program (Rodriguez & Millican, 2008). As summarized previously (Phipps, 2011), knowledge brokering via a help desk provides a service whereby community (usually community service agencies but also school boards, police services, faith groups, and government agencies) or campus (faculty or students) members can obtain support for developing a community-campus research collaboration. The knowledge broker seeks to understand the needs of the requesting party and then to make a match between the requesting party and a potential collaborator from the other sector.

Knowledge brokers span community and university contexts and must be mindful to create the conditions that support equitable partnerships between community and university collaborators. Key determinants of successful knowledge mobilization partnerships include trust, openness, a common framework (i.e. shared language), and a flow of information across partners (Bennet & Bennet, 2008). These determinants help to mitigate potential barriers that arise as a result of power differential among partners.

In their seminal text, *Using Evidence*, Sandra Nutley and colleagues write about power describing how "giving weight to research as a fundamental 'truth' also denies or suppresses alternative forms of knowledge" (Nutley, Walter & Davies, 2007, p. 121). In many community university collaborations, the processes, frameworks, and resources needed to produce and use knowledge are more likely to favour more powerful actors (Jones, Jones, Shaxon & Walter, 2012). These processes reinforce the power of those who control funding, have research skills and access (such as access to knowledge in university libraries) and those who define the question, undertake the analysis, and control the dissemination of results. This traditionally privileges academic expertise over community (practice-based or citizen-based) expertise (Nation, Bess, Voight, Perkins & Juarez, 2011; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Brown, 2014).

Creating democratic partnerships supports the diffusion of power. Democratic partnerships are supported by 1) conditions that locate the partnership in the context of community, 2)

learning interactions that encourage full participation of partners, and 3) personal attributes that promote depth of involvement (Dostilio, 2014). Ultimately, democratic partnerships “may be able to provide a locus of action and resistance to the dominant culture of higher education by calling attention to the structures and norms they encounter in their pursuit of democratically oriented public work” (Dostilio, 2014 p. 242). By being responsive to the needs of community, supporting collaborations that originate from community, and maintaining a commitment to working towards a balance between community and academic expertise, a knowledge broker can begin to address power differentials between community and university collaborators.

Despite a growing literature (see below) on knowledge-brokering theory and practice, there remains a need to describe in detail the typical brokering devices and methodologies (Meyer, 2010). We have previously described in detail our knowledge mobilization services (Phipps, 2011) including clear language research summaries (Phipps, Jensen, Johnny & Myers, 2012) and social media (Phipps, Jensen & Myers, 2012). Consistent with the call for more knowledge-brokering methodologies (Meyer, 2010), this paper presents a detailed description of York University’s knowledge-brokering activities. We present the knowledge-brokering process and analyze the results of eight years and 342 knowledge-brokering opportunities. We also present the impact of partnering with United Way York Region (UWYR) to invest in a community-based knowledge broker and reflect on how these initiatives help to create democratic research partnerships that diffuse power between community and university contexts. Greater clarity on the process of institutional knowledge brokering will provide other universities and communities with a tool to forge research collaborations that can have social, environmental and/or economic impacts as well as academic impacts.

Knowledge-Brokering Literature

Jonathan Lomas defines knowledge brokering as “all the activity that links decision makers with researchers, facilitating their interaction so that they are able to better understand each other’s goals and professional cultures, influence each other’s work, forge new partnerships, and promote the use of research-based evidence in decision-making” (Lomas, 2007, p. 131). Reflecting on knowledge brokering as a social activity, Jonathan Lomas also writes, “This social focus points to human interaction as the engine that drives research into practice. It implies the need for both human intermediaries between the worlds of research and action (knowledge brokers) and supporting infrastructure (knowledge-brokering agencies and resources)” (Lomas, 2007, p. 130). He calls not only for knowledge brokers but also support for these brokers by the right infrastructure. Knowledge brokers have been described as one solution to overcoming the challenges of transferring research evidence into health policy and practice (Ward, House & Hamer, 2009). In policy implementation, research evidence is said to compete in an “open market of knowledge sources” (Caswill & Lyall, 2013, p. 365), and it is knowledge brokers who have the appropriate skills and market awareness to be able to support social scientists competing in this space.

Knowledge brokers have been reported to have a huge diversity of roles: creating relationships; promoting mutual understanding; facilitating exchange of knowledge across

boundaries; facilitating social interaction to bring about knowledge exchange; building capacity and supporting organizational change for knowledge exchange while engaging in all the analytical tasks (such as monitoring and evaluation) to support all of these activities (Conklin, Lusk, Harris & Stolee, 2013; Dobbins et al, 2009). This diversity of tasks has also been observed in two papers (Lightowler & Knight, 2013; Chew, Armstrong & Martin, 2013) in a special edition of *Evidence and Policy* (August 2013, volume 9, number 3) focused on knowledge brokers. These two papers highlight the dissatisfaction of project-based knowledge brokers due to lack of long-term employment, lack of training, isolation and role ambiguity.

Most of this literature describes knowledge brokering in research projects or in discipline specific research programs. van Kammen has called for institutional (i.e., not project-based) mechanisms for knowledge brokering: “We believe that intermediary organizations, such as regional networks, dedicated institutional mechanisms and funding agencies, can play key roles in supporting knowledge brokering” (van Kammen, de Savigny & Sewankambo, 2006, p. 608). In our experience, knowledge brokers hired into an institutional infrastructure do not share the challenges reported above for project-based knowledge brokers. In York University’s Knowledge Mobilization Unit, we are able to offer ongoing employment, training (albeit mostly “on the job” training) and clear role definition as the institutional knowledge brokers are core funded by the university and part of the university research infrastructure (Phipps & Morton, 2013). Nonetheless, there remain few examples of university-based, institutional knowledge brokering as opposed to project-based knowledge brokering. In addition to University of Brighton’s Community University Partnership Program and the Canadian ResearchImpact-RéseauImpactRecherche (RIR) network for which York University is the lead institution (www.researchimpact.ca), there is a group of 24 African universities working to develop a profession of research uptake management so that development research can benefit local communities (www.drussa.net). There is also the newly formed Mid-Western Knowledge Mobilization Network (<http://midwestknowledgemobilization.wordpress.com/>).

Knowledge-Brokering Process

Knowledge mobilization contributes to York University’s University Academic Plan which features Community Engagement as one of five institutional priorities. The institutional knowledge-brokering process has become a central feature of our knowledge mobilization service (Phipps 2011) and addresses the need for appropriate infrastructure (Lomas, 2007) and institutional knowledge brokering (van Kammen, de Savigny & Sewankambo, 2006). The Knowledge Mobilization Unit provides a brokering service to identify and support sustainable research collaborations between academic (student and faculty) and non-academic research partners. The Knowledge Mobilization Unit and UWYR (as well as other intermediary organizations) work in concert to respond to each knowledge mobilization opportunity. The process is illustrated in Figure 1 and each stage described in greater detail in Table 1 and in the text below. Each knowledge mobilization opportunity is tracked stepwise from initiation to one of a number of possible results.

1. Opportunity received and in progress (assessment, seek match, contact match,

- introduction)
2. No match
 3. Match and no activity
 4. Match and activity (shared activity such as panelist or speaker at an event but falling short of collaborative project)
 5. Match results in a collaborative research project potentially with impact on the non-academic partner

Table 1: The process of knowledge brokering

| Stage | Title | Description |
|-------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1a | In Progress: Interview and Assess | Seek clarification, scope, purpose, expectations, resources |
| 1b | In Progress: Seek Match | Use website, research officers, internal data sources |
| 1c | In progress: Contact Match | Introduce opportunity, provide background information, seek permission for introduction |
| 1d | In progress: Introduction → Interest | Following introduction seek mutual interest in meeting |
| 2 | No Match | After 3 tries, abandon |
| 3 | Meeting: No Activity | Meeting occurred but no activity arising |
| 4 | Meeting: Activity | Such as Lunch & Learn speaker, KM in the AM events |
| 5a | Meeting: Project | Collaborative research |
| 5b | Project Impact | Change in partner's program, policy, product, service |

Stage 1a. In Progress

Interview and Assess. The Knowledge Mobilization Unit participates in or exhibits at many externally facing events creating opportunities to connect our services to researchers, students, and potential research partners. The process of knowledge brokering starts with a request for service. This request can come directly through in-person, telephone or email contact. In 2006, we developed a one page Opportunity Description Form which provides brokers a chance to solicit common information in areas of objectives for collaboration; specific needs from the collaborator; specific needs from York knowledge brokers. In addition to this information on the Opportunity Description Form, the broker will seek details on desired timelines and availability of any fiscal resources to support the request.

The knowledge broker contacts the requesting party (30% of requests come from York faculty or students; 70% come from non-academic parties) to describe the process of knowledge brokering, explain the values of mutuality underpinning our service and to manage expectations. We emphasize that there is no guarantee that a match will be found

(see below for reasons). Managing expectations is critical to ensuring that the trust and credibility of the knowledge broker remains understood. During the first contact with the requesting party, we seek to clarify the request and work to refine the request to a research question. Many requests are expressed in very broad terms, so it is important that we help the requesting party narrow down the request to a manageable question. It is this question that we then use to seek a match to a person or organization that might be able to collaborate on the specific question.

Seek Match. York University knowledge brokers leverage resources and networks within and outside the university to help support the matchmaking process. The university lacks an institutional expertise database, although most Faculties have developed some researcher profiles. Each Faculty has at least one Faculty-based Research Officer who provides direct grant facilitation services to researchers and thus can act as a guide to researchers who may be a good match for a particular opportunity. To date, the Faculty-based Research Officer remains a critical and trusted source of knowledge of research expertise and capacity across the university. Similarly we work through external intermediaries such as UWYR and the Human Services Planning Board of York Region for contacts in York Region. We also work with Policy, Innovation & Leadership for contacts in the Ontario Public Service and with the TD Centre for Community Engagement for contacts in Jane/Finch (another community neighbour of York University). Using trusted university and non-academic intermediaries rather than websites or databases that lack context reduces the risk of seeking someone who might have relevant community or academic expertise but might not be predisposed to collaborative research.

Contact Match. The knowledge broker identifies individuals with a potential interest by providing clarity of purpose, expectations, structure and supports for the opportunity. A process is developed which covers the following: introductions, process, expectation, and overview of the opportunity and any action items, timelines, and clarity on next steps. The knowledge broker addresses difficult issues like timelines and fiscal resources that are not always easy to address when exploring a collaborative relationship. The knowledge broker finally seeks permission to make an introduction to the requesting party.

Introduction and Interest. Once a match has been identified, the knowledge broker makes an introduction between the two parties. This is usually through a mutual email presenting background on the knowledge mobilization opportunity and background information on the two parties. The email provides the parties with the opportunity to exchange further information with the knowledge broker being copied on this correspondence. If mutual interest is established, then the knowledge broker seeks permission from each party to proceed with an introduction that will usually be by telephone but may be in person. The knowledge broker is part of the early conversations and meetings to help scope out the knowledge mobilization opportunity and ensure that the interests of both parties are being met. York's knowledge brokers are 93% successful in getting at least an introductory conversation between the parties.

Stage 2. No Match

In the event the knowledge broker has been unable to find a match after contacting three possible matches, then the knowledge mobilization opportunity is abandoned. This is done by email and/or phone to the requesting party with constructive feedback as to the reasons for failing to find a match. The requesting party is encouraged to undertake some refinement of the opportunity and return once additional work has been completed. York is part of the ResearchImpact network (www.researchimpact.ca) that includes eleven universities who are making investments in knowledge mobilization services. As the network matures, we shall explore inter-institutional knowledge brokering. In the event that appropriate academic expertise cannot be found at York University, the knowledge mobilization opportunity will be made available to the other nine universities to seek academic expertise to match a non-academic knowledge mobilization opportunity.

Stage 3. Meeting - No Activity

In some instances, the parties express mutual interest in meeting but the match does not result in any activity. This may occur as the parties explore the opportunity: resources may not materialize; personnel or priorities may change; unanticipated needs may arise. Should no activity occur, then the knowledge broker offers to restart the process of match making.

Stage 4. Meeting - Activity

York's knowledge brokers successfully identify matches that result in an activity or a project for 82% of knowledge mobilization opportunities. Once the parties meet and agree to collaborate on the opportunity, some activity ensues. Sometimes the requesting party is not seeking a collaborative research project but is seeking an expert (community or academic) to be part of an event such as a Lunch and Learn or KM in the AM (Phipps, 2011) or to be part of an expert panel or dialogue. One example of this was the involvement of a York University researcher as part of an expert panel with representatives from York Region community agencies including Kinark Child and Family Services, York Region District School Board, and Catholic Children's Aid Society to provide input into the development of a community data-sharing platform. No collaborative research arose, but the parties shared expertise from their own perspectives. This was a short-term engagement but it met the needs of both parties and provided opportunities for longer term collaboration should the parties wish to explore an ongoing relationship. Short-term engagements are often good ways of building trust and developing a shared understanding of issues and opportunities. The knowledge broker usually attends these short-term activities or events.

Stage 5. Meeting - Project

Collaborative research project. In the event the parties seek a longer term collaborative research partner and the match is successful, then a project may arise. This project might be a long-term research collaboration such as Mobilizing Minds (see below) or involvement in a community development project such as the York Region Food Charter (see below). It may also involve a graduate student internship (Nichols, Phipps & Johnstone, 2014). Importantly, in all such cases the knowledge broker is not one of the collaborating parties. As shown by the dotted line in Figure 1 after Stage 4, the role

of the knowledge broker is complete when a match has been made or the knowledge mobilization opportunity abandoned. The knowledge broker will check in with both parties occasionally to identify stories of impact (Stage 5) but does not become part of the collaboration. In one instance, the knowledge broker was asked to help the parties resolve a dispute which resulted in the facilitated termination of the collaboration to the mutual appreciation of the parties.

Project Impact. For York's Knowledge Mobilization Unit, impact is measured as a change (i.e., in policy, practice, service and/or product) at the level of the non-academic partner(s). We acknowledge the importance of academic impact as measured by funded grants, published papers, creative endeavours, and graduate theses, but these activities accrue in the absence of knowledge mobilization and engaged scholarship. Knowledge mobilization and engaged scholarship seeks to maximize the economic, social and environmental impacts of university research. Since impact on the lives of citizens is created through public policies, commercial products or social services, this impact is mediated by collaboration with government, industry and community agencies respectively. In some cases, a collaborative research project ends up having such impacts. In all cases, this impact occurs years after the end of the collaborative research project and can only be identified by staying in touch with partners and asking about the long-term impacts of these projects. York University's knowledge brokers reach out annually to partners from past opportunities that reached Stage 4, seeking feedback on any impacts of the collaboration on the activities of the non-academic organization. In this way, knowledge brokers have been able to identify success stories. These stories are drafted in a one page template to showcase the non-academic impact of knowledge mobilization brokered collaborative projects in areas of public policy or professional practice. In some cases, a short video is made of a success story illustrating the academic and non-academic impacts of the collaboration (see www.youtube.com/researchimpact).

Knowledge Brokering – Results

The numbers of knowledge mobilization opportunities received by York's knowledge mobilization Unit are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Knowledge Brokering Opportunities (May 1-April 30)

| Year | # Knowledge Mobilization Opportunities |
|---------------|--|
| 2006-2007 | 4 |
| 2007-2008 | 55 |
| 2008-2009 | 50 |
| 2009-2010 | 41 |
| 2010-2011 | 63 |
| 2011-2012 | 47 |
| 2012-2013 | 22 |
| May-July 2014 | 10 |
| Total | 342 |

In 2011 the number of opportunities for which brokers were unable to make a match was 37%. Seeking to understand this 37%, we examined each opportunity in more detail by contacting the requesting party of the 37% to determine the reasons for the unmatched opportunities. The common reasons for not making a match included: (a) the opportunity was withdrawn from the organization or individual making the request. It may no longer have been a priority or capacity within the organization and support for it may have diminished; (b) brokers were simply unable to make a match; and (c) the question was deemed to be too vague to follow up with and the originator was unavailable to provide detail.

This examination resulted in changes in how opportunities are solicited and followed up. We removed a web form used by organizations/individuals seeking knowledge mobilization service. Opportunities using this form made up the majority of the 37%. The form appeared to enable poorly developed requests, meaning opportunities which were vague without an appropriate follow-up mechanism with the requestor (cause 3 above). Direct follow-up now with the requestor allows brokers to have a clearer sense of the request and has resulted in greater success. At the time of writing this paper, the rate of the 'Unable to Match' (Stage 2) dropped to 18% of all requests since 2006 with withdrawal from the knowledge mobilization opportunity by the requester (Cause 1 above) being the most frequent cause of failure to make a match.

The matchmaking process is not an exact science. In some cases, opportunities are assessed (Stage 1a) by the knowledge broker but not acted on by the originator if s/he requires more time to refine the question or the goal of the knowledge mobilization opportunity. Only when the originator feels they have landed on the right question will they provide the broker the freedom to seek a match. Conversely, some requests are very well constructed and address key organizational goals. In some cases, brokers are able to locate a match within days and an exploratory meeting or conversation can take place quickly. In other cases, it can take weeks or months to secure a match, often depending on the time of the academic year when faculty may have less capacity to respond.

Occasionally, the knowledge mobilization opportunity results in an impact on agencies and/or citizens (Stage 5b). We have previously described some success stories (Phipps, Jensen and Myers, 2012; Nichols, Phipps and Johnstone, 2014) and illustrate this impact with two new stories.

Story 1. Mobilizing Minds

Our first collaborative opportunity continues to have a significant impact on our community partners. Our first KM in the AM (a breakfast brokering event), back in November 2006, was on youth mental health which was identified as a priority by our partners at that time: The Regional Municipality of York, and the York Region District School Board. Over 30 people assembled for our breakfast event with featured speakers from York's Faculty of Health (Psychology Department) and the York Region Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). They had never met. They presented briefly about their own work and the overarching issues around youth mental health separately, but connected during dedicated networking time. The York and CMHA colleagues were joined by researchers from University of Manitoba and

Brock University as well as lead community partner Mind Your Mind and other partners (listed at <http://mobilizingminds.ca/partners/community-partners>) and received \$1.5M from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Mental Health Commission of Canada to form Mobilizing Minds: pathways to young adult mental health. The funding also engaged young adult leaders to become a national team to develop and disseminate research on youth mental health to consumers and organizations.

This grant supported numerous academic papers and graduate theses but also allowed the academic, community and young adult partners to co-create the Mind Pack (<http://depression.informedchoices.ca/wp-content/uploads/mobilizing/index.html>). Mind Pack is a multimedia on-line tool that provides access to research-informed evidence about mental health topics. These topics were identified and designed by young adults in a format for young adults. Academic researchers provided the evidence-informed messages and tested the Mind Pack in clinical settings. Community agencies and the mental health services of Mobilizing Minds universities will disseminate the Mind Pack to their clients, providing young adults with an evidence-informed tool to aid in making decisions about their own mental health.

Story 2. York Region Food Charter

In 2011, the UWYR knowledge broker (see below) supported a collaboration between the York Region Food Network (www.yrfn.ca) and Rod McRae in the Faculty of Environmental Science, York University. This collaboration was instrumental in helping community partners in York Region determine how best to approach the development of a food charter and provided connections with other jurisdictions engaged in the same work. He also provided insight into the academic cycle in order to foster engagement of students who might be interested in field experience or a major research project. A team of seven students from a fourth-year undergraduate Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping Course mapped food access projects across York Region as part of preliminary work related to a Community Food Assessment. They presented their work to a Community Forum “Food for Change” in March 2012. These data became part of the evidence that supported the development of the York Region Food Charter (<http://yrfn.ca/issues/york-region-food-charter/>). The York Region Food Charter provides guidance for the development of food related policies and programs in York Region.

The York Region Food Charter Working Group has substantial interest in academic partnerships to support ongoing efforts to advance policies and programs that support the development of a sustainable food system in York Region. Four of nine municipalities (Aurora, King, Markham, and Whitchurch-Stouffville) have endorsed the York Region Food Charter. The Newmarket Environmental Action Committee has taken up the Food Charter and recommended that Council endorse it. In addition, it has been presented in Committee in the municipalities of Georgina and East Gwillimbury. This is an example of policy influence as municipalities that endorse the Food Charter are setting the stage for establishing sustainable food policies and programs that will have an impact upon residents, including those experiencing food insecurity as well as other sectors/stakeholders.

Community-Based Knowledge Broker

York University's Knowledge Mobilization Unit and UWYR started out by being gateways for exchange of information between our organizations. We deepened our relationships by supporting each other in governance and decision-making roles. This partnership has extended to supporting collaborative research projects. Of the 342 knowledge mobilization Opportunities above, 48% engage York Region partners, the most from any single jurisdiction. By way of a few examples, one collaboration examined mental health services for teen moms in York Region and another collaboration explored youth homelessness. York University researchers and students collaborated with the Regional Municipality of York to evaluate immigrant settlement services which informed a decision by the Regional government to invest over \$20 million to expand these services. York University and UWYR funded three graduate students to research social asset mapping in York Region which generated the evidence to support a new form of UWYR funding, Strength Investments. As described in the success story in Appendix 2, Strength Investments are now a regular feature of UWYR funding with \$2M committed over the next four years.

In September 2011, York's Knowledge Mobilization Unit partnered with UWYR to pilot an expansion of the knowledge broker model within a community organization. This was a natural extension of our five-year knowledge mobilization collaboration (Phipps and Zanotti, 2012). York's Knowledge Mobilization Unit and UWYR co-authored a successful one-year grant application to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to undertake community knowledge mobilization services to connect research expertise on social determinants of health. Because this was a collaborative application with York University and UWYR, co-Principal Investigators, we were able to transfer the majority of the \$93K to UWYR. In community campus collaborations, it is important to create authentic partnerships. This means that power and funding must be shared between partners. Transferring the funding to UWYR allowed them to hire the community-based knowledge broker and become the lead organization for the project. In 2012 we jointly applied for a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant of \$149,000 to continue the work and focus on economic and housing vulnerability, an issue that emerged as a priority from the social determinants of health project. Again, the majority of the funds were transferred to UWYR who hired the community-based knowledge broker.

UWYR has continued their commitment to this partnership by hiring Jane Wedlock to continue her work in community engagement, research and knowledge mobilization. Co-authors on this paper, Jane Wedlock (Community Engagement and Research Manager, UWYR) and Michael Johnny (Manager, Knowledge Mobilization, York University), continue to work in partnership to create processes and opportunities for two-way connections between community and campus partners so that practice-based evidence can inform academic research and research-based evidence can inform community practice. To our knowledge, this partnership of dedicated resources for university-based and community-based knowledge brokering is unique in Canada.

The addition of the community knowledge broker has resulted in some significant changes

for York knowledge brokers:

1. Greater outreach in the community increased the quality of knowledge mobilization opportunities
2. Having a community-based knowledge broker provided more time for York knowledge brokers to work on campus and resulted in the launch of on-campus workshops which raised the capacity for researchers, students, and research staff to engage in knowledge mobilization (<http://researchimpact.ca/fall-2013-york-kmb-learning-events-les-activites-dapprentissage-offertes-par-york-mdc-en-automne-2013/>).
3. Tracking and data sharing was refined as brokers from York U and UWYR were engaged in similar opportunities and needed to share data. This resulted in the tracking stages 1-5 above.
4. With almost two-thirds of opportunities originating outside the university, placing additional resources outside the university allowed for greater and more meaningful engagement with community leaders and organizations. Community organizations had a trusted advocate for research engagement in UWYR, and UWYR was able to build community capacity for engaging in collaborative research.

Partnering on knowledge mobilization has also had an impact on UWYR and York Region community agencies. The role of a community-based knowledge broker has been more than brokering—it also includes community development, and builds the capacity of community organizations to think about how research/academic partnerships can support/inform their work. At the same time, the community-based broker working in partnership with the Knowledge Mobilization Unit sheds additional light on the social infrastructure, geographical and political contexts which inform their collective endeavours of knowledge brokering in a particular place.

The second year of the partnership through the SSHRC grant created an important opportunity to take a systems approach to a complex issue: re-imagining our response to youth homelessness in York Region. Our activities involved an adaption of the knowledge mobilization tools and brought us into a new collaborative space. Activities were deep, in terms of being focused on one complex issue, but also wide through the involvement of a professor in the Faculty of Education at York University and Director of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. Over 12 months, we held two research forums, brought leading researchers/practitioners from across Canada to be part of an innovative seven-part learning series in York Region that was live-streamed and is now permanently hosted on the Homeless Hub web site (<http://homelesshub.ca/learningseries>). Community agencies and other stakeholders are benefitting from research conducted by five graduate students who were funded by an external grant to undertake the research. These students created baseline data to better understand the pathways of youth into homelessness in York Region and those points at which early

intervention could be beneficial. The twelve-month grant has ended, but commitment to the systems approach and developing ways to continue the collaboration is ongoing, and have resulted in the commitment to create a community task force to inform both practice and policy related to ending youth homelessness in York Region.

This shared community university knowledge mobilization service helps to support democratic partnerships which address power between York University (and its faculty members) and United Way York Region (and its member and associated community agencies). The research question is located in the needs of community in 70% of knowledge mobilization opportunities. The knowledge brokers act as coaches for community and university partners to promote equity between academic expertise and community/practice-based expertise and build capacity to collaborate. The majority of knowledge mobilization projects are funded through the in-kind contributions of the collaborators, and for those that receive external funding, the knowledge mobilization unit helps to structure the funding application so that funding can be shared with community. The knowledge brokers also make training available to help community members participate as research partners not research subjects. These actions of the Knowledge Mobilization Unit support democratic partnerships that begin to share power between community and university collaborators.

One issue that remains unaddressed by the knowledge-brokering process is the time available to community to participate as an authentic partner in the research process. University faculty members have the privilege of protected time for research. This is not the case for community collaborators. Faculty members also tend to control dissemination of the research. Authors of this paper were co-authors on an editorial for a special edition of *Scholarly and Research Communications* that included papers from the first York Symposium on the Scholarship of Engagement (Phipps, Gaetz and Wedlock, 2014). Despite a requirement that all presentations at the Symposium be co-authored between community and university partners, we observed that only three of seven papers submitted for scholarly publication included non-academic co-authors. Full participation in democratic partnerships means university collaborators need to work with community collaborators from conception to dissemination. The knowledge mobilization partnership between UWYR and York University sets the expectations and creates the conditions to support these authentic partnerships.

Conclusions

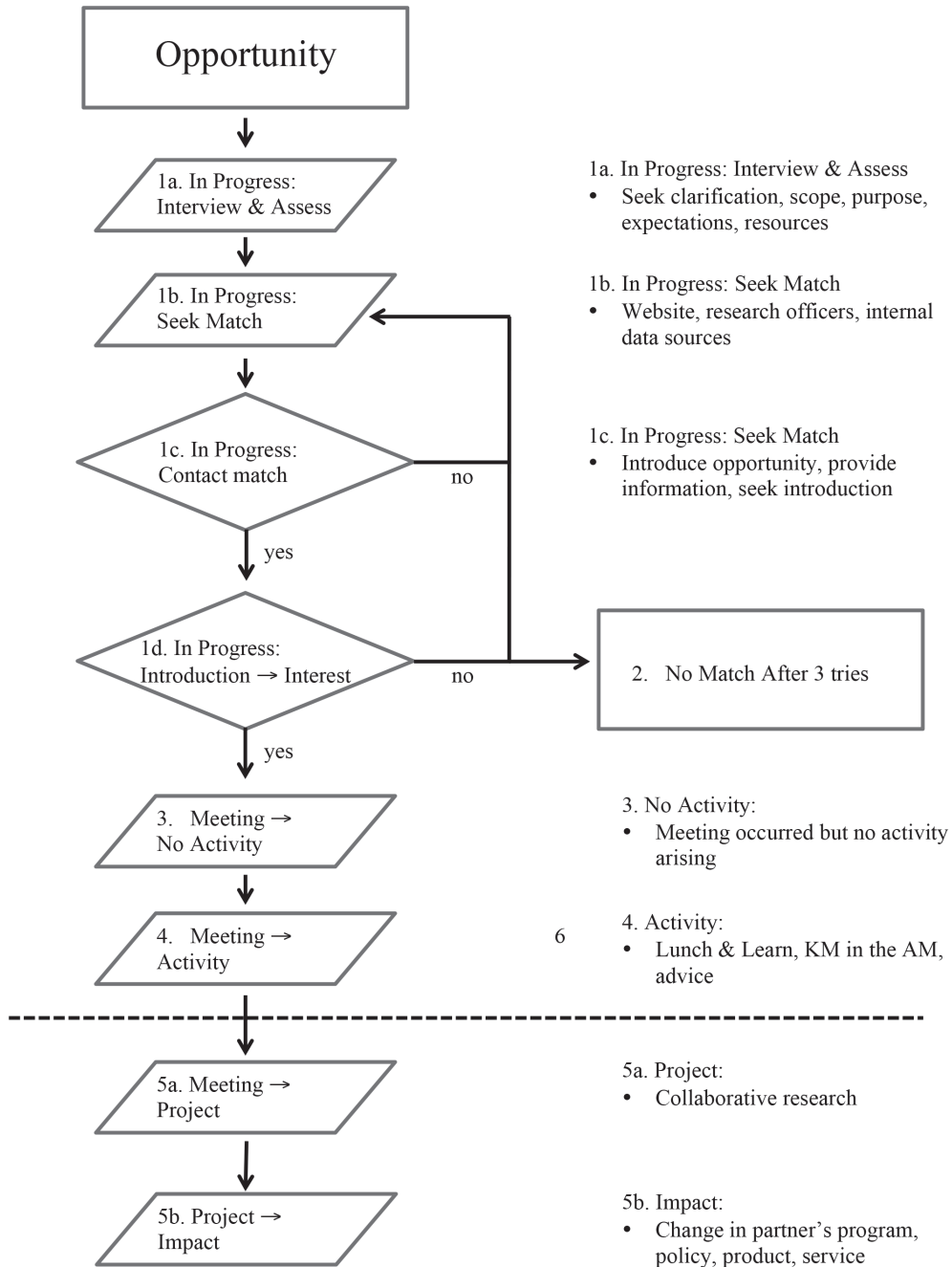
There are two fundamental knowledge mobilization processes: “end of grant” knowledge mobilization which supports tailored dissemination strategies designed to make research evidence accessible to end users; and “integrated” knowledge mobilization which engages end users throughout the research cycle (CIHR, 2012). By identifying and supporting sustainable community campus collaborations, knowledge brokering is a mechanism that supports integrated knowledge mobilization. It is a service that essentially says, “If you want to connect to community or academic expertise, give us a call.” As a key knowledge mobilization tool, knowledge brokering supports engaged research and thus supports institutional priorities such as community and/or public engagement.

Both York University and UWYR knowledge brokers were initially hired through grant funds. Success in knowledge brokering created the evidence for both organizations to identify community engagement, research and knowledge mobilization as institutional priorities and make ongoing investments in knowledge brokers. This has created numerous community campus collaborations that have had academic and community impacts and have helped to diffuse power between these constituencies. This success has demanded the development of tools to support this knowledge mobilization system. The structured tracking process identified above creates an evidence-based process for monitoring a system of knowledge mobilization. It is a tool for the knowledge broker to be able to monitor progress of projects from inception (Stage 1) to community impact (Stage 5a). This monitoring tool does not create impact but provides a tool for knowledge brokers to identify projects that have an impact and work with academic and non-academic project partners to communicate those impacts.

While York University and UWYR knowledge brokers seek to support democratic community campus partnerships, this knowledge mobilization system in York Region is itself a democratic partnership. The partners have worked together for eight years developing trust through joint activities that have progressed from shared communications to shared funding supporting shared personnel. The CIHR and SSHRC grants included York University and UWYR as co-Principal Investigators meaning that both community and university partners were involved in setting the priorities. Importantly, grant funding was transferred to UWYR giving the community partner the authority over hiring of personnel.

The university and community based knowledge brokers form a unique knowledge mobilization pairing by working together to build community and university capacity for engaged scholarship to increase the quality of knowledge mobilization opportunities. Both bring their own expertise to the knowledge mobilization pairing, creating equity between community and university knowledge. Making joint presentations and publications (such as this one) is further evidence of the authenticity of this partnership. This knowledge mobilization practice begins to address the critique of power differentials inherent in community university collaborations. By creating collaborations that respond to the needs of community, building capacity for authentic participation in research, and acknowledging the value of academic and community/practice-based expertise, the knowledge brokers in this knowledge mobilization practice diffuse power and help collaborators to create new knowledge that is relevant to both community and academic partners. This satisfies the determinants of democratic partnerships as identified by Dostilio (Dostilio, 2014). This process for mapping knowledge brokering from inception (Stage 1) to impact (Stage 5) also provides a standardized, evidence-based tool for academic institutions to monitor their knowledge mobilization portfolio or knowledge mobilization system and articulate the non-academic impacts of their investments in institutional knowledge brokers.

Figure 1: The knowledge brokering process



About the Authors

As Executive Director, Research & Innovation Services, **David Phipps** (*corresponding author*) leads York's award winning Knowledge Mobilization Unit. It provides services to researchers, community organizations and government agencies that wish to use maximize the economic, social and environmental impacts of university research. He also leads ResearchImpact-RéseauImpactRecherche, Canada's knowledge mobilization network including 11 universities from across Canada. Email: dhipps@yorku.ca

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