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community-engaged research, teaching, and learning

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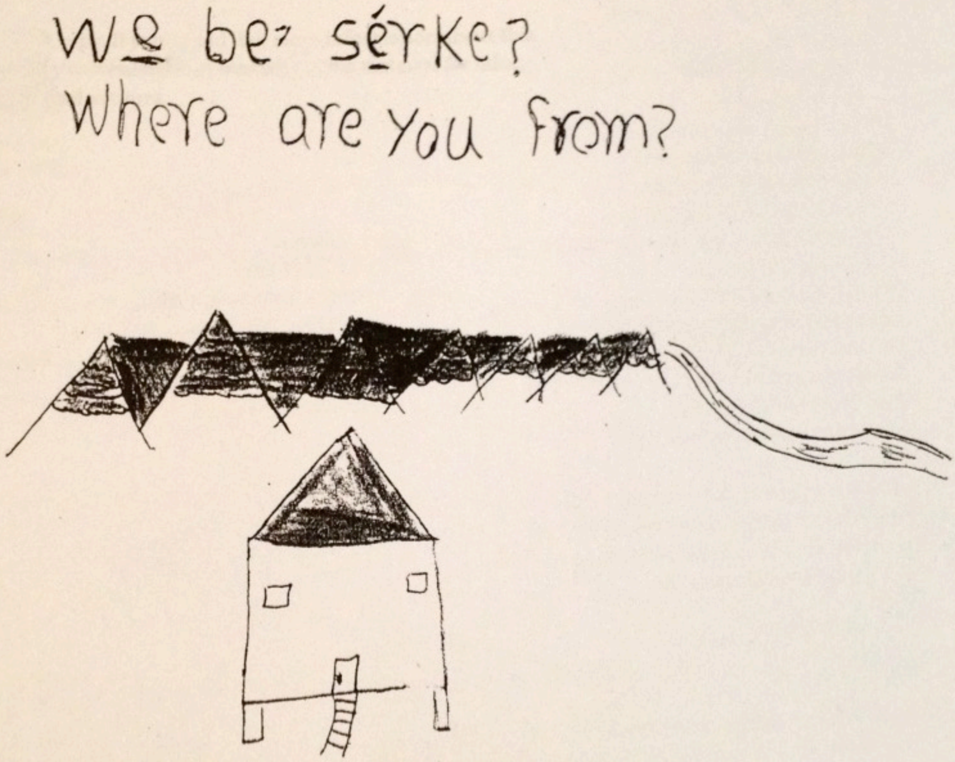

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Acknowledgements

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Issue Statistics

A. Authors and Submissions

Authors and Co-Authors	
University-based	44
Community partners	12
Total	**56**

Article Submissions	
Original proposals for peer and editor review	16
Articles submitted for editor review	2
Articles submitted for peer review	13
Peer-reviewed articles accepted for publication	7
Editor-reviewed articles accepted for publication	0
Book reviews submitted for editor review	3
Book reviews accepted for publication	2

Geographic Distribution (Corresponding Authors Only)	
Eastern Canada	
Brock University	1
Carleton University	2
Concordia University	1
Laurier University	1
Queen's University	1
University of Windsor	1
York University	1
Non-University Based	3
Western Canada	
St. Thomas More College	1
University of Alberta	1
University of British Columbia	1
University of Victoria	1
Non-University Based	1
International	
Indiana University Kokomo, United States	1
United Nations mandated University for Peace, Costa Rica	1
Total	**19**

B. Peer-Reviewers and Peer-Reviewing

Peer Reviewers	
Total invitations to peer review	78
Number of peer reviewers who accepted invitations	26

Geographic Distribution (Peer Reviewers)	
Eastern Canada	
McMaster University	1
Memorial University	1
University of Waterloo	1
University of Toronto	1
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Western Canada	
Adler University	1
St. Thomas More College	2
University of Alberta	2
University of Saskatchewan	6
International	
Adelphi University (US)	1
Edge Hill University (UK)	1
Griffith University (Australia)	1
Jacksonville University (US)	1
Michigan State University (US)	1
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Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia)	1
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Essays

Assessing the Outcomes of Community-University Engagement Networks in a Canadian Context

Crystal Tremblay, Robyn Spilker, Rhianna Nagel, Jennifer Claire Robinson, Leslie Brown

ABSTRACT Inter-organizational networks are proliferating as a tool for community-university engagement (CUE). Focusing on three Canadian inter-organizational networks that bring communities and universities together, Community Based Research Canada (CBRC), the Pacific Housing Research Network (PHRN) and the Indigenous Child Well-being Research Network, this paper identifies key criteria for assessing these networks' outcomes and highlights factors that contribute to these networks' challenges and successes. This work is part of a growing body of scholarship seeking to better understand the role and contribution of networks in society and more specifically how the outcomes of these engagements might benefit and enhance collaborative research partnerships between civil society and higher education institutions. The results illuminate lessons learned from each of these three networks and their members. These findings inform broader research into community-university engagement networks and illustrate how these types of engagements can help build a stronger knowledge democracy in Canada and elsewhere.

KEYWORDS networks, community engagement, higher education, knowledge democracy, outcomes

There is currently a strong global trend to unite civil society, higher education institutions and networks in common efforts to "co-create knowledge, mobilize it to inform practice and policy, and enhance the social, economic and environmental conditions of people, communities, nations and the world" (Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 391). There is also a growing body of scholarship and interest in the epistemological revolution and movement towards a knowledge democracy, a relatively recent concept described by Tandon et al. (2016) as the "recognition of ecologies of knowledge and cognitive justice such as organic, spiritual and land-based systems, frameworks arising from our social movements, and the knowledge of the marginalised or excluded everywhere" (p.3). Among other key values as described by Tandon et al. (2016), knowledge democracy is about taking action in social movements and elsewhere to deepen democracy; it's about open access for the sharing of knowledge and intentionally linking values of justice, fairness, and action to the process of creating and using knowledge. Our work presented here is largely informed by a theoretical framing of these ideals, and those situated in community-based research. Our thinking is also guided by the premise that higher education institutions have an ethical obligation to contribute to the common good, and that community engaged scholarship can provide an important conceptual umbrella for organizing that civic mission (Cuthill, 2012).

It is through this lens that we shed light on Community University Engagement (CUE) networks as spaces that bridge universities, governments, First Nations, civil society organizations, industry, and community representatives on an organizational level. On an individual level, these networks connect researchers, policy analysts, and citizens as well as leaders from First Nations, civil society, businesses, and governments with the hope that dialogue among diverse stakeholders will create mutual understanding, innovative ideas, and stronger linkages between research, practice, and policy. Such complex open systems can be unpredictable as they are richly interactive and dynamic and involve many citizens and stakeholders. A lack of resources and internal struggles between members can make it harder for networks to be effective. Attempts to influence one part of the system can have far-reaching repercussions. These networks bring together organizations and individuals with diverse knowledge of the systems in question, allowing for a more holistic collective understanding for issues. Thus, networks may be able to influence various levers for change within these systems to collectively address contemporary; however, the nature of these complex systems makes it difficult to disentangle the networks' outcomes from other influences on the system. Zornes et al. (2015) highlight the obstacles specific to networks for establishing evaluation criteria and measures related to community-based impacts and outcomes beyond 'quantitative' measures.

This paper focuses on three inter-organizational networks that bring different communities and universities together to assess the outcomes of these networks, focusing on the overarching research question "*how and in which ways do CUE networks enable equitable and accessible knowledge co-creation between higher education and civil society?*" The three participating networks are Community Based Research Canada (CBRC), the Pacific Housing Research Network (PHRN), and the Indigenous Child Well-being Research Network. The findings in this paper are based on document analysis, literature review, and in-depth interviews with members of each of the networks. This paper begins by defining networks more broadly, particularly related to community university engagement, cross-sector collaboration, and social change. Following this is a discussion of the key benefits of networks, and factors found to influence network success, as identified by our participants. A methodology for assessing the outcomes of these three networks and a description of the networks follows. The primary aim of this research is to inform the three participating networks and their members of the beneficial outcomes of these engagements and to provide further insight into the obstacles and successes of CUE networks.

Unpacking CUE Networks

Malinsky & Lubelsky (2014) define networks as open systems of "relatively autonomous actors that are working in concert to achieve shared goals or pursue individual goals within a shared system" (p. 8). What a network can achieve depends in part on their members' skills, knowledge, access to resources, and influence in their community or organization (Head, 2008). Membership in these networks can be small or large, heterogeneous or homogenous, comprised of individuals or organizations, from any sector or field, and are localized, national or international in scope (Head, 2008; Malinsky & Lubelsky, 2014). Researchers have observed that networks generally have internal aims, such as "information exchange and capacity building for network members, and external aims such as policy change, service delivery, and planning" (Head, 2008, p. 738). Plastrik & Taylor (2006) expand on this concept by identifying three common network goals and relating them to stages of network development. First, all networks foster connectivity by linking people and organizations. Second, many networks build on connectivity to create alignment through developing shared values and a collective sense of identity. Third, some networks build on connectivity and alignment to produce external outputs of varying types. The array of possible outputs includes producing goods and services, influencing policy, promoting promising practices, mobilizing citizens, and developing innovative solutions to social and economic issues (Plastrik & Taylor, 2006).

The prevailing view of networks is that many organizations with shared aims will be more effective working together than if they compete or function separately (Provan & Milward, 2001). There is an advantage to working collaboratively as multiple organizations can often harness a wider range of knowledge and resources to achieve a coordinated goal (Proven et al., 2005, p. 603). Pressure to collaborate is especially strong within the public and third sector due to resource scarcity, the complexity of problems, and the need for horizontal coordination between organizations that have developed specific specializations (Provan & Milward, 2001). Anderson et al. (2010) argue that addressing complex problems requires distributed leadership across sectors, networked efforts, and citizen engagement as action. Furthermore, for networks to address complex social, economic, and environmental problems, they need relevant knowledge and skills.

Community-university engagement networks may be especially useful because they can mobilize the knowledge, skills, and assets of both universities and communities. The most recent World Report in Higher Education makes a strong case in support of building knowledge networks. Because "[t]he complexity, dynamism and global nature of our current context requires a huge amount of knowledge and, at the same time, social dialogue" (Vilalta et al., 2017, p.405), it is no longer possible, argues Vilalta et al., (2017), for an institution or organization (whether a government, university, company or any other) to act with full autonomy and resolve questions that are in themselves complex and interdependent.

Such partnerships apply rigorous research approaches and value community knowledge that is place-based and context specific to democratically find solutions to contemporary challenges (Popp et al., 2013). As Escrigas et al. (2014) explain (or emphasize), inter-organizational networks are proliferating as a tool for CUE (see also Hall et al., 2013; Hall et. al, 2015). These networks bring community-based and university-based representatives together to work towards a common purpose, often to benefit communities and develop solutions to social, economic and ecological problems (Popp et al., 2013). Community-based representatives can include individuals from non-profits, governments, First Nations, industries or community groups. Meanwhile, university-based representatives can include researchers, administrators, faculty members, staff members, and students. Though research on CUE networks is a developing field, CUE networks fall within the broader category of cross-sector and social change networks that seek to benefit citizens and communities.

Assessing the Outcomes of CUE Networks

Considering their proliferation and their foci on such complex problems, it is both necessary and difficult to explore how CUE networks are benefiting their members, their organizations, and their communities. In considering networks, researchers tend to evaluate whether networks have positive outcomes that support effective processes and desired results for the network (Provan et al., 2007). Bryson et al. (2006) state that collaborations can have three levels of positive impacts: "First-order impacts are those that are immediately discernable, directly resulting from collaboration processes" (p. 51). Examples include the development of innovative strategies, social capital, and information sharing. Second-order impacts tend to occur when collaborative processes have gained momentum: "these might include new partnerships, coordination and joint action, joint learning that extends beyond the collaborative, implementation of agreements, changes in practices, and changes in perceptions" (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 51). Then third-order impacts are generally long-term; they can include "new collaborations, more co-evolution and less destructive conflict among partners; results on the ground, such as the adaptation of services, resources, cities, and regions; new institutions; new norms and social heuristics for addressing public problems; and new modes of discourse" (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 51). Given that networks have a diverse range of outcomes, some are easier to measure than others. As stated by MacPherson & Toye (2011), "the longer-term impacts […] are contingent on the individual and organizational members of the network and how the focus of the network is being addressed or impacted by other forces" (p. 61). The evaluation of network outcomes and effectiveness is often steeped in evaluating network processes, dynamics, and incremental steps.

Plastrik & Taylor (2006) describe an evaluation approach that aims to measure connectivity, overall health, and results. Connectivity focuses on how effectively information and resources are flowing through a network and how these flows are shaped by network structure. Network health focuses on the presence or absence of internal conditions required to achieve long-term goals. While each network will come up with different indicators for this, common ones include adequate resources, diversity, growth, and active participation by members. Network results are difficult to assess, but Plastrik & Taylor (2006) suggest identifying intermediate indicators of incremental changes that demonstrate the network is moving towards its goal. They argue that evaluation should start with an understanding of what essential role networking plays in achieving impact. Taylor et al., (2015) recently published an evaluation assessment rubric considering network stages of evolution and network conditions (such as connectivity and leadership). This incorporation of network stage into the evaluation allows for developing a more case-specific understanding of a given network.

Provan & Milward (2001) present an output-focused evaluation framework for community-based networks, especially those that deliver health and human services. They consider community-level, network-level, and organization/participant-level outputs, and the stakeholders associated with each level. As Provan & Milward (2001) state, "at the broadest level of analysis, community-based networks must be judged by the contribution they make to the communities they are trying to serve" (p. 416). For instance, community-level contributions could be measured by the incidence of a problem the network addresses, the mobilization of community assets, or the growth of social capital. Then on the network-level, evaluation focuses on whether the network is a viable collaboration between organizations. Outputs at the network-level can include network growth, relationship building, common understanding of goals, and coordination of activities. Finally, organization and individual members are motivated to participate in their network through the promise of value creation for themselves and their organizations. Organization and participant level outputs include accessing information, acquiring more resources, reducing the cost of transactions between organizations, and gaining legitimacy through affiliation.

Throughout the literature on evaluating cross-sector and social change networks, there is an emphasis on customizing evaluation to suit a network's needs. This often requires determining what outcomes a network's members, community, and stakeholders are most interested in observing. Factors that influence network outcomes can provide insight into network impacts. While networks and their evaluation strategies are diverse, researchers and practitioners have identified some common factors that influence networks' effectiveness and ability to create impact. These factors are access to resources, alignment and planning, communication, bridging and linking, trust and conflict resolution, learning, leadership, and governance. The results of this research have been organized around these factors.

Methodology for Assessing the Outcomes of CUE Networks

The three networks in this study were chosen for the diversity in their purpose, membership, represented sectors, geographical scope, size, and for their association with the Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community-University-Engagement (ISICUE), a former research centre at the University of Victoria (UVic) dedicated to bridging the university with community organizations. ISICUE's involvement in these networks ranged from providing administrative support, shared resources, staff, and leadership, to serving as an affiliated research organization. Interviews were held with three members of each of the three networks who chose to participate in this study. As this research was designed to be exploratory, these interviews were semi-structured in form to allow interviewer and interviewee to have more of a collaborative conversation with both parties learning more about CUE networks, their functioning, and their key outcomes. Interview questions related to the interviewees' personal experiences of participating in the network; to the internal form, function and processes of the network; and to the external relations and influences of the network. Interview transcriptions were analyzed through an iterative process of thematic coding based on the literature and the emerging elements from each interview.

Pacific Housing Research Network (PHRN)

The PHRN network officially launched in early 2012 "to facilitate multi- sectoral housing research activities across BC and foster dialogue and collaboration among housing researchers and stakeholders to encourage the effective application of research results to housing solutions" (PHRN, 2013 – Winter Newsletter). Membership to PHRN is free and open to all and implies subscription to PHRN E-News. This provincial network is co-chaired by researchers from the University of Victoria and one from the University of British Columbia. The steering committee consists of representatives from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), MITACS (funder), the Housing Policy Branch of the Government of BC, BC Housing, UBC, UVic, and the BC Nonprofit Housing Association (BCNPHA). PHRN has one hired staff member as the network coordinator. BC Housing and CMHC provide funding, with major in-kind support from ISICUE and UVic and significant in-kind support from other Steering Committee partner organizations. PHRN holds a yearly housing symposium, which brings together scholars, practitioners, and policy makers. The network publishes two to three newsletters a year; hosts a website with network news (http://phrnbc.com/), housing related resources and symposium information; sends out monthly to bi-monthly e-news to subscribers; supports students through work-study positions, awards and networking opportunities; and promotes events, opportunities and resources through Twitter.

The Indigenous Child Well-being Research Network (ICWRN)

The Indigenous Child Well-being Research Network brings together a variety of Indigenous peoples representing both on/off reserve; status/non-status; Métis, Inuit, and First Nations in response "to an urgent need for Indigenous approaches to research topics that are grounded in the experiences and voices of Indigenous children, youth, families and communities" (ICWRN, 2013). The network began in 2009 as the Indigenous Child Welfare Research Network (ICWRN) with the vision that "one day our children will laugh and play freely in their communities with their families" (ICWRN, 2010, p. 3). Membership to ICWRN is free, open to all and provides access to resources, literature and people who specialize in Indigenous Research (ICWRN, 2013). Staffing fluctuates based on funding and ICWRN currently has one hired staff member as the administrative assistant. Funding is primarily grant-based through supporters such as Vancity and the Vancouver Foundation, with core support from the Faculty of Human and Social Development at UVic. ICWRN also raises funds through service fees for research and engagement projects. The Executive Committee consists of three researchers from UVic and one from the University of British Columbia (UBC). The Steering Committee is composed of mainly Indigenous professors from UVic, UBC, and Australia, with four serving as executive members of the network (ICWRN, 2013). ICWRN also has an Advisory Committee, with representation from various territories in order to promote, advise and liaise to community, agencies and institutes (ICWRN, 2013). The network hosts a website which showcases ICWRN-led research, resources, publications, presentations and opportunities.[1]

[1] ICWRN website: http://icwrn.uvic.ca/

ICWRN facilitates training with Indigenous communities and are dedicated to highlighting and using Indigenous methodologies. Through the network's projects, significant works have been published on methodologies and specific topics of interest.

Community Based Research Canada (CBRC)

Community-based Research Canada (CBRC) began in 2008 as the Pan-Canadian Coalition for Community Based Research. As of 2013, CBRC's vision has evolved to become a national champion and facilitator of community-based research (CBR) in the broader context of community-campus engagement through its network of post-secondary institutions and community partners. CBRC membership is open to all and a paid membership strategy began in 2012 to sustain core administrative funding for the network; fees range depending on the type and size of the member organization. The network hosts a website which profiles its members, provides opportunities for networking, and shares resources and network news. CBRC's Engaged Practice Learning Exchange (EPLE) supports on-line networking opportunities and facilitates face-to-face workshops on topics of interest, as identified in CBRC's member survey in 2008. CBRC also supports CUExpo, a bi-annual conference that "allows community members, universities, colleges, government, and nonprofit organizations to work together to create an innovative learning environment where research, knowledge, and relationships can be shared and cultivated" (CBRC website). CBRC is governed by a steering committee of CBR leaders from universities and civil society across Canada, which is supported by a secretariat housed at the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) in Kitchener, Ontario.

Results from Participating Networks: Key Outcomes

Through thematic analysis of interviews and CUE related literature, the following factors affecting network access stood out as resonating with the networks' approach to understanding their outcomes: access to resources, alignment and planning, communication, bridging and linking, trust and conflict resolution, learning, leadership, and governance. This could be the result of the generally early stage of the network and/or the limited resources available to formally evaluate efforts or undertake in-depth network assessment. Thus, many of the interviewees did not directly nor concretely portray specific network outcomes, hence the value of this study in starting this conversation. The following is an overview of network interviewee responses in relation to these factors.

Access to Resources

Both human and financial resources are required to perform collaborative work (Foster-Fisherman, 2001; Plastrik & Taylor, 2006; Provan et al., 2007). All those interviewed from the three networks identified access to resources as an underlying success factor for networks to achieve their desired outcomes. Generally, it was found that as a network, members can access resources and tools that they could not access without the multi-stakeholder network and that financial resources are primarily dedicated to buying time. In-kind human resources offer the bulk of leadership to each of the three networks and this is commonly the case in CUE networks (McPherson & Toye, 2011). While dedication, passion, and position are vital to the possible impacts of the network, there is danger in individual burnout, particularly if capacity is weak within the organization for succession planning. In this light, every interviewee and many of the reviewed documents outline the importance of a paid coordinator role. In fact, financial resources were primarily deemed necessary to maintain the coordinator role and their associated tasks. Each participating network observed that through supporting the secretariat, and/or maintaining a paid coordinator position, they could see and fill gaps, and increase capacity to move beyond network maintenance to network growth, formalization and innovation.

A strength in CUE networks in relation to access to resources is the ability to leverage the attributes of community and university partners for acquiring funds. Community organization partners were identified as providing community contacts, contextual understanding, and support letters. Similarly, researchers and staff in the institutions were identified as providing connections, time, and access and ability to write research grants. CUE networks can access research funds, which have the capacity to "create opportunities for engagement at the community level" (Interviewee). Furthermore, individual and organizational funding opportunities are shared throughout the networks. However, due to reduced and constrictive funding, network members are, as one interviewee noted:

> Absolutely burnt out and overworked …[...]… whether we have funding makes all the difference so if you don't have a large amount of core funding you are spending all your time applying for special project funding... without the core funding we are limited in our capacity to follow up, develop new partnerships, have a proper functioning listserv and the networking piece is often the first to go.

Considering the importance given to 'networking' in 'networks,' the impacts of this funding challenge is significant. Institutional support for researchers enables network activities to continue even when their financial resources are not acquired; the researchers themselves, and institutional work-study and student internship type positions can provide a strong motor for the network while financial and volunteer resources are low. However, when accessing funds for research that are administered through university institutions, the institution uses a percentage to support administration. Both community and university partners voiced frustration in this process. The downfall of research funds, stated one of the interviewees, is in "how the funding was handled for the project. Some of it if it went through the regular research funding stream of the university, we lost $5,000 every time."

Each network also highlighted the need for a clear identity to acquire funds and support, and yet, requiring funds to appropriately define their identity. Given the complex nature of CUE networks and the complex issues that they are aiming to address, this conundrum can be a burden for network members and leaders and can create tension. Apart from funders increasingly asking for clearly defined grantees, a crystallized identity can be helpful in avoiding opportunistic funding sources that can distract network members from the network's purpose.

Alignment and Planning

Much of the literature identified network-level goal clarity and agreement on project objectives as desirable, though, not always essential for networks to function effectively (Bryson et al., 2006; Foster-Fisherman et al., 2001; Head, 2008; Provan & Kenis, 2008). However, those interviewed for this research strongly suggest that it is easier to understand the impacts and influences of the network when the question of *a network for what?* is answered. A clearly defined identity and strategic plan are important for responding to that question. Without these, the value of the network cannot be portrayed to new members, funders, and the broader public. As one interviewee stated, having a "clear identity is what moves things along."

Many interviewees found that part of creating a strong identity is being more robust, and part of it is the visibility and credibility in the broader community. The process and product of a collaboratively developed strategic plan is what support network alignment between individual, organizational, and network level goals and visions, according to several interviewees. "The plan makes things much more real, a couple of years ago it was an idea. Now it's an idea with a good plan and people working towards it and actions coming out of it," said one interviewee. Another stated that "the plan is great and moves us along" because it clarifies the mission and goals and builds necessary structures for achieving those, without over-bureaucratizing. One participant said that what "makes the governance group work…is that they are pretty clear about their shared mission." In determining priorities, the strategic plan is fundamental for clarifying the details of the network's work; practical objectives assist the network in aligning with its vision.

One network used a network member survey as a tool to develop the strategic plan and then wrote the plan collaboratively. Apart from the value of clarifying work, the process of collaboratively developing the strategic plan was identified as having the impact of growing capacity and connections within the network. One participant said that their network is in the early days and is thus still defining the "general direction of where and how and why we do the things we do…it would be false to say 'here are the great things that we get from the network.' It's an early network, we are building it now." Developing network identity requires significant time and internal and external relationship building.

In the development and solidification of the network identity, the greatest impacts, both intended and secondary, seem to occur when there is alignment between individual, organizational, and network level visions and goals. It was observed that when this alignment occurs, involvement in the network contributes to solidifying work at members' home organizations and vice versa. This reciprocal relationship then fosters the growth of the societal movement that the network is aiming to contribute to. One participant said, "there's a movement, there's a network, and there's an organization, and how do you keep the three going at the same time?" Two impacts associated with alignment and planning that were identified by interviewees are 1) developing a more robust network, and 2) creating more visibility and credibility in the broader community, both of which feed back into alignment and planning. Furthermore, there is emphasis on the importance of network identity, vision, and goals aligning with network activities. With this clarity, internal and external network communications are more readily facilitated and meaningful.

Communications

Communication was identified in the interviews as being *the role* of the network. With this important designation assigned, network impacts come to light when looking at the questions of who is communicating what, to whom, and how. While this differs with each network, a common factor of success in communications was using the right language to clearly convey the network's message and activities, while still attracting interest from members (to-be and active), funders, and other stakeholders. The participating networks were either provincial or nation-wide in their scope. Thus, each faced geographical barriers to communications. Furthermore, the active members of each network are very busy, with tight schedules, and at times, restrictive organizational policies around communications.

The purpose of network communications varied slightly between the networks, but generally provided information about the network to members and the public, built momentum around an issue or activity, created internal and external connections, encouraged new membership, shared research and other resources within the network and developed funding applications. Through network communication modes, members could communicate opportunities, passions, resources, and knowledge with each other, with network partners and funders, and with the public. Such communication provides the opportunity for policy makers to accept (or continue?) research, for movement building, for developing new audiences for research and community work, and for students and community members to participate in research. The identified modes of communication used in the networks are the following: Skype, website, email, telephone, conferences/ symposiums, electronic and hardcopy newsletters, annual face-to-face meetings, and Twitter (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Identified modes of communication used in the networks.

Mode of Communication	**Benefits**	**Challenges**
Skype	Facilitate communication between geographically distant members; easily used for trainings and meetings	Technology sometimes problematic

Website	Maintain transparency; showcase network vision, activities and members; share resources and learnings from face-to-face interactions; "A lot of research communications, a little more network communications" (Interviewee)	"Place for information not so much communication, at least not two-way" (Interviewee) Lost information when changing platforms. One network lost significant documentation of presentations, reports and program evaluation when switching platforms and therefore lost some of the transparency that they had worked so hard to achieve.
Telephone	Provides more clarity than emails	
Email	"Email was key source for all kind of information" (Interviewee)	Can be ambiguous; difficult to read tone
Conferences/ symposiums	Creating face-to-face connections between multiple members and diverse partners; energizer; "facilitate and foster…inter-person communication" (Interviewee)	Geographically distant members may not be able to attend; cost; human resources related to planning
Hardcopy newsletter	Ready material for meetings	Cost
Electronic newsletter	"Pushing out" information to broad audience and through member's individual networks; easy to disseminate; can use "…e-news analytics to talk about some impact quantitatively" (Interviewee)	
Printed informational brochure	Ready material with general network information	Cost, especially when reprinting is required for updated information
Annual face-to-face meeting	Getting on the same page	Cost; human resources related to planning

Twitter	"Pushing out" information to broad audience and through member's individual networks; can use "twitter […] analytics to talk about some impact quantitatively" (Interviewee)	Maintaining and updating account requires significant human resources

It can be difficult to establish commonly agreed-upon language that resonates with the network's broader public and respects the political climate of members. "The broader your reach is, the more accessible your communications need to be," stated one interviewee. Without the appropriate language, it is difficult to cultivate the internal and external bridges and links that ultimately increase a network's influence. For the most part, it was observed that communication is streamlined through the role of a Project Coordinator or Project Manager, with side conversations occurring between members and with funders. One of the interviewees stated that members were originally communicating with multiple people, but now communication is mostly "streamlined from one person, which is easier because you know who to contact." In this sense, the coordinator acts as a repository and conduit of information.

Bridging and Linking

Creating a shared understanding of issues and collective support for network goals requires working across organizations, sectors, and social positions. Bridging stakeholders with diverse viewpoints can be essential for achieving such alignment (Head, 2008). Additionally, bridging to a wide range of organizations and sectors can increase a network's access to funding, information, people and other resources, ultimately increasing their influence (Foster-Fisherman et al., 2001). Each of the networks is committing significant time, energy, and financial resources to creating shared understanding and collective support for network goals through bridging a wide array of organizations, sectors, and social positions. While the individuals within the network are producing the research, the network serves to create the linkages.

While each network specializes in a unique sector, they are often presented as hubs, focusing on "ways in which you build more rigour or robustness […] and how [to] best draw upon the strengths represented" in the field (Interviewee). Another interviewee stated that the network demonstrates great "sectoral involvement and reach" and that there is "great representation and a high level of collaboration." Another interviewee said, "if you can't do it alone, do it together right." Regarding the impact of working together within the network, one interviewee noted that "fostering contribution and participation, I think, certainly allows for connections to be made between people." Further, developing dialogue with many different actors and between sectors solidifies connections. Conferences, symposiums, and face-to-face interaction were identified as the preferred means of initiating this dialogue and working relationship.

When asked how their networks were impacting their field and how being part of the network impacts their work, interviewees focused significantly on how the networks "support space to build a movement" and reduce fragmentation. Some interviewees observed that they and others valued their individual and organizational level work more through sharing it and grouping it with other network members' work. As one interviewee articulated, "it is helpful to know other people in the network and be able to get things done. So, the collegial support of linking national and international voice I think that's had an influence locally." The same interviewee described an external expectation for networked sectors and a consequent credibility challenge related to sharing a network identity with peers in the field. As network members and/or partners, funders are also developing dialogue around funding priorities and processes with networks where historically the relationship was primarily based on applications and responses.

One impact of CUE networks in communities is a shift in community-university relations. "Over time they have developed the rapport and relationship with communities," stated one interviewee. This creates common ground for community and researchers and makes "research accessible and practical for the community based world." One of the networks focuses a significant amount of time on supporting communities through capacity building and deconstructing power structures around research. In this case, interviewees shared significant personal impact stories related to their work in community. For example, one interviewee expressed the following:

> So much of our work is decolonial re-centering, re-storying what research is. And it's a decolonization process, and a healing process. And to see it, and to be with Elders who have been told you know, your language doesn't matter, your knowledge doesn't matter... To have spent two days praying together and drumming and honoring the stories and developing a new vision, that is the impact - like reclaiming research is the impact. To us that's tremendous.

Further, the interviewee describes the significance of a decolonizing research process within her own work and that of being a bridge builder and translator with government:

> On one hand communities weren't interested in doing their own research, I think in part because research had always been positioned as a colonial endeavor, coming from colonial institutions.... And then what was used to find and assess agencies, even if they were Aboriginal, was still coming from colonial research. So, it was kind of this perfect opening for Indigenous academics to step into and say can we work with community in partnership, following Indigenous ethics, following different protocols not this helicopter Euro-western appropriation model, and work with communities to look at their own practices, knowledge and then translate that back. And then on the other prong other end of the spectrum; work with government and policy makers for them to understand research evidence and evaluation and program design in a much broader way. So, kind of doing that translation bridging work.

While these personal outcomes came from issue-specific work, the interviews and documents highlight a difference of opinion around whether it is appropriate to bridge and link around specific issues. Comments showing resistance to issue-based bridging included the following: the network needs to "support and create space, not create demands and create stands"; not issue-driven, but capacity and communications driven to encourage connection from more people, particularly those who are risk adverse (including funders); it is difficult to speak with one voice as a network due to political circumstances of those involved; broad framing of work "so that …[…]… stakeholders can all take part in it, so it will be kind of general"; the network is not for talking about specific issues, but for building relationships and the network itself. Comments favouring issue-based bridging included the following: the idea is that the network can "address questions and issues that matter and make a difference on those issues in ways that we wouldn't otherwise be able to do" and "collaborate on the national level about funding and addressing big issues." It seems that the strategy that two of the networks have adopted in response to this tension is to meet the views in the middle and identify "over-arching themes." Increasing network reach perhaps enables the growth of a movement that will, through its various actors, address more controversial issues.

Trust and Conflict Resolution

Collaborations require building trust over time, as members develop relationships, share information, make progress on goals, and demonstrate competency, good intentions and follow-through (Bryson et al., 2006; Foster-Fisherman et al., 2001; Head, 2008). Bryson et al. (2006) argue that conflict is common in cross-sector collaborations due to differing histories, organizational cultures, expectations, and aims; therefore, collaborations function more effectively when conflict is managed and power dynamics are negotiated. All interviewees from each of the networks identified significant trust within the networks and with network partners. This trust was related to intentions in that it was commonly portrayed that everyone is involved for the right reasons. Consequently, there is more patience for diversity of ideas and approaches. As one interviewee put it, "I can't talk about inclusiveness and transparency without talking about…the intentions of the people who come together. They respect each other's intentions. So, there is no nonsense…it's really wonderful." This trust was also related to credibility in that individuals give the network credibility and the network gives individuals credibility. This "good credibility piece in both directions," as one interviewee called it, is an interesting outcome of participating in CUE networks. The working relationships of the CUE networks provide an opportunity for trust to develop, which in turn supports committed working relationships.

Learning

Learning or continuous improvement orientation is another factor that can support networks to achieve beneficial outcomes (Head, 2008; Plastrik & Taylor, 2006). Foster-Fisherman et al. (2001) characterize continuous improvement as the process of seeking feedback from internal and external sources, including monitoring systems and evaluations, then using the feedback to develop as an organization. Each of the participating networks evaluated specific activities in response to funders' metric criteria. Several interviewees said that these evaluations resonated only slightly with what the network and its members wanted to learn to move forward. Only one of the networks used a formal survey to support network improvements. They found that this evaluation was extremely useful for creating more alignment between individual, organizational and network goals and visions. However, the networks identified time for administering, participating in, and documenting network evaluations as the reason why formal network evaluation is not occurring. Informal evaluation, though perhaps not as impactful, is occurring within each of the networks.

Leadership

Leadership capabilities that benefit networks include the ability to be task oriented, mobilize assets and strengths, market strategic opportunities, and adapt to changing contexts (Bryson et al., 2006; Foster-Fisherman et al., 2001; Head, 2008). Bryson et al. (2006) point to the value of informal leadership throughout the network, as members' participation is often self-directed, actions are decentralized, and decision-making is shared. In addition, networks often rely on leaders that fill champion and sponsor roles. Sponsors use prestige, authority, and access to resources to sustain collaborations though they may not be involved in day-to-day work; meanwhile, champions use their energy, time and process skills to further the collaboration and lead day-to-day work (Bryson et al., 2006).

It was expressed in each of the interviews that leaders within the networks demonstrate real commitment to the network. One interviewee said that the strength of the network is in "the dogged determination of the individuals of the group…the sense of willingness and camaraderie…of the executive and steering committees." They added, "it is a huge strength to have people who have so much experience who actually believe in what they are doing…. Each can give something different and have different strengths in their experiences." It was also stated that "for nobody is it a paid job" and that "it's being done for the greater good and not your actual CV and that's where the commitment comes in. That is really impressive." Individual researchers were singled out as being instrumental in moving things forward by allowing the network access to their funds and connections. One interviewee stated that "everyone at the table is a leader in their sector or they wouldn't be there. They are leaders, they speak like leaders, they have expectations of leaders, and they bring constituencies to the table." Another stated that "the movers of the network are not only bringing their individual commitment and ability but they bring with them the knowledge, respect and connections that are the lifeblood for developing genuine university-community engagement." So individuals are using their networks to expand the network and increase visibility. However, it was also highlighted that "[a] good leader... is somebody who speaks the language of the academics and the language of the local community…If you don't speak the language you will be closed in your ivory tower."

While each of these networks has a community focus in their mission, the leaders at the universities and their administrative support were praised for being the key drivers in getting things going and having the ability "to make some shifts…not just through their network, but through their positions within the university they're able to influence policy and practice through the various committees that they might sit on whether that's in the government sector or the private sector." A lack of community leaders at the network tables was identified; one interviewee described leadership as "pretty university-centric." When asked why this was so, several interviewees responded that the organic nature of the development of these networks means that those who take the lead are the leaders; NGO and private sector leaders, who are often not supported by their institutions in network development, are not able to take that lead. Researchers at academic institutions, however, can add research network leadership to their portfolios. When a community leader was asked about this, they expressed gratitude for the time and expertise that university leaders could dedicate to their network and were pleased that the work was continuing despite limited resources of time and money.

Members interviewed from each of the networks identified significant leaders within their networks and highlighted the need to maintain a certain degree of leadership consistency, especially for a time, or as one interviewee put it, "until the network is solidly established…. if you lose your staff or your leadership or champion too soon, or too often I think it affects the stability and the forward movement for sure." It was further noted that "you need to have a champion in leadership but…If you only have one then its vulnerable. If you have a group maybe with a leader but you have a strong group that is keen, then you are going to have a sustainability piece built in as in any organization." This was reiterated by another participant who stated:

> If you rely on your executive director and no one else, your executive director leaves and your organization goes belly-up. So, I think it's a network of leaders or supporters that will sustain it over the long term. And grooming people or training people get them into leadership roles. And I don't necessarily mean a full hierarchical thing, but where its team leadership or whatever it takes, it doesn't have to be one person.

Leaders were said to build and nurture relationships and capacity. All network leaders were identified as members of the steering or executive committees and network coordinators. These leaders all have capacity in navigating institutional administration. Several interviewees expressed that network leaders are motivated by strong personal dedication in creating systemic change through their work in the network. The role of the coordinator was highlighted as instrumental in driving the network, both in terms of maintenance and growth. Within each of these networks, the coordinator or project manager, was the only consistently paid position within the networks. Interviewees observed that while the dedication of the leaders keeps the networks alive, the network is not living well without a paid coordinator who pulls the pieces of the network together, maintaining internal and external communications, convening and recruiting members, managing accounts, organizing events, and in some cases writing grant applications.

These leaders are also identified as individuals who foster individual and team leadership, often by creating trust and space for participation and contribution. As one interviewee said, "the leadership can come out of participation." The external and internal connections of network leaders support the development of the network and of the individuals within it, specifically individuals who are keen on participating actively in the network. It was stated, "there are a few people who are playing an active role in different directions and I think if you are willing to lead in a direction then we should support you in that direction...Someone takes on something that they really want to see happen and others support that." Furthermore, "if somebody gets really excited because of their contribution or participation to the network I can see leadership developing out of that. I can see the champion role coming out of that." As such, strengthening both emerging and existing leaders in the networks' fields is an impact of these networks.

Governance

Each of the networks has a central governance group, made up of an executive and/or steering committee and some form of advisory committee. Formally, the executive committee sets that direction of the network and is part of the wider steering committee and the advisory board? (in some cases with significant community participation) provides guidance and direction around policy and practice. The coordinator is then the point person who puts tools and processes in place. While each of the networks has a formal governance structure, those members who are actively participating in the network drive the networks. As expressed by one interviewee, "most decisions are made by that core group and there's a yearly meeting where others have influence as well. [Decisions] are arrived at quite collaboratively, but the weight is on those who actually do the work." Trust, a shared mission, and the generally small size of these networks allow for this structure to function. One interviewee stated, "inclusiveness and transparency are the ingredients of a successful network." Another noted that what "makes the governance group work here is that they are pretty clear about their shared mission." Challenges related to governance include working within the bureaucracy of the university or other institutional partners; formalizing informal relationships and governance as the network grows and network goals are clearer; generating governance involvement from members outside of institutions where the resources are abundant enough to support that involvement; and keeping the space open enough for creativity, innovation and inclusion while having sufficient structure for fulfilling goals and fluid network processes such as succession planning for leadership and staff.

Conclusion

Networks are being used to build trust, collaboration, knowledge sharing, capacity and innovation in the face of complex challenges facing communities and nations and the world. Yet evaluating whether these networks are working is challenging because complex problems are influenced by a myriad of factors, can take a long time to change, and evade standard cause and effect models. For these reasons, network evaluations often examine network processes, relationship dynamics, organizational health, outcomes or incremental steps towards achieving results. This article builds on the literature of cross-sector and social change networks to provide insight into the evaluation of CUE network outcomes. Though the questions asked in this study were too broad to get a comprehensive sense of CUE network outcomes and related criteria, several key factors were recognized by the participating CUE networks that influence outcomes: access to resources, alignment and planning, communication, bridging and linking, learning, trust and conflict resolution, leadership, and governance and can be measured at the community-level, network-level and organization-level. Some of the key lessons learned, as highlighted by interviewees, were the following:

1. Face-to-face meetings and conferences foster meaningful conversations around network direction, goals and processes;
2. It helps to use theories of change to assess network outcomes and be creative in language to translate those outcomes and processes to the audience's language;
3. Social media and other on-line communications tools provide metrics that are useful for understanding a network's reach;
4. The network is a space for learning from individual, organizational and collective processes and outputs and difference strengthens the network and the individuals within it;
5. Flexibility and adaptability to external influences and internal changes maintain and grow the network;
6. When core funding is lacking, it is important to think outside of the box in terms of network structures and activities;
7. The network is only as strong as the individuals that move it forward and the strategic plan that they have collaboratively developed;
8. It is difficult to maintain and develop a network without at least one paid coordinator position;
9. Working groups, with significant autonomy, are key to an active network; and
10. Without succession planning (which requires significant leadership and relationship building) the network will not be sustainable.

It is important for networks to assess and acknowledge their role in resulting outcomes, to better understand how these networks' efforts are manifesting change. To do so requires further development and application of indicators or criteria. Many of these criteria relate to a network's connectivity (membership and structure) and its health (resources, infrastructure, and advantage) (Network Evaluation Guide, 2014). Each network has unique forms, functions and processes and is at an evolutionary stage of its development (Plastrik, 2015). Thus, unique criteria for assessing internal (individual and collective) and external outcomes are required. Furthermore, there is a growing body of the benefits of CUE to society that will likely prove extremely valuable for CUE network assessment, criteria that can be used to evaluate both positive and negative network outcomes as there is much to be learned beyond our study.

While our study does not attempt to provide a complete picture of all the outcomes (and challenges) of CUE networks, our findings reinforce the important role they play in bringing diverse groups, in this case civil society and higher education, together for opportunities to co-create knowledge. These particular community-based networks, as compared to other professional networks, operate in collaborative ways and help to amplify and strengthen the growing movement towards a knowledge democracy. They do so in ways that value community knowledge, with a shared space for open dialogue, reciprocity and respect – characteristics that are needed in order to collectively solve the contemporary 'wicked' challenges our world faces.

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The Think&EatGreen@School Small Grants Initiative: How the Distribution of Resources Supported the Project's Community of Learners and Contributed to Community Engaged Scholarship

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Abstract This paper describes how a Small Grants initiative evolved to support the aims of a large, multi-sector community-university research project. It explores how the giving of small amounts of project funding to community groups enabled a deepening of community engaged scholarship across a large community-university research alliance. We present the Think&EatGreen@School Small Grants initiative as a case study on how the distribution of small amounts of funding can encourage the role of community voices in research, create opportunities for resource and knowledge sharing, generate rich information and valuable data, support and contribute to networks of support and resource sharing, and articulate the interests of a broad diversity of stakeholders.

KeyWords community engaged scholarship, trust, grants

This paper describes how a Small Grants Initiative emerged as an important part of the process of ensuring community participation and engagement in the Think&EatGreen@School research project (TEGS). Born of a collaboration between the Vancouver Board of Education, the University of British Columbia, and dozens of community partners, TEGS worked from 2010 to 2015 to create healthy, sustainable school food systems in Vancouver. The project sought to enable students, teachers, and policy makers to influence how their food is produced and where it comes from, and to create knowledge that might support the deeper integration of healthy, sustainable food in Vancouver Schools. TEGS began with a commitment to working collaboratively with a diverse and representative community of learners, and evolved iteratively over the years to support and incorporate a wide network of stakeholders in the research goals. Throughout, this paper touches on aspects of our approach to Community Engaged Scholarship and shows how the Think&EatGreen@School Small Grants Initiative became an important tool to help frame common goals while creating a synergistic network of community stakeholders to work towards them.

The Small Grants Initiative was created by the TEGS project as a way to support the engagement of school communities in school-based healthy and sustainable food system projects in Vancouver public schools. The distribution of small grants to a diversity of community stakeholders enabled trust and teamwork to grow within our networks, while deepening communication between university and community team members. The Initiative not only increased the legitimacy of our work in the eyes of the community of practitioners we sought to reach, but also gave community stakeholders a voice in crafting our research objectives and bringing them to life. The Small Grant Initiative was also valuable for generating useful data to support our research project's development and findings.

TEGS' Small Grant Initiative was established in the second year of the TEGS research project. The primary outcomes we hoped to achieve were as follows:

- Listening to key stakeholders: schools, teachers and NGO community partners, in order to better understand what schools needed. We also wanted to specifically identify which schools and teachers had an interest in carrying out Think&EatGreen@School initiatives;
- Increasing our contacts within the Vancouver School Board;
- Understanding better the goals and objectives of individual school communities;
- Finding educators, students, parents, and other school community members who were genuinely interested in school food system change;
- Recording and mapping the work that schools in Vancouver were doing to implement healthy, sustainable school food systems;
- Convening a synergistic network of stakeholders working towards overarching goals for Vancouver's school food system;
- Strengthening connections with individual schools in order to connect students from UBC to action-research opportunities that could address the real needs of the community while working as part of our community-engaged scholarship approach.

These objectives were defined by the TEGS core team and developed through an iterative and oral process. They were held and coordinated by our lead author over the 4 years of the Think&EatGreen@School Small Grants initiative, from 2011-2014.

Emergence of the Small Grants Initiative

The core research team's initial project description included a commitment by TEGS to focus on "Projects of Community Impact." At that point a specific mechanism to elicit the voice of individual school communities was not yet developed. We agreed within our team of UBC researchers and community partners[1] that the problems, objectives, and outcomes must be jointly defined. However, at this point in the process, some of the people most involved in school food systems, that is, teachers, K-12 students, and parents (with the exception of only three school teachers) were not initially a part of this consultation process or the TEGS core research team, although all community partners were involved in the preparation of the original research grant application submitted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. A small proportion of the original research budget had been set aside for

[1] Including non-profit organizations, public health institutions, members of the Vancouver Board of Education, and other university-based researchers.

"Community Engagement," with the hope of finding equitable ways to meaningfully engage a broad spectrum of people from individual school communities within our community of learners. We acknowledge that in the beginning we did not fully know the concrete mechanism(s) that we would use to work in true partnership with school communities, though we assumed these would emerge. During the project's first year, the idea of the Small Grants program was born. Our community engagement budget would become the seed funding we needed to start the Small Grants initiative.

By the end of our first year, we were fully committed to the practice of Community-Engaged Scholarship (CES) and felt a need to "walk the talk," and thereby create relationships of reciprocity and trust with individuals and schools, and within our existing alliance. Our core team realized that the "[d]irect involvement of people affected by the problem under study facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of their social reality. By directly involving those affected and those serving the affected, experiential knowledge is brought to the research process" (Balcazar, Keys, Kaplan, & Suarez-Balcazar, 1999, p.92; See also Harper & Carver, 1999; Selener, 1997). The TEGS research team assumed that by including teachers and others involved at the individual school level, our larger community of learners would be able to meaningfully connect with, and learn from, individual school experiences, thereby significantly improving our capacity to achieve socially relevant outcomes (Hemlin and Rasmussen 2006; de Jong et al. 2011). As Carew & Wickson (2010, p.1147) articulate, we wanted to integrate "potentially disparate knowledges with a view to creating useable knowledge. That is, knowledge that can be applied in a given problem context and has some prospect of producing desired change in that context." The Small Grants initiative became one important way to invite individual school communities into the discussion as valued participants in our research team.

Distributing Small Grants

Starting in TEGS' second year, the Small Grants initiative was created as a pilot effort to increase participation and action from teachers, students, administrators, and parents. Over four years of administering funding through the Small Grants initiative, TEGS provided $110,000 to 57 public schools within the Vancouver School Board (VSB). School-based teams developed concrete proposals, using our grant application form, in response to TEGS' call for the submission of proposals for funding. Each year, TEGS allocated a set amount to the Small Grants initiative, and this money was distributed amongst all applicant schools. We did not turn any school team down, so long as their application was complete and submitted within the application period. Resources were distributed amongst all applicant schools based on the established application criteria, with more funds going to projects that demonstrated higher potential for achieving significant action outcomes.

The amount that we were able to give schools increased over the years, as we received contributions from the Vancouver Retired Teachers' Association and the Vancouver School Board. We distributed grants from $200-$2,000 to individual school teams. To ensure the transparency of the process of allocating the project's resources, a process of application to the Small Grants initiative was created and a decision-making committee was formed, with representatives from the UBC team, the VSB, Vancouver Coastal Health, and the project's not-for-profit community partners (see Figure 1 for application criteria). The committee evaluated school-based projects and provided feedback to help support each school project in clearly defining and achieving its objectives. Flexible guidelines were provided by the leadership of the project, so teams could develop action plans tailored to specific school needs, while fitting within a framework of key goals identified by TEGS' core research team.

Figure 1: Small Grant Application Criteria

Application Criteria for 2011-2013 Small Grants Initiative

Criteria for becoming a *Think&EatGreen* School

Priority will be given to schools that can demonstrate (as many as possible of) the following criteria:

- Involve a working **team of 3 or more** members committed to strengthening the connections within the food system at their school. This team may include teachers, administration, support staff, food service staff, maintenance staff, students, parents, or other community members. **At least one team member must be a teacher, administrator or other school staff member.**
- Demonstrate a commitment to initiatives that **make connections between different aspects of the school food system** and provide **opportunities for student learning and activities** such as growing, preparing and sharing food and managing food waste.
- Involve **partnerships** with community-based organizations and/or other schools.

Application Criteria for 2014-2015 Small Grants Initiative

Criteria for becoming a *Think&EatGreen* School

Priority will be given to schools that can demonstrate (as many as possible of) the following criteria. *Where applications are of equivalent merit -- according to the listed criteria -- preference will be given to applications that include a partnership with another elementary or secondary school.*

- Partnerships between at least two schools with a joint application for Food System activities at both the schools.
- Partnerships between a community organization and the applicant school(s).
- Concrete action projects for improving aspects of the Food System at the school.
- Creation of lesson plans around Food Systems that can be shared with other schools and interested parties.
- Involve a working **team of 3 or more** members in *each* school who are committed to work collaboratively for healthy and sustainable food systems at their school. This team may include teachers, administration, support staff, food service staff, maintenance staff, students, parents, or other community members. **At least one team member must be a teacher, administrator or other school staff member.**

A Rich Source of Data

Individual applications submitted by school teams provided insight into the unique needs and interests of food systems projects in Vancouver schools. For example, each year, schools were asked to identify and explain what was in place in their school communities, with space for specific details about school gardens, school composting systems, school cooking programs, curriculum integration with whole food cycles, lunchrooms and connections to local farms, school lunch/meal programs, and any other relevant school activities that were applicable to TEGS' research objectives. In addition, schools were also asked to identify members of their school teams; describe a work plan that identified objectives, specific actions, timelines, and associated budgets; answer questions about how they would evaluate the success of their participation in the project; and describe ways in which their school would integrate academic curricula with whole food system experiences.

Beginning in the 2012/13 school year, schools that received Small Grants were also asked to complete a voluntary self-assessment survey shortly after receiving their grant. This tool was developed by the TEGS research team to monitor, alongside other monitoring tools (see also Black et al., 2015; Ahmadi et al., 2014), the evolution of school food systems and food education in the schools that received Small Grants. The self-assessments provided information about the goals, barriers, and activities that individual schools were experiencing in their work developing school food systems change, and were collected during an in-person meeting near the beginning of each school year.

Along with completing a self-assessment, each Small Grant recipient school in the middle two years of our project was also required to submit photos and text to create a unique poster report at the end of the school year. The poster reports were based on a template format created by the TEGS core team. We have digital versions of posters from all four years of the initiative, some of which are available for viewing at www.thinkeatgreen.ca. These posters helped the TEGS community of learners to determine if schools were able to carry out their objectives as set in the application, and what barriers they faced in trying to reach these objectives. Posters were displayed during a final end of year meeting of all Small Grant schools, and then given to each school for them to display in their school. This end of season meeting of all the TEGS Small Grant recipient teams became a useful forum for community building, sharing of experiences, and mutual support.

For the years 2012, 2013, and 2014, we also compiled many notes and reports on many of the Small Grant schools. Internal reports and observations were written and discussed by TEGS research assistants, who were working directly with school teams to support their project objectives. In the year 2013, polished reports were formatted as short stories in a journalistic style (700 words approx.) and given to each of the schools to support their project development.

Table 2: Data collected and resources distributed for the duration of the TEGS Small Grants (SG) initiative from 2011-2015.

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
# of Schools Involved	14	17	33	38
# of Applications	14	17	33	26[2]
Poster Reports	-	17	33	-[3]
Short Stories	-	-	33[4]	-
Self Assessments	-[5]	16	31	-
Funds Distributed	$20,000	$21,000	$35,000	$43,000

Trust, Engagement, and Celebration

Throughout, TEGS has sought to create relationships of mutual trust. A key goal of the Small Grants initiative was to incorporate a diverse range of stakeholders as valued investigators in our community of learners, helping to establish the research process as trustworthy, fair, and valuable in the eyes of those who stand to benefit from and/or use the research (Cash et al., 2002). As Belcher et al. (2016) explain, "legitimate transdisciplinary research 'considers appropriate values, concerns, and perspectives of different actors' (Cash et al., 2002) and incorporates these perspectives into the research process through collaboration and mutual learning." The Small Grants provided a mechanism to involve a diversity of stakeholders' perspectives in the TEGS team and provided a useful forum for exchange and sharing.

One of the most unique aspects of TEGS' Small Grants initiative has been its ability to give schools autonomy in deciding their own priorities, challenges, capacities, and needs when applying for funding, *while at the same time* providing overarching criteria that Small Grant school-based teams agree to abide by, which reflect the goals of TEGS (See Figure 1). The decision to give schools autonomy in deciding their own project goals and activities helped address potentially disabling power dynamics. In community/university research, inequitable distribution of power and control is a frequently mentioned challenge (Israel et al., 1998). TEGS' core research team was concerned about the distribution of power, especially at the start of the process, as we were still unsure how the concrete mechanism to work in true partnership with the school communities would evolve. Still we felt that "[w]hile challenges faced by communities may be initially recognized by academia, they can be addressed in a way that validates community partners as valid actors in producing knowledge and being part of the solution process" (Korzun et al., 2014, p.107). The Small Grants initiative was a key way to

[2] 2014-2015 was the first year that the Small Grants team put an emphasis on forming partnerships between schools. That is why there are more schools than grant applications for the 2014-2015 year.

[3] As the project ended before the end of the school year in 2015, graduate research assistants did not visit to collect data for reports.

[4] Short stories were only written for the 2013-2014 schools.

[5] Self-assessments started in 2012.

support and validate community partners in these processes.

To establish trust and mutual respect in a research community, everyone needs time to get to know the contexts and perspectives of the different stakeholders (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2004). Community Engaged Scholarship requires stakeholders to hold a positive attitude about the collaborative partnership (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992; Nyden et al., 1997). TEGS regularly convened recipients of Small Grants schools and the larger community-university research alliance in face-to-face meetings, in order to help facilitate strong, positive, and collaborative partnerships between hundreds of involved stakeholders. An example of such collaboration was seen in VanTech Secondary's 2011 poster, where they said that the momentum and energy of "the Small Grant from TEGS has facilitated VanTech teachers pursuing urban agriculture projects, resulting in a partnership where [Fresh Roots Urban Farm Society] is so excited and honored to be growing the first Schoolyard Market Garden in Canada with the VanTech school community."

Our team convened the recipients of Small Grants Schools twice each year as soon as grants were awarded (this is when self-assessments were completed), and again to celebrate all of the projects undertaken by school teams (when we presented school posters). For four years we also hosted an annual two to three day professional development Institute (Rojas et al., publication pending), which created further opportunities for communication and sharing. These gatherings helped develop relationships of trust, wherein common goals and shared visions were articulated. School stakeholders participated in an environment of open-mindedness, which acknowledged that there are many 'ways of knowing', and sought to create a shared feeling of reciprocity.

Regularly present at all of these meeting, we as authors were witness to a growing feeling of conviviality and trust. In the third and fourth year of the Small Grants project, we saw that those who came to gatherings shared stories, sought advice, traded contact information, and embraced in a spirit of community solidarity where hugs and warm greetings were ubiquitous. At our final Small Grants meeting in 2015, more than 40 people stayed beyond the meeting's official close at 6:00 pm, even though the vast majority had started the school day at around 8:00 am. At our final public event, the 2015 Think&EatGreen@School Institute, our community voluntarily lingered late on a Saturday afternoon, well after both our Principal Investigator and our Project Manager had delivered their final closing speeches. Instead of quietly dispersing, the group insisted on gathering in a large circle of over 50 people in a silent sharing of positive intention, as we each passed a squeeze from one held hand to the next. During this final event it was commonly agreed by the many school community members present that the TEGS Project had played a vital role in connecting and communicating a shared vision of healthy school food systems in Vancouver.

Looking at the Impact of Small Grants through Multiple Lenses

In this section we tell the story of the Small Grants initiative from three different perspectives: an elementary school, a community-based NGO partner, and a university-based researcher. Through these perspectives, we see in turn how the Small Grants initiative has supported trust and teamwork, self-sufficiency, an equal distribution of power, and the generation of rich data.

Queen Elizabeth: Trust and Teamwork

At Queen Elizabeth Elementary (QE), the Small Grants initiative played an important role in developing strong relationships between school staff, community organizers, and university-based researchers. The school's perspective shows how the Small Grants' process promoted reciprocal relationships based on trust and teamwork, a critical pre-requisite to conducting effective Community-Engaged Scholarship (Suarez-Balcarez et al, 2005). Among the more than 40 schools involved in the Think&EatGreen@School network, QE stands out as a telling example of the facilitative power of Small Grants, alongside the other TEGS initiatives, in supporting the Community-Engaged Scholarship approach. Over their five years of participation in our community of learners, QE's school food initiatives significantly evolved from the seed of an idea planted by one very motivated teacher to a flourishing food garden capable of becoming a transformative feature within the school's food culture.

A key first step in QE's journey towards a culture of integrated food cycle learning was the connection made between the school's food system champion, teacher Natasha Tousaw, and Catriona Gordon, the School Garden Coordinator for the local non-profit, and TEGS Community Partner, Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC). This connection formed early in the school's journey towards wholly integrated school food systems (just months before TEGS began). The relationship would become a cornerstone and key first step in building a collaborative culture around food that was based on teamwork and mutual trust. As Natasha explains, "I could not have done this without SPEC. I could've done a little bit, but without Catriona's connections to others and to other schools… it would have been really slow going." Natasha explains that at Queen Elizabeth, it wasn't teachers who first got on board as "key investors," but that it was instead "Catriona and [her] one key parent [who] have been really key in that." She then adds that "a team is important, critical. You can't do anything on your own." Yet the reality of non-profit funding loomed heavily over Natasha and Catriona's relationship:

> Every year we wondered if she was going to be able to come back or not. And that was one of the big fears with expanding the garden beyond myself and my colleague who was right next door to me…I knew that I would be capable of teaching the curriculum and integrating it into the curriculum, and my own teaching, but I wasn't sure if anyone else could. And luckily Catriona has been able to stay on [to support that].

These comments were made in 2012, when QE's garden was still in a stage of becoming. Over the following three years, the school utilized TEGS' Small Grants Initiative to maximize the impact of this relationship. Using TEGS' funds, they substantially upgraded their garden and food efforts to a point where all classes in the school were experimenting with deeper engagement in some aspect(s) of the school food cycle.

Through TEGS in general, and the Small Grants Initiative specifically, the school received both garden development funds and UBC student support, which enabled the teachers at QE to become meaningfully involved in the garden: "The grants have enabled us to expand our garden in such a way that we can, or we could, have every class planting something if they wanted to. To me that's huge because it's making this available to everybody. The possibility for everybody to be involved is there and it wouldn't have been without the involvement of TEGS." This support was a key physical offering that supported teachers in creating healthy school food change at QE.

Another equally important, if non-physical, aspect of TEGS' support for QE is expressed in Natasha's enthusiasm and appreciation. As a regular attendee of TEGS' Small Grant meetings and events, Natasha expressed a profound appreciation for the work and a visible affinity and respect for TEGS' research team. As she explains:

> I'm really appreciative of your guy's program, TEGS, because I really feel like it's going to take an outside influence like an academic institution outside of the school board to ignite the fire that needs to be ignited in order to afford change, because we are weary and we don't have a lot of clout, but other institutions do. And, what you guys are doing is really making a difference. More and more people are feeling like there is a beacon of hope.

By regularly convening highly engaged teachers in meetings and professional development training sessions, the TEGS' Small Grants initiative alongside other TEGS activities, has given over 100 Vancouver educators fuel to ignite or sustain this fire of change.

Environmental Youth Alliance: Promoting Self-Sufficiency

This section describes the impact that the Small Grants initiative has had on one of the key community non-profit organizations working in the TEGS community of learners. During the first year of the Small Grants initiative Matthew Kemshaw worked with the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) to redesign the EYA's Growing Kids program. As the Program Coordinator from 2009-2012, Matthew collaboratively developed programming that would support school communities in building and maintaining outdoor food gardens as wholly integrated outdoor classrooms. Over the course of the Think&EatGreen@School project, the EYA established relationships with 12 school communities, committing to working towards change in each community over a period of three years. As the Growing Kids coordinator, Matthew developed an internship program to train community members to co-facilitate a wide range of hands-on activities, which the EYA delivered regularly in its partner schools. In this time, the EYA also worked to convene school meetings and support educators in learning how to utilize school yard gardens as learning grounds.

The Think&EatGreen@School Small Grants initiative helped the EYA to both expand and deepen its relationships with teachers and administrative staff in several schools. Working collaboratively with school communities to complete applications to the Small Grants initiative, Matthew witnessed these communities become more involved in school food system change. School community members began to see their work as situated within a larger, whole school food system. Once Small Grants were received, schools enjoyed a stronger atmosphere of support, and key champions began to see a growth of interest and curiosity towards their work from colleagues. As Matthew's successor at the EYA, Alaina Thebault explains, the process of writing the grant, receiving it, attending a large gathering of all TEGS schools, completing the projects funded by the grant, and then reporting on what they had accomplished, empowered schools to "build on what we're doing [as EYA program staff] and make it their own." The buy-in that the Small Grants Initiative engendered was a crucial tool in several schools, which helped the EYA to "deepen our work and create professional capacity within specific schools" (Alaina Thebault, personal communication). Synergistically, this was *exactly* the goal of the Growing Kids program, which hoped to be able to fade out its involvement within schools after three years and leave healthy school food gardens to be utilized and maintained by the school community.

One of EYA's biggest challenges was finding ways to support schools in becoming totally self-sufficient in the management of their school gardens. The experiences of the EYA supporting schools in writing Small Grants demonstrates how useful the initiative was in stimulating teacher interest and generating school activity towards the creation of healthier food systems. By pairing outside community support with a process for acquiring small grants, teachers gained access to both the knowledge and the tools to learn how to sustainably run integrated school food programs. By supporting this beneficial pairing, the Small Grants Initiative established school gardening as something worth valuing and investing in. Through the process of writing, receiving and reporting on their accomplishments, Matthew and Alaina both witnessed EYA's partner schools becoming much more invested in the success of their school food gardens. This is echoed in our report on Trafalgar Elementary in the 2013/14 school year, whose team stated that after working with EarthBites (another community non-profit organization) to secure a Small Grant, "it started to be less like a 'field trip'… and began to be more embedded in the school culture."

University Researcher – Generating Rich Data

Elena Orrego is an anthropologist and co-founder of the Think&EatGreen@School project. She is a member of TEGS Coordinating Committee and the Project Manager of TEGS. Elena has extensive national and international experience in community-engagement activities and scholarship. She has contributed from the beginning of the project to the ongoing dialogue on how to increase and secure the TEGS commitment to community engagement.

The Small Grants initiative gave TEGS' university-based researchers a level of immersion into the Vancouver school community that they otherwise would not have had. Developing entry into a community

> [I]s not necessarily guaranteed by carrying the university name or holding an advanced degree. Developing entry into the community organization involves getting to know

> the community of interest by spending time learning about the organization's culture, history in the community, and vision for the future. (Harper et al., 2004 as cited in Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005, p.87).

Investing in school communities gave TEGS' research team critical access to the individual cultures, histories, and future visions of the school teams most impacted by the problems our research sought to address. This access, in turn, led to interactions within the community-university alliance that may not have happened otherwise. Key players within the school communities were identified, challenges and capacities were established that were unique to each school team, and opportunities for community-engaged scholarship and further research were realized, in large part because the Small Grant initiative facilitated frequent visits to Small Grant schools and bi-annual meetings of school teams.

Information collected throughout the length of the Small Grants initiative included a range of qualitative and quantitative data that built on the histories of individual school partners as they reapplied for funding each year. With rich data collected via applications, self-assessment, and project poster reports, the Small Grants served as a tool for identifying challenges, needs, capacities, and opportunities that were distinct to each school's community or endemic to the larger Vancouver school context. Emergent patterns in this data have proven key to TEGS researchers, allowing us to 1) identify ways that the project can better support schools by connecting them with others working on similar projects or issues; 2) design resources, workshops, and events that can address challenges prevalent amongst many of the school communities, and; 3) work within the VSB to address policies that can better support school needs and capacities. The history that has also been established through working with some of the school partners since 2011 has given the TEGS team opportunities for comparison and analysis of how each school's circumstances have changed over the course of the project. In this way, TEGS has been able to not only better understand its influence in transforming school food systems in Vancouver, but also make decisions that better support the champions within the school system who are working so hard to create school food system change.

Conclusion

Although the Small Grants initiative was not initially included in the original TEGS research grant application submitted to SSHRCC, which only stated the intention of developing "Community Impacts Projects" to be elaborated with the school communities, it emerged as a key tool for conducting community-engaged scholarship and became an integral part of the overall TEGS Project. The Small Grants initiative demonstrated that TEGS explicitly valued the role of school community voices within the Project, contributed alongside other TEGS initiatives to create opportunities for resource and knowledge sharing, generated rich information and valuable data, supported and contributed to form critical networks of support and resource sharing, and sought to articulate the interests of a broad diversity of stakeholders. The willingness of TEGS to share resources through a small granting program also contributed to a leveling of the traditional power-dynamics often problematic in community-university research relationships. The multiplicity of connections and relationships created by the Small Grant Initiative situated university-based researchers in their environment of study, providing a deeper understanding of the individual contexts of each of the school communities, as well as the broader landscape that is the Vancouver school food system.

Through the sharing of funds our Small Grant initiative created multiple outcomes and useful indicators to measure the overall project's success. We feel that the care and time taken to build and foster relationships within our community-university alliance must not be overlooked in this accounting, nor should the challenges faced in the process be ignored. Regular gatherings and genuine social interactions were important for creating an environment of trust, mutual respect, and reciprocity; these convivial gatherings generated much knowledge and are in themselves useful indicators of our project's success. University researchers, university students, community-based non-profit organizations, and individual school teams all shared their unique experiences and knowledge. Supporting the connections between different stakeholders, legitimizing their experiences, and recognizing their efforts were all keys that unlocked many of the advances made by the TEGS Project. Building these relationships takes time and intention. Facilitating large group meetings and hosting multiple events every year was a significant undertaking. One key challenge in this process was finding the time and resources to properly support and encourage our community of learners. The TEGS research project invested heavily in this undertaking.

The investments made in supporting school actors and advancing action projects meant less resources and time were spent analyzing and communicating key academic learnings that emerged from all of our collected data. Many of the advances made by the TEGS project are not well documented in academic literature. A significant amount of the communication of our work and learnings has been done orally in dialogue with our large community of learners, as we read and engage with their work and learnings. Some of the work of analyzing all of our collected data and communicating the knowledge generated by it remains for future students and scholars interested in our questions and approach.

Although we are confident that some initial funding is a key component in supporting increased collaboration towards truly healthy school food systems, there is a possibility that the Small Grants initiative may have created some degree of dependency on small amounts of funding that originated from sources other than the schools themselves, or the VSB. While this may be the case, we also believe that funding from the Small Grants initiative has assisted in the creation of a strong community of teachers, community partners, parents, students, and university partners. Such connection within the school food network helps ensure that schools are resilient and able to find the future resources that will be needed to continue growing, eating, and composting food at the school level, and to give students the tools necessary to become literate in such critical skills.

There is also the question of equal distribution versus affirmative action, and whether the TEGS project should have supported fewer schools with larger funding amounts as opposed to a greater number of schools with smaller funding amounts. This is especially relevant in that significant challenges were often faced at an institutional level by the small grant teams and the Small Grants initiative. Obstacles related to the use of school space, and the increase of work that having gardens or compost systems implied for teachers and grounds staff, were often challenges for small grant teams wanting to implement sustainable food system projects. There could be some merit in providing fewer schools with larger amounts of funding and more organizational support in the hope that they become leading examples to the rest of the school community, effecting change at an institutional level so that effective policies and support networks are already in place when challenges arise. The process of allocating funding was very much run by the university researchers; we never developed an advisory committee made up of small grants holders to advise on how the program should run, and so never gathered more input from schools about the way the initiative was implemented. This would have been another way of sharing power and learning how best to support our community of learners.

Schools are agents of cultural and social change. The relationships and projects supported by the Small Grants Initiative will require continued support and encouragement if they are to flourish. By inviting school actors into our community-university alliance, school communities have become active agents in this research, rather than passive subjects. School efforts have been legitimized and rewarded. When teachers, students, and their larger communities become active citizens rather than remain passive, we find ourselves one step closer to the goal of school food system transformation. The Small Grants Initiative has helped make progress towards our goal of "learn[ing] to see food as the grand connector of all aspects of human life, including the relationships between humans and nature" (Rojas et al., 2011, p.3). Yet our progress is very much incomplete, and much work remains to be done. Our project has reached the end of its funding cycle and while important progress was made to embed the activities and goals of TEGS within the institutions involved, we are worried that without support, some of the projects we have supported will fail. We hope that support for individual school food action initiatives will continue to grow and evolve in the VSB for many years to come.

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Engaged Scholarship in Action: The Journey of the School Board – University Research Exchange (SURE) Network

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Abstract In this paper we use a chronological case-study narrative format to detail the creation and progression of a School Board-University Research Exchange (SURE) network in Ontario, Canada. This network is led by a group of university- and school board-based professionals, who are committed to deepening connections between educational research, practice, and policy. Our narrative presents the SURE network's evolution using the metaphors of being "in the woods," looking for "our compass," and finding "new pathways" of engaged scholarship. We present the challenges and successes we experienced while crossing the borders of our individual and institutional cultural settings, emphasising the importance of continuing discussions and collaborations within and amongst our communities.

KeyWords school board-university partnership; community engagement; education; sustainability; research collaboration

Historically, academics and practitioners have been viewed as inhabiting in two distinct worlds (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014; Garman, 2011; Shapiro, Kirkman, & Courtney, 2007). While some scholars discuss new possibilities for bridging the gap between academics and practitioners (Vermeulen, 2005), others claim that the gap is increasing (Tsui, 2013). Uncovering tensions associated with the academic-practitioner gap can inform theory and "stimulate new types of scholarly inquiries" (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014, p. 2), especially those inquiries related to scholar-practitioner partnerships. Our literature review demonstrates that similar gaps exist in different sectors, including business management, nursing, and education.

In education, on one hand, school teachers might perceive university research as irrelevant for classroom practice and/or that university researchers often focus on their personal research interest, rather than on school board needs and priorities (Garman, 2011; Martinovic, Wiebe, Ratkovic, Willard-Holt, Spencer, & Cantalini-Williams, 2012). On the other hand, university researchers might feel that there is little to gain from including practitioners' priorities and perspectives in their programs of research (Garman, 2011). In attempts to foster mutual understanding and collaboration, in the last two decades, there has been a strong focus on developing partnerships between universities and schools (Ancess, Barnett, & Allen, 2007; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Lang, 2001; Ramsey, 2000; Ross, Rolheiser, & Hogaboam-Gray, 1999;

Yardley & Lock, 2004).

In part, to foster collaboration and effective use of data amongst school board partners, as part of its Research and Evaluation Strategy (Campbell & Fulford, 2009), the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) established seven regional planning bodies, which they named Managing Information for Student Achievement Professional Network Centres (MISA PNCs). These Centres function as "professional learning communities and assist in building capacity in boards and schools to work with data in support of evidence-informed decision-making and undertake a broad range of local research in this area" (OME, 2011). The London region MISA PNC is comprised of 16 district school boards and contains, within its boundaries, five faculties of education. The Research Subcommittee of this PNC approached deans of these faculties to determine their interest in establishing a network for promoting collaborative research initiatives with school boards. The purpose of such a network was to develop long-lasting partnerships, create a regional research agenda, facilitate school-based research projects, and design ways for improving dissemination and use of research findings across school boards and universities. The initial meeting of representatives from most school boards and the deans/associate deans from the five universities was held in August 2008 and resulted in establishing the Research Exchange Steering Team. This team recognized that research and knowledge creation occur in both university and school settings and that reciprocity is the key to mutual benefit (Lefever-Davis, Johnson, & Pearman, 2007). In attempts to foster this reciprocity, the team created the School Board–University Research Exchange (SURE) Steering Committee of about 15 members from representative school boards and universities.

Initially, the mission of SURE was "to develop and sustain an active collaborative relationship among universities and school districts in the OME London Region in order to inspire a culture of inquiry, advance skills, and promote knowledge exchange related to education research" (SURE Mission Statement, 2009). Since then, SURE developed a viable governance structure and committed to knowledge mobilization related to education research (Martinovic, Ratkovic, Wiebe, Willard-Holt, Spencer, & Cantalini-Williams, 2012). This commitment to knowledge mobilization (KMb) is in congruence with Boyer's (1996) scholarship of engagement and his statement that the academy must engage with the community. Boyer explains: "The academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and must affirm its historic commitment to what I call the scholarship of engagement" (p. 18).

In June 2015, the current SURE Steering Committee decided to examine the SURE journey in order to develop a school board-university engagement model and the six co-authors of this paper volunteered to undertake this research. The authors are employed by two school boards and four faculties of education. Our Research Ethics Boards provided clearance to engage in the research during which we analyzed documents and materials collected over a seven year history of SURE's existence. In this paper, we explore the challenges and successes SURE experienced in the process of developing and sustaining community-engaged collaborative work in Southwestern Ontario. As engaged education scholars and practitioners, we address the imbalance in power relations in our work, and examine the genesis and evolution of the SURE network.

We illustrate the challenges and affordances of network-initiated innovation and address the following research questions: *What was the rationale for establishing the SURE network? How has SURE transitioned and evolved into a community-engaged network? What has sustained the existence of the network? What have been innovative features of SURE? What has been the impact of SURE on education practice, research, and policy?*

Prior to this research, we had not interrogated in depth our group dynamics and feel that our findings have deepened our understanding of school board-university partnerships and community engagements, and will be useful for others who are embarking on a similar path. We suggest a number of implications for school board-university research networks that build on "tensions, dialectics, and paradox" (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014, p. 2) when enacting "a community-engaged collaborative work … in cross-cultural settings" (Khanenko-Friesen, 2015, p. 8). Our paper concludes with a brief reflection about the tensions we experienced during our journey and an acknowledgment of the contribution these tensions might make to theoretical and practical applications of school board-university research collaboration, as well as to education research, policy, and praxis. Within this paper we scrutinize and celebrate our SURE partnership, our engaged scholarship, and our contribution to the broad field of education.

Treasure Hunt

This essay uses a chronological case-study narrative format (Flyvbjerg, 2006) to describe the SURE network genesis and evolution. Such a dense case study format is more useful for practitioners and more intriguing for academics than summaries of findings or generalizations of theory (Peattie, 2001). We work with the assumption that context-dependent knowledge and experience are crucial in gaining new insights and developing expertise. Moreover, we concur with Flyvbjerg (2006) who claims that context-dependent knowledge and expertise "lie at the center of the case study as a research and teaching method" (p. 5). Following Flyvbjerg, we keep our case study open and tell our story in its diversity, complexity, and authenticity. We hope that such an approach will enable readers from different backgrounds to draw diverse conclusions while interpreting our journey.

Our case study has utilized a mixed methods research approach, one of which is qualitative content analysis (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002) of multiple data sources collected between August 2008 and June 2015. These sources include minutes of the SURE Steering Committee meetings, research proposals, conference presentations, reports, posters, research briefs, and participants' feedback related to SURE KMb and engaged scholarship events. Appropriate when existing theory or literature on a phenomenon is limited, this type of content analysis served as a "method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). We avoided using preconceived categories (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002) to describe the phenomenon of our school board-university collaboration and, instead, identified the categories as they emerged from the data. The analysis of multiple data sources and collaborative writing of this essay triggered the research team members' memories and feelings, some of which were then recorded and included in our narrative.

A quantitative research approach utilized a Self-Assessment survey based on Woodland and Hutton's (2012) *Collaboration Evaluation and Improvement Framework (CEIF)*, appropriate for group self-assessment and triangulation with analyses of SURE meeting agendas and minutes. In February 2012, the Steering Committee invited all 23 of its past and present members to complete this anonymous, online survey, and nine of them responded. One item on the survey asked about the respondent's primary affiliation (i.e., university or district school board), while 22 items were adapted from the Team Collaboration Assessment Rubric (TCAR from CEIF), which on levels 0-2 evaluated different aspects of collaboration, such as dialogue, decision-making, action, and evaluation (see Appendix). The additional 16 open-ended items asked for more evaluative comments and suggestions, which addressed the level and the complexity of collaboration. These questions provided useful insights and enabled us to situate the experiences of SURE along two models of collaboration. First, the survey data were assessed through the four *Stages of Collaboration Development Model* (Gajda, 2004; Bailey & Koney, 2000; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). The model includes *Assemble and Form*, *Storm and Order*, *Norm and Perform*, and *Transform and Adjourn* stages. At the *Assemble and Form* stage, partners are finding the value of coming together and discussing an initial vision and mission of the joint venture. At the *Storm and Order* stage, partners are establishing their individual roles and norms, while determining strategies, objectives, and outcomes. At the *Norm and Perform* stage, they act upon their goals and create the continuous feedback loop. At the *Transform and Adjourn* stage, re-assessment and possible modifications take place. Second, we used Bailey and Koney's (2000) 4-level *Continuum of Integration Scale* for strengthening strategic alliances, where a common goal can be achieved through cooperation (i.e., independent groups share information to support each other's work), coordination (i.e., independent groups start aligning their activities), collaboration (i.e., individual groups give up some degree of independence); and coadunation (i.e., at least one partner gives up its autonomy). Quantitative analyses using these models of inter-organizational collaboration, together with our qualitative content data analyses allowed for a deep and comprehensive self-evaluation and analyses of our work.

Our Journey

In 2008, school board researchers in the London Region MISA PNC identified two main barriers to evidence-based educational practices. One barrier was that university research did not necessarily focus on school board research priorities nor did it seamlessly translate to classroom use. Another problem identified was the seeming "burden" to school boards of requests to conduct research in schools along with the perception that boards provided a convenient pool of research subjects (Short, 2009). There was a desire by school boards to be more involved in shaping the research agenda of university researchers and to find a common ground for knowledge exchange. As a result, the school board research subcommittee of the London regional MISA PNC proposed a school board-university partnership to the Deans of Education in the London region. The main aims of this initiative were to deepen relationships amongst five faculties of education and 16 school boards in this geographic area, enrich understanding and communication between these two communities, and enhance opportunities for collaboration and the creation of relevant and coordinated programs of research (Short, 2009).

First Steps

The impetus for SURE (originally known as the Research Exchange) was the outcome of a MISA PNC action research grant that four school board researchers of the London Region applied and received funding for in 2008. Their study was driven by the following research question: "What is the feasibility of establishing a Research Exchange with school district and university partners in the London Region?" The university deans and associate deans participating in this study found this initiative feasible and unanimously volunteered to be part of the London Region Research Exchange Steering Committee. This steering committee became the first step of SURE's journey. According to the mutual agreement, participation in the SURE community was voluntary and funded by MISA PNC from the outset, so none of the participating organizations were expected to contribute funds to SURE. All 16 district school boards (DSBs) and five faculties of education in the London region were invited to send their representatives to the Steering Committee, who met in London (ON) on March 10, 2009. In hindsight, the university members and representatives from the larger school boards attended the meetings regularly, while for the small school boards it was a challenge to do so because of the lack of research personnel. The MISA PNC representative also attended the SURE meetings and reported on the SURE activities during the regional MISA PNC meetings. Initially, deans of faculties of education were invited to join SURE, but most appointed associate deans, research leadership chairs, faculty members, and/or research officers as their representatives on the Committee. The membership of the DSBs included individuals responsible for overseeing research in each board with some of the individuals changing over time, which may have complicated the relationship building processes and the Steering Committee's work. The meetings of the Steering Committee were at first "designed to inspire open-ended thinking" (SURE, Minutes, March 10, 2009). They were not agenda-driven, although the intent was to generate group dialogue around mission and vision statements, and long-and short-term goals.

As recorded in the minutes of one of the first steering committee meetings (MISA Feasibility Pilot - Planning Next Steps, March 10, 2009), we noted that collaboration was about developing deep relationships, not simply a functional exchange of information on a website. We also recognized that there was impetus for collaboration from funders, and this may be particularly important in these economic times. The moment was right, as the school boards were beginning to meet with local universities to talk about common interests. We were aware that new faculty and graduate students were looking for sites to conduct their research and perceived that it would be feasible that they build a program of research around school board priorities. We also engaged in dialogue about questions with respect to research ethics review processes. As a result, we proposed sharing the application forms and data sharing protocols to streamline the review process across our member institutions. Finally, university partners clearly stated that conducting research in boards was a privilege, not a right, for university researchers.

At the core of establishing the SURE network was the need for a common understanding and common language among our members, and the Steering Committee was assigned with the task of bridging our "worlds." As outlined in our meeting minutes, we present some of the ideas shared during our initial meetings: universities could create a form for school boards to complete if they are looking for a potential collaborator on a given research topic; the OME officials in the London Region should be invited to join the Steering Committee; and we should engage educators in research partnerships through face-to-face events and a web-based presence (e.g., wiki). While some of these considerations took years to materialize (e.g., having a repository of research ethics forms of our member organizations on the SURE website) and some never came about (e.g., having the London Region OME officials as members of the Steering Committee), many innovative ideas and activities emerged from these initial beginnings. These ideas included creating an online database to match researchers and practitioners; developing a governance structure that defines what we do, such as working subcommittees; and meeting regularly (Moving Forward: New SURE Executive and Constitution, June 2013). The committee also obtained grants from various organizations to fund research and disseminate information, in addition to receiving annual funding of $10,000 from the London MISA PNC to cover meeting and travel expenses, web design, and research-to-practice events. These grants and the events/conferences that SURE organized are detailed next within the "in the woods" and "our compass" sections of our paper, which document our processes of exploration and discovery.

In the Woods

SURE began with ad hoc, informal meetings and transitioned to a structured entity with a governance model and roles (see http://www.surenetwork.ca/about-us/) as it negotiated and created its role in education research, practice, and policy. In 2008, understandings of our two worlds deepened in terms of differing goals, logics, time dimensions, communication practices, rigour and relevance, interests and incentives. One factor that assisted us in the development of common understandings is that some of our members had worked in both the school board and university contexts. For example, at least two university faculty members had previously worked as school board consultants.

In our work plan for the 2008/09 school year, it was suggested that we (a) establish an electronic web platform for communication and sharing throughout the region, (b) annually conduct four Steering Committee meetings, (c) employ a graduate student project coordinator, (d) organize an Education Research Speaker Series where faculty members and school board representatives would exchange visits to discuss applied education research, (e) organize local Board and Faculty Research Roundtables, (f) establish a London Region Spring Research Conference, and (g) monitor our collaboration, while (h) securing additional funding for our activities. Over the years, most of these tasks were accomplished and some were modified to capitalize on other opportunities that arose. Starting from brainstorming potential needs, we transitioned from conducting research into teachers' perceptions of their research acumen and needs, to organizing research-to-practice festivals and developing a research-to-practice video series focussed on topics related to teachers-as-researchers.

The tensions and successes we experienced while finding our way "out of the woods" are reflected in the following retrospective narrative written by a DSB representative after reviewing our data and reflecting upon our journey, while co-authoring this paper. Concerns related to our differing worlds and the workload imbalance among the committee members were expressed:

Since the inception of the SURE Steering Committee, we have grappled with our differing timelines and logistics. We have recognized that DSB research timelines often do not fit university research grant or project deadlines. Additionally, time investment in SURE projects has differed among the committee members. For example, although everybody on the committee was invited, involvement of DSB representatives in writing a research report and a research paper was limited. Moreover, some MISA leaders faded away from the committee or dropped out of some individual SURE projects. Why? Maybe they did not have time or an incentive to engage with the SURE or its activities,

This problem was noted in our meeting minutes, where "[a DSB representative] stated challenge for people to value participation in SURE" and "[a university representative] commented on the turnover of staff; that this makes acculturation difficult" (SURE Steering Committee meeting minutes, September 19, 2014). Transitioned roles and portfolios of our members particularly complicated our DSB members' involvement in SURE activities.

In terms of logistics, some DSB representatives feared that other committee members might assert ownership over data and publications/presentations that were not necessarily vetted by the entire SURE committee. Most specifically, external funding provided through grants acquired by faculty members at universities (e.g., SSHRC Public Outreach Grant), created a tension around the influence of the MISA PNC or universities on the Committee agenda, project activities, and outcomes. Over time, we also needed to negotiate data ownership. For example, while writing a research paper about educators' use of research in the London region (Authors, 2012), we asked ourselves: "Who owns it? Is the paper a publication of the members of the writing team or a SURE publication?" These questions came up frequently at our meetings. While we wanted to work as a collective, we continued to wonder…

> How does it work? How do you make it happen? How can we work and publish as a collective and establish a group/shared identity, rather than work collectively as two distinct groups that participate in projects from their respective areas of interest, priorities, and pressures? Who benefits from publishing an academic paper? Are the university researchers the only beneficiaries of SURE activities?

A university representative on SURE reflected on these tensions in the following manner: "We are volunteering our time and expertise to support teachers and students, stepping outside our field to further school board priorities. However, we do recognize potential of such partnership that surpasses any individual's personal goals."

On the other hand, to secure regular MISA PNC funding, we were encouraged (if not pressured) to produce tangible and multiple KMb outcomes. We feel that our work strategies and relationships evolved organically through continuing conversation, collaboration, and commitment, and in hindsight realise that it would have been helpful to discuss our trajectories and practices more frequently and in more detail, despite the pressure to produce "tangible" outcomes. Not recognising these tensions and collectively deciding whether or not it was mutually beneficial to work this way, might have left some committee members feeling guilty while others might have felt overworked. How do we reconcile this incongruence? Can we reconcile it if we talk about our differing pressures and priorities and the role SURE plays in our professional lives? Over time, we have noticed that when we operate as a collective with a single SURE identity, we present ourselves as equal members. This was evident during our conferences/events and our presentations at other conferences. The reality beneath the surface is, however, that we are just assuming this equal membership. We contribute in different ways. How can we quantify and acknowledge the various contributions? Analyzing our data and writing this paper provided us with the opportunity to re-think our differences as well as collective accomplishments; it helped us recognize our collective identity and not only celebrate our common goals and achievements, but also acknowledge our disagreements and silences.

In retrospect, some of our long-term DSB members believe that SURE was about ideas, about sharing information freely and collaborating with Deans in attempts to change the research culture in the faculties of education. In the view of these DSB members, Deans of Education were expected to encourage university researchers to develop programs of research that would be more relevant to the DSBs' needs and priorities. Did the mission of this group change from the inception? In a written narrative about their experiences in SURE, a DSB representative noted:

> We were not originally intending to be a working engine. Was it naive to think that we would be a think tank? Project reporting became our meeting agenda, rather than bouncing of ideas. Our initial purpose/mission was about aligning teachings of the education students and research priorities; making the faculties of education aware about the realities in the classroom. The faculties struggled with the boards' research review processes and barriers to conducting research. It is safe to assume that boards would be motivated to take down some barriers if the faculties' research is aligned with boards' priorities; the boards would be more inclined to facilitate the process. Past experiences of the boards are that researchers would get data and run away with them. The boards wanted to change it. They could learn and benefit from research conducted in their schools. Deans were expected to influence the change in the research culture of the faculties of education—to benefit the community/schools; to bring about what the boards envisioned—community-based research in the faculties of education.

Some of our university representatives reiteratively wondered: How critical is it to have deans and superintendents of education on the SURE Steering Committee? How would they shape (or transform) SURE network's mission, vision, and role within educational theory, practice, and policy?

Over time, we have evolved into a group of leaders-in-the-middle and our goals have changed. Our challenge became to figure out how we can accomplish what we set out to accomplish within our current group reality. That is a conversation we have not pursued persistently until engaging with this research. Maybe we can affect change incrementally by fostering university and school board partnerships and reaching out to our organizational leaders. Maybe our original vision needs to change. Maybe we need to focus on developing and modelling school board and university collaborative work, exploring where we can go with it, who we can reach, and what outcomes we can achieve—documenting the journey, struggles, and victories as a model for other community engaged partnerships. Ultimately, we needed to carve out time to have these reflective conversations, embrace the growing pains and tensions, and discuss what we are learning from it. This collective writing process has reconfirmed that relationships have remained a key factor for us.

Our Compass

As we embarked on our journey, we encountered multiple road blocks, but we were also able to leave a new trail in the field of education research and engaged scholarship. Over time, we used different opportunities to assess our collaboration and educational community engagement, and develop new directions. Some of these opportunities that we used for deepening our understanding of group dynamics and performance included a self-assessment survey of committee members, participants' feedback following SURE events, and development of our governance structure.

Self-assessment Survey

In the fall of 2011, we were invited to submit a presentation proposal for a 2012 Ontario Education Research Symposium (OERS). The symposium was focused on the theme of research impact. That prompted us to reflect on our journey, and assess the degree and nature of our collaboration. The results of the SURE self-assessment survey (40% response rate, 6 university and 3 DSB respondents) revealed tensions, complexities, and paradoxes, some of which relate to ownership of data, authorship over the KMb products, engagement levels, and the SURE as an idea-generator vs. producer-of-research (see Appendix).

In each of the categories considered by the Team Collaboration Assessment Rubric (Woodland & Hutton, 2012), we identified both our strengths and areas for improvement. For example, in the area of Action, we identified strengths related to coordination, work ethics, and collaboration. According to one survey participant, a strong work ethic was very important in motivating other members to complete assigned tasks: "Work ethic of some members is inspirational." When describing our collaboration processes (i.e., our professional and personal engagement with each other), another participant used the words: "Amazing! Inspiring! Promising!"

At the same time, varied involvement and/or contribution of committee members was listed as a primary concern by seven out of nine respondents. One of them explained:

> I think that distribution of action-taking is unbalanced, but I cannot say it is unfair; I don't know why some members are more active than others. Do we need to learn more about each other priorities and constrains, about new ways of supporting each other and breaking barriers to action and productivity? (Self-Assessment Survey participant)

While articulating this concern, the participants also made the further suggestions such as "Make use of collaborative tools (Skype, Google Docs, and Doodle) for action-planning."

Our participants reported the following strengths of our collaboration: (a) building upon and recognizing the skills and expertise of individual members; (b) informing the partners in a realistic manner of our unique needs; (c) working well together; (d) making impact within member boards, faculties of education, and across the province; (e) developing relationships and building trust; and (f) bringing together so many different organizations in a unique partnership. We identified funding from the MISA PNC, dual SURE-MISA PNC roles, team work, supportive administration, keen interest in applied education research, and familiarity with people already on SURE as enabling factors for our successful collaboration. At the same time, we encountered multiple challenges associated with issues of power and unequal contribution; different needs, interests, and incentives among the partners; geographical distance of our member institutions; conflicting schedules; heavy personal workloads; and lack of guiding principles.

Based on this Self-Assessment survey, SURE was at the *Norm and Perform* stage of the Stages of Collaboration Development Scale (Gajda, 2004; Bailey & Koney, 2000; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) and at the *Collaboration* stage on the Continuum of Integration Scale for Strengthening Strategic Alliances (Gajda, 2004; Bailey & Koney, 2000). After considering these different models of collaboration and integration, we concluded that our development was emergent and that the journey metaphor best reflected our key structures and processes. It became evident to us that we had shifted our focus from our differences to our commonalities, and created a new scholarship of engagement model (see Figure 1). Our team self-evaluation revealed some weaknesses, such as lack of focus on the SURE practice and performance in a dialogue. This resulted in the use of a standardized format for creating and documenting meeting agendas and minutes. In terms of decision-making, we decided that being flexible and open for (and supportive of) different levels of contribution should be our stance.

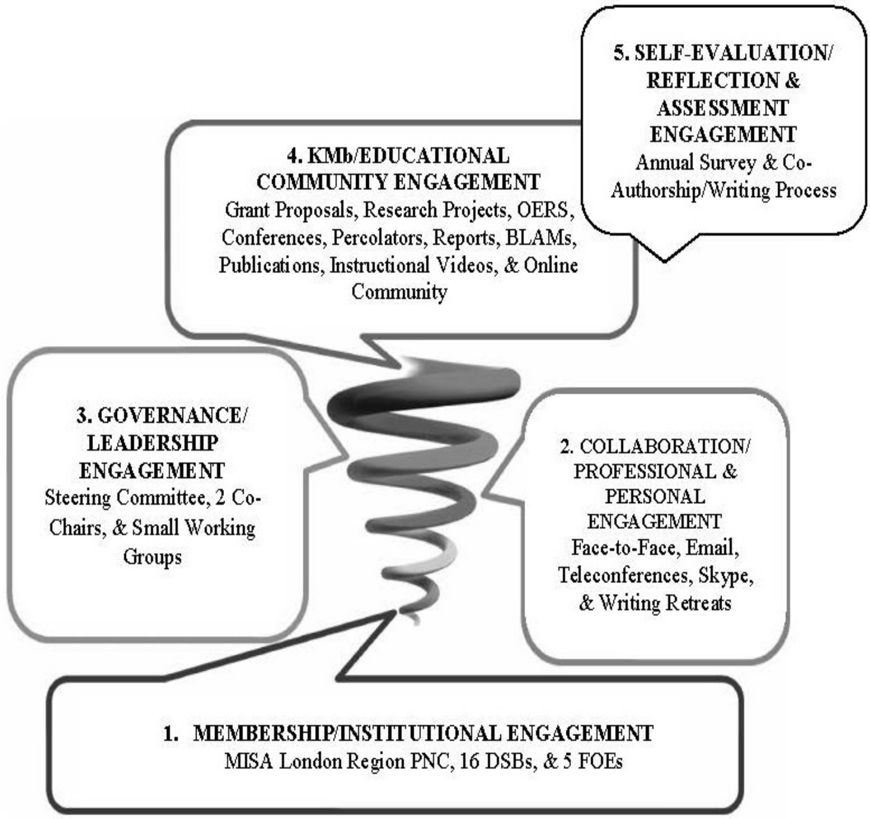

Figure 1: SURE scholarship of engagement model.

Encouraged by the successes of our projects, we have continued growing the SURE network to its full potential. Our members reported being identified by our institutions as SURE representatives, having a vested interest in "finding ways to make research and its use valuable and easy for teachers to use" (SURE member, Self-Assessment Survey, 2012), working as a team, knowing people on SURE, being willing to experiment and collaborate, and sharing a common mission, vision, and values, as main pillars of our collaboration.

Although we had developed a mission and a vision from the very beginning of our evolution, some committee members thought that we needed value statements, such as "what matters at the end of the day are kids in schools" (University representative, personal communication, 2009). It was also suggested that we must collectively recognise that SURE is not a vehicle for furthering faculty members' careers, but a means of improving educational practice. Responding to this suggestion, some university representatives noted that serving on the SURE committee did not advance their careers. At the same time, some committee members did not feel that SURE's dual identity was problematic; they felt fully integrated and contributing members of the SURE community.

Another complexity identified by the steering committee was that even the voices of school board researchers at the table often differed. How much say did they have? Some board researchers felt that their "influence within the SURE Committee is sometimes extremely limited" (DSB representative, personal communication), especially in terms of generating ideas and contributing to SURE initiatives (e.g., writing grant applications, research reports, and journal papers). Integral for sustaining SURE was the development of trust and mutual respect, while actively collaborating on joint projects served to strengthen the bond and working relationships. We have sustained SURE through a flexible and fair approach to meetings and writing sessions, although workload- and contribution-related discrepancies and tensions persisted. SURE committee chairs and projects/small working groups' leaders have encouraged members to contribute in any way possible through Skype, Google docs, or conference calls (as noted in the minutes). As a committee, we have also been careful to schedule meetings in centrally located venues to minimize travel time and expenses. Hosting our meetings in our own institutions—including universities and district school boards—has also eliminated rental costs. Over time, we initiated the practice of joint co-chairs, with one representing each sector—universities and school board membership. The coincidence that our first co-chairs were from one geographic location may have facilitated face-to-face planning meetings. We also invited graduate students to many events such as research festivals and 'percolator' events, thus contributing to scholarship of engagement in and for education.

While our common ground was dedication to scholarship of engagement and bridging the research-to-practice gap, we grew to understand that school boards and universities as institutions valued some outcomes differently. For instance, after several committee members obtained an external grant, with the application supported by letters from all five universities, several school boards, and the SURE committee, tensions arose. Some SURE members wondered who is driving a committee's agenda and challenged us to reconsider our mission and vision. We started asking the following questions: Are we knowledge brokers or researchers? Should we facilitate school board—university collaborative projects or conduct research ourselves? Which contribution would be most valuable for the field? We noted:

> The need to define our relationships is a pressing issue because it has become complex and there is confusion over what/who is funded from which grant, who owns intellectual property, who controls an externally funded project, and the role of the whole group vs. working group. (Meeting minutes, April 20, 2012)

It became apparent that having tangible outcomes was a key for engaging the education community, influencing the field, and sustaining our network. Our first tangible outcomes were a research report to the Ministry of Education and an academic paper. We were advised by our DSB colleagues that the research findings needed to be packaged in a more accessible form if they were to be used by practitioners. We subsequently began creating infographics, videos, and organizing KMb events, which enriched our scholarship of engagement, as detailed in the feedback participants provided following SURE events.

Participants' Feedback following SURE Event

In 2013-15, we organized five KMb events in the London region. Over 300 people attended these events (including teachers, university researchers, graduate students, ministry representatives, school boards personnel, etc.). Overall, the feedback was positive. Most of participants' post-event evaluation survey comments addressed enhanced opportunities for collaboration, connections, and networking. Representative sample comments included:

> It was a great event and I am happy that I attended. I find sessions like these very beneficial towards building capacity and breaking down silos to help us learn more of what others are doing, to learn from each other, and to share our experiences towards greater capacity building.
> I learned a lot about collaborative research initiatives within my region.
> (Participant Surveys, Research to Practice Symposium: Building Partnerships in Education, Nipissing University, Brantford, March 1, 2013)
>
> Allowing for good dialogue regarding research in various contexts. (Participant Survey, Research to Practice Symposium: Ignite Festival, Western University, November 23, 2013)
>
> Something useful I learned today that I will apply in my daily work [is the] value of collaboration in math and focusing on persistence and stamina as a valued goal.
>
> I went into the conference with my own lens as a current classroom teacher and then realized I needed to change that perspective to a leadership one as there were many board leaders in the room such as principals and coordinators. Having said this, I did not gain as much to improve my teaching practice with regards to new lesson planning ideas as I did for understanding a system perspective for how math can look system wide and how initiatives are planned based on data. Once I viewed the conference from a leadership lens I enjoyed it more and took in learning from that perspective. It was definitely worthwhile to be able to attend such a conference and I am grateful for the opportunity!
> (Participant Surveys, A Math and Technology Research Percolator: Looking at Collaborative Inquiry, Western University, April 30, 2015).

When asked to identify areas for improvement, "spreading the word" amongst more educators, and the inclusion of opportunities for sharing resources and hands-on activities, were often reported by participants:

> I was disappointed that there were not more participants. You and your committee planned well for this day and I am not sure why people are not coming out to join. Maybe this is something that you can deconstruct and explore other avenues to reach out to people and get them involved and participating. This is an important initiative but the word is not spreading. (Participant Survey, Research to Practice Symposium:

> Ignite Festival, Western University, November 23, 2013)
>
> Provide more and better opportunities for sharing resources and include more hands-on activities in the presentations. (Participant Survey, A Math and Technology Research Percolator: Looking at Collaborative Inquiry, Western University, April 30, 2015)

Governance Model

Our collective response to some of the dilemmas outlined in this paper was to develop a governance model featuring co-chairs from a university and a school board (see http://www.surenetwork.ca/about-us/). This model has helped us negotiate rights and responsibilities, as well as sustain our partnership over time. It added a structure that has shaped our group purpose and direction. It grounded us. As detailed in the minutes of our October 18, 2013 meeting, when we first talked about implementing a governance model, there was fear that something would be lost. Both university and school board members feared that a governance model would bring Robert's Rules to our setting and decrease the informal, unstructured, and warm discussions we were having and possibly stifle new, unanticipated areas of conversation. We were careful in articulating the governance model in a way that helped us with structure, leadership, and direction but did not take away from the camaraderie we had developed. We purposefully rejected Robert's Rules for consensus-building and used our agendas as a means of making sure that we allotted time for all of our items and initiatives. Importantly, we also managed to provide time for conversational tangents that deviated from the agenda items. A school board representative noted: "Going off on tangents is when things get interesting and innovative!" (Personal communication, June 1, 2015).

New Pathways to Education Research, Policy, and Practice

Understanding that key leadership at the top of the organization is critical to champion any program or initiative, we note that our work might have been more influential if SURE had included active members who were senior administrators (i.e., University Deans and School Board Directors of Education and Superintendents). Despite this challenge, we have developed a greater awareness and knowledge of each other's strengths and interests. SURE has enabled us to understand the processes and priorities of each member's institution more clearly. We have made an impact within member boards, faculties of education, and across the province with our scholarship of engagement. One of our members stated in the SURE Self-Assessment Survey: "Bringing together so many different organizations in a unique partnership—wow! What potential."

One of our key initial accomplishments was the completion of the Teacher-Researcher study and the dissemination of these results (Martinovic, Wiebe, Ratkovic, Willard-Holt, Spencer, & Cantalini-Williams, 2012). This first research project that we completed together helped us to look at how to bring research into classrooms and felt ground-breaking in terms of collaborating with each other. This study laid the foundation for many of our subsequent endeavours, such as the 2013-2014 SSHRC-funded project which allowed us to complete numerous KMb activities. Overall, SURE accomplished an extensive KMb Plan, which is in the further text organized by Cooper's (2011) strategy. According to our Summary Report from 2011-2013, we developed a website, participated in OERS (Martinovic, Spencer, Ratkovic, Cantalini-Williams, & Landon, 2012), created research reports and research briefs, published a paper in the research journal (Martinovic, Wiebe, Ratkovic, Willard-Holt, Spencer, & Cantalini-Williams, 2012), organized and facilitated numerous networking and KMb events (Martinovic, Donohoo, Ratkovic, Willard-Holt, Grierson, Spencer, & Wiebe, 2013), presented at national and international conferences, and developed a video series for teachers-researchers.

Our 'scholarship of engagement' products are available on the SURE (http://www.surenetwork.ca/) website. These SURE activities helped create a growing network of educators who are willing to use, design, and conduct research, and communicate their findings orally and/or in writing. These outcomes are significant for building a holistic and integrated education community and increasing teacher efficacy. Despite our successes, it remained challenging to incite a deep change in relationships between our institutions, as our institutional leaders were less involved than faculty members and research personnel. However, developing this joint research community was a critical undertaking, given that effective teaching practices are based on or substantiated by research (Ramsey, 2000). Arguably, given the participation of educators and teachers in our many events, SURE has facilitated research-to-practice agendas at the school and/or classroom level for over seven years.

In congruence with Gore's (1995) literature review, SURE findings suggest that democracy, trust, open communication, time commitment, rewards and recognition, common goals, joint responsibility, and a focus on change are important when promoting scholarship of engagement and building genuine partnerships in education. Lessons learned about SURE will inform school board–university collaborations that operate on both large and small scales, bringing together the "two worlds" (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014). For us, SURE has been a transformational partnership at the regional level similar to the partnership described by Butcher, Bezzina, and Moran (2011). Our conviction that neither scholars nor practitioners know education better, but that we know it differently (Ancess, Barnett, & Allen, 2007), provided a fertile ground for our community-engaged collaborative work (Khanenko-Friesen, 2015). Our partnership laid the groundwork for future collaborative projects and has provided insight and direction not only provincially, but also at national and international levels. While some scholars claim an increasing gap between academics and practitioners (Tsui, 2013), we have demonstrated possibilities for bridging the gap between these two worlds. Uncovering tensions associated with academic-practitioner collaboration informed our work and generated "new types of scholarly inquiries" (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014, p. 2) and engagements across educational settings.

The Road Ahead

Analyzing our experiences and writing this paper provoked us to re-assess our community engagement model and reflect on our journey. While we were getting lost in the woods of our beginnings, our governance and self-assessment compass took us back to the core of our existence, to our mutually beneficial relationships. We became even more cognizant of the values that we share and of the partnership activities that are recognized in the field. At the same time, we embraced the complexities and contradictions of our experiences. We used this research and writing process to reflect on our seven-year long journey, not leaving many stones unturned along the way. We encountered some surprises, which led to new questions and deeper understanding of our relationships and future goals. Moreover, we opened ourselves to the possibility of change and continued on this road to build understandings between and among academic and professional communities in education.

In hindsight, the SURE network has evolved into a flexible collegial partnership that is characterized by collaborative research, evaluation, and scholarship; collaborative research ethics review; recognition and appreciation of each other's priorities, skills, and contributions; and discovery, integration, knowledge-sharing, and knowledge-application. Our key accomplishments include collaborating across school boards and universities; facilitating research-to-practice activities within member boards, faculties of education, and across the province; developing relationships and building trust; creating KMb events and products; and sustaining our collaboration since 2008. At the same time, numerous tensions and challenges arose along the way, including differences in timelines between school year and grant deadlines; different pressures and priorities; issues regarding data ownership and authorship; power-imbalance due to different sources of funding (Ministry vs. SSHRC); struggles with building and enacting a governance model with accountability; and lack of recognition and incentives for the boards' personnel related to their work as researchers or their contributions to research. We conclude that it is important to continue our discussions and collaborations, even when tensions or challenges arise, so that we evolve collectively both as a group and as individuals. We concur with Bailey and Koney (2000) that "the implementation of inter-organizational efforts has…much to do with individual relationships" (p. 29), and embrace our journey in the midst of tensions, complexities, and victories.

The SURE model (see Figure 1) discussed in this paper represents the evolution of our scholarship of engagement from establishing a committee, building a collaborative community, developing a governance structure, mobilizing knowledge, and evaluating our practices. The spiral nature of the model reveals the complexity and fluidity of our engagement as well as the need to keep observing, planning, acting upon, and revising community engagement models and practices.

While MISA PNC financial support for SURE meetings and activities ended in 2016, our professional and personal relationships have endured. This essay demonstrates our unceasing commitment to the SURE network, scholarship of engagement, and the field of education.

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APPENDIX: TCAR-based findings after SURE self-assessment survey, February 2012.

Areas of Strength	*Areas for Improvement*
Dialogue – Logistics (pre-planned agenda and good minutes) – Respect (professional tensions are negotiated through respectful language and support; discussions are open; desire to learn about each other's worlds; active participation by all is encouraged)	**Dialogue** – Lack of attendance at meetings (due to conflicting schedules, different institutional priorities, and geography) – Team meetings do not focus on group practice and performance
Decision-Making – Inclusive practice (being open to different points of view in the process of making decisions; most decisions are reached out by consensus) – Commitment to decisions (enacting the decisions agreed upon)	**Decision-Making** – Lack of protocol/policy for decision-making – Limited opportunities for self-assessment of decision-making processes – Complexities and challenges of inclusive practices (issues with follow-up and collaborative supervision)
Action – Coordination (team actions are well coordinated) – Work ethics (committee members are inspired by their SURE colleagues) – Collaborative strategies (members work together well and they are good at following through on what they agree to do)	**Action** – Unbalanced involvement and/or contribution
Evaluation – Commitment to evaluating the collaboration process (findings are shared among us, mostly informally, and with a larger education community through formal means) – Team expertise (in evaluation, data analysis, and evidence-based decision-making) – Commitment to improving educational research and practice	**Evaluation** – Lack of quantitative data about team practices/outcomes (we evaluate the work of others more often than our own work) – Lack of regular and systematic approach to evaluation

Developing an Evaluation Capacity Building Network in the Field of Early Childhood Development

Rebecca Gokiert, Bethan Kingsley, Cheryl Poth, Karen Edwards, Btissam El Hassar, Lisa Tink, Melissa Tremblay, Ken Cor, Jane Springett, Susan Hopkins

Abstract This reflective essay traces the development of an evaluation capacity building network within the early childhood development field. First, we describe the context for building the network using a community-based participatory approach and provide rationale for our specific focus on early childhood development. Second, we provide an explanation of the purpose and processes involved in three areas of significant engagement: partner, stakeholder, and student. We reflect on the methods of engagement used across these three areas and their impact on the outcomes that we achieved. Finally, we conclude the paper with some final considerations for guiding engaged scholars and with the next steps in our own work.

KeyWords community-university partnerships, early childhood development, evaluation capacity building, partnership development, engagement methods and practices

The health and well-being of children and families has long been a focus of research and social policy, as it impacts the economic and social fabric of our communities (Akbari & McCuaig, 2017; Hertzman & Boyce, 2010; Shonkoff & Levitt, 2010). Solutions to the issues that are faced by communities, including poverty, health inequalities, and access to quality early learning and care opportunities are not limited to a single discipline or sector and require the expertise and collaborative efforts of community leaders, funders, the academy, and all levels of government. There is growing recognition that collaboration through community-university partnerships is an effective way to bring community members, practitioners, and researchers together to discuss important issues in an environment where multiple worldviews are respected, solutions can be generated, and knowledge can be co-constructed (Cargo & Mercer, 2008; Israel, Schultz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; Kajner, Fletcher, & Makokis, 2011). Many of these partnerships are guided by principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR), which encourages authentic collaboration by bringing together knowledge and expertise from multiple sectors and disciplines. CBPR principles are intended to reinforce the relevance of the partnership through shared leadership and decision-making, to foster ownership and sustainability (Israel et al., 1998; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008).

Community-university partnerships have been developed to tackle pressing social issues and are well documented in the community engaged scholarship (CES) literature (e.g., Jagosh et al., 2015; Pei, Feltham, Ford, & Schwartz, 2015; Viswanathan et al., 2004). Fewer examples exist of sustainable community-university partnerships and networks that encompass all aspects of CES (e.g., research, teaching and learning, student engagement, knowledge mobilization) with core resources (human and financial) from both university and community partners. Although less common, examples of such partnerships include the Community-University Partnership Program at the University of Brighton, Community-based Research Canada, and Participatory Research in Asia. In the province of Alberta, the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) in the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta represents another example. CUP was launched in 2000 through shared community and university leadership to improve the development of children, youth, and families by promoting interactions among researchers and community members (e.g., practitioners, policymakers, families) in the areas of research, knowledge sharing, and lifelong learning (Chapman, 2015; McCaffrey, 2007). CUP has the mandate to nurture environments where evidence is used effectively to develop practices, programs, and policies that support the healthy development of children, youth, families and communities across four priority areas: policy, poverty, early childhood development, and evaluation.

Over its 17 years of operation, university and community partners have shared joint responsibility for guiding and sustaining CUP, and are represented by CUP's Steering Committee. Reflecting the partnership, an academic and community member co-chair the CUP steering committee, and its membership is currently comprised of 27 members that represent foundations, municipal and provincial government, academics, research and policy centres, and community-based agencies. This governance structure has long provided the impetus for collaborative opportunities in CUP's key focus on evaluation and early childhood development from its many community requests for research, measurement, and evaluation support (Bisanz, Edwards, & Shaw, 2013). These requests have resulted in sharing resources, brokering relationships with other faculty and graduate students on campus, and developing participatory research and/or evaluation projects. However, with ever-increasing requests from community-based agencies that are not always accompanied by resources, it became necessary for CUP to determine a more systematic and effective way to respond to these needs.

This reflective essay provides an in-depth account of how community and university members of CUP spearheaded the development of a network to advance evaluation capacity in the early childhood development field, using a CBPR approach. First, we describe the context for the development of the Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN)[1] and the reason for focusing on early childhood development. This is followed by an explanation of the purpose and processes involved in three areas of significant engagement: partners, stakeholders, and students. We reflect on the methods of engagement used across these three areas and the impact of these methods on the outcomes that we achieved. Finally, we conclude the paper with some final considerations for guiding engaged scholars and with the next steps in our own work.

[1] For the sake of consistency, we refer to the ECN and its development in the past tense throughout this paper. However, the ECN is a long-term project and is therefore ongoing.

Addressing Community Evaluation Needs Through Partnership

CUP has received a steadily increasing number of requests from community agencies for assistance with research and evaluation (Bisanz et al., 2013). This reflects an increasing demand across Canada for evaluation. Funders, program planners, and policymakers are seeking rigorous and reliable evidence to inform resource allocation and improve essential services (McShane, Usher, Tandon, & Steel, 2015). However, the demand for evaluation currently surpasses the required resources and supply of evaluation knowledge and expertise available to many community agencies (Gauthier et al., 2010). This has placed community agencies in an untenable situation. With limited funding, human resources, and evaluation expertise to collect and use evaluation evidence, community agencies often struggle to justify continued support through evaluation (Bakken, Núñez, & Couture, 2014; Cousins, Goh, Elliott, & Bourgeois, 2014; Janzen et al., 2017).

To gain a deeper understanding of widespread evaluation capacity issues with the intent of developing an effective response, CUP hosted two focus groups in 2012. The 14 participants included leaders (e.g., CEOs, executive directors, and managers) from nonprofits, foundations, and provincial government, as well as professional evaluators and university academics familiar with evaluation related issues. What emerged from the focus groups was a locally-relevant understanding that community agencies find the process of evaluation challenging in common ways. These findings resonated with what others had already reported in the literature: funders often request specific evaluation methods and outcomes to meet their needs for accountability that do not realistically reflect organizational strategic learning goals, time, and resources (Carman & Milleson, 2005; Leviton, 2014); agencies find the process of evaluation challenging due to insufficient funding, and lack of human resource capacity (Bakken et al., 2014; Cousins, et al., 2014; Janzen et al., 2017); experts find it difficult to provide all the required resources, knowledge, and capacity to community agencies; and evaluation outcomes often prove uninformative for program development and practice. Common across the focus group participants was the urgent need for further dialogue among intersectoral stakeholders who support evaluation of programs. They also validated the need to create a central point where stakeholders could access coordinated evaluation capacity building resources, and ensure high quality training, practice, and research in evaluation.

Forming the Partnership

Focus group findings were presented to the CUP steering committee, and a working group was established to realize the evaluation initiative. The working group consisted of a foundation CEO, two executive directors of large nonprofit agencies, and an academic and research associate affiliated with CUP. The key task of the working group was to identify and bring together leaders (funders, nonprofits, academics, and government) from the social sector to form a partnership. The intent of the partnership was to develop and operationalize a robust, coordinated plan for increasing the availability of quality evaluation knowledge, resources, expertise, and tailored capacity building opportunities. In September 2013, a group of 18 leaders was brought together for a full-day meeting to determine (1) what the focus of the evaluation initative should be, (2) how to fund the initative, (3) what individuals and organizations needed to be involved, and (4) what steps the partnership should take moving forward. The group decided that the focus of the initative would be on evaluation in the early childhood development (ECD) field. Much of the group's discussion focused on the need to foster and support "evaluative thinking" in the ECD sector. Evaluative thinking has been defined as

> Critical thinking applied in the context of evaluation, motivated by an attitude of inquisitiveness and a belief in the value of evidence, that involves identifying assumptions, posing thoughtful questions, pursuing deeper understanding through reflection and perspective taking, and informing decisions in preparation for action. (Buckley, Archibald, Hargraves, & Trochim, 2015, p. 378).

To stimulate and support the intiative, several partners offered in-kind and cash contributions to support an application for a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Partnership Development Grant (SSHRC PDG), which we were successful in obtaining in 2014. As determined during the September planning meeting, the primary objectives of the SSHRC PDG were to (1) conduct an intersectoral needs assessment using community forums with the aim of identifying common evaluation knowledge (i.e., language, metrics, methods, theories and issues) and capacity gaps; (2) develop and deliver educational resources and training opportunities that address these gaps and to subsequently evaluate and refine the resources and training; and (3) nurture and sustain an Evaluation Capacity Network that supports ongoing dialogue of evaluation experts, government, funders, and community agencies at a national level, and knowledge mobilization of community-engaged evaluative practices across the range of sectors that impact ECD. The partnership now had a clear focus on building a network to advance evaluation practice in the ECD field, and the necessary funding and committed leaders to move things forward.

Rationale for Focusing on Early Childhood Development

The rationale for the partnership's focus on evaluation in ECD was based on several considerations. First, robust scientific evidence in the areas of child and family health and well-being demonstrates that experiences and environments in the early years profoundly impact children's development (Akbari & McCuaig, 2017; Hertzman & Boyce, 2010; Shonkoff & Levitt, 2010; Shonkoff, 2017). Incorporating multiple sectors and systems, the field of ECD is interdisciplinary and complex yet provides critical opportunities for innovations in social policy and practices. When policies and programs that target the early years are responsive to the complexity of the field, they can reduce expensive interventions in later years (Akbari & McCuaig, 2017; Duncan et al., 2007; Heckman, 2008; OECD, 2012; Shonkoff, 2017). Despite significant investments in early years programming, approximately one in four Canadian children lack the social, emotional, and cognitive capacities to benefit from the public education system (CIHI, 2014). This rate doubles for Indigenous children and English-language learners of immigrant and refugee backgrounds, who experience social vulnerabilities as a result of economic, cultural, and language differences (Cabrera, 2013; Georgis, Gokiert, & Kirova, 2018; Gokiert et al., 2014; Government of Canada, 2011). The prevalence of mental health disorders among children in Canada is about 13% (Waddell, Shepherd, Schwartz & Barican, 2014), and roughly a quarter of Canadian children are living in low-income households (Statistics Canada, 2011). Furthermore, in 2016 UNICEF ranked Canada 26th of 35 high-income countries for child well-being. Such statistics indicate there is a pressing need for improvement in existing Canadian child- and family-focused policies and practices.

Second, policy frameworks have been emerging for over a decade that encourage a common understanding of development in the early years, promote shared language and outcomes, create continuity across jurisdictions and settings, and serve as a resource to support program and policy development (CMEC, 2014; Government of Alberta, 2013; Government of Manitoba, 2013; Government of NWT, 2013; Munro, 2006). Unfortunately, these policy frameworks tend to create unintended complications for the early childhood system. Funders adopt these policy frameworks, and do not always provide clear expectations on how to use them or contribute to them in meaningful ways. This leaves the public sector collecting considerable amounts of data that result in a significant "data burden," as nonprofits invest resources beyond their means to produce performance data that is of little use to both the organizations producing the data and the funders requesting it (e.g. Snibbe, 2006; Carman, 2010; Leviton, 2014; Liket, Rey-Garcia, & Maas, 2014).

Finally, there is no common approach to quality evaluation knowledge, resources, expertise, and capacity-building opportunities tailored to the needs of the intersectoral and interdisciplinary nature of the ECD field. This void compromises high-quality research, training, and practice in evaluation, and ultimately impacts the programs and practices in ECD. A coordinated approach was the solution, and so we extensively engaged partners, stakeholders, and students to understand the needs and assets of the ECD field. In the next sections, we will explore our process of developing the Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN) through three distinct but related themes of engagement: (1) partner engagement, (2) stakeholder engagement, and (3) student engagement.

Partner Engagement: Developing a CBPR Partnership for Evaluation

As the ECN is grounded in a CBPR approach (Israel et al., 1998), it integrates research, action, reflection, and communication. As such, a partnership was the first step towards building the ECN because it provides principles and methods to guide the work of the network, can stimulate intersectoral and interdisciplinary dialogue, and can ensure that community needs and values are at the foundation of the network. Partners were carefully chosen for the important expertise they had, and the role they could play in working together to recognize and address the complexity of intersectoral evaluative thinking. Partners represented stakeholder groups whose definition(s) of evaluation effectiveness, practices, and outcomes are influenced by the sector within which they worked and the role they played in supporting ECD programs, practices, or policies.

ECN Partnership Governance

The partnership that was developed and now sustains the ECN comprised three main governing bodies and involves the authors in various roles: a steering committee, core research team, and project management team (see *Figure 1*). The 19-member Steering Committee had representation from government, community agencies, funders, evaluation consultants and academia. The Steering Committee was the decision-making body for the ECN and provided high-level guidance, support, and direction for partner engagement, research, data interpretation, knowledge mobilization, and funding initiatives. The Steering Committee comprised 19 members, including academics (Gokiert, Kingsley), funders, government representatives, evaluation consultants, and nonprofit representatives. The Core Research Team met monthly and was responsible for the design, development, and implementation of the research component of the ECN. The Core Research Team comprised nine members, inclusive of an executive director from a national nonprofit (Hopkins), a government representative, five academics (Cor, Gokiert, Poth, Springett), and one postdoctoral fellow (Kingsley). The Project Management Team met weekly and was responsible for the development and monitoring of the plans, schedules, budgets, and deliverables of the ECN within the established time frames and quality guidelines approved by the Steering Committee. The Project Management Team comprised the principal investigator (Gokiert), a postdoctoral fellow (Kingsley), graduate research assistants (El Hassar, Tink, Tremblay), practicum students, and student volunteers.

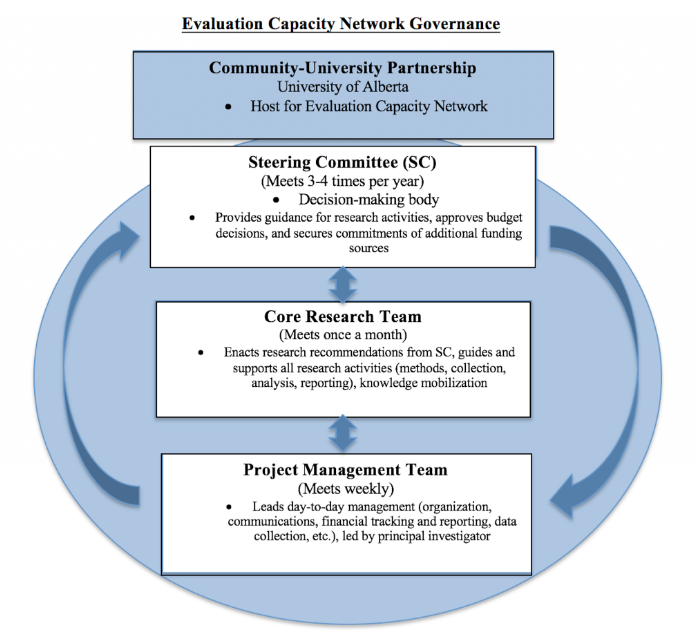

Figure 1: Evaluation Capacity Network Governance

Engaging Partners through Focus Groups

To develop guiding goals, common principles, indicators of success for the partnership, and a framework for building a provincial evaluation agenda, we hosted two focus groups with 16 individuals across the levels of governance. The questions posed were: What was the original reason you agreed to participate in the ECN and what do you hope to gain from your involvement? What are the essential elements of the community-university partnership that will contribute to developing a successful ECN? What would success look like for the ECN? The focus groups were audio-recorded, and three graduate research assistants took extensive notes. Members of the Project Management Team completed a thematic analysis of this data and organized the information into core partnership principles, project outcomes and particular actions that partners described wanting from the ECN.

The principles that arose from the focus groups were highly reflective of the guiding principles of a CBPR approach (Israel et al., 1998). They included the need for trust, mutual benefit, equity, co-creation, accessibility, collaboration, strong communication, a commitment to action, and engagement at all levels. The focus groups provided an important opportunity not only to identify key principles to guide the partnership, but to also ascribe meaning to these principles in the context of the ECN.

The partners identified several immediate and intermediate outcomes that were important to guide the ECN towards the ultimate outcome articulated through focus groups: children are provided the best possible start through evaluation-informed policies and practices. Immediate outcomes included the need to increase awareness and understanding of the purpose of the ECN, increase the perceived importance of evaluation, and increase evaluation capacity through elevated evaluative knowledge and practice. Intermediate outcomes included the need for a culture that values evaluation, risk-taking and transparency, an increase time and financial investments in evaluation, evaluations in ECD that are relevant and meaningful, and the integration of evaluation into organizational processes through a utilization focused approach.

Finally, a number of actions were identified that partners felt would contribute to the success of the ECN. Actions included the need to engage and connect current and future evaluators, users of evaluation, and evaluation capacity builders; provide evaluation mentorship and expertise; develop education tools and resources; develop common evaluation language through effective communication mechanisms; provide professional development and learning opportunities; and share best practices in evaluation. For these actions to occur, it was determined that there would be a need to mobilize and create synergy between the levels of governance and the broader membership of the Network.

Challenges and Opportunities in Partner Engagement

The focus group process was beneficial as a means of engaging partners in a dialogue about shared principles, outcomes, and actions that they wanted for the ECN. The focus groups also generated ideas, enthusiasm, and a shared commitment for the ECN that otherwise might not have happened. Despite the positive impacts of the focus groups, maintaining a concerted level of engagement over time and adhering to the principles that were identified by the partners has been challenging for a number of reasons. For one, the breadth of the project – engaging partners from across so many contexts (universities, funding agencies, nonprofits, government, policy and research centres and consulting firms) – has, to some extent, affected the depth of engagement that we were able to achieve. Having 19 people on the steering committee alone limited the extent to which face-to-face meetings could be held and rich discussion could be facilitated. In addition, many of the steering committee members were high-level decision makers and leaders in the field. As a result, finding meeting times when everyone was available and expecting significant engagement in the ECN was difficult beyond meeting once per year and communicating project milestones through email.

Although we initially intended the Steering Committee to be the primary decision making body for the ECN, the Core Research Team took on many of the responsibilities of the Steering Committee and provided significant expertise in measurement, evaluation, and engagement. Although not initially intended, the Core Research Team members suggested meeting monthly to gain momentum on the project. The Steering Committee still functioned, however, with a more distal role than we originally intended, with strategic thinking, funding opportunities, and provincial connection being the main areas of focus. To compensate for this limited engagement, we have instead engaged with members of the Steering Committee on an individual basis depending on the task at hand or the stage of the project, reflecting a need to connect on a more personal level.

Stakeholder Engagement: Understanding the Evaluation Needs and Capacities of the Field

Building an agenda for advancing evaluation practices in the field of ECD required determining evaluation needs and assets, which in turn required extensive stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder, in this sense, refers to individuals who might be affected by decisions about an evaluation agenda (Freeman, 2010) – namely funders, evaluators, nonprofit and government employees, and academics. Consistent with a CBPR approach, we wanted to develop an agenda that had mutual benefit across the ECD field (Israel et al., 1998). It was therefore essential to understand the needs and assets of the field from the perspectives of stakeholders working across a range of contexts. A subsequent goal of stakeholder engagement was to gain a wider sense of ownership and momentum across the ECD field towards working collectively to address the evaluation needs that exist.

To accomplish the needs and assets assessment, we used three primary methods of stakeholder engagement across the province of Alberta: surveying stakeholders, priming stakeholders and consulting stakeholders. The methods were complementary, in that an evaluation capacity building survey and stimulus paper were sent to the participants in advance of attending the forums, and the survey results and stimulus paper were used to spark discussion throughout the forums. We will describe each method of engagement in more detail with its contribution to understanding the needs and assets of the ECD field.

Evaluation Capacity Building Survey

It is important to recognize that evaluation is not simply about developing in people and organizations the capacity to *do* evaluation but also about developing the capacity to *use* evaluation (Cousins et al., 2014). The construct of evaluation capacity has been conceptualized and defined in the literature and operationalized in the form of assessment tools (e.g., Labin, 2014; Preskill & Boyle, 2008; Taylor-Ritzler, Suarez-Balcazar, Garcia-Iriarte, Henry, & Balcazar, 2013). However, many of these frameworks and tools are not context specific, making them less reflective of the complex field of ECD and thus were not appropriate for understanding the individual and organizational capacity of our stakeholders. As a result, it was necessary to draw on these frameworks and tools, through an extensive review of the literature and to develop a survey that better reflected our context. A doctoral student (El Hassar) took a leadership role in developing the survey as part of her doctoral thesis. She engaged the Core Research Team at several points in the development process such as determining the most contextually relevant survey components and items, measurement scales, and survey format (online). The final survey consisted of items across three main areas of evaluation capacity: individual capacity (e.g., attitudes, motivation, knowledge, and skills), organizational capacity (e.g., leadership, organizational processes, and available resources), and training and professional development (e.g., training experiences, desires for capacity building). Stakeholders that were invited to the evaluation capacity building forums (described below) were purposefully selected based on experience, expertise, or leadership in evaluation and/or early childhood development in the province of Alberta. The survey was sent out to these stakeholders prior to their attendance at the provincial forums. Approximately 164 surveys were sent to invitees, and a total of 101 surveys were returned. As mentioned, the resulting data were presented back to participants at the forums.

Evaluation Capacity Building Forums

In total, the ECN hosted four forums across the province of Alberta in Winter/Spring 2016 as a way to further understand the collective evaluation needs and capacities of the ECD field. The specific purpose of the forums was to engage influential stakeholders in conversation about the evaluation barriers, facilitators, and needs experienced in their work and to generate innovative and collective solutions for addressing them. A total of 164 leaders from 78 different organizations (funding, government, nonprofit, university, and consulting) were invited, and a total of 122 attended. A large facilitation team guided and stimulated discussion during each forum and comprised a mixed group that mirrored the diversity of the stakeholders. The team included current and retired leaders in the ECD field from school boards, funding agencies, and nonprofits; academics (Gokiert & Kingsley) and graduate students from CUP (El Hassar, Tink, & Tremblay); and a highly-respected consultant in the social sector. For each forum, there was a primary moderator who led the agenda and several co-facilitators sat at each discussion table to guide conversation, take notes, and report back to the larger group. The agenda for the forums was co-created by the Core Research Team, the Project Management Team, and the same external consultant who aided the facilitation.

To provide contextual grounding, shared language and definitions for the forum, and to spark some initial ideas, we developed and sent a stimulus paper to all the invitees (Evaluation Capacity Network, 2015). The stimulus paper comprised five main sections that situated evaluation capacity building in the field of early childhood and asked participants to think about the possibilities for advancing meaningful evaluation in the field. Discussion questions were integrated throughout and provided in an accompanying worksheet to generate ideas in preparation for the forum (e.g., What ECD evaluation framework, if any, have you found most useful and why? What characteristics does your organization have that support an evaluation learning culture?). The stimulus paper was one of several engagement techniques implemented with the aim of stimulating innovative, change-focused ideas. We also used a combination of small and larger table discussions, group plenaries, a world café (www.theworldcafe.com), and a design thinking challenge (Stanford University, 2017). The facilitation team made modifications to the agenda through a reflective debrief after each forum.

The information shared during each forum was captured on participant worksheets that were given to stakeholders at the start of the day, in addition to sticky notes used during some of the group activities. This information was electronically inputted and a basic thematic analysis was conducted to organize the ideas. These ideas were presented as three action areas for the ECN to focus on to advance evaluation in the field of early childhood and were reported back to stakeholders in a "What We Heard" summary document (Tink, Kingsley, & Gokiert, 2016). In addition, feedback from stakeholders during the forums indicated that they wanted us to send the survey out more broadly in order to reach all levels of an organization, from frontline staff through to the leadership. With this advice, we modified the survey to be reflective of a more diverse audience and redistributed it. We sent the survey to all participants and asked that they forward it through their organization to staff using a snowball technique of sampling. The second administration generated over 329 responses. The survey data was reported back to stakeholders in a report that is posted on the Evaluation Capacity Network website (Tink, Gokiert, Kingsley, & El Hassar, 2017).

Authentic stakeholder engagement is not an easy or straightforward process, even with substantial experience. For this reason, we relied heavily on pre-existing, well-established, and trusting relationships with pivotal stakeholders and organizations across the province (developed over the past decade of CUP's history). One of the ECN partners, the Muttart Foundation, had carried out a series of forums across Alberta and Saskatchewan with the ECD sector to determine a system of early learning and care (Muttart Foundation, 2013). We reached out to the Muttart Foundation for advice about their engagement process, costs, ideal locations and venues, skilled facilitators, and the leaders they had previously invited. It was under their guidance that we recruited facilitators in each region as they had the relationships necessary to increase the likelihood that stakeholders would participate. The Foundation used stimulus papers for each of their forums, and so we adopted this idea and created a stimulus paper to contextually ground our forums. They also provided insight into the professional cultures of each location so we could adapt our style of engagement. For example, one of the larger cities in which we hosted a forum had more of a 'corporate' culture, which was quite different from the 'relaxed' culture of one of the smaller rural locations. We made subsequent decisions about the locations based on these differences, with the larger urban forums held at a conference centre and hotel in the downtown core, compared to the rural forums which were held at a public library and a school.

We wanted the forums to be change-oriented rather than deficit-focused. With this in mind, we purposefully invited leaders who we believed were driven to find unique solutions to complex problems, and possessed the influence to effect such change. Despite these intentions, the extent to which this made a difference to the quality of the discussion is difficult to gauge. In focusing on inviting change-oriented leaders, we also restricted the number and breadth of perspectives shaping the direction of the ECN, particularly those of frontline staff and service providers.

Positioning the forums around change created expectations from our stakeholders for *action* to result from the discussions. This was exacerbated by the fact that a number of other consultations had been recently conducted in the field. For this reason, it was important to provide time-sensitive reports to summarize learning, and to find a balance between community need and academic definitions of rigour (Kingsley & Chapman, 2013). In this process, our ability to respond to demands for action has been impacted by our own limited resource, time and expertise, which must grow significantly if we are to adequately respond to the needs presented during the forums. This is further tested by the interest and awareness generated through the engagement process. Raising the profile of the ECN through public dialogue has also resulted in an increased number of requests for evaluation support and resources. In an attempt to meet this need, we have drawn upon graduate students as a source of capacity for the ECN, the details of which are described in the next section.

Student Engagement: Training and Mentorship

Graduate student engagement has been fundamental to the success of the ECN, as they have provided significant capacity. Some students have completed their masters' and doctoral research with the ECN, while others contributed through independent studies, research assistantships, practicums and course placements, and volunteering. For example, two students joined the project management team to fulfill a 150-hour practicum as part of an embedded graduate certificate in community-based research and evaluation. Two graduate students from the Master of Arts in Communication and Technology program in the Faculty of Extension developed a communications plan and website for the ECN as part of an independent study course. One of these students became further involved in the ECN and completed her final capstone project with the ECN. Two doctoral candidates are pursuing their dissertation research focused on different research questions relating to the ECN (El Hassar, Poth, Gokiert, Kingsley, & Krishnan, 2016; Gokiert et al., 2017; Tremblay et al., 2016). In the three-year span of the ECN thus far, eleven graduate students and one postdoctoral fellow have been mentored through, and provided support to, the ECN. Mentorship is generally provided by academics that are community-engaged scholars themselves and/or who specialize in evaluation.

Emerging Community-Engaged Scholars

The intent of engaging students in the ECN is to support their development as community-engaged scholars and evaluators. The focus on such enhanced learning opportunities is based on a growing need for professionals who are equipped to navigate a social sector with complex challenges (Armitage & Levac, 2015; Cantor, DeLauer, Martin, & Rogan, 2015). Students seem to be recognizing this need to expand their learning and build new skills, which has resulted in an increasing number seeking community-based research and evaluation opportunities. These emerging scholars are acquiring skills, knowledge and experiences that would not be available through conventional academic training. For example, students are exposed to several research methods in an interdisciplinary context, and developed skills in knowledge mobilization and engagement with academic and non-academic audiences. More specifically, they have facilitated meetings and forums, produced grey literature and scholarly manuscripts, and developed and maintained the ECN's online presence through email campaigns and blog posts.

Community Service Learning

In addition to preparing students as community-engaged scholars, the ECN also supports students to develop their skills as evaluators. As mentioned, there is a substantial need for evaluation support in the social sector, which was reiterated by the information gathered during the forums. To meet this need, while providing experiential learning in evaluation for students, service learning placements were established. Service learning is a method to enhance students' learning and development through organized service experiences in the community, and is integrated into academic curriculum (Taylor et al., 2015). Service learning, particularly in community-based participatory projects, is widely considered to expand the student learning, providing opportunities to develop critical thinking and a sense of civic responsibility (Taylor et al., 2015). Service learning also provides additional capacity to the organizations in which the placements occur. Learning opportunities are therefore intended to be of equal benefit to both the student and the recipient of the service (Furco, 1996).

The service learning placements in this project are embedded within three graduate-level evaluation courses at the University of Alberta: Health Promotion Planning and Evaluation in the School of Public Health, Program Evaluation in the Department of Educational Psychology, and Program Planning and Evaluation in the Department of Human Ecology. To fulfill their course requirements, graduate students are asked to work with community organizations to build contextually relevant evaluation plans. To build a comprehensive plan, they meet with organizations several times to gain a contextual understanding of their evaluation needs, develop a logic model and gain feedback from staff. The course instructors mentor the students to enhance learning and serve as a form of quality assurance for the community and government agencies. This approach has been generally positive; however, there is a need to further extend this service learning to assist organizations with evaluation beyond the creation of an evaluation plan. To this end, advanced courses in evaluation are required that involve more extensive and concerted student engagement over time. This need to build the evaluation capacity of university students in Canada is well supported in the literature (e.g. McDavid & Devine, 2009; McShane et al., 2015), and will become a focus for the ECN moving forward.

Funding Graduate Students

Due to limited funds to engage graduate students in the ECN, we have sought other funding opportunities to supplement student involvement. Several funders have supported the ECN's student engagement and created various learning opportunities. The Women and Children's Health Research Institute (WCHRI) based at the University of Alberta has several student funding streams including the Patient and Community Engagement Training program and conference travel. Through this program, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows conducting engaged research are funded for 8 months to support their work. In each funding year, a community of practice is formed to discuss issues relating to engagement. One doctoral student (El Hassar) and one postdoctoral fellow (Kingsley) have participated in the training program and received travel grants to present their research at conferences. Mitacs, a Canadian funding agency that builds partnerships between academia and nonprofit or industry partners, has also provided substantial graduate student funding support. Mitacs funded a postdoctoral fellow (Kingsley) for three years, two doctoral (Tremblay) and one masters' student up to one year, to assist community agencies with evaluation and evaluation capacity building.

Graduate students have added significant capacity to the ECN; however, we have also run into some challenges with a project reliant on such extensive student involvement. Finding funding for students has been difficult at times and as mentioned, it was necessary to seek alternative forms of funding. Applying for this funding consumes available resources such as time. In addition, students – no matter their level of experience – require mentorship, or at the very least, management and supervision. Allocating university mentors or supervisors who have sufficient time to work with students, above their regular academic responsibilities, is also challenging. For this reason, much of this workload falls on the project management team, and is the reason that having a postdoctoral fellow involved in the project has been essential for sharing the supervision load of students.

An additional issue relates to student retention, as most students are only available on a short-term basis, either because they finish their degrees, accept alternative opportunities, or because our ability to fund them diminishes. Although we have had some students volunteer for us in the past, we would prefer to be able to pay individuals for their time. Finally, as with all CBPR projects, there can often be a dissonance between community and academic timelines. Graduate students have milestones they need to achieve before they can progress with their research (e.g., a candidacy exam), yet the project needs to progress regardless. This can put additional pressure on the student during what is already a stressful process and has the potential to prevent the project from moving ahead as planned. Similarly, academic standards and expectations that inform student processes and products are sometimes at odds with the flexible, responsive approaches needed when partnering with community. For example, one of the students (El Hassar) took the lead on the development of the evaluation capacity survey as part of her dissertation and engaged partners during this process. In addition to reflecting conventional standards of validity, this engagement (and the tool itself) also reflects an alternative form of rigour that more closely reflected a community-based research approach (Kingsley & Chapman, 2013). To allow for a broader conceptualization of rigour, it is important to form graduate committees with faculty who have some understanding of community-based and engaged research to avoid potential friction between academic and community needs and expectations.

Concluding Remarks

The value of co-created understandings is highlighted by the evaluation-focused efforts of McShane and colleagues (2015) who state, "community engagement is often touted as a goal for universities and community collaboration is increasingly viewed as favourable in research" (p.149). Evaluation experts have long recognized the importance of the interests, views, involvement, needs, and roles of all stakeholders in evaluation practice and theory (e.g., Alkin, 2004; Cockerill, Myers, & Allman, 2000; Cousins & Earl, 1992). Using a CBPR approach and through multiple forms of engagement, the ECN was developed to bring together many voices from across academic, government, nonprofit and consulting contexts around the issue of evaluation in the field of ECD.

The purpose of this reflective essay was to provide an in-depth account of the development of the network and reflect on our engagement processes. Illustrating the context for the development of the ECN, we provided a detailed description of the purpose and process of engagement with partners, stakeholders, and students in the development of a provincial agenda for the ECN, reflecting on each method and its impact on the outcomes we were able to achieve. In these concluding remarks, we offer some final considerations for community-engaged scholars relating to these three forms of engagement, provide details of our intended next steps for the ECN, and invite individuals and organizations to contact us for more detailed information.

In a summary of learning from a conference co-hosted by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) and the University of Guelph, Wenger, Hawkins, and Seifer (2011, 2012) articulated the need for flexibility in community-engaged scholarship. Through our engagement with ECN partners, we also learned early on that we needed to be flexible in our approach. Despite a comprehensive plan for governance – three committees with specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations – it did not play out in practice as we originally intended. This did not appear to negatively impact the quality of the process, but did require us to adjust our engagement expectations and modify our collaboration processes to align with these. To be respectful of partners' time, we only convened the entire group for specific and necessary purposes and instead met one-on-one to access specific expertise on an ad hoc basis. It is difficult to know the effects of this shift, and it may have led to limited ownership and learning amongst those less engaged. To access this information, it would be beneficial to ask our partners if this reflected their preferences and how it may have impacted their involvement.

Relating to stakeholder engagement, the role of CUP was pivotal in providing a stable foundation for reaching out to community and government agencies and receiving such a positive and enthusiastic response. With CUP's 17-year history as an effective relationship-builder, in developing the ECN we drew heavily on CUP's existing relationships as a trusted organization within the province's social sector to determine scope and pool resources. The benefits of this are unsurprising since trust is identified as a fundamental pillar of authentic community-based research partnerships (e.g., Cargo & Mercer, 2008). Key partners, such as the Muttart Foundation, which we relied on for guidance in our provincial forums, were critical in avoiding missteps, gaining momentum quickly, and increasing our reach substantially. Through our stakeholder engagement process, we also identified a number of assets that have led to new evaluation-related opportunities in the community.

Finally, engaging students was a mutually beneficial process for the ECN and for the students themselves. Students, through research assistantships, practicums, course-based learning, and volunteering, provided much needed capacity. In return, students themselves were mentored as community-engaged, interdisciplinary scholars who were better equipped to respond to "wicked problems" (Cantor et al., 2015, p. 407). Engaging students to the extent that we did helped to highlight the pressing need to build better infrastructure to support student engagement. Although there are a number of courses through which students are connected to the ECN, there is currently a significant lack of evaluation courses in Canadian universities generally (McDavid & Devine, 2009), and the University of Alberta specifically (Bisanz et al., 2013). This makes both the training and recruitment of students who have evaluation experience difficult and limits the supply of students available to the ECN. In addition, hiring students or facilitating practicum placements requires mentorship, supervision, and management. This is currently an area of lack for the ECN, with most of the supervision falling on the principle investigator and a postdoctoral fellow on the project. This will not be sustainable over time and is an area that requires attention.

To our knowledge, the ECN is the first initiative of its kind to use a systems approach to build evaluation capacity that extends beyond the scope of a particular organization. To effect change, we believe a broad systems approach is essential to mobilize influential players from across the entire early childhood field (Sanderson, 2000; Suárez-Herrera, Springett, & Kagan, 2009; Waldrop, 1992). Doing so will not only foster a collective and coordinated effort to build capacity, it will increase the likelihood that the questions asked of evaluation are valuable to the field as a whole and will be more effectively used to support improvements to early childhood policies and practices. In addition, while this broad reach is necessary, we must also develop resources and opportunities that are tailored to different users and therefore contextually relevant. As such, the ECN aims to be, simultaneously, a broad yet localized approach. This has required us to draw on the various forms of engagement described in this paper. However, fostering deep relationships with partners remains a challenge with a project of this scale and an area requiring further attention.

Next Steps

The Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN) was developed to support dialogue among intersectoral stakeholders and create a central point through which stakeholders could access coordinated evaluation capacity building resources tailored to the field of ECD, and ensure high quality training, practice, and research in evaluation. The ECN has provided, and continues to provide a mechanism for fostering dialogue among academics, funders, government representatives, evaluation consultants, and nonprofit representatives. It also provides a way to more easily share and develop capacity building resources, expertise and opportunities. Through our engagement with partners, stakeholders, and students, we have developed a provincial agenda for the ECN that we intend to implement over the next several years, while continuing to expand the network and establish new partnerships in Canada and internationally. It is also through engagement that our learning and those we engaged with remain in motion and challenge us to adapt in new ways. In light of this, it is important to acknowledge that engagement is not an inherently necessary or equally advantageous process. Although the various forms of engagement through the ECN have helped to generate interest and develop a mutual agenda, it will be essential as we move forward to continually assess whether the ways we are engaging are meaningful and appropriate. To evaluate our partnership and our engagement processes systematically, we will use multiple methods and tools (e.g. the PARTNERtool; Varda, Chandra, Stern, & Lurie, 2008), which will allow us to respond to unanticipated challenges throughout the life of the partnership.

With an increasing number of institutions attempting to distance themselves from an ivory tower status (Furco, 2001), the concept of engagement appears to have gained significant momentum across the academy. There is a subsequent need for caution when making decisions about the forms and extent of engagement appropriate in each research project to avoid tokenism (at best) and tyranny (at worst) (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). We commit ourselves to this ongoing deliberation and invite others to join us in a collective effort to engage carefully.

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Doing Indigenous Community-University Research Partnerships: A Cautionary Tale

Kathleen Absolon, Susan Dion

Abstract With the intention of generating critical discussion, in this paper the authors examine the complexities of doing decolonizing research within colonial institutions. Drawing on their experiences as co-investigators on a large scale partnership grant involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners doing community-based research in Indigenous communities, they tell a cautionary tale about confronting and working through the challenges. Specifically addressing communication, decision-making, internalized colonialism and research relationships, the authors conclude that while these kinds of partnership grants involve struggle, in the end the effort is necessary.

KeyWords Indigenous, community-based research, decolonizing research, Indigenous community, partnership, internalized colonialism, emancipatory, dialogue

Ultimately, however, I learned that transgression is the root of emancipatory knowledge, and emancipatory knowledge is the basis of a revolutionary pedagogy.
(Sandy Grande, 2004, p.5)

Don't air your laundry in public, tell tales out of school, or talk about what happens behind closed doors. These warnings loomed large as we wavered in our decision to write this paper. For our wellbeing and in service of contributing to revolutionary practice we chose to write. In this article, we examine the complexities of doing decolonizing research in Indigenous communities with a team that includes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and partners. While there is a growing body of literature addressing principles of doing research with and for Indigenous communities (Castleden, Morgan, Lamb, 2012; Koster, Baccar, Lemelin, 2012; Ninomiya & Pollock, 2016), we address issues that arise when the research is done by a team that includes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. As Indigenous co-investigators on the Walking the Prevention Circle: Re-Searching Community Capacity Building for Violence Prevention project, we supported one another and regularly engaged in conversations, examining our experiences and the challenges we encountered while attempting to do community-based research (CBR). In these conversations, we co-created ethical space (Ermine, 2005) where we could talk and be heard from our positions as Indigenous scholars working through the complexities of accomplishing decolonizing research within colonial institutions. Creating space to talk afforded us a pathway to understanding: the place where

Euro-Western knowledge systems meet Indigenous knowledge systems; the disconnect between our ideals and reality; and, our conflicting relationships to the research process. Our writing provided a venue for identifying and understanding what was happening on our team. With the hope of grounding our analysis in experience, we have included excerpts from our recorded conversations in italicized font. While we agree with Grande that emancipatory knowledge is the basis of revolutionary practice, we also acknowledge our transgression in writing that which exposes failures, grapples with the messiness and examines the nuanced power relationships that represent the real experience of engaged scholarship processes. While the research project continues, shortly after completing this paper, we made the difficult decision to remove ourselves from a project that, while on the way to completion, was from our perspective losing its Indigenous and community-based approach. Our intention is a focused search for understanding process. It is not about holding individuals responsible but rather a consideration of the complexities of doing engaged research for, with and by Indigenous people.

Engaging Ourselves in a Critical Project

Almost ten years ago we joined a team of academics and program providers interested in learning successful strategies of violence prevention in Indigenous communities. When the team received a SSHRC Partnership grant in the spring of 2012, we began the project feeling both hopeful that our work would contribute to knowledge in service of communities recuperating from colonial violence, and daunted by the task. During the past five years, we have learned more about the complexities of doing collaborative research and less about violence prevention. While we have experienced some success, in many ways, the project has been frustrating, time-consuming and disappointing. We are reflecting and writing to understand and share our learning.

Our commitment to participating in the project of understanding violence prevention in Indigenous communities is deeply embedded in our personal and professional lives. We are both tenured Indigenous scholars working in academic Institutions. Absolon[1] is Anishinaabe kwe with a passion for Indigenous wholistic practice and methodologies in re-searching from Indigenous places of knowing. Her research and teaching are focused on Indigenous knowledge and methodologies; she has been engaged in community practice, education and Indigenous re-search for 25 years. Dion[2] is a Potawatami/Lenape re-searcher and educator with mixed Irish/French ancestry working in the field of Indigenous research and education for over 25 years. We use re-search purposefully to indicate our shared commitment to the production of knowledge that is both Indigenous and decolonizing. We hyphenate the word to re-search and in doing so promote an act of looking again at how we search and as we

[1] I have known the lead community partner on this project for 20 years. We worked together on Walking the Prevention Circle prior to the start of this project. I did not know the principal investigator or my co-author.

[2] I have collaborated with the principal investigator of this project on one other SSHRC Insight Grant. We have been colleagues for 16 years, and I consider her a mentor. Before the start of this project, I did not know either my co-author or the lead community partner.

"re-search, we re-write and we re-story ourselves" (Absolon, 2011, p. 21) by centering our epistemologies, principles, and methodologies in our search and gathering journeys.

The goal of the partnership project was to "conduct community-based research on how communities mobilize and build capacity through the Canadian and Australian Red Cross Societies' Walking the Prevention Circle (WTPC) -- a model for violence prevention in Aboriginal communities" (Cardinal and Pepler, 2011).[3] From our perspective, this research presented an opportunity to engage in a project meant to create opportunities for learning from how communities implement WTPC and re-establish wellness. Working within a team model was appealing to both of us. On this partnership grant, the Principle Investigator (PI), a senior university non-Indigenous researcher, is working in collaboration with a Lead Community Partner (LCP) who is an Indigenous person working in a non-Indigenous non-governmental organization. The Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network (PREVNet) along with the Canadian Red Cross, both non-Indigenous bodies, provide governance for the project. We were invited to join the project as co-investigators and asked to guide an Indigenous-informed research process. We conceptualized an Indigenous methodology, designed the specific steps and were responsible for training the Community Based Researchers (CBRs)[4] in the skills of data collection and analysis, along with knowledge and understanding of processes for identifying and presenting their research findings. CBRs are community members identified and hired by the participating communities. The LCP is the National Aboriginal Advisor to the Canadian Red Cross and is the driving force behind WTPC, a program that focuses on violence prevention education for Indigenous communities. The five-year project work plan entailed an ambitious schedule of program delivery, training community members in CBR methods and documenting and learning from communities' response to the programming they received.

Our vision for this project was to "break through the university's monopoly claim on knowledge and truth" (Van Katwyk & Case, 2016, p. 28), through a team approach based on Indigenous principles of shared collaboration and equitable decision-making (Horn Miller, 2013). The principles we articulated in our research plan state, "we are drawing on Aboriginal approaches and collaborating to respect Aboriginal values, understanding, methods of re-searching and decision making" (Cardinal and Peplar, 2011, p. 2). We understood this to mean that the research team agreed to engage in a research process honouring Indigenous ways of knowing and practice. As the Indigenous re-searchers, we took the lead on establishing protocols for our research process and understood that the team was committed to an Indigenous-informed process. Our meetings began with ceremony, in the presence of sacred helpers including an eagle feather, smudge, medicines, drums, and shakers. The presence of this bundle represented our commitment to honouring Indigenous knowledge and the spirit of the project. We regularly led a circle process to invoke inclusivity, equity, collaborative

[3] In its original iteration, this project was supposed to involve communities in Australia, but these partnerships did not come to fruition.

[4] In this paper we use the acronym CBR for community-based research and CBRs for community-based researchers.

discussion, and decision-making. Consultations with Indigenous team members were to occur on a regular basis, and the team leaders seemed committed to practices that respect Indigenous values of relationship building, reciprocity and wholistic practice throughout the project. Unfortunately, the team fell short on operationalizing these approaches in the longer term.

Demands from the university and partner institutions surfaced and pressures for more efficient decision-making, budget reductions and a dismissal of epistemological differences of progress over process led to compromising the commitment to Indigenous principles. Repeated conversations and requests to restore and schedule regular meetings and inclusive decision-making practices were disregarded and minimized in the spirit of efficient decision making by the project PI and LCP. In our experiences, Euro-western university researchers tend to default to everyday practices when under pressure to produce results within timelines that do not match Indigenous community or re-search processes. Inequities of voice, process and decision making are still all too common, despite engaging in collaboration and shared decision making that characterize the rhetoric of community engagement (Van Katwyk and Case, 2016). We related to this work as Indigenous researchers who resist Euro-western approaches to both research and project functioning. Accomplishing change in partnership relationships with Indigenous – non-Indigenous team compositions and community-university engagements is challenging work. Indigenous knowledge calls upon all partners involved to sit in circle, invoke the spirit of the project with ceremony and medicines, collaborate, share knowledge and make decisions within the whole. All team members are included in all aspects of the research process, in decision-making and all planning, regarding the direction of the project. Centering Indigenous knowledge, protocols, and practices in re-search requires movement from understanding the value of relationships, reciprocity, respect and equity to enacting them.

Engaging with Our Team and Communities

Our project story is connected to a larger narrative characterized by the ongoing presence of colonization in our lives. Our lives and hearts' work have been to restore Indigenous identity, land, language, culture, and traditions. We do this through our work as educators, community helpers, and re-searchers. In the academy, our worldviews, languages, traditions, and cultures guide our contributions to restoring the value of Indigenous knowledge. We were invited to be co-investigators because we are Indigenous re-searchers; we had experience with CBR, and we had relationships to the PIs through the WPC program and as colleagues. When invited to participate, we discussed Indigenous principles of practice, and it was on these principles that the project showed promise to decolonize the process and promote Indigenous community-based wellness. We agreed to participate on the basis that we would be steering Indigenous processes both on the team and in the re-search; and that the Institutional stakeholders would create a pathway for us to lead the Indigenous methodologies. Our knowledge informed the teams' processes concerning circle sharing, discussion, and decision-making. Additionally, our experience and expertise told a re-search process guided by Indigenous research methodologies for a community-based and capacity building project.

At its core CBR is about centering community needs, creating space for capacity building, and generating restorative relationship processes (Dockstater et al., 2016; Fraser & Voyageur, 2016). These were also the stated goals of our project, and for us, this meant crafting a research process grounded in Indigenous worldviews. We committed to developing and delivering a community-based research methodology. We believe that community-based approaches can be decolonizing while centering Indigenous ways of searching, and offer two brief descriptions of CBR and Indigenous methods from our project.

The following description of CBR is from the project-training manual we developed to train the Community Based Researchers in CBR, Indigenous research methodologies, ethics and knowledge gathering (Absolon & Dion, 2015). Essentially, CBR fits nicely with Indigenous ideologies and worldviews because it tends to be community defined and open to Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. Within Indigenous communities, the community's well-being is a central concern in determining action.
CBR occurs with specific parameters:

- The community benefits from the research,
- The community owns the process and controls the forms of data collection,
- It enhances community capacity and empowers community members,
- It educates, trains and develops skills of community members,
- It facilitates community-based relationships and connections, and
- It is a process that occurs over an extended period.

The research is a decolonization process in which Indigenous peoples do not have to rely on non-Indigenous researchers or to work from a non-Indigenous perspective. CBR allows Indigenous peoples to reclaim their identities, their histories and their understandings of the world around them (Absolon & Dion, 2015, p. 21).

Engagement is essential to a community-based process that honours the community's timelines and priorities (Lonczak, et al., 2013). Along with other Indigenous researchers including Brant Castellano (2004), Ermine (2005), Kovach (2009) and Wilson (2009), we recognize that engaging people from the communities involved is essential to a community-based process. We also firmly believe that Indigenous people ought to lead re-search within our communities to produce knowledge that is emancipatory and liberating out of colonialism in all its forms and impacts.

Our goal was to engage members of the communities involved to become CBRs. They are critical to meaningful research as they carry existing relationships, knowledge, and understanding of their community history and context. CBRs are the ones who, with their community, determine the means of gathering. They are involved in all aspects of the project including making meaning and presenting their community's findings. The goals of CBR are achieved through the process of working with CBRs and transferring knowledge of how to gather information and community stories that are respectful and consistent with the community culture (Lonczak et al., 2013). A principle of having CBRs is that they learn to do research that is driven by their community in a manner consistent with their Indigenous worldviews and traditions. We introduced and trained the CBRs on Indigenous research methodologies.

We believe that Indigenous research projects must be framed by and rooted in Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2009). These methodologies, by design, create space for each community to determine which methods will emerge as most useful and this depends on each community's landscape, language, culture, and traditions. Our manual states that "Indigenous methodologies are methods that are wholistic, relational, inter-relational and interdependent with Indigenous philosophies, beliefs, and ways of life" (Absolon & Dion, 2015, p. 23). From this perspective, our goal was to do on-going capacity building and training throughout the project contributing to the restoration of Indigenous community presence, voice, and process.

Beginning Milestones

The project started with a five-year work plan outlining the intention of bringing four communities from Canada into the research in Year One; in Year Two we would add a fifth Canadian community and two communities from Australia. We had a reasonably rigorous plan for identifying, hiring and training the CBRs. At the request of the PI and the LCP, we developed an Indigenous tool to help CBRs produce their baseline story. We called this tool the Starting Point Story (SPS). It provided the CBRs with a specific task to begin their work. The tool was included in the Training Manual we developed to train CBRs in data collection. By the end of Year Two, we had hoped to have two CBRs working in each of the seven Indigenous communities involved in the project. Training was supposed to happen in each of the five years. In January of 2014, two years after receiving the grant, we did initial training with only one CBR in attendance. It was a challenge, but we saw it as an excellent opportunity to pilot the manual. A year later, with an improved manual, we conducted a second successful training with six CBRs present. In December 2016, we had a follow-up session, and the CBRs from three communities in Canada presented their Starting Point Stories. With three communities (now four) ready to proceed, the LCP was to deliver the Red Cross Ten Steps training in all four Indigenous communities in Canada during April 2017.

Identifying Moments of Success

We have a shared vision and a commitment to understanding and contributing to violence prevention within Indigenous communities. We began the project with feelings of promise and hope and probably with naïveté, thinking that it would be productive, rewarding and impactful. We were optimistic because we had existing respectful relationships among the core team members. In our conversation we shared:

> *We have genuinely shared our work together. Commitment, investment and love for Indigenous people, culture, Creator, land and all that we are moving to reclaim, restore, reconnect and re-search our Indigenous knowledge and ways of being, seeing and doing. Our shared capacity to speak the truth of history, the re-search process and frustrations with working within a colonizer / colonized relationship.*

Working together, we, the co-authors of this paper, have had the opportunity to uphold the value of relational accountability to each other and committed to consulting with one another and to a shared decision-making process. We would not agree to anything without informing and connecting first. Through this, we learned from and with each other and supported each other. Rather than working alone with sole responsibility for reminding, advocating, and teaching others to consider Indigenous people's experiences and perspectives, we collaborated and received many lessons from this project. It has been a significant success.

We approached the project highly invested in the Indigenous CBR process. Working on a national scale with a broad scope was challenging, and it took some time to get the project launched. Start-up challenges meant only starting when CBRs were identified and ready. Delays resulting from events happening in the community took precedence over the research projects' timelines. The research team and research sites span the country, and while there have been challenges, the team has made significant strides. Although our work with the communities has been challenging, we have also had opportunities to work in limited ways with a group of CBRs. Listening to their Starting Point Story presentations was a celebratory moment. We witnessed capacity building in action as the CBRs demonstrated their developing research, writing and presenting skills.

Since the project began, we have witnessed the benefits of employing Indigenous CBRs who have been trained to respectfully hold up their own community's knowledge and history. Our goal as Indigenous researchers was to ensure they benefit from our training and engage with their communities in a manner that respects their community's priorities. How the CBRs have engaged with the process deserves acknowledgment. For example, at a project meeting, we witnessed presentations by the CBRs on their Starting Point Story. The following is a brief description and list of what we observed of their learning. In their presentations the CBRs

- demonstrate that they have become knowledge keepers of their own community's history and facilitate their community's history becoming visible;
- work at sharing the history in their community for their community's benefit;
- together with the team, learn to understand some of the root causes of their community's challenges;
- build and form new relationships with one another that cross language and cultural boundaries;
- oresent their community's story while understanding the forces that challenge their community;
- see their knowledge as valuable to the community leaders to assist with applications for funding and for identifying and responding to community needs;
- show what they learned about working together and sharing knowledge as they created community information banners, posters, and presentations about their community;

- developed technical skill while working with media, photoshop, graphing and audio recordings;
- searched out and worked with community photographs, newsletters, and historical records;
- shared their learning from community Elders;
- reflected their understanding of how their community changed over time, and
- experienced the power of talking, sharing, learning and growing in their relationship with one another.

CBR, using Indigenous methodologies, is healing and reconnects people to each other, their community's story and journey. It is personal, meaningful and emotional. Despite the differences across the communities, the CBRs all seem to be having rich learning experiences. They have traveled and navigated dogsleds, airports, ferries, and buses, and have managed to make their journeys back home. The pathways they are forging are pathways of sharing their histories comprised of land, culture, tradition, colonization and disrupting forces. The CBRs are working hard at restoring their community knowledge about itself and in the process restoring their relationship to each other. During the presentations, one of the CBRs expressed how she now feels visible in her community and that is a dramatic difference for her. Before this project, her experience was one of absence and uncertainty of not knowing her voice or her capacities.

The presentations revealed that in a CBR design using Indigenous methodologies, the impact on learning with the Indigenous CBRs is empowering and their learning evidenced knowledge building and skill development. For us, it was exciting and rewarding. The CBRs have learned so much already, and they have only started their Starting Point Stories; they have become community historians, knowledge keepers and elders in training. The knowledge mobilization has begun, and the beauty of Indigenous methods in a CBR design is that knowledge mobilization is embedded in the process of learning, sharing, and growing within one's community.

Engaging in Process: Identifying Challenges and Tensions

Competing needs, timetables, and priorities are common sources of discontent on large-scale research teams where to a certain extent challenges are expected. Engaging in re-search with a blended team that involved collaborating with Indigenous communities addressing issues of violence prevention, we were prepared for challenges. Looking back on our project, we have come to understand how unresolved problems became sources of serious tension. Drawing on Dockstater et al. (2016), who describe their own challenging experiences doing research that crosses academic-Indigenous community boundaries, we now turn our attention to identify and discuss critical challenges we encountered. Our experience of the project was impacted by core differences in worldviews, language, pace and protocols, political, academic and social pressures, and capacity issues.

Challenges of Scope and Interest

As Indigenous researchers invited to participate in a project that included communities spread across a large geographic area, we believed that we could develop a hybrid model of CBR that would work. If the communities were seriously committed to the project, the challenges of distance and differences would be manageable. A hybrid model would require investment in relationships between the funded academic researchers and the communities. Our first step was to develop the CBR training manual (mentioned earlier) on CBR, Indigenous research, ethics and data collection and do so in a relevant manner. As we worked, we were challenged not only by the distance and differences between the communities involved but by the distance between the communities and ourselves. The gap was both material and ideological. While they had agreed to the research project, their capacity for and commitment to CBR was unclear.

At the time of writing this paper, challenges with community engagement were increasing as was our frustration, rooted in what we were experiencing as a loss of commitment to the process. As time passed without significant progress, pressures from the funding agencies and partner institutions were contributing to the collapse of a process that was supposed to be driven by Indigenous values and methods. As pressure mounted, the team leaders resorted to 'taken for granted' ways of working that resulted in a return to researching colonized ways. A challenge that seemed to be rooted in the project scope became a tension rooted in lack of progress caused by a lack of attention to relationships and a commitment to CBR principles.

Challenges of Community Ownership

Reflecting on our experiences as co-investigators on this project our primary concern was with making progress in a good way.

> *There is a gap in the relationship between the lead Indigenous researchers and the CBRs. This gap is reflective of and contributing to a problem. Over the years there has been little opportunity for us to meet with the CBRs in the communities, to see Walking the Prevention Circle training in action, to understand and support the community engagement process. How and why should the communities trust the process if they've never met the Indigenous researchers on the project? How are the CBRs supposed to connect with us if we have never been to their communities? Who has cultivated relationships of trust with the communities or is this also part of the problem? Maybe this relationship doesn't exist?*

For us, community ownership of, commitment to, and investment in the research process are required for a successful project. When our training sessions were scheduled, rescheduled and then rescheduled again, we came to realize that there was a problem. We asked ourselves "Are the communities genuinely committed to doing both the Walking the Prevention Circle program and the research? Was a lack of commitment contributing to the delays?"

Issues of community ownership were further exacerbated by distance between the communities and us. While we were providers of the research model and the lead instructors for the CBRs, we were not on the front line establishing relationships with the communities nor were we invited to travel to and meet with the communities involved in the project. The unpredictability of community engagement required flexibility and adaptability; as experienced researchers, we were aware of those needs. We know that community timelines are more important than the institutional deadlines; however, the lack of community ownership of the research and the lack of connection between the Indigenous researchers and the communities added to tensions between the research team partners.

Tensions Resulting From the Research Team's Lack of Investment in Process

As time passed, we found ourselves conversing with each other in an attempt to understand our increasing frustrations. Progress on the project was stalled, and we did not know what was going on in the communities. Collaborative research projects are often structured in such a way that team members are dependent on each other for access to the community sites. In our project, this contributed to the creation of tensions within the team. Cultivating positive relationships based on trust between all members of the research team and the communities is necessary to avoid gatekeeping as a strategy of control. We tried to engage with the team, we were committed to the time and energy required, but our research partners dismissed our calls for regular meetings to discuss the challenges. As Koster, Baccar, Lemelin, 2012) observe, "The research interaction must be based on respect and trust, where the community knows the researcher and the purpose and intent of his/her work and they approve" (p. 209). Clarifying roles and responsibilities is a positive and proactive step, yet in many cases this process breaks down. Excluding team members from access to the research sites, failing to make time for discussion and decision-making about schedules, budgets and changes to the project focus can be particularly damaging to research team relationships and threaten the possibility of accomplishing project goals.

Investigating the layers of frustration, confusion and lack of progress in accomplishing our research, we came to realize that not all team members were comfortable with the CBR model, nor were they ready to commit the time and energy required to make the process work. While we knew from the start that members of our team were coming to the table with different objectives, we thought that a hybrid model of CBR was going to be possible. We now realize that our purposes were not only different, they conflicted. Burnette & Billiot (2015) explain that mainstream and Indigenous researchers often come to projects with differing ideas of purpose: "mainstream research may focus on knowledge development, whereas Indigenous research may focus on making meaningful contributions to the Indigenous community along with knowledge expansion" (p. 6). These observations expose different ideas about what knowledge matters. Within the mainstream construct, researchers want knowledge about the community to justify or promote a particular program. Ultimately the research is intended to construct knowledge that serves the researchers' objectives. Indigenous CBR focuses on communities creating knowledge that is of use to the community (Smith, 1999). Finding a process capable of sustaining both researcher and community needs requires patience, respect, time, energy, and a willingness to work in service of accomplishing each other's goals. In essence, it requires the creation of ethical spaces where "researchers and community members [are able to] acknowledge and accept differing worldviews and address unequal power relations (Broad & Reyes, 2008, p.130). We recognized the need for dialogue and reflection in a research project aimed at transforming colonialism and power relations. It seemed that our partners did not understand that our requests for increased engagements and meetings would facilitate a much needed ethical space.

Tensions in language and wording. Wording and language differences emerged throughout the project. One example is that in our project, the mainstream researchers wanted us to develop a 'baseline data' instrument. As Indigenous researchers working outside of an empirical frame, the notion of starting with a measurement of the community's state so that one could then measure the impact of a program felt like an alienating and pathologizing step, and we resisted creating one. In response to this challenge, we reframed the idea of a baseline to fit our practice and used language that reflected the CBR process by developing a tool we named the Starting Point Story. Rather than a measurement tool, we created a tool that allowed CBRs to tell their community's story.

As the project progressed, we experienced tensions related to letters of consent. We proposed that the communities use their language and words for their consent forms (if they were going to use them) and debated with team members about this issue. We worked to reframe language in our training manual to be accessible and relevant to our CBRs. At times these conversations with the larger team were tense, and it was at these times that we began to see that power and decision-making was shifting.

Tensions in communication and in decision making. In our conversation about communication and decision-making, we shared our frustrations.

> *Communication between the research team is an ongoing challenge. We press for opportunities to express concerns we want to refocus on the original intention of the project. We speak up – wanting to meet and resolve confusion, frustration and team disconnection. Our questions and concerns about process including community control, researchers learning and capacity building along with relationships between team members are lost in the demand to meet deadlines and accomplish outputs.*

On this project, we were caught off guard when significant decisions were made in the absence of whole team discussions. It contributed to the distress and anxiety we associate with the project. On a regular basis, we, the co-authors, met and discussed issues. In the absence of full team meetings, we created space to connect, step outside of our experience, critically reflect and apply a decolonizing analysis. For us, this shift felt empowering and hopeful that change was possible. We were working to construct critical understandings and move forward.

Although the team had a stated commitment to implementing an Indigenous model of decision-making, we frequently found a colonial hierarchical, top-down process being used. Being at the bottom of the top-down model positions us as having to bear the weight of decisions made in the absence of our input. We are critical of this model and believe the process fosters complacency and even rebellion (Horn Miller, 2013, p. 117).

Engaging in Decolonizing and Building Insight

> *We are paying attention to the way internalized colonialism operates within each of us. Even as we work to understand it, colonialism continues to impact our actions and interactions particularly when we are working within institutions steeped in colonial practices.*

The struggle within our project was a struggle for decolonizing and Indigenizing research and knowledge production. Looking back, we see our conversations as acts of seeking truth out of colonialism; writing about it is our transgression; emancipatory knowledge emerges from critical reflection and analysis. In order to understand the experiences that are at times confusing and frustrating, we have turned to critical liberation theorists (Memmi, 1965; Freire, 1970; Littlebear, 2000; Grande 2004), and our Elders (Dr. Jo-anne Dellaire, Dr. Duke Redbird, Dr. Lauri Gilchrist, Herb Nabigon ban and Banakonda Kennedy Kish Bell) who have laid foundations of dialogue and consciousness-raising. Decolonizing requires us to re-examine our situations and remain committed to developing a critical consciousness. As Memmi (1965) explained, it is possible to have contempt for the colonizer and experience admiration and attraction at the same time. We admire the space our non-Indigenous peers occupy while striving to carve spaces for our Indigeneity to dance and sing from who we are, not what others think we should be. We can be critical of the structures of colonialism and reach for transformation within them. As lead researchers, we worked to promote equity through circle work and by appreciating all voices in discussions related to the project. We could look the other way and remain silent so as not to generate discomfort within the team but to ignore colonialisms' presence would be dismissive of an opportunity for critical growth and the sharing of 'emancipatory knowledge.' Working within colonial settings, none of us can entirely escape its grip on how we relate and operate (Friere, 2008; Memmi, 1965). Decolonization requires a commitment of time, energy and process to work through the intersections of personal internalization of colonizer, colonized, oppressed, oppressor, and all the possible external manifestations that emerge in team dynamics. Decolonizing re-search calls for a shift in how people relate and respond to those who occupy the role of boss, power holder or decision maker. Colonial modes of decision-making are a stark contrast to democratic models existing within Indigenous knowledge systems (Horn Miller 2013). Our critical consciousness, decolonizing and Indigenizing selves fuel essential encounters that shift the colonial norm. We question and press for change in our work together. The macro aggressions of colonization upon Indigenous peoples are replicated in micro contexts such as research teams. The reality is that when pressures build and demands increase, Indigenous methods and Indigenous re-searchers become cumbersome, get compromised and that which is comfortable, familiar and efficient dominates.

For us, Indigenizing means that we are actively relearning our languages, cultures, and Indigeneity to inform how we engage in research. More specifically, it was crucial that Indigenous knowledge and principles of equity, inclusivity, voice and circle work informed our team's research process. Our role as Indigenous re-searchers was to consciously reach for reclamation of Indigeneity. We are now investigating the structures we want to transform out of, including–for example–how the demands of SSHRC grants and academic institutions create parameters that don't nurture authentic process, community engagement, or time for dialogue collaborative knowledge construction. With a blended team and diverse community and institutional partners, dilemmas emerge that challenge the relationships and principles of CBR, and the reality is often there are no guidelines to navigate difficult issues. The literature reflects that we are not alone in navigating landscapes where the nuances, undercurrents and unpacked ideologies of decolonizing re-search present challenges, are messy, and require pauses, dialogue and time to work through rough patches (Dockstater et al., 2016). Knowing key principles is not sufficient, and we suggest that improved transparency and systems that acknowledge specific markers of authority reproducing relationships of power, and control in research involving Indigenous people are necessary to improve practices (Ninomiya & Pollock, 2016; Van Katwyk & Case, 2016). While conflicts and tensions are inevitable in CBR, it is how these uncomfortable moments are addressed that matters (Kovach, 2009). In our view, making these moments transparent is a useful exercise. As more researchers and community stakeholders write frankly about their positionality, challenges, and solutions to the lived realities of putting Indigenous CBR concepts and principles into place, the more we will further the work of decolonizing research (Ninomiya & Pollock, 2016, p. 35).

Challenges experienced in this project are also rooted in the worldviews, experiences, and perspectives that team members bring to the work. These differences impact our ways of communicating, our actions and interactions, our priorities and decisions. Although the project began in a good way, as time passed with little progress being made, we saw signs that pointed to a lack of support for Indigenous methodologies. We engaged in this project because of its intentions. We are passionate about projects that work to reclaim our ancestral memories and place within Creation (Hampton, 1995). Projects rooted in a desire to decolonize, Indigenize and promote anti-colonialism at all levels of work are worthy of our time and energy. Burnette and Billiot (2015) explain, "Unless the intricacies and complexities of conducting research with Indigenous communities are deconstructed, they may well serve as barriers to the broader project of decolonization, and decolonization is integral for the improved well-being of Indigenous peoples" (p. 2) and all people. We all need to work at being consciously aware of the complex histories, values, goals aspirations, fears, and anxieties that impact team and community partnerships for better or worse.

We also had to look in the mirror unpacking and understanding our experiences. We are reflecting on how constraints on our time impacted the project and contributed to the issues and challenges.

> *We are asking ourselves how we are implicated in disrupting the team. Our schedules are busy, we both have other commitments, we're not the PIs on this project consequently we have to be PI on other projects and this project doesn't get the time and attention from us that it deserves. We are reliant on the PI and the LCP to manage the budget, community engagement and cultivate community relationships. Most importantly we are relying on the*

> *leadership team to have trust in the CBR process and build trust in the communities. Are we asking too much? How can the leadership team trust a process that they don't know or understand?*

Tensions in Indigenous-mainstream research contexts are difficult to navigate and require time and attention. It is the responsibility of researchers to create time and space to critically reflect, discuss and make decisions together (Burnette & Billiot, 2015). Research teams comprised of both Indigenous/non-Indigenous members researching Indigenous communities must have ongoing discussions about who is driving the project and whose agendas are being met. If knowledge produced through research is going to be of use to Indigenous communities, it must be framed by Indigenous and decolonizing frameworks; otherwise it is merely another case of hegemonic knowledge production.

Engaging with Consciousness: Our Words of Caution

> *At this moment in the project we feel silenced, and there is no space to talk about power, control, hierarchy and the ongoing imposition of colonizing ways of working together. We are coming to understand that our ways of being and doing are made difficult by requirements and frameworks imposed on us by the non-Indigenous institution including research granting institutions.*

We believe that working through challenges requires ongoing dialogue and team-based decision-making. The values we maintained in our process have been our openness to discussion and decision making with each other, a commitment to being available to meet and plan, and a willingness to deconstruct and engage in critical decolonizing conversations. In this section, we provide a series of cautions to researchers who are committed to this practice. While it is challenging and tensions arise, we still believe it is possible and worth the struggle. Having learned some lessons, we are now sharing them here.

Consciously Consider Invitations to Collaborate

We get invited to work on projects led by non-Indigenous academics. It is alluring because the pressure to produce and engage in research is a reality for all of us in the academy. Young Indigenous scholars are vulnerable to being invited to participate and add Indigenous presence on research projects. In spite of the pressure to engage, take the time to consider the degree to which one's input will be included. When invited to collaborate, discuss issues of community ownership and investment and ask how the process of community engagement will unfold. Engage in conversations about who is leading the project, what the motives are and who will benefit from this search. Talk about issues of power in process and decision-making. These are all legitimate conversations when considering an invitation to collaborate.

Assert Yourself on the Team

Identify research assistants and other necessary support you will require. Assert your right to a budget and initiate conversations about processes related to conflict resolution, team protocols, and decision-making. Doing Indigenous non-Indigenous research in Indigenous communities is complicated, and issues of power and control will surface. Be aware of the tendency for self-doubt, for questioning legitimacy of place and propensity to attribute the confusion to one's own inability to understand the research language, process or material. This tendency can fuel non-productive anxiety, frustration, and exasperation. Exercise caution when invited to participate or when inviting others to join as the Indigenous "expert" on a research grant. It can be difficult to say no to senior colleagues especially when they are also your mentors and friends. Joining research partnerships needs to be done with careful consideration and project protocols in place. Ask about writing, decision-making practices and access to funds. Be aware of time commitments and the implications of not having enough time.

Engage with Critical Reflection and Conscientious Unpacking of Colonial Methodologies

Talk about decolonizing and anti-colonial methods and take the time required to engage in decolonizing spaces. Discuss Indigenous scholarship to gain an appreciation and understanding of team members' awareness of critical Indigenous perspectives and knowledge relative to Indigenous re-search. Not all people wanting to engage in Indigenous research partnerships are taking the critical steps necessary to decolonize and work in anti-colonial ways. We encourage potential teams to talk about this and to discern if team members are on their journey of decolonizing. Are principles of dialogue and critical reflection embedded in the teams' process of working together and is this important to your philosophy of research? Are team members willing to talk about their fears, capacities and what they will bring and contribute to the project?

Engage in Meetings and Discussions about How the Research Methodology and Process May Unfold

Talk about language, terminology, and wording. Have conversations that deconstruct language and meaning behind the use of jargon and alienating terms. Make use of Indigenous language translations as a tool to clarify definitions. In terms of re-searching and affirming Indigenous values and priorities related to process and protocols, don't let the funding grant deadlines generate pressure to default to the PIs. If a project team wants to do a CBR methodology, it is crucial that all partners invest in the time to discuss and understand what it is they are seeking to accomplish. Partners must understand and be knowledgeable about CBR and how to work with CBRs. They must have knowledge and faith in the process, in the value of Indigenous knowledge and protocols and understand how to be supportive in all areas of the research. When timelines are stressed, don't allow the process to be compromised for the sake of Institutional pressures.

Engage in Conversations about the Scope of the Project and What is Realistic

Time and distance warrant questions, and we caution researchers that projects that are national or international in scope require time and travel. Is there room in the project budget to support you and the commitments that are crucial to authentically nurture relationship building across time and distance by all members of the research team? Know that you have choice as an Indigenous researcher on an interdisciplinary team and that you are not bound to consent to what is familiar.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous partnerships must be grounded in Indigenous knowledge, worldviews and practices and research must be done in service of restoring humanity based on respect, love, humility, courage, truth, honesty and wisdom.

Conclusion

Our cautionary tale is told to generate critical discussions and contribute to creating consciously responsive and responsible research partnerships. We described how we become intertwined within academic organizations, SSHRC funding structures and the partnerships between individuals, organization, and communities. The layers and interplay within and amongst the multiplicity of relationships create a complex myriad of challenges and tensions. Challenges, when unattended, result in tensions that can unravel a team. We paid attention to our emotions and read them as a signal that there was something wrong. We chose to learn from and make sense of what we were experiencing. This process of critically deconstructing our experience aids in bringing balance to experiences of disempowerment, marginalization, and exclusion. Our analysis has moved from feelings of uncertainty toward understanding.

Having done the work of learning, we are compelled to share what we have learned even when running the risk of transgression. We are responsible for asking how to apply our understanding to create change. Through this paper, we have created time and space for critical reflections on our experiences. Paulo Freire (2008) teaches that with love and humanizing encounters, the oppressed will liberate their oppressor and that dialogue, reflection, and action are pathways to emancipating ourselves from internalized colonialism in how we engage in our partnerships. The positions we occupy on this project and in life matter. We are committed to accessing the power to speak and assert difference in service of accomplishing research that will be of use to Indigenous communities.

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How are Educational Researchers Interacting with End-users to Increase Impact?

Amanda Cooper

Abstract There has been increased interest in how researchers might collaborate with end users to increase the impact of their work. In Canada, efforts to extend research impact beyond academia are called knowledge mobilization (KMb). This study surveyed SSHRC- funded educational researchers to assess their KMb efforts in relation to three areas: stakeholder engagement (target audience and frequency of interaction), dissemination mechanisms (intermediaries, networks, media, online tools), and research impact (research-related, service/practice, policy, societal). Findings: 70% of researchers reported regularly interacting with target audiences. Types of interactions included getting to know target audiences (71%), discussing research results (65%), and dedicating resources for capacity building (45%). Researchers reported impacts in relation to research (76%), service/practice (67%), and policy (35%), and societal impacts (35%). Researchers felt very well prepared to create plain language summaries of their work (54%), and collaborate with stakeholders (45%), but much less prepared to deal with media (32%), work with intermediaries (22%), or use technology to disseminate their work (16%). Implications for engaged scholarship are articulated in five areas: prioritization and co-production; packaging and push; facilitating pull; exchange; and improving climate for research use by building demand.

KeyWords research impact, research evaluation, engaged scholarship, knowledge mobilization

The context of research and its evaluation in social systems has changed considerably in the past two decades. The rise of research impact agendas globally has increased interest in how researchers collaborate with non-academic audiences to increase the impact of their work (Cuthill, 2010; Hicks, 2012; Phipps, Cummings, Pepler, Craig, & Cardinal, in press). Alongside the rise of the research impact agenda has been a global interest in the field of knowledge mobilization (KMb) (Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2007). KMb is about how research finds its way (or fails to find its way) into the hands of those in communities that could benefit from its use. There is a widely acknowledged gap between research and both policy and practice across sectors (Davies, Nutley, & Smith, 2000; Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Lemieux-Charles & Champagne, 2004; Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999). Research often fails to have the impact it might, due to a lack of capacity to translate this work for end-users in non-academic settings and mobilize policymakers, practitioners, and community members to apply its findings. Due to this well-documented problem, there has been an increased focus on KMb sectors. The rationale for prioritizing KMb is persuasive. Historical applications of evidence in countless areas of social policy have seen improved outcomes and benefits for citizens in society (such as handwashing in health, use of seatbelts in transportation, anti-smoking legislation in certain jurisdictions such as Canada, among many others). This article explores these issues using theoretical perspectives and conceptualization from KMb and engaged scholarship (outlined more fully in the literature review) and presents data from a survey of Canadian researchers exploring their interactions with educational stakeholders, their level of preparedness for collaborating with non-academic audiences, and the perceived impact of their funded research projects in four areas: research-related impacts, practice impacts, policy impacts, and broader societal impacts.

Literature Review

This literature review is organized according to the major themes arising from the literature on KMb: stakeholder engagement, dissemination mechanisms, and research impact. The review begins by discussing the foundations of engaged scholarship using Boyer's (1990) seminal work on scholarship reconsidered and its implications for stakeholder engagement, before discussing how KMb is being conceptualized and operationalized in national research infrastructure around the globe. Next, we outline dissemination mechanisms that researchers can use to carry out new mandates to reach broader audiences, including intermediary organizations (bridging organizations that facilitate connections between research producers and user communities), media, and web-based platforms. The final section explores research impact by adapting a framework from the health sector (Kuruvilla, Mays, Pleasant, & Walt, 2006) that categorizes impacts in four areas: research, service (practice), policy, and society.

Defining knowledge Mobilization, Engaged Scholarship and Implications for Stakeholder Engagement

Traditional academic outputs, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, are failing to have impact outside of academia (Nutley et al., 2007; Wixted & Beaudry, 2012). Boyer's (1990) seminal work *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate* argued that academic priorities and traditional research need to be broadened:

> Knowledge is not necessarily developed in…a linear manner. The arrow of causality can, and frequently does, point in both directions. Theory surely leads to practice. But practice also leads to theory….viewed from this perspective, a more comprehensive, more dynamic understanding of scholarship can be considered. (pp.15−16)

Boyer (1990) suggested four areas important to his conception of scholarship: discovery (original empirical work that advances societal knowledge), integration (synthesis across disciplines, across topics or across time), application (later termed "scholarship of engagement") which involves faculty members working outside the university with communities and non-academic audiences, and teaching and learning (study of teaching and learning processes) (Figure 1).

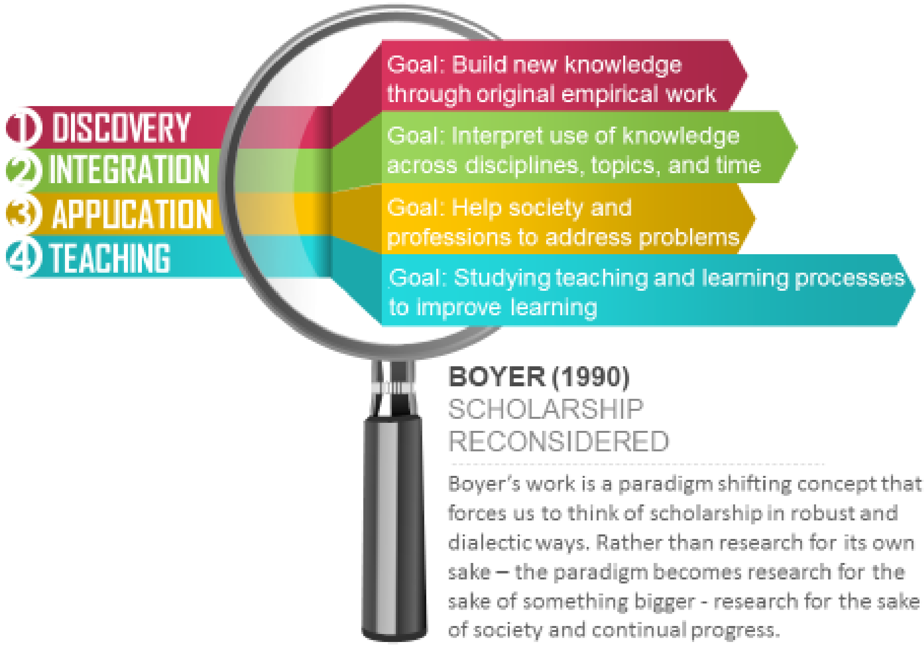

Figure 1: Scholarship reconsidered: Discovery, integration, application, and teaching

Boyer's work fundamentally shifted the way many scholars began conceptualizing the role of scholarship as moving beyond research and academic publications. Boyer's vision of the professoriate incorporated the idea of academics as public intellectuals with an important role to play in societal improvement efforts. In many ways, the KMb and research impact movements (if one accepts the underlying spirit of these movements as societal transformation) echo Boyer's notions of the role of scholarship beyond the ivory tower. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is the primary funder of social science research in the nation. SSHRC has increasingly been prioritizing knowledge mobilization (KMb) and partnerships (through various partnership development grants and connections grants). SSHRC defines KMb as follows:

> Knowledge mobilization: The reciprocal and complementary flow and uptake of research knowledge between researchers, knowledge brokers and knowledge users – both within and beyond academia – in such a way that may benefit users and create positive impacts within Canada and/or internationally, and, ultimately, has the potential to enhance the profile, reach and impact of social sciences and humanities research. (SSHRC, 2014)

The increased emphasis by research funders on non-academic engagement and impact is shifting the way researchers conceptualize and go about their work. A more recent iteration of this goal is the emerging field of engaged scholarship:

> Engaged scholarship (defined as a form of collaborative inquiry between academics and practitioners that leverages their different perspectives to generate useful knowledge) is based on the belief that higher-quality, more relevant research results from true collaboration and from integrating the diverse perspectives of multiple stakeholders. (Bowen & Graham, 2013, p.12)

Many funders across the globe are changing the way they talk about research, its goals, and its ultimate impact. And most are moving towards conceptions of multi-stakeholder collaboration in the pursuit of greater research impact. The rationale behind the move to collaborative networks of diverse stakeholders is that research has failed to have the impact it might, due to a lack of involvement of relevant end-users throughout various stages of the research, dissemination, and implementation processes (Cooper, Levin, & Campbell, 2009; Mitton, Adair, Mckenzie, Patten, & Perry, 2007; Nutley et al., 2007).

End-users have the potential to inform various aspects of the research process: from shaping what questions are asked and interpreting research results in relation to a specific context or user group, to providing input on what messages and modalities are best suited to a particular target audience (Cuthill, 2010; Martin, 2010; Muirhead & Woolcock, 2008; Paynter, 2014; Saija, 2014). In light of these developments, it is important to explore the ways in which researchers are engaging target audiences of their research, the dissemination mechanisms they utilize to reach audiences outside the academy, and their perceptions of the impact of these efforts on policy, practice and broader society.

Dissemination Mechanisms

Exploring research dissemination and utilization is not new (Knott & Wildavsky, 1980; Weiss, 1979), despite recent coinages of terms such as KMb or engaged scholarship that provide more robust understandings of how to co-create research impact (to be further discussed in the next section). Lavis, Ross, McLeod, and Gildiner (2003) categorize KMb processes as follows: producer push, user pull, and exchange. Producer push refers to efforts undertaken by researchers and universities (the producers of research) and includes publications and related products that might increase research use among end-users. User pull refers to efforts that are initiated by intermediary organizations, researchers, or by the practice organizations to build systems and processes for end-users to find, evaluate, share, and apply research in professional contexts. Exchange efforts include collaboration of stakeholders (researchers, policymakers, practitioners) with two-way exchange from researcher-user, but also from user-researcher, in order to address the issues lamented in the field of research as being largely irrelevant to policy and practice spheres in common academic formats (journal articles). Exchange efforts refer to the collaboration of stakeholders (researchers, policymakers, practitioners), a process which moves in two directions: from the researcher to the user and from the user to the researcher. Such a two-way exchange can address the irrelevance of much of the research that appears in common academic formats (journal articles) for policies and practices in the fields which are the object of the research. It is important to consider the usefulness of various dissemination mechanisms if we are to learn more about which KMb processes have the potential to yield the most impact with end-users.

Mechanisms for dissemination are changing rapidly with advancements in technology, and also with the emergence of social media. However, little is known about the frequency with which researchers use media and online dissemination mechanisms for their work. A study by Edelstein, Shah, and Levin (2012) found that

> although the internet has become a primary access point for research…. online uptake of research is not as robust as might be thought. Passive strategies of information provision do not, based on these data, seem very effective or efficient, and our findings suggest that organizations interested in sharing research need more active knowledge mobilization strategies. (p.11)

Because online dissemination mechanisms do not necessarily have a wide reach and impact, KMb scholars suggest that intermediary organizations (third party educational organizations that act as bridges between research producers and users) could improve KMb efforts through tailoring research products for target audiences, facilitating embedded service learning, and through many other functions that seek to make research more engaging, accessible, and useful to end-users (Cooper, 2013). We were interested in learning whether or not researchers were working with intermediary organizations to increase their KMb efforts and in what capacities.

Research Impact

Research impact is an important focus of KMb; the rationale underpinning the KMb movement is that research should positively affect the daily activity of professionals working in public services. There have been some attempts to develop frameworks to measure research impact in the health sector (e.g., Kitson, Harvey, & McCormack, 1998; Kuruvilla et al., 2006; Lavis, Ross, McLeod, & Gildiner, 2003). Kuruvilla et al. (2006) provided a catalogue of potential impacts from research in the health sector grouped into four categories: research-related impacts, policy impacts, service impacts, and societal impacts (Figure 2).

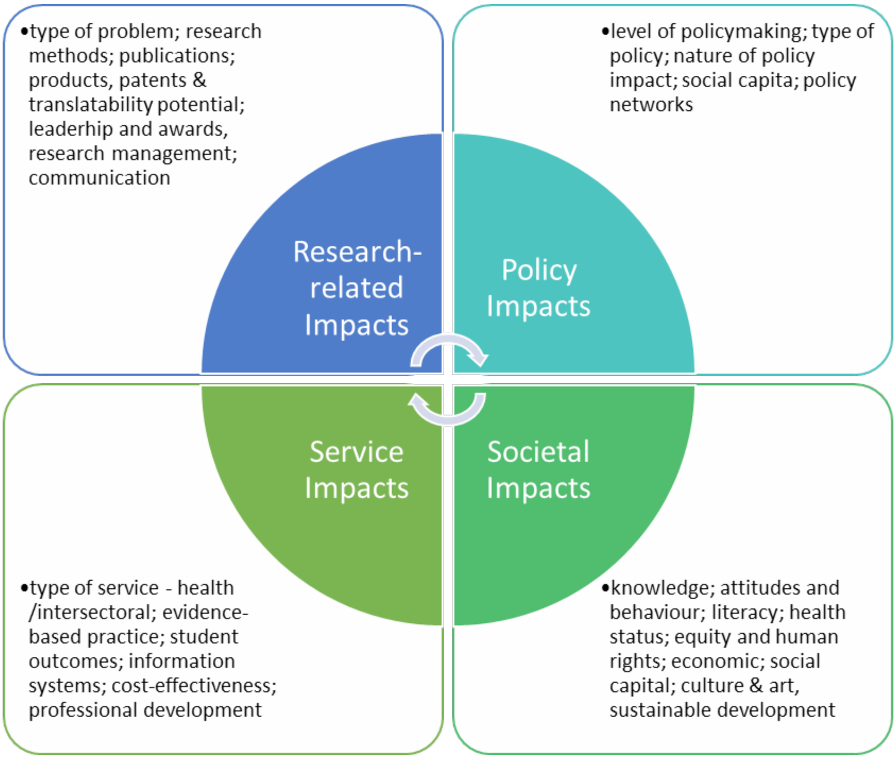

Figure 2: Conceptualizing research impact in public services (adapted from Kuruvilla et al., 2006)

Canadian researchers were surveyed about the perceived effects of their work using Kuruvilla's impact categories modified for education and asked researchers to provide examples of these impacts where possible.

Methods

Keeping their names and purpose hidden, the team surveyed SSHRC-funded researchers in Canada holding grants related to education in order to assess researchers' interaction with end-users, proportion of time spent on academic versus non-academic outreach and dissemination mechanisms used in relation to intermediaries, media and web-based tools.

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

The conceptual framework identifies three areas mentioned in the literature that were explored in relation to researchers' KMb efforts: stakeholder engagement (target audiences, frequency of interaction), dissemination mechanisms (intermediaries, networks, media, online tools), and impact (research-related, service, policy, societal) in relation to KMb efforts in relation to academic and non-academic outreach and production (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Conceptual framework to explore KMb efforts of Canadian researchers

The overarching research question was "What KMb efforts are being made by Canadian education researchers to make their findings more accessible and available to the broader education community?" Table 1 articulates further research questions in relation to each section of the conceptual framework.

Sampling and Recruitment

The sample was identified from the online SSHRC database of successful grant holders using the following parameters: (i) Program – Standard Research Grants, (ii) Discipline – Education, and (iii) Projects completed no later than 2011. Deleting duplications, 278 researchers were identified by the sampling strategy. It was important that grants had been completed a minimum of five years before, since the literature suggests that impact takes time after the completion of a project.

Table 1. Research questions linked to the conceptual framework

Conceptual Framework Dimension	Research Questions
Stakeholder Engagement	What educational stakeholders do researchers believe their research is most relevant for? What is the nature and frequency of interaction with target audiences?
KMb efforts	How much time do researchers spend on academic versus non-academic products, events, and networks?

Conceptual Framework Dimension	Research Questions
Dissemination Mechanisms	How prepared do researchers feel to engage in different types of non-academic outreach activities? What dissemination mechanisms are researchers using in education?
Impacts	How do researchers' perceive the impacts (research-related, policy, service and societal impacts) of their work?

Our team (working anonymously) hoped that sampling already completed projects would mean that researchers would have published the findings from the final years of their study, and would have a more comprehensive understanding of whether or not uptake had occurred through the various dissemination mechanisms they had employed.

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey included a demographic section as well as sections corresponding to the conceptual framework on stakeholder engagement, dissemination mechanisms, research impact, and KMb efforts more broadly including questions relating to academic versus non-academic efforts (link to survey removed for blinding). After survey construction, face validity was assessed through piloting the survey with a small group of researchers and key informants from the field of KMb/KT who had expertise (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). Recommendations were integrated into the survey. The survey was not implemented multiple times; hence, reliability measures were not ascertained. The survey had face and content validity as a measure of KMb activity of Canadian researchers; however, I am unsure of its reliability (consistency of a survey's measurement) (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). An online survey was distributed by email to the list of 278 researchers compiled from the SSHRC database. Four email reminders were sent to increase the response rate. Ninety-seven respondents chose to participate in the study from across Canada, a 35% response rate, which is average for an online survey (Kittleson, 1995). Criterion validity was not provided because each survey question and variable asked about discrete and unique items; hence, a particular concept was not distributed throughout the survey. Survey results were exported into Excel for cleaning and then transferred into SPSS to calculate descriptive statistics (i.e., means, medians, standard deviations, range). Qualitative responses from the survey (such as the descriptions of research impact) were imported and analyzed in NVivo. Thematic coding was conducted using areas from conceptual framework (such as Kuruvilla's four impact categories) and inductively in relation to common themes emerging (such as researchers identifying that impact occurs over time).

Findings

Educational researchers are involving stakeholders in various ways in their research projects (such as getting to know their target audiences and discussing research results), with many reporting regular interactions with end users. Most educational researchers (72%) report that teachers are the target audience that is most relevant for their work. Researchers spend most of their time conducting research, working on academic publications, and attending academic events, with far less time spent on non-academic outreach, events, and networks (academic and non-academic). Researchers report being most comfortable with plain language writing and, to a lesser extent, with collaborating with stakeholders; researchers are least comfortable interacting with media and reporters, finding and working with intermediaries to increase the impact of their work, and using technology to disseminate their research. Findings for each section of the conceptual framework are reported in more detail; researchers were asked to keep just one SSHRC-funded study in mind as they responded to the survey questions.

Respondent Characteristics and Nature of Research

Most (66%) participants were female. Almost all researchers (91%) had completed their PhD over 10 years ago, with 39% of this group having over 20 years of experience since completing their PhD. SSHRC grant values varied across the sample: a third (32%) held grants valued between \$50,000 and \$100,000, 44% held grants valued between \$101,000 and \$150,000 and 24% held grants valued between \$151,000 and \$200,000. Our team inquired about whether their SSHRC project was connected to a larger research program: 34% of respondents reported that their grant was part of a larger research program, with 33% reporting additional funding from other sources including government sources outside SSHRC, internal university resources and other external organizations with interest in education.

Different types of research might be more amenable to mobilization efforts; consequently, researchers were asked to identify the nature of their research as practice-focused (59%), basic conceptual research (21%), policy-focused (15%), or other (5%). The sampling method could explain the dominance of practice-focused research since education was the explicit focus of the SSHRC grants held. Our team ran analyses in relation to demographic characteristics exploring years of experience, size of grants, as well as type of research; no significant differences were found; therefore, we do not report analyses in relation to demographic characteristics.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our team was interested in gauging what target audiences researchers perceived their work to be most relevant to (Table 2).

Table 2. Reported relevance to different audience groups (from most to least relevant)

	Relevance (%)			
Audience	**Strong**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**None**
Teachers	72	12	9	8
Students	54	22	17	7
School Boards	44	29	12	15
School Administrators (Principals, Vice Principals Superintendents)	39	29	16	16
Educational Organizations (NGOs, think tanks, advocacy groups)	37	31	18	15
Parents	34	19	26	21
Government (Provincial or Federal)	32	40	18	11
General Community	21	31	34	14
Other	50	10	0	40

Researchers believe their work is relevant to a variety of stakeholders, with the dominant target audience being teachers (72% felt that their research was strongly relevant to teachers). In order of prominence, other target audiences for whom researchers perceived that their work mattered included students (54%), school boards (44%), school leaders (39%), and educational organizations (37%). Roughly a third of researchers believed their research was relevant to parents (34%) and governments (32%).

How Often, and in What Capacities, Do Researchers Interact with End Users?

Lavis et al. (2003) described ways that researchers interact with end users. This survey asked researchers how often researchers interacted with end users across different stages of the project (Table 3).

Table 3. Frequency of interaction with target audiences.

	Frequency of Interaction n (%)		
Type of Interaction	**Regularly**	**Once/Twice**	**Not at all**
Making an effort to know target audience	71	23	6
Discussing research results	65	31	4
Discussing ideas beyond this project	58	29	13
Discussing ideas arising from research	57	33	10
Dedicated resources to capacity-building	45	28	28

The most frequent interactions with end users reported by researchers were (i) to make an effort to know their audiences regularly (71%), and (ii) to discuss research results regularly (65%). Over half of the sample also engaged regularly with target audiences to discuss ideas arising from the research (57%) and to discuss ideas beyond the research project (58%). Fewer researcher devoted dedicated interactions to capacity building with target audiences (45%) with almost a third (28%) not engaging in capacity building efforts with target audiences at all. Capacity building is known to be an underutilized (yet potentially powerful mechanism) to increase mobilization and uptake of research in policy and practice.

Comparing the Proportion of Time Spend on Academic and Non-academic Outreach Activities.

Due to rising expectations that researchers interact and collaborate with non-academic end users, the survey attempted to gauge the relative proportions of time spend on academic versus non-academic activities (Table 4).

Table 4. Proportion of time spent (out of 100% on specified KMb activities

Variable	Mean	SD	Min (%)	Max (%)	Interquartile Range
Conducting Research	47	16.6	15	90	35-60
Academic Publications	26	14.4	5	100	20-30
Non-academic Publications	8	7.6	0	50	5-10
Academic Events	12	12.2	2	100	5-15
Non-academic Events	7	7.4	0	50	4.25-10
Academic Networks	4	3.5	0	10	0-5
Non-academic Networks	4	5.0	0	30	0-5

Researchers reported spending the largest proportion of time conducting research (M=47 % of their time, SD=16.6). Questions about academic and non-academic outreach were asked in relation to three areas: publications, events, and networks. Academics reported spending far more time on academic publications (M=26 % of their time, SD=14.4) than on non-academic publications (M=8 % of their time, SD=16.6). Hence, researchers spend more time on academic than on non-academic publications at a rate of 3:1. Researchers reported spending an average of 12% of their time on academic events (SD=12.2) and 7% (SD=7.4) on non-academic events, a ratio of almost 2:1 in favour on academic events. Time spent on academic and non-academic networks was the same: academic networks (M=4, SD=3.5) and non-academic networks (M=4, SD=5.0). However, it is important to note (despite the empirical literature that suggests the importance of networks in bridging the divide between research, policy and practice), there is very low investments of researchers' time spent on networks.

How Prepared Do Researchers Feel to Engage in Different Types of Non-academic Outreach?

The survey also asked researchers about how prepared researchers feel to engage in different types of non-academic outreach, such as creating plain language summaries, collaborating with stakeholders, interacting with media and reporters, finding and working with intermediaries, and using technology to disseminate research (Table 5).

Table 5. Researchers' perceived level of preparedness for non-academic outreach

	Level of preparedness				
Non-academic Outreach Activity	**Very Well Prepared (%)**	**Prepared (%)**	**Moderately Prepared (%)**	**Somewhat Prepared (%)**	**Not Prepared (%)**
Plain language summaries	54	23	14	7	3
Collaborate with stakeholders	45	29	11	7	8
Interact with media and reporters	32	16	24	11	16
Find and work with intermediaries	22	16	29	12	21
Use technology to disseminate research	16	18	26	12	27

There are very different skills involved in brokering and working with end-users (Cooper, 2013), so I was interested in how confident researchers felt engaging in these endeavours. Most researchers (78%) felt prepared or very well prepared to write plain language summaries of their research. And a large percentage (74%) also felt prepared or very well prepared to collaborate with stakeholders. However, fewer researchers felt prepared or very well prepared to interact with media (48%), work with intermediaries (38%) or use technology to disseminate research (35%). Researchers felt the least prepared (38% felt not prepared or only somewhat prepared) to use technology, close to a third felt not prepared or somewhat prepared to work with intermediaries (33%) and, despite the prevalence of communications departments across universities, only 27% of researchers still felt not prepared or only somewhat prepared to deal with media and reporters about their research.

What Dissemination Mechanisms are Researchers Using in Education? Researchers were asked about three mechanisms to disseminate research arising from the literature: online strategies, media communications, and working with intermediary organizations. The use of online dissemination strategies was low with only 43% of researchers using websites, 15% using listservs, and fewer respondents using blogs (3%) and social media (2%). However, researchers were asked to think about a project that finished 5 years previously, so perhaps this is reflective of the fact that social media had not yet become as ubiquitous as it is now. .

Of the survey respondents, 47% indicated that their research is communicated through the media. The media picked the story up on its own in 62% of the cases. In just over half of the cases (53%), the faculty's communication department contacted the media to initiate coverage, while only 15% of researchers contacted the media directly. Researchers reported sharing their findings in local and national newspapers and radio broadcasts, institutional media (e.g., faculty newsletter), or popular magazines (e.g., *Today's Parent, Psychotherapy Networker*).

One in four researchers (25%) reported working with intermediary organizations to share their findings. Those that indicated they worked with intermediaries engaged in the following activities with these organizations in order of prominence: disseminated research through their networks (89%), organized events based on research (61%) provided professional development based on research results (50%), created products based on research (50%), facilitated interaction with a user group (44%), partnered in research (39%), disseminated research to the media (28%).

How Do Researchers' Perceive the Impact of Their Work?

The survey asked researchers to report on the perceived impact of their work in four areas: research (e.g., expanded the current knowledge base), service (e.g., influenced practitioner behaviour, incorporated into professional development), policy (e.g., incorporated into an organizational or system level policy), and society(e.g., changed attitudes, improved outcomes) (Table 6).

Table 6. Perceived research impact on identified areas

Area of Impact	**Yes (%)**	**No (%)**	**Don't know (%)**
Research	76	3	21
Service (Practice)	67	10	23
Policy	35	28	38
Society	35	23	42

The primary area of impact was research, that is, advancing bodies of knowledge.. The second area of impact was service and practice. This area is often a focus of educational researchers, especially those who work with educational stakeholders such as teachers and principals. Researchers reported less impact in policy and the broader society; however, these were also the areas about which they expressed the greatest uncertainty about possible impact of their research.

Some researchers also provided short qualitative descriptions of each of these four areas of research impact (research N= 36; service/ practice N= 31 ; policy N = 18 ; society N = 14), and many researchers reported impacts spanning the four areas across one project. A researcher focusing on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) specified a number of perceived impacts:

> KNOWLEGE: Understanding of children with ADHD for their own behaviours; peer victimization of children with ADHD; parent involvement in the education of children with ADHD; parenting stress in parents of children with ADHD; effectiveness of a mindfulness intervention for children and youth with learning disabilities and ADHD. SERVICE: Psychologists' understanding of limitations of self-report tools. Risk factors for peer victimization. CHANGED ATTITUDES & IMPROVED OUTCOMES: Parent workshops served to change some of their attitudes and practices in relation to their children.

Other researchers talked specifically about evidence that showed the influence of their work that often involved consultations with government and policy-makers in the ministry, invitations to train practitioners, and involvement with a range of educational organizations working in their area:

> Evidence of impact on knowledge base from invitations to contribute and to participate, queries from grad students, national & international colleagues, government actors. Evidence of influence in the field from invitations to present to practicing educators and feedback on actions taken in consequence, for example, use of my PowerPoint presentations for teacher professional development. Evidence of societal impact from forms of recognition from outside organisations, such as awards, invitations to sit on community, foundation boards.

Another researcher described involvement in training teachers due to their research program:

> Impacted directly on the participants, those who are directly involved in field teaching. Ongoing onsite and online programs have since been developed and have to date put through over a 1000 participants who are field teachers.

Some researchers even identified the various system levels or number of schools that had been influenced by their work:

> Role of parent involvement in early learning including home-school connections and family literacy interventions were promoted in Ministry initiatives (e.g. Best Start), in school boards (e.g. focus on parent involvement in early years), and in regional government (e.g. Region of Peel family literacy programs in approximately 80 schools as a result of research)

Many of the impact explanations also dealt with social justice issues:social justice curriculum, hiring policies for indigenous peoples, children with learning (dis)abilities, English-language learners (ELL), as well as work with specific groups (urban Inuit, Jewish communities, and marginalized youth).

Researchers also mentioned many barriers to research impact such as attribution (it is difficult in complex social systems to point to one factor, such as the research, as having impact), marginalization of various research topics, inconsistencies between research findings and the values of particular communities, and time lag between conducting and disseminating research and its subsequent influence in communities:

> My work is just now being sent out as this is a longitudinal study. My grant has finished but I am just now putting out the findings. My answers could change in a year or two but it is too soon to tell.

The correlation between time and impact is important; literature suggests that impact can take years to infiltrate public services (Nutley et al., 2007).

These descriptions show tangible benefits that Canadian researchers are having as a result of their interaction with different educational stakeholders and communities.

Discussion

Lavis (2006) outlines five types of activities used to increase evidence use in policy, including prioritization and coproduction, packaging and push, facilitating pull, exchange, and improving climate/ building demand. The discussion explores each of these areas in relation to the findings to provide suggestions and implications for the field of education.

Prioritization and Co-production

There is emerging evidence to suggest that involving end-users at the outset of the project, rather than passive participants, can improve the demand and use of research (Cherney, Head, Povey, Boreham, & Ferguson, 2015; Cherney, Povey, Head, Boreham, & Ferguson, 2012; Phipps & Shapson, 2009). Educational researchers reported regular interaction to get to know target audiences, and noted that their research had strong relevance for teachers. Brett et al. (2012), from a study in the health sector, show positive impacts from collaboration being identified at four stages of the research process: planning the research, undertaking the research, analyzing and writing up the study, and disseminating the research and considering its implications. In the end, they found "clear evidence that [end-user] and public involvement can have positive impacts on research, enhancing the quality of research and ensuring its appropriateness and relevance" (p. 643). In education, while researchers report involving stakeholders once the study has been funded, very few discussed having involved educational stakeholders in setting the research priorities and questions in the first place. Having communities and end-users involved prior to the conceptualization of the study is important, as it can actually create demand for the findings since the topic itself was generated by the practitioner community. In this way, knowledge mobilization and engaged scholarship, rather than being a top-down process, becomes a collaborative mechanism for communities and teachers to solve particular problems of practice. Phipps et al. (2016) describe how coproduction models of research impact actually have the potential to accelerate or even skip some of the more traditional stages of research utilization (such as dissemination, uptake and implementation) because the end users are actually involved at the beginning and hence uptake occurs through the collaboration embedded throughout the course of a project, rather than occurring terminally after the project is already completed:

> Knowledge mobilization is often described using the metaphor of "bridging the gap" between the silos of research and policy/practice; however, this metaphor maintains the academic and non-academic silos. In co-production there is no gap to bridge. Academic researchers and non-academic partners come together in a shared space of collaboration (see Figure 2). They maintain their own independent spaces but research, dissemination, uptake, and implementation occur in a collaborative environment. (p.37)

Involving stakeholders in co-production and prioritization of research topics is a fundamental shift from traditional notions of research controlled by academics towards a more iterative and fluid process that seeks to influence and benefit communities. In this dynamic process, traditional research outputs (such as academic journal articles laden with dense jargon) must also be reimagined.

Packaging and Push

Literature on KMb and the lack of use of research by end-users has long lamented the inaccessible format of research articles and reports (Cooper, Klinger, & McAdie, 2017; Davies, Nutley, & Walter, 2005; Levin, Cooper, Arjomand, & Thompson, 2011). Researchers in this study reported low levels of use of media, online dissemination tools, and low levels of interaction with intermediaries that could be active KMb agents with various target audiences. Educational researchers also reported a lack of confidence engaging with media and reporters, online tools, and intermediaries. However, the gap between research and practice has been attributed to both the packaging of research, which is not useful to end-users, as well as the passive push mechanisms used by academics. Publishing a journal article or posting a report on a website remains insufficient to increase research use on the frontlines. There is now growing recognition that research needs multiple modalities and engaging outputs in order to be useful to policy-makers and practitioners, and products need to be tailored to the different target audience (for instance, policymakers' needs are very different than practitioners' needs). Similarly, push mechanisms need to integrate ways that actually reach end-users through a combination of efforts that recognizes the primary sources of professional knowledge in different fields. For some end-users, social media and twitter will be useful; for teachers, dissemination through unions and professional association e-bulletins and publications is more likely to be successful than academic journals residing behind a paywall. However, just relying on push mechanisms will also not produce the robust research integration that can change public service delivery; it is also important to create mechanisms that allow end-users to search and pull information that they need into their practice environments.

Facilitating Pull

Facilitating pull is about creating brokering structures to assist busy policymakers and practitioners apply research in focused and time sensitive ways. However, only one in four educational researchers was interacting with intermediary organizations that might facilitate pull for different end users. Unlike researchers 'pushing' mobilization products, 'pull' mechanisms put users at the center of the process, as it is users who drive the search, adaptation, and implementation of research based policies, processes, and practices. Emerging findings from studies in education are emphasizing that to facilitate pull and focus on the need of practicing teachers, research mobilization efforts need to be embedded in school and district level processes (Coburn & Turner, 2011; Datnow & Hubbard, 2016; Honig & Coburn, 2007). Campbell and Levin (2012) highlight that teachers and educational leaders need to be able to find, understand, share, and act on research and that intermediaries are well situated to mediate processes between research producers and users. Each of these four steps (find, understand, share, and act) requires different efforts on the part of researchers, mediators, and practitioners. For instance, research needs to be publically available in ways that educators can sift and search according to their needs. In the health sector, databases of research with plain language summaries and implications for different stakeholders have been created to facilitate these efforts. In the United Kingdom, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an intermediary educational organization that has created a searchable database for education that provides synthesis of evidence in particular areas, outlines the strength of that evidence, and includes the cost of particular interventions or initiatives (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit). However, the EEF has a large budget of over $20 million per year; hence, creating these types of databases that focus on end-users is not cheap. This database has already had widespread use, with recent surveys noting that "two-thirds of schools now use it to inform their teaching practice and spending decisions" (Education Endowment Foundation, 2016). The fact that two-thirds of schools are now using the toolkit since its inception in 2012 is quite a remarkable achievement, especially considering the traditionally low use of research usually reported in educational contexts globally. So, there are models that show the type of mechanisms that could help users meet the challenges of their professional contexts, such as interactive toolkits that provide multi-media training and implications for teachers on the frontlines. Another mechanism critical to increasing research mobilization and engaged scholarship is the two-way exchange of information and expertise between end-users and researchers.

Exchange

Research-informed practice is the mantra in education currently; however, what about the role of practice-informed research? Reciprocity between research users and producers is important so that community members, policymakers, and practitioners are more than just research subjects. Once again, while intermediaries can facilitate interaction among diverse stakeholders, researchers in this study were not utilizing them to amplify their messages with specific end-users. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (2009) in the UK, commissioned a series of impact case studies in order to identify impacts of funded research on policymakers, professional practitioners, and other groups outside academia, analyze determinants of impact, and develop suitable approaches to impact assessments in the social sciences. Ultimately, they found that engaged scholarship remains central to creating impact:

> In all the impact case studies, the most important factor contributing to the generation of impact was the pre-existence of networks and relationships with research users. Sustained contacts with users, based on personal relationships and built up over the long term were the most important channels for policy and practice applications. Evaluators commented that the ideal connectivity with users was a two way process, where research findings were fed into policy and practice arenas, whilst pertinent policy and practice issues could inform the development of new research ideas. Early and continuous engagement with users at various stages of the research (from design through to dissemination) could help to increase the relevance and accessibility of research findings and increases the probability of impact. (p. 15)

This report highlights the need for *exchange* and two-way flow of information between producers and users. While many initiatives attempt a one-way transmission from research to policy and/or practice, very few mechanisms seek to use policy and practice settings in order to inform the research enterprise. There is also evidence to suggest that a key determinant in whether or not a practitioner will use research (and the frequency of that use) is whether or not they have had collaborative experiences participating in research projects (Belkhodja, Amara, Landry, & Ouimet, 2007). So, a focus on exchange and collaboration could contribute to further build practitioners' appetite for evidence use. In addition to exchange between producers and users, it is successful collaborations that have the potential to improve the climate of research use more broadly in public services and build demand for research within our educational systems.

Improving Climate and Building Demand

Because practitioners view academic research as irrelevant to their contexts, they have not demanded research, although much is consistently produced by universities. There is too large a gap between academic research production and the needs of frontline policymakers and practitioners. A famous saying by Peter Drucker—"culture eats strategy for lunch"—points out the power of organizational culture. For research to be integrated into the frontlines of service delivery in public service sectors, the climate of schools and districts needs to be transformed to build demand, interest, and appetite for evidence-use and research. Many of the actions already discussed would improve the climate and culture of research use in education: building stronger relationships between users and producers, involving end-users in prioritization and co-production of research topics and projects, changing packaging and push mechanisms with the end-user in mind, facilitating pull mechanisms for busy professionals, and increasing opportunities to have meaningful exchange of expertise and ideas among producers and users. Building a strong research culture takes time, and one of most crucial, and currently least attended to, necessary actions is to build the capacity of practitioners, educational leaders and policy makers to use data to actually implement evidence-based practices (Datnow & Hubbard, 2016; Gough, Tripney, Kenny, & Buk-Berge, 2011). To change culture, KMb infrastructure needs to be embedded at the organizational level in schools and school districts, so that research and data use is seen by frontline practitioners as a tool to solve the many challenges that schools, communities, and students face daily.

Limitations

This study had several limitations including small sample size, lack of prior research studies on the topic, and self-reported data. The primary limitation was its small sample size; more participants are needed to make generalizations regarding the data, although the data still provides a snapshot of how researchers in education are engaging with end-users and how they perceive the impact of their work. Ideally, the sample would be more evenly distributed across gender (66% of respondents were women). Also, data were not triangulated, which could have been partially addressed by adding qualitative interviews or case studies of impact bounded by projects in which researchers perceived high impact; however, due to the anonymity of the survey, we could not sample based on participant responses. Another way to triangulate research impact data would be to survey the end-users that researchers engaged with as well, to see how they perceived the impact of a particular project. However, this approach would also yield very small samples in most cases. Another limitation of the study is that data from the survey relies on self-reporting. Self-reported data from researchers can rarely be independently verified and could contain many biases including attributing more impact to a project than actually occurred or than end-users would perceive.

Conclusion

This article presented empirical research on how SSHRC-funded education researchers across Canada are interacting with end users and perceiving the impact of their work, an area where there is still a dearth of empirical evidence. Educational researchers are engaging with stakeholders, and involving them in a range of activities, although capacity-building efforts with end users remain underdeveloped. While researchers feel comfortable writing plain language summaries, less than half of the researchers in this study felt 'very well prepared' to collaborate with stakeholders, and even less felt comfortable working with intermediaries to amplify their message or using technology to disseminate their work. As a result, there are many areas in which KMb efforts could be improved both on the research production side (through researchers developing more robust partnerships with intermediaries and end users) and on the research use side (through mechanisms to allow practitioners to find, understand, share, and apply research).

Table 7. Recommendations

Activity	Recommendations
Prioritization and coproduction	• Including end-users in conceptualizing research project and questions, including • practitioners and community members as co-investigators rather than just participants
Packaging and push	• Creating non-academic formats of research that are relevant to end-users with a focus on actionable messages for practitioners and educational leaders • Working with partners to create outputs to ensure relevance to end-users • Have end-users involved in distribution of resources to increase credibility and uptake
Facilitating pull	• Using trusted intermediaries (organizations that translate research to practice and already have established networks) • Creating feedback loops for practitioners to request research on topics they are interested in and that can inform the current challenges they are facing (rapid response policy units, research infrastructure embedded in districts)
Exchange	• Too often exchange is thought of directionally from research to practice; however, practice-informed research is also important as it recognizes flow from the frontlines and practitioner knowledge back into research processes

Improving climate/ building demand	• Building an evidence-informed culture in schools by integrating research knowledge into professional development • Organizing events that invite researchers and end-users to collaborate so that end users can identify relevant problems of practice for researchers to pursue.

What is clear is that research is having many impacts on research and practice in education and, to a lesser extent, policy and society at large. Researchers are taking on important projects, many of which address important equity issues in marginalized communities, so the potential to increase these efforts through KMb can only act to further strengthen our education systems in Canada. Researchers were positive about their interaction with diverse educational stakeholders, and it is through continued building of trust and reciprocal and substantive partnerships that system improvements will occur. Engaged scholarship is gaining recognition and momentum in academia. While it is challenging, expensive, and sometimes slow work to build substantive partnerships, efforts to build those networks will ultimately provide stronger connections among publicly funded research and public service sectors to the benefit of Canadian citizens.

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Ulàpeitök: Using Bribri Indigenous Teachings to Develop a Ph.D. Research Methodology

Olivia Sylvester, Alí García Segura

Abstract Although there is a growing interest in Indigenous research, education regarding how to put Indigenous research into practice is not often part of academic training. To increase the awareness of how Indigenous methodologies can be applied to academic research, we describe how we used Bribri Indigenous teachings to develop a Ph.D. research methodology for a food security project in Costa Rica. Our research approach was based on a Bribri concept related to cooperation, *ulàpeitök*; this concept guided our work and helped to reduce the negative consequences associated with conventional research with Indigenous people (e.g., extractive practices, reinforcement of gender inequality, misrepresenting cultural information). We identified three considerations that may be useful for other scholars applying Indigenous teachings to academic research: 1) build flexibility into the entire research program, 2) ensure that community-level and university-level researchers are willing to play multiple roles beyond those associated with conventional research, and 3) proceed with an ethic of friendship. Our work is relevant to scholars working in Indigenous/non-Indigenous research teams that aim to transform conventional research approaches to ensure that they support human rights, equity, and cultural continuity. In Costa Rica, our research is specifically relevant to building wider acceptance of Indigenous methodologies in higher education.

KeyWords Costa Rica, ethics, Indigenous methodologies, qualitative research

> "*Creating and sharing knowledge that authentically represents who you are and how you understand the world is integral to the survival of people's identity.*"
> Marlene Brant Castellano (2004, p.109)

This opening quotation by Marlene Brant Castellano eloquently sums up what motivated our collaborative partnership to create, implement, and disseminate a research project based on Bribri Indigenous values and ethics. Developing this Bribri research project is important because, in Costa Rica, Indigenous peoples have been part of academic research designed and interpreted through outsider research frameworks since at least the late 1800s (e.g., Gabb 1875). Thus, despite the large body of literature on Indigenous peoples in Costa Rica, there has been little evidence that it has led to support of cultural continuity, language preservation, and/or other issues related to human rights (e.g., food security, self-determination; Alí García, *personal communication*).

One telling example that illustrates how research that uses outsider frameworks may not support cultural continuity comes from the Térraba Indigenous Territory in Costa Rica. Anthropologists have been studying the Térraba language and culture since the 1960s, a book has been created about the Térraba language, but over this period of time, the language has become endangered (i.e., it has few speakers and is not commonly being learned by youth). This example illustrates that despite decades of research on the Teribe culture and language, this research has done very little for language continuity for the Teribe people.

That Western extractive research approaches have not succeeded in producing positive results for people's collective rights to self-determination and to cultural continuity is not unique to Indigenous people in Costa Rica. Indigenous scholars have widely described how research done within the dominant research paradigm has contributed to Indigenous peoples' colonization and oppression and to a worsening rather than an improvement of the conditions being studied (Tuhiwai Smith 2012[2009], Chilisa 2012, Wilson 2008, p.19). These scholars have collectively called for a new approach that does not insert Indigenous people into the dominant research paradigm, nor does it try to adapt Western research tools to include Indigenous perspectives. These scholars propose an approach that emerges from Indigenous peoples' distinct way of viewing the world and of living in it (Wilson 2008, p.15). Specifically, some unique characteristics of an Indigenous research paradigm include 1) knowledge emerging from relationships with the land as well as from non-human beings, and 2) researchers demonstrating relational accountability to people, clans, places, and non-human beings. In other words, there are different ways of knowing about a research topic that go beyond gathering verbal or written data from participants. Furthermore, there is a need to ensure that research acknowledges, respects, and addresses the needs of one's family, clan, and cultural spaces and places.

Our research emerges from this Indigenous conceptual framework, one that recognizes: 1) distinct ways of knowing and being, 2) the need to generate knowledge using tools that emerge from an Indigenous worldview to produce "*a better understanding of, and provision for, the needs of Indigenous people*" (Wilson 2008: 20), and 3) the need to evaluate Indigenous research based on Indigenous and not Western criteria.

Our research aims to make three important contributions to the Indigenous methodologies literature. First, there is a growing body of literature on Indigenous methodologies, most of which comes from the global north (Tuhiwai Smith (2012)[1999], Kovach 2009, Wilson 2008); thus, our work makes an important contribution to describing the process of developing and implementing Indigenous methodologies in the southern (Chilisa 2012) and Latin American context. Second, at a global scale, there is more research that describes Indigenous methodological principles and fewer studies that describe the process of applying them. Describing methodological implementation will provide examples for scholars who wish to use Indigenous methodologies but who are not aware of what that would look like in practice. Both authors of this paper work in academic institutions in Costa Rica and find that emerging scholars express this common concern; thus, our paper will provide guidance to these scholars. Describing how to practice Indigenous research is also important for academic institutions to gain familiarity with unconventional approaches; this familiarity will help institutions create more inclusive research guidelines (e.g., research ethics protocol). Third, our work contributes to a small body of literature on the implementation of Indigenous methodologies by a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars (and to the wider literature on insider-outsider research teams; Blodgett 2014, Kovach 2009).

History of Research Regarding Bribri People

The Bribri people are one of the eight Indigenous groups that live in Costa Rica. There are multiple Bribri territories in Costa Rica. Specifically, the Cabagra and Salitre Territories are located on the Pacific side of Costa Rica and the Talamanca and Këköldí Territories are located on the Atlantic side. The latest census reports 12,785 Bribri people in Costa Rica (INEC 2011). Around 70% of Bribri people speak Bribri, a Chibchan language.

The historical context of academic research regarding Bribri people is important for understanding how our work makes a unique contribution to Bribri research. Some of the first anthropological research published about Bribri people appeared at the end of the 19th century (e.g. Gabb 1875). Historian Mauricio Menjivar Ochoa (2014) describes how this research, authorized by colonial endeavours (including those of the United Fruit Company), has heavily shaped how Bribri people have been portrayed in the literature. Overall, the content of this 19th-century documentation about Bribri people depicted them as inferior and uncivilized; these documents were used to justify their colonization and oppression, a commonality among Indigenous peoples internationally (Tuhiwai Smith 2012[1999]).

Since the early 19th century, anthropologists have continued to work with Bribri people and have built upon the knowledge generated by these early naturalists and anthropologists (Bozzoli 1979). A large body of anthropological literature about Bribri people exists regarding their history, language, stories, social relations, traditions, religion, economy and their use of plants and natural resources (e.g., Whelan 2005, García-Serrano & del Monte. 2004, Villalobos & Borge 1998, Bozzoli 1979); the majority of this body of work has been carried out by non-Indigenous researchers using Western research methodologies. To our knowledge the only academic works published to date from a Bribri perspective, are those authored or co-authored by Alí García (hereafter Alí), author of this paper (e.g., García Segura 2016; Jara Murillo & García Segura 2003; Jara Murillo & García Segura 1997; García Segura 1994).

Although scholars have heavily analyzed Bribri people in academe, little attention has been given to the methods used to do so or to their impacts. In Costa Rica, it has been taken for granted that extractive outsider research, based on eurocentric values, is the way research in academia is done. Both authors of this paper work in national academic institutions in Costa Rica, and we have found it common that our non-Indigenous colleagues are not familiar with the concept of an Indigenous methodology.

That the academic community in Costa Rica has not fully recognized Indigenous methodologies relates to the same reasons that these approaches have not been fully recognized in academia elsewhere. Margaret Kovach (2009, p.156) describes these reasons: 1) an active resistance to change, 2) a passive non-awareness, and 3) a lack of understanding of what

Indigenous methodologies would look like in practice. We have explained how we applied a Bribri research paradigm to a graduate academic project to address resistance, passive non-awareness, and lack of knowledge about Indigenous methodologies in academia in Costa Rica and elsewhere.

Relevance of Indigenous Methodologies in Academia in Costa Rica

Much of the information about Bribri people written by non-Bribri scholars has mis-represented Bribri knowledge and activities. When outsider research approaches are used (especially those that are done in short periods of time without in-depth knowledge of language and cultural context), Bribri people have tended to provide simple and superficial information to researchers; this phenomenon is further complicated by the fact that Bribri people may feel obligated to tell researchers what they want to hear because Bribri people do not feel comfortable sharing accurate information because of either past discrimination and outsiders' unfamiliarity with Bribri practices and life. Bribri methodologies need to be developed, described, and disseminated to ensure that researchers support a process in which people are comfortable sharing accurate information about themselves.

The purpose of our paper is to describe the process of applying Bribri teachings, values, and ethics to a doctoral research methodology. This paper is organized as follows. It begins with a background of our project. We follow with a description of how the Bribri concept of *ulàpeitök* guided our work and the creation of tools to gather information. We close by presenting a critical discussion of our work. Throughout this paper, we chose the word colleague to refer to the Bribri people who participated in this project; this is because we felt it best described the process of mutual knowledge sharing among authors and community members.

Authors and Project Background

Alí is a Bribri researcher of the *Sẽ̀bliwak* clan and works in the linguistics department of the University of Costa Rica. He has been selected by community leaders and Elders to guide Bribri research and he has done so for over 20 years. Specifically, one highly respected community leader, the late *Awá* (Bribri traditional doctor) Don Francisco García, requested that Alí engage in Bribri research using Bribri teachings and ethics and since then he has continued this work.

Olivia is a non-Indigenous Canadian of Irish descent with academic background in environmental management; she has spent the past decade studying and doing research in Costa Rica, and has lived there. Her Ph.D. dissertation topic was to examine Bribri people's wild food access in Costa Rican forested lands (Sylvester & García 2016 and Sylvester et al. 2016 a,b,c). Alí's interest in collaborating on this Ph.D. project was to document information about Bribri food harvesting using a Bribri methodology, to produce information that accurately represents Bribri people.

Initial Project Development

Our project took place in Alí's home community, Bajo Coen (Figure 1). Before Olivia was invited to Alí's community to start talking about what the project would look like at the community level, Olivia was taught for over two years about the social, political, and cultural context of Bribri people. This learning took place during weekly meetings with Alí. Olivia was exposed to teachings, stories, ethics, and history in a Bribri way. Olivia remembers techniques she was exposed to such as non-judgmental listening, non-hierarchical sharing, and respecting each other's learning paces; these are Indigenous values reported by other scholars (e.g., Wilson 2008).

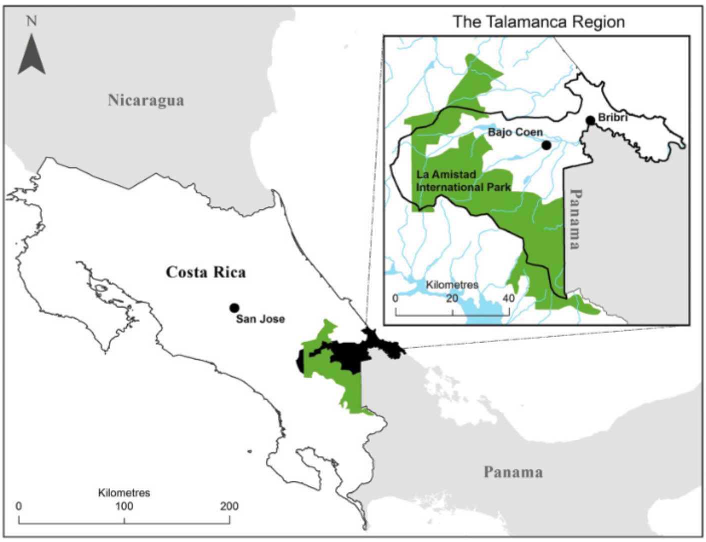

Figure 1: Map of the Talamanca region and the town of Bajo Coen where this research was carried out (map created by Justin Geisheimer).

Our intentionally slow pace promoted in-depth learning. If Olivia had rushed through the process merely reading about different Indigenous worldviews, methodologies, and not internalizing this information, she would not have achieved the level of understanding she now has about Bribri people and the importance of using Indigenous methodologies to contest a difficult history of discrimination and oppression. She describes this process in her research journal in 2012:

> When I first sat down with Alí, I asked him if we could work together to better understand Indigenous peoples use of resources to help inform national parks of community conservation efforts. This [desire] was me wanting to take information from Bribri communities and insert it into existing conservation models, this was me generalizing about Indigenous practices, this was me breaking down relationships, taking Indigenous knowledge without its names, faces, and/or histories, without its places and wanting to bring it into conservation board rooms. Now, I sit down with Alí from a different starting point. I ask him how we can work together to support

> his family and clan members, such as his sister Ms. Sebastiana Segura or his mother Ms. Anastasia Segura, to create projects important for their social, educational, and cultural goals, such as…the traditional shifting corn farming project.

Although Olivia did choose to carve out a space in her program to take things slowly, there were times when she felt the need to speed up her research project based on her advisory committee's recommendations (e.g., to boost her publication record). There were also times she was hesitant to or did not have the confidence to explain that she needed more time in her methodology, because she was a graduate student in a highly competitive educational system that thrives on the products of research. However, she believes that being taught Bribri values early on helped to build her confidence to explain to her academic peers why this project needed to take a different pace than what is usually found in the dominant academic paradigm.

Alí made decisions about the pace of this project that allowed him to maintain accountability to his family. Alí explained that he did not want to define the methodology of this project until Olivia was sure that she could commit to the project as it would be defined by his Bribri colleagues. This was intentional on his part because he has worked with many researchers in the past who commit to different elements of a project but then come to "the field" and claim they do not have the time nor the funds to do the project in a way that is meaningful to Indigenous people; this is disappointing to Bribri community members, and it communicates that their needs and ideas are not being taken seriously.

Building Relationships with Bribri Community Colleagues

One protocol that academic researchers need to comply with is research ethics. At the time of our research, there were no written guidelines concerning the community-level organization that should be consulted prior to this research. Past non-Bribri people who have done research in the Bribri Talamanca territory told Olivia she would need to seek ethics approval from the Bribri Talamanca government (ADITIBRI), the state-approved governing body for this territory. Olivia discussed this with Alí, and he explained that this was not a traditional Bribri governing body; it would be more appropriate to receive approval through traditional processes of accountability. A Bribri person is first accountable to their family, then to their clan, and thirdly to their community. Consequently, Alí decided it was best to work through his family and clan relationships for this research, and he sought approval through these networks. Thus, although a state-appointed Bribri government does have a process to approve research, we made a conscious choice to use traditional Bribri institutions for our ethics approval process. Working with traditional Bribri networks of accountability greatly enriched our project; it shifted the power to Bribri authorities to determine the research approach and this ensured that our outcomes were meaningful to our community colleagues.

Së́bliwak Women's Group

Alí chose to work with the *Së́bliwak* women's group (hereafter the *Së́bliwak* group) in his home community for three main reasons: 1) his sister is the president of this group, 2) most members are from his clan (thus he is accountable to his family and clan), and 3) this group was interested in our food harvesting research topic. This group was composed of nine members and their families. Alí met with members of the women's group and there were three important outcomes of these meetings. First, all members of the *Sẽ̀bliwak* group expressed interest in collaborating and working with us on how to best do so. Second, Olivia was invited to meet with the group. Third, members of the *Sẽ̀bliwak* group self-selected their roles in the project and some of their desired outcomes.

Although Olivia felt it was important to attend these initial meetings, she later learned why her absence was important. She learned from the women within the *Sẽ̀bliwak* group that researchers have imposed their research ideas and approaches on community members in the past. Even when women have requested changes to these methodologies, researchers have told them these changes are not possible for a number of reasons. Because of this history, our Bribri colleagues explained that they do not always feel completely comfortable asking outsiders to design research to account for the needs of the group and the community. Reflecting on this history, Olivia now feels it was important that she was not present at these initial meetings because of the power imbalance it could have created that could have limited people's ability to share their needs, and their desired outcomes for the project.

What a Bribri Methodology Looks Like in Practice

Using Ulàpeitök to Guide our Research

Alí and the women's group proposed to develop a research approach based on a Bribri concept called *ulàpeitök*. *Ulàpeitök* translates to lend (*peitök*) a hand (*ulà*) and is a Bribri concept related to helping each other with work. For instance, when a person is growing corn using shifting cultivation (where plots are cultivated then left for regeneration), people can ask their friends or relatives for *ulàpeitök*, i.e., help farming. *Ulàpeitök* is not limited to agriculture however; it can apply to other tasks (e.g., to cut a tree or to clean up an area of the community). When someone asks others for *ulàpeitök* there is an understanding that the person requesting help will provide a meal and *blo'* (chicha, a fermented drink) to the people working. Furthermore, there is an understanding that if someone has asked you for *ulàpeitök,* you can ask the same of that person in the future, for a project of your desired interest. Because *ulàpeitök* is a traditional teaching on how to share work, our colleagues suggested we apply this to our project as a way to work together.

Ulàpeitök informed how we defined the project outcomes. Specifically, we developed this research so it would result in benefits for all participants. Alí would benefit by applying a Bribri methodology to an academic project. Members of the *Sẽ̀bliwak* group would receive funding and other forms of support with one of their food harvesting projects. Olivia would gain teachings and information necessary for her to complete her Ph.D. thesis.

By working with members of Alí's family and clan, we were able to use Bribri criteria to determine the outcomes of our work; these community members added another dimension to the project that was not contemplated by the primary researchers alone. Specifically, members of the *Sẽbliwak* group wanted to ensure that this project would assist more than the nine families of the women's group; this was because, as Ms. Sebastiana Segura, the *Sẽbliwak* president, explained, for Bribri people one important value is not to be stingy. Thus, it was important for these women that the benefits reached as many community members as possible. For this reason, *Sẽbliwak* women requested that Olivia teach English classes to Bajo Coen residents. English classes were important for youth because at the time of our work the community primary school did not have an English teacher, but when these students move on to high school, they are required to have a Grade Six English level to enter into Grade Seven English (Figure 2).

Ulàpeitök also informed how we shared research benefits (e.g., research funding). Members of the women's group assisted Olivia in acquiring Bribri teachings. Olivia assisted the women's group (with funding and labour) to support their corn farming project (Figure 3). Olivia and the *Sẽbliwak* group also worked together to successfully find funding for a second food harvesting project to grow organic coffee (Figure 4).

Overall, using *ulàpeitök* as a guide to define our research partnership was central to shifting power to our community colleagues so they could define an approach compatible with their values and address on-the-ground needs of their community. Without the input of women early in the project, Olivia would have never imagined taking on the role of an English teacher, nor would she have understood the need to incorporate community accountability, i.e., extending benefits to as many community members as possible.

Figure 2: Shifting corn cultivation project (left) to grow corn to feed chicken being raised in the structure on the right called tȍl.

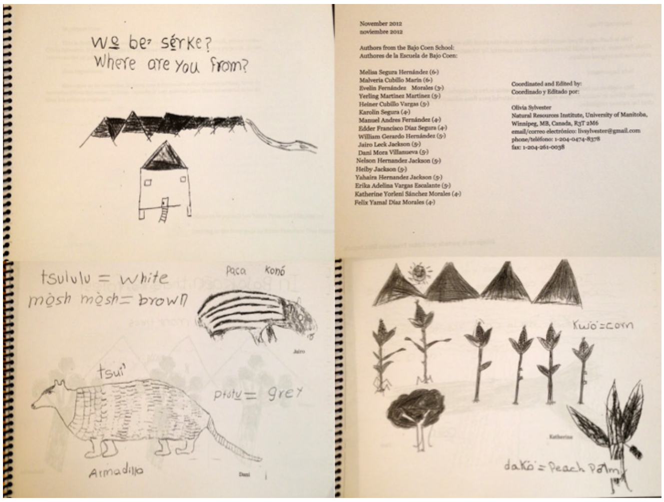

Figure 3: Sample pages of a book created by Bajo Coen community school students as part of English classes; students' names appear beside illustrations and the top left illustration was done by Edder Díaz Segura.

Figure 4: Organic coffee project. Seeds were purchased from Elders in Bajo Coen (left) and seedlings were grown by members of the Sẽbliwak group.

Using Bribri teachings to guide learning and information gathering

In this section, we describe how our information gathering methods were developed using Bribri teachings and practices.

Working with Family and Participating in Daily Life

Indigenous scholars explain why it is important to work with family as intermediaries to invite people into your research; the researcher is then responsible to themselves as well as to a circle of relations, i.e., what Shawn Wilson (2008) calls relational accountability. Reviewers of this paper highlighted that working with family may be viewed as causing a conflict of interest for non-Indigenous audiences. For Alí, this conflict of interest is not perceived because for Bribri people, status is not related to resources or one's profession; although Bribri people may have different knowledge, experience, or professions, every Bribri person is valued as an equal. We now further elaborate on why working with family is important.

Working with family gives a research participant the chance to ask the family intermediary direct questions about the nature of the research and its motives and to decline participation to the intermediary (Wilson 2008; 129, paraphrasing Webber-Pillwax). This latter point is important for Bribri people, who explained to Olivia that it is not Bribri culture to deny someone knowledge or information. In this case, working with intermediaries can allow Bribri participants to gain necessary information about the research and to decline participation if needed without disrespecting cultural norms. Because Olivia did the majority of interviews with a community colleague Ms. Sebastiana Segura (hereafter Sebastiana), participants had the chance to ask questions with a trusted intermediary before accepting or declining participation. After these conversations with Sebastiana, three people that we approached to interview declined, a choice that, as Alí and Sebastiana explained, people would not likely have felt comfortable doing if an outsider had requested their participation.

Living life in a Bribri way was the best way to get a Bribri education, one that did not compartmentalize education about food harvesting from other Bribri values and practices. To better understand what we mean by this, we provide the example of banana farming. Banana farming is a key source of income for people in the Bajo Coen community. To understand banana farming through participation, you can choose two different ways. If you participate only in the cutting and planting aspect of farming, you will get an idea about how people farm or harvest, how much they harvest, and perhaps you can narrowly describe the gender dimensions of farming. If you participate in daily life, you will be up at 3am helping the household women prepare the fire to make sure everyone has breakfast before farming, you will appreciate how families have to work together to get children on their way to school before farming and how women and men, young and Elder, work together to get baskets and machetes ready for work. If you participate in daily life, you will also experience how tired people can be after three or more hours in the hot sun, with their hands calloused from machete work; while you recuperate, you will hear stories and teachings as you rest in hammocks under shaded palm thatched roofs. If your participation is prolonged, you will travel every two weeks by foot to pick up your pay for harvesting bananas; you will see how challenging it is to earn a monthly salary when one kilogram of bananas is sold at around 10 cents (US currency).

Specifically, participation helped to build strong friendships; among many things, these friendships were important for women to feel comfortable participating in this research. Our female colleagues expressed their appreciation of Olivia's attempt to adapt in many ways to their day-to-day life; examples women mentioned was that Olivia worked with people in banana farming, went to Bribri doctors to be treated for illness, ate the same food as her colleagues, and maintained the same daily schedule as our colleagues (i.e., rising at 3-4am and sleeping at 6-7pm). Bribri colleagues contrasted these actions with those of other researchers; specifically, our female colleagues explained that past researchers have been reluctant to participate in Bribri work and elements of daily life. Although researchers would ask many questions about Bribri knowledge and practices, they would not engage in these practices themselves. For instance, Sebastiana explained that when she had participated in interviews in the past, after the interview, people would retreat to their rooms and some people would not even eat with her and her family. Sebastiana and our other female colleagues interpreted these practices to mean that people either had an aversion to Bribri food and/or were disinterested in Bribri life and culture. Members of the Sẽbliwak group said this lack of interest in Bribri women's lives, work, and culture caused them to feel reluctant to share Bribri teachings with researchers.

A second benefit of participation was that it helped Olivia understand women's unique barriers to engaging in academic research. Scholars have observed how women can experience a triple workload (e.g., work outside of the household, household maintenance, and childcare) which is a barrier to women's participation in research (Leach et al. 2016, Pfeiffer & Butz, 2005). As a consequence, women's full contributions to food harvesting have not been adequately represented in the published literature (Pfeiffer & Butz 2005, Howard, 2003, Brightman 1996). Understanding this suite of obstacles that female colleagues experienced was important to modify our research approach to minimize for women who wished to participate in research and to help Olivia limit the demands on women's time so as not to add to their workload. To meet these two goals, participation was critical. Olivia worked with women in banana fields, in community schools, and in households. Her work with women freed up time for them to help her with her research and/or it allowed Olivia and colleagues to converse while they were doing other daily activities.

A third benefit of our approach was that it helped our project progress at the pace of people's daily life. This was important to our female colleagues because, as they explained, if this pace is not a priority, projects can interfere negatively in women's lives. Female colleagues explained that many past researchers only started to wake up around eight or nine in the morning; in these cases Bribri women have to stay around the house to make sure researchers have breakfast and have what they need for the day. As Sebastiana explained, her attending to researchers' needs had affected her work in the past: although she would normally be out of the house by six in the morning working in agricultural fields, when researchers have stayed with her, she had been held back from work because she needed to work around their schedules, preparing breakfast for them later in the day (e.g., 8am). She was pleased with participation as a research method because it allowed her to teach Olivia while keeping on top of her work (interview 14/12/13).

Visiting Friends and Conversation Interviews

In her book, *Indigenous Methodologies*, Margaret Kovach (2009, p. 129) talks about the importance of finding a way back "to core values of what is responsible, respectful, and kind, to that which is ours not someone else's." This point resonates with how we did interviews. Specifically, our approach was shaped from the teachings of Sebastiana, Olivia's main teacher. Early in her stay in Bajo Coen, Olivia discussed her interest in interviewing people. Sebastiana, who has had experience interviewing and being interviewed herself, explained that it was important for Olivia to get to know each person well before requesting interviews. This meant that Olivia would travel with Sebastiana to visit people. That Sebastiana accompanied Olivia during her first visits to community colleagues was important to allow these colleagues to ask Sebastiana about who Olivia was and to find out more about her research.

Sebastiana also sent Olivia on her own to meet community colleagues; she did so by asking Olivia to bring food that we cooked or harvested to these people. Olivia later learned that sharing food with people is also an important part of daily life and maintaining relationships. After living in Bajo Coen for a few months, Olivia learned how important visiting people is in Bribri daily life. During visits people check in with each other about their family's health, people share food, and they discuss important community issues, such as those related to the land and its health.

It was only after many visits and conversations that Olivia invited people to be interviewed. When Olivia asked if she could talk to people about an issue or topic, our colleagues would always respond by referring to an interview as a conversation. Margaret Kovach (2009, p. 124) describes this conversation method as a way to provide "…space, time, and an environment for participants to share their story in a manner that they can direct without the periodic disruptions involved in adhering to a structured approach, as in an interview format."

Conversation interviews served as spaces for a two-way information sharing. Many of Olivia's colleagues said that this two-way sharing was important to learn more about Olivia, her culture, her expertise, and her experiences working with other rural communities. For example, Sebastiana told Olivia how these conversations were important to her because she was able to learn about different cultures and about the realities of other farmers in Costa Rica and elsewhere. These learning opportunities were important because she had not yet had the opportunity to finish her schooling nor did she have many chances to travel outside of her community; what she learned with Olivia are things that would be important to share with her children and grandchildren.

Feedback from Research Colleagues

We received positive feedback from our *Sě̀bliwak* group collaborators. Over a period of nine months, Olivia met with the *Sě̀bliwak* group during their monthly group meetings to check in about our collaboration and visited this community yearly after the project was completed. On December 16, 2013, Sebastiana shared one of her reflections:

> This is the first thesis project that took us seriously. In the past I have asked that thesis

> projects help us out in some way, but people always tell us that it is not possible… so I thought that it was true, that people were not able to help us with things that we need like helping our [women's] group or giving English classes to our children; they [English classes] are something that we do not have here but they are needed. This project has been a great blessing for us, a great help.

We also received positive feedback from other Bajo Coen residents who were not directly involved in the project. Specifically, people expressed positive feedback related to Olivia's engagement with the Bribri language and in Bribri daily life and English classes. People talked to both Olivia and Sebastiana about how important it was that Olivia engaged with Bribri language and people's work and that Olivia cooked, shared, and ate locally harvested and traditional food. One of our colleagues and participants in this project, Mr. Ancelmo Díaz, described his impression of the project design. On October 24h, 2012, he explained how he felt it was important that youth observed Olivia's engagement in many of the activities that are central to Bribri culture. This was important because some youth place higher value on outsider customs than on Bribri customs. Having an outsider engage in and value Bribri harvesting, work, and food, can be important to help youth see the value of Bribri cultural practices. Olivia felt a level of discomfort accepting praise for something that should be second nature for researchers, i.e., valuing the customs of people we work with. However, we included Mr. Díaz's insight because it was something that many of our colleagues voiced. His comment illustrates one of the challenging realities of colonization and social inequality that many Bribri people live.

We also received constructive feedback. A few of our colleagues found teaching Olivia was at times challenging because of language barriers. Although Olivia spoke Bribri in conversations that did not require elaborate explanations, teachings related to our research were mainly in Spanish. There were times when Sebastiana would tell Olivia that it was very challenging to explain a concept to her in Spanish that had a unique meaning in Bribri; and, she also faced an additional challenge because Spanish was both Olivia's and her second language. Scholars have stressed that the use of Indigenous languages in Indigenous research is fundamental to understand concepts not easily translated (Wilson 2008). We addressed these challenges by having Olivia work closely with Sebastiana and with co-author Alí, both Bribri language speakers who have reviewed the knowledge Olivia has shared in her thesis and publications; however, we acknowledge that many oversights could have been made considering Olivia was the central researcher and had only a limited knowledge of the language.

Considerations for Future Practice

Build Flexibility into the Entire Research Program

We all go into a research project with our own ideas of how a project should be run. Doctoral students are often asked to provide details regarding research plans, research tools, timelines, and use of funding early in the research process, even before developing a relationship with community-level collaborators. For these reasons, it is easy to get attached to a given data collection tool, schedule, and/or ways to use funding. In our experience, we were required to be flexible on all of these elements. One key example of this flexibility relates to our allocation of funding.

In our project we had not allocated funding to support a local-level farming project. Because the support for this corn project was a priority for the *Sẽ́bliwak* group, we modified our budget so this project was funded. At first, Olivia was not fully comfortable with this level of flexibility; this discomfort was due to her attachment to using funds to purchase cameras for her research as well as to her lack of experience sharing power to this extent with her research colleagues. Olivia was fortunate to have a supportive funding agency and an academic committee who understood the importance of shifting funding allocation to meet community needs. This flexibility is important if we wish to reduce power inequalities among graduate students and their community colleagues.

Be Prepared to Play Multiple Roles in a Project

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012[1999]) explains how one person must often perform many roles in collaborative research; examples of these roles include activist, researcher, family member, community leader, which are additional to a person's day job. Playing multiple roles was critical for the completion of our project. Sebastiana, for instance, took on the role of Olivia's primary teacher; this required her to balance this role with her other roles such as *Sẽ́bliwak* president, healer, family member, and farmer. She worked hard to carve out time to work with Olivia to visit research participants, carry out interviews, make time for our research discussions, and help Olivia interpret information gathered. Sebastiana often told Olivia that she would love to have unlimited time to sit and teach her all about Bribri life and history; however, this was often challenging considering her other multiple tasks.

Olivia experienced some challenges balancing her role as a researcher with other roles in this project. Specifically, in any given day Olivia was a researcher, an English teacher, and a member of the *Sẽ́bliwak* group. Some of these tasks required a lot of energy she did not anticipate (e.g., waking at 4am to help around the house before laborious banana farming) and left her with little energy in the evenings to take notes on the lessons and teachings she learned that day.

Early in the project, Olivia was concerned that these extra commitments would not leave her time to complete the academic objectives of her Ph.D. Upon reflection, Olivia now feels her concern about not having time to collect the academic data was rooted in her narrow understanding of data and the learning process. Since her moving out of Bajo Coen, Olivia has realized that the richest teachings and information came from what she learned while participating in daily life. She learned that important lessons and teachings were shared just as much in day-to-day tasks, such as accompanying people to the doctor or to the bank, as when harvesting food with people. Playing multiple roles exposed Olivia to many aspects of the day-to-day that helped rather than hindered her understanding of her colleagues' teachings; this allowed her to gather information that was representative of her Bribri colleagues' lives and concerns, information that is hard to collect in snapshot ethnographies.

Adopt a Research Ethic of Friendship

In 2003, Jennifer Tillmann-Healy proposed friendship as a research method as a way for researchers to pursue high ethical standards. She explained that friendship and fieldwork are similar in many ways. First, for instance, to do both friendship and fieldwork, colleagues need to gain acceptance and trust. Second, colleagues need to learn new codes for behaviour and experience challenges, conflicts, and loss. Third, people should not be rushed and should approach these processes with the ebb and flow of everyday life. Tillmann-Healy's (2003) concept of an ethic of friendship resonates with our approach. As Tillmann-Healy did, we invested in an ongoing process of acceptance and trust in a way that was compatible with Bribri teachings. Olivia learned new codes for behaviour, such as approaching a research partnership from a Bribri concept of sharing (*ulàpeitök*). Lastly, we did not rush data collection; instead this process occurred at the pace of everyday life.

Conclusions

Our research makes important contributions to the Indigenous methodologies literature. First, although there is a growing body of literature on Indigenous methodologies, most of which comes from the global north (Tuhiwai Smith (2012)[1999], Kovach 2009, Wilson 2008), our work makes an important contribution to better understanding Indigenous methodologies in Latin America. Second, our work illustrates the success and challenges of doing this work on the ground. Third, our work contributes to better understand how to prioritize Indigenous values while working on Indigenous / non-Indigenous research teams (Blodgett 2014, Kovach 2009).

Our research approach was based on Bribri practices, values and ethics; that these Bribri principles were central to our work helped us address the power inequalities common in conventional research. That the women's group we worked with suggested the Bribri concept of *ulàpeitök,* or working together, to guide our collaboration, placed the values of non-hierarchical learning and cooperation at the core of our work. Specifically the value of cooperation was central to addressing gender inequalities that have emerged with conventional research in the past. Women emphasized that all of the research they have participated in has created extra workloads for women (e.g., washing researchers' clothes, cooking special meals for them, missing out on wage labour to attend to researchers). Working together using Bribri values of cooperation allowed women to propose ways to help Olivia gather information that did not interfere with their daily responsibilities; this was not only important to support gender equity (e.g., Leach et al. 2016), but to create scenarios where women felt respected. The respect women felt led to greater comfort in sharing information with researchers that accurately represented themselves and their culture.

Negotiating and transforming conventional research frameworks requires time, institutional and economic support, and a desire to do things respectfully (Cuerrier, Downing, Patterson, & Haddad, 2012; Czaykowska-Higgins, 2009; Kovach, 2009; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012[1999]). We were fortunate to have institutional and economic support and Bribri collaborators who helped us understand how to proceed in a good way. Although our approach was not without challenges, overall, we achieved our goal, i.e., to apply Bribri teachings to a Ph.D. methodology with the goal of challenging, if only slightly, the conventional way of doing research with Indigenous people in Costa Rica. When this project began, Alí told Olivia it has taken over 500 years to attempt to colonize Bribri people, and reversing this process may take a similar period of time. In this context, Alí asserted that every attempt to decolonize research with Indigenous people, no matter how small, is important because it is contributing to an ongoing, lengthy process of decolonization. Our hope is that this project has made one small contribution to this process.

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Exchanges

Exchanges

In the *Exchanges,* we present conversations with scholars and practitioners of community engagement, responses to previously published material, and other reflections on various aspects of community-engaged scholarship meant to provoke further dialogue and discussion. We invite our readers to offer in this section their own thoughts and ideas on the meanings and understandings of engaged scholarship, as practiced in local or faraway communities, diverse cultural settings, and various disciplinary contexts. We especially welcome community-based scholars' views and opinions on their collaboration with university-based partners in particular and on engaged scholarship in general.

Relationship, Accountability, Justice: A Conversation about Community-Engaged Research

Sarah Buhler, Sue Delanoy, Amanda Dodge, Chantelle Johnson, Jason Mercredi, Heather Peters and Stan Tu'Inukuafe

In 2015, a coalition of six Saskatoon community organizations (the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan, AIDS Saskatoon, STR8 UP 10,000 Little Steps to Healing, Inc., the Mennonite Central Committee, the Micah Mission, and Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City [CLASSIC])[1] and a university researcher (Sarah Buhler from the University of Saskatchewan College of Law) came together to address the issue of telephone access in Saskatchewan's provincial correctional centres. Together we established an informal research coalition that we called "Project Access." The issue of telephone access in provincial prisons had been identified by the six community organizations through their ongoing work with prisoners and former prisoners. Specific concerns included the exorbitant costs of the prison telephone system and unfair and uneven application of policies regarding telephone access. As we met to discuss the issue, it became clear to us that in order to advocate effectively for changes to the system, we needed to research the issue and to learn more about the ways the current telephone access policies were being implemented in provincial prisons.

The Project Access coalition collectively determined that we should apply for funding to undertake a literature review and qualitative study to learn more about

[1] See: http://www.elizabethfrysask.org/ ; http://www.aidssaskatoon.ca/ ; http://str8-up.ca/ ; https://mcccanada.ca/learn/where/canada/saskatchewan; http://themicahmission.org/ ; http://www.classiclaw.ca/

former prisoners' experiences of the prison telephone system. We were fortunate to receive funding through the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Sciences and Justice Studies at the University of Saskatchewan for our project, and were able to interview a total of 37 individuals who had been incarcerated in a provincial correctional centre in the previous two years. Our research led to a detailed report to the Ministry of Justice, public and community presentations, and a public report and infographic.[2] It also led to a meeting of coalition members with the provincial Minister of Justice, who announced changes to the inmate telephone system that responded to several of the concerns we raised in our report shortly thereafter.

Throughout the more than two years that the Project Access coalition worked on the research project, we met monthly. Following the completion of our project, coalition members determined that we wanted to continue to work together on research projects related to issues and concerns in the community. We decided also to meet to discuss and critically reflect on the process of working together in this research project. The following is the edited transcript of our discussion. In order of their appearance in the conversation, the participants were as follows: Sarah Buhler (Associate Professor, University of Saskatchewan College of Law); Jason Mercredi (Executive Director, AIDS Saskatoon); Heather Peters (Restorative Justice Coordinator, Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan); Stan Tu'Inukuafe (Outreach worker, STR8 UP); Amanda Dodge (Supervising Lawyer, CLASSIC); Sue Delanoy (Executive Director, Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan); Chantelle Johnson (Executive Director, CLASSIC).

Sarah: Let's start with talking about how everyone originally got involved in this project.

Jason: Amanda from CLASSIC came to our drop-in centre to just chat about issues we have in the community and this issue of telephone access for prisoners was one I identified to her. I wanted to be involved because it was an issue that we at our organization had been banging our heads against the wall about for about two years.

Heather: Yes, Amanda and I originally had a discussion about some different root problems that we see in our correctional centres and our community, and then she contacted me a few months later saying that this issue of telephone access in prisons was one that we wanted to focus on. So we came to see what it was going to evolve into.

Stan: That is what happened with us at STR8 UP too.

Amanda: When CLASSIC's Systemic Initiatives Program was getting developed we consulted

[2] These documents will be available soon on the website of the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Sciences and Justice Studies at the University of Saskatchewan: http://www.usask.ca/cfbsjs/

community agencies and this systemic issue came up repeatedly. It was great to have not only the community agencies speaking into it but then wanting to participate and come to the table and work more collaboratively together.

Sarah: From my perspective my involvement also emerged primarily through my ongoing relationship with CLASSIC. It is interesting to me to point out that although some of the coalition members had not worked together before, there was a framework of pre-existing relationship for some of the community organizations and people involved.

Amanda: I think there is an interesting contrast between the existing relationships among community organizations and the new ones. With CLASSIC's systemic work, we were looking at agencies that support prisoners; some of them we had relationships with and some of them we didn't. So it was a great opportunity to do some outreach and build some new relationships through the work.

Sue: I got involved after speaking individually with everyone about this situation, and talking with CLASSIC about the opportunity to delve deeper into some of the issues all of the groups have experienced within our organizations regarding incarceration policies and practices.

Sarah: So can people share why they got involved with this project and this issue of telephone access in provincial prisons?

Jason: AIDS Saskatoon works with people who are HIV positive in the province. Our concern was that HIV rates are very high in the provincial prison system and it was important for us to have access to people we are trying to reach out to. Getting involved in a research project like this and trying to influence change to the system and increase telephone access made sense.

Sue: Our, the Elizabeth Fry Society, works with women and girls who are facing the criminal justice system or directly involved with incarceration. We hear directly from the women about the situations while incarcerated that halt their progress while inside, and stymie their abilities for a successful reintegration back into their communities. We also wanted to be involved with a project that could influence change and after much discussions regarding some of the challenges in the various institutions. Telephone access was one of the main frustrations with many of the women. Also the ability to give voice to the women was extremely important to us!

Heather: Our organization, the Mennonite Central Committee, does not do direct programming within prisons but we do support education and advocacy on justice issues. Being part of this research project was really important in that it supported community organizations and was a different kind of advocacy work. So it was really important for us to be here.

Stan: From our perspective, we not only got involved in this project because STR8 UP members all have experienced incarceration, but we also got involved because from an organizational perspective we believe that it is important for the individuals who access STR8 UP be given a space where they can have their voices heard.

Amanda: CLASSIC is committed to working collaboratively in our systemic advocacy work. I think being involved in a partnership like this enhances the credibility of the work we do in at least two ways. One, it taps into the expertise of the community agencies that come around the table. Then secondly, it enhances our credibility with the decision makers that we are appealing to for change. Working together like this means that no one is standing alone or even in a group of two; here, there are six of us standing together saying this telephone system in the prisons needed to change. It increases the credibility of the work considerably.

Chantelle: Our legal clinic represents people in provincial correctional centres. We noticed that this issue of telephone access was affecting them and was important to address.

Sarah: For me, I had pre-existing relationships with most of the people and organizations that are involved in this project. As a university researcher, my priority and my goal has been to link the work that I do to projects that will benefit the community. It is really exciting when something like this comes along. The research topic and the desire to do the project arose directly from the community organizations, and I would definitely not have been able to identify prison telephone access as a key issue sitting alone in my office at the university.

Amanda: It is a good lesson in how accessible that dialogue can be. I don't think it was a hardship for us to have those initial conversations. I think it was half an hour, or an hour, in each other's offices just chatting about "what are the systemic issues the folks you are working with facing?", that led us to identify this as a topic of common concern.

Sue: Ditto! This experience of all working together was very positive to delve deeper into an issue that impacted so deeply the people that we serve. Also unpacking the actual correctional telephone policies was extremely interesting to understand the workings of the governmental policies, and then to put voice to the ramifications of these policies.

Jason: I have had many conversations with researchers or people who want to do community-based research. And usually you never hear from them again and so I wasn't necessarily expecting it to lead to anything at first.

Sarah: Interesting, and why do you think that is, that you usually don't hear back from researchers?

Jason: I think navigating this many relationships is not easy. The coordination of this kind of research takes time and effort. And also there can be lots of egos involved and so sometimes it's just, people like the *idea* of community based research but once they start doing it they get cold feet or realize it's too time consuming.

Sue: I agree with Jason, it was lovely to be with others who had a comprehensive understanding of the work that we all do, the simplicity of it and the complications involved. Also the other organizations are extremely knowledgeable, easy to work with, and very generous in their abilities to get along with each other.

Stan: And I think sometimes university researchers think they want to do research with the community but they actually have a preconceived idea of what they want to research. And when a community identifies a different need, then the university researcher might say: "oh, that's not really what I was thinking."

Jason: I have had that experience where I am involved in a research project but the researchers clearly have an intended purpose and even though the community partners identify a different concern, the university researchers keep trying to shift the focus back to what they would like the focus to be.

Stan: Yeah, because a lot of times I think the university researcher already has written up how their funding is structured so they have to fit what they are doing in that box instead of coming and discussing the research with the community first. Our process with this project was different because it evolved over time, right?

Amanda: For the community agencies around the table, did you feel like you could steer the ship in terms of the direction of the research?

Jason: It felt very relational.

Many Voices: Yes. Yeah.

Sue: This project is very much a compilation of many voices and no one seemed to overpower another organization. It was definitely not heavy handed academic wise, or community wise. It felt like a true collaboration, and one that I hope to pursue on other topics. I learned a lot from my peers and respect each and every one of them immensely.

Stan: But I think, from my perspective, it is only because of the relationships we already had, right? People around our table felt comfortable to give their opinions and be involved.

Sarah: I feel like relationship is a theme that runs through any of this kind of work. It is front and centre.

Stan: And for me, to be honest, when I come to a group, I see who is at the table, and if I feel they are "doers", I am more engaged, because I know things will be followed up, as compared to just coming and talking. Because I hate coming to meetings to just have a meeting, I don't have time for that. For me, I am really aware of who is at the table. I don't know if others do that but it's something I do.

Heather: It is also realizing that relationships take time too. And that is why this project took time a while.

Sue: The relationships were there before the project, but were deepened and widened with this project.

Sarah: What did you understand the purpose or goal of the collaboration to be, when it first started? What did you feel you could bring to the table and to this research project?

Heather: I understood the purpose to be to do a research project together on an important issue identified by the community.

Sue: I did too, but also liked that this was a project whereby we could directly involve the women who we work with.

Amanda: For CLASSIC's perspective, we were wanting to see recommendations for legal and policy change. We thought that we could bring a legal lens, as well as legal research and support to the project.

Jason: We work in partnership, that's how we do almost everything we do. I have worked with a couple bigger coalitions so I thought I could bring that experience, especially the bigger advocacy piece, to the table.

Chantelle: I feel like all the partners at this table brought really unique perspectives and we learned from each other throughout the course of the project.

Sarah: And there was a strength in numbers too, I think. A feeling of legitimacy. Most of the organizations that do front line work within prisons and with former prisoners in Saskatoon were at the table. I think that really brought us solidarity into the project. So let's move on to the next question: How important was it to have the university research capacity involved? What do you see as the main benefits and drawbacks of the University research involvement in community based research projects?

Jason: The benefits are definitely the increased capacity that this brings. No community based organization I know of has a researcher on staff. Another benefit was the ability to access funding for the project. I don't think any of us within community organizations would have had the time. An academic background is good because while I think we can translate results to the community, an academic can help translate results to policy makers and other academics. For this project, if we didn't have that research capacity, we would be in the exact same place now that we were in three years ago. We were actually able to show that we are basing our policy recommendations in fact and with the empirical evidence to support it. The limitations that we faced in our project had to do with the issue of advocacy. Some of our organizations, as charitable organizations, have limits in terms of how we can advocate on issues in order to maintain our charitable status. University researchers have academic freedom and don't have those limits. So the issue was that it was important that any publications that came out of the research didn't cross the line in terms of advocacy.

Sue: Well said, I could not agree more!

Chantelle: There can be that tension – the university researcher needs to publish and the community organizations want to ensure we are in line with our obligations not to cross the line in terms of advocacy, so I think if that the university is really interested in community based research, this is one of the areas to acknowledge.

Jason: A lot of times academic research doesn't really result in changes policy wise or other because it sometimes feels like they just want to toot their own horn instead of being very strategic in how they present their message.

Sarah: I think that speaks to the dominant ethos of academic research: there can be this idea that we as academic researchers should try to be neutral, to just provide information or get the evidence. Of course, critical perspectives show that all knowledge is political in some way and how you choose what to research shows values and shows ideology and all that kind of thing. But not all researchers take a strategic perspective or see themselves as advocates, I think most don't, right?

Chantelle: Whereas that is super important if you are doing community engaged research because if you are gathering all the research and not thinking about the consequences you are probably going to run out of community to do community engaged research with!

Stan: For STR8 UP, we are relatively new as an organization. For us, getting involved in a project like this in conjunction with the university and the other organizations involved makes us more credible in a sense.

Amanda: I thought that one of the real benefits the partnership with the university was the ethics approval process for the interviews that we did. To have that protection from the ethics approval process through the university, and to be able to publish the results and share them because there was such a high standard applied to that. I also want to echo the previous comments about how the partnership gave voice to the project in a way that community based agencies might not be able to express on their own. The university partnership also gave us a forum to present on our research. For example, when we were involved in presenting at a Human Rights conference at the College of Law; that would not have been possible without the university connection.

Sue: This partnership and initiative gave us legitimacy to prove something that we already knew or felt intuitively, it offered us the opportunity to prove through research what we thought, and gave our advocacy more legitimacy.

Sarah: So it sounds like overall, I am hearing a net positive impact. But with sort of some hurdles that we had to deal with along the way, competing interests and issues that arose along the way that I think we really hashed through.

Chantelle: And I think that it is important to reflect back to the discussion we had on the other questions. The community-university relationship was successful because we already knew you Sarah, and we had a relationship with you. I am not sure how well we would have done with someone from the university that we don't know who just parachuted in.

Sue: I think it would have been more difficult with someone who we had not known, but the organizations and the individuals are all real doers, so this was a win -win all around.

Jason: Especially when you are talking about what happens with the results of the research. We get approached for research all the time and sometimes we say no because sometimes I get a bad sense that the person is going to take whatever they want and run with it. But, because we have that relationship and there is a level of trust that you are not going to screw us in the end if we identify something of concern, this worked well.

Chantelle: Whereas that might happen with somebody who isn't as entrenched in the community who might just prefer to get published and not care about all the rest of our interests and needs.

Stan: There was a lot of trust between all of the members of the group. This really was based on the fact that we had a relationship among us.

Sarah: Does anyone want to speak to how important it was to have students involved in our project? We had, as you know, a series of university student research assistants throughout the time on our project.

Amanda: They were so fantastic to have - students who were able to go and do the interviews, many of them, and help with some of the research we needed. Students did legal research, policy research, sociological research, and even economic research. It was just fantastic. In addition to that, what a great learning experience for students to be sitting around this table, to see collaborative systemic advocacy at work, across different disciplines and with the different perspectives.

Sarah: How did the collaborative nature of the project strengthen it, and did it bring challenges? I know we have touched on these questions already to some extent.

Chantelle: I agree with what Stan said earlier about the way that working collaboratively increases the credibility of the work.

Heather: And a challenge is the length of time that it takes to finish anything when you are working as a group!

Jason: I think too there was a number of times we would disagree on stuff because we could talk it through, versus if there was just one person they could potentially dominate the conversation. When we were talking about messaging and that got heated, we would disagree on it but come to some kind of resolution. That is a big strength in this type of research.

Amanda: There seems to be a lot of equity around the table. Everyone's voice was valued equally, that is a real strength. And also I always looked forward to the meetings because I liked the people around the table. We enjoy each other's company in addition to working well together. We laugh together and I think those things matter in terms of "am I going to go to this meeting or not, am I going to make time for this?". Whether you are enjoying the work and the people you are working with can determine engagement.

Sue: Students always bring a good perspective to any project.

Sarah: I think what was really interesting and worked really well with this project was the actual design of the research. It actually happened collaboratively right from the start. First of all, the idea for the project came about from the community partners. We also worked together to figure out the research questions and protocols. I feel like the whole process was collaborative. And then even the interpretation and analysis of the data, community partners worked on that together.

Amanda: A difference maker, I think, is that CLASSIC had set aside resources for systemic advocacy. Oftentimes this work is done "off the sides of people's desks" as it were. Because CLASSIC dedicated resources, we had a staff member who could work to coordinate the meetings and supervise the students, and a site to host meetings and house the material. That kept the collaboration supported and moving forward.

Sarah: So what are the key elements of successful community based research and advocacy in your view?

Amanda: I would underscore the importance of data as a key element of our project. The interviews with former prisoners yielded such credible data because it was from those affected. It wasn't just that we were blustering on a position but that our position was strongly supported through the voices of people affected and the legal and sociological research.

Heather: I agree.

Sue: Me too!

Chantelle: Maybe the flexibility and nimbleness amongst the collaborators to be able to work with one another and understand the barriers to what we faced a year into the project. And again, that comes because of relationship.

Amanda: I'll add to this the importance of the commitment of people around the table. I mean, this was a three-year long project and everyone kept coming to meetings. It is pretty amazing.

Sarah: Does anyone have reflections on power dynamics within the group?

Jason: I thought it was pretty good.

Sue: I enjoyed being part of this group. I felt like everyone learned from each other and it felt equitable.

Amanda: It felt equitable and I think that is commendable thinking about the diversity of people around the table, like gender and organizations. No one was asserting that their personal or organizational capacity was more important or needed to dominate what we were doing.

Sarah: Are there any reflections on the ethical issues that arise generally in community based research and advocacy and how they should be addressed? Were there any ethical issues in this project that arose? We spoke earlier about the importance of having the research ethics board approve the protocol.

Amanda: One thing I have heard a lot from the community is that people keep researching us but aren't bringing a benefit into our lives as a result of this research. Our cultural advisor and elder Maria Campbell has said you always need to honour the principle of reciprocity. There needs to be a tangible benefit that the community experiences as a result of the research. Now, how do you ensure that happens from the outset of the project when you don't know if you are going to be successful? I think we have been fortunate in that we have had some success with our project and we can say we think that there is now a (small) benefit to people incarcerated or in conflict with the law as a result of our project. So I like that our project was able to honor the principle of reciprocity in terms of the systems change that started as a result of the advocacy.

Heather: I think we are fortunate that we have something tangible that we can point to and that there has actually been change because I think that rarely happens.

Chantelle: Often systemic changes are a trickle down result. You don't see results for years. It does not say that the work is not important but how does it translate to the people connected to it? We could strategize about this and learn from the community.

Sarah: What are the risks, if anything, to the community of community based research? And potentially of this project?

Jason: Funding backlash. These are the types of things, if the powers that be are not happy with the research that community groups are doing and what they do with it, they might lose funding.

Sue: Exposing publically what we already might know, then working to change public perceptions, and also highlighting something to the government that they might change their minds on negatively is always a risk.

Heather: Also, the people that we engage with, they make themselves vulnerable in the interviews and as we collect data and if nothing comes of it, why would they do that again, right?

Stan: And maybe as community organizations, if we have misunderstood the goals and objectives, it could strain relationships amongst the partners.

Sarah: What do university researchers need to know in order to work effectively with community engaged research?

Jason: Time commitment, you have to be willing to put in the time. And so, don't come knocking if you are not willing to put in the time.

Amanda: Build relationships, make yourself known. Don't swoop in from the campus and just swoop back.

Sue: Understand the community you are seeking to work with!

Chantelle: And be careful to learn what the priorities are of the community partner and be aware that this might be a consideration in terms of how the research is presented.

Sarah: So be prepared to be accountable to the community.

Amanda: And you have had to make compromises because of that accountability.

Jason: I have been involved in a number of research projects where I felt like I was resume padding for someone and I didn't appreciate that. So if you are looking for some sort of thing to put on your cv, then community based research is not for you.

Sarah: So what are your hopes in the future in terms of this group?

Amanda: I think we know we have a good thing going and we want to take on other issues in the future. We are talking about our next project, and need to make some decisions around that. It is exciting to think about future impact.

Heather: My hope is that we can continue our work as a coalition to research injustice and that it comes from our work and where we see the needs.

Sue: I hope we can continue to work together on other initiatives and build solidarity!

Stan: Our hope too is that we would continue moving forward together.

Chantelle: I think that a whole bunch more comes from this type of collaboration than the actual project results themselves. Over three years we have gotten to know each other quite well. The networking and mutual support beyond this project is invaluable - if something comes up, you can contact one another. I wouldn't feel uncomfortable contacting Stan or Heather now with an issue beyond this group's focus. So I think the benefits for the community are a lot broader than just the research results.

About the Participants

Sarah Buhler *(corresponding author)* is an Associate Professor at the University of Saskatchewan College of Law. She is involved in community-engaged research that considers the impacts of the legal system on marginalized communities, and works closely with CLASSIC (Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City). Email: sarah.buhler@usask.ca

Sue Delanoy is the Executive Director of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan. Prior to her involvement with the Elizabeth Fry Society she was the National Executive Director in Ottawa Canada, for the CCAAC (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada). She spent 10 years as Children and Youth Advocate for Communities *for Children* in Saskatoon and 10 years before that as the Executive Director of the provincial Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association.

Amanda Dodge is the Program Director at the Mennonite Central Committee of Saskatchewan (MCC). Prior to her work with MCC, Amanda was a supervising lawyer at CLASSIC (Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City) and director of CLASSIC's Systemic Initiatives program.

Chantelle Johnson has been the Executive Director of CLASSIC (Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City) since 2012. She has B.A. and LL.B. degrees from the University of Saskatchewan. She has previously worked with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, with the Child Sexual Exploitation Unit in Edmonton, as Crown Counsel in British Columbia, and as an intern at the Indigenous Law and Justice Branch in Australia.

Jason Mercredi is the Executive Director at AIDS Saskatoon, he has been with the agency for the past five years and has over a decade of non-profit experience. He is a Board member for the Canadian AIDS Society, SUM Theatre, Saskatoon Housing Authority, and the 33rd Street Business Improvement District. He is an advocate for Harm Reduction and health equity. He is of Metis, Dene and Scottish ancestry and hails from Treaty 6 and the homeland of the Metis.

Heather Peters is the Peacebuilding Coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan. In this role she connects with communities in Saskatchewan who are interested in trauma awareness, restorative justice and reconciliation.

Stan Tu'Inukuafe has been supporting those involved in the criminal justice system for the past ten plus years. He is married and the father of four beautiful girls. Stan currently works as a school social worker at Oskāyak high school in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Book Reviews

Inspired Sustainability: Planting Seeds for Action by Erin Lothes Biviano. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016. xvi + 286pp. ISBN: 978-62698-163- 8

Researched and drafted by Erin Lothes Biviano, while she held an Earth Institute fellowship under the direction of Jeffrey Sachs at Columbia University from 2007-2010, *Inspired Sustainability* offers a rare empirical look at how ordinary people of faith engage ecological issues in the context of their religious congregations. While most books dealing with religion and ecology focus on doctrines along with their potential implications and promises for forming integrated worldviews, in the present volume Biviano reports qualitative data about the views and opinions held by individuals in local-level faith communities. Her sample is drawn from people identifying with a variety of religious traditions including Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity of various denominations, Islam, and Judaism. Biviano's focus is on the US context with the core of her research participants recruited in New Jersey, where she is now an assistant professor of theology at the College of St. Elizabeth. She also lists atheist and agnostic interviewees but they are not featured in the present monograph.

Biviano coded her data to examine seven recurring themes related to religiously flavoured sustainability education and action initiatives, including how they are inspired and maintained: (1) scientific literacy, that is, the importance of insights from the natural sciences for motivating faith-based ecological consciousness; (2) awareness of global connectivity, which perceives that intertwined relationships permeate the Earth community; (3) commitment to social justice, which flows from faith-inspired commitments to human equality; (4) reverence for creation, which, for many of Biviano's research participants, arose out of a conviction that nature was intrinsically spiritual , (5) interfaith connections, meaning that ecology transcends religious boundaries; (6) expanding religious visions as they enlarged the research participants' understandings of categories like God, neighbour and self, often putting them in a cosmological context; and (7) independent thinking, that is, a refusal to accept the herd mentality so often associated with religiosity by secular academics. With the aid of these themes, Biviano refines her 'green blues' theory, which she variously explains as "a mélange of ambiguity, conviction, discouragement, and persistence regarding sustainable living" (p. xxi) and "a religious dimension of grief for the environment that experienced the diminution of creation's beauty as a spiritual loss" (p. 50). However, her green blues theory is also about practical theologies that work, which, even if they are not wholly successful in overcoming the malaise of presently existing un-sustainability, nonetheless show awareness of contemporary challenges for the Earth community and support, propose, and sometimes even enact alternatives.

It is people with socio-ecological perspective and location that feature in the interview data in this monograph. Indeed, most of the people interviewed are involved with committees at their places of worship that were formed to engage sustainability issues. This is an interesting focus, allowing Biviano to question an assumed status quo in which most religious traditions active in the United States of America can affirm the value of the natural world without moving toward transformative ecological action.. Further, Biviano maps important insights regarding multiple ways that people on the ground and in the proverbial pews both care about and engage in this work. It is significant from a community-engaged perspective that those voices are given prominence in this work. Indeed, Biviano admits that she had wished she could simply publish the transcripts of her interviews because they are so rich. As a result of her focus, readers learn that Biviano's respondents sensed that if religious leaders actually spoke about ecological issues from the pulpit in the US context, they would endanger their jobs. The response of these concerned lay people was to engage directly in ecological issues without pastoral leadership; this becomes the most prominent theme in the book.

Other interesting points that can be gained from reading this monograph include the impression that evangelical Christians cannot speak effectively about global climate change due to a perceived partisan understanding of that socio-ecological challenge, but can circumvent that partisan framing of the issue by speaking about the biblical basis for creation care. Another prominent theme is the affirmation of the importance of growing food to raise ecological consciousness, physically connect with the soil, and provide a basis for action. When addressing that area, Biviano memorably relates an encounter with a Quaker woman who grew all her own food, employing a freezer and a canner to meet her nutritional needs, using what fruitfulness of the Earth is available in a suburban New Jersey yard. There is also a poignant reflection on the value of considering Earth as mother for fostering ecological action. A recurring theme is also the importance of naming the effects of ecological degradation on people living in poverty and otherwise marginalized in order to activate a sense of religious moral duty to reclaim the dignity of the human person, which is a central belief of the faith communities engaged in this research.

At times Biviano's reporting is interspersed with theological reflection, including the thought of the prominent twentieth-century theologian Paul Ricoeur, the ideas of the storied Orthodox Rabbi Joseph D. Soloveitchik, Buddhist articulations of interbeing, the example of the Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I, and the Catholic Social Teaching of recent popes. Yet, the volume still lacks theological weight, a problem compounded by what seems to be a breakdown of good copyediting so that quotes are not always properly introduced or redacted, leaving the reader to struggle to navigate information like names and events that are not situated. There are also a notable number of instances of unacknowledged verbatim repetition of very distinctive quotes, sometimes only a few pages apart. The result is a style that seems episodic even within a single page. The overall impression is that the book is a report, not an analysis and synthesis. This is regrettable given the importance of bringing an engaged research methodology to bear on the wicked problem of the insight-action gap in ecological action, and the potential that Biviano's green blues theory has to aid in that effort. . Nonetheless, if only as a potential motivator for transformative action and for its insight into lay people's ecological motivations and actions, *Inspired Sustainability* remains a valuable read.

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Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships: Global Perspectives by Hall, B., Tandon, R. and Tremblay, C. (eds.) 2015. Victoria, BC.: University of Victoria Press. 306pp. ISBN 978-1-55058-562-9

The edited book *Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships: Global Perspectives* came together as a result of much collaboration and extensive partnership, a direct testament to what the editors are looking to promote. This book methodically and thoughtfully presents research findings, largely in the form of case studies, of institutional arrangements that facilitate and support research partnerships between civil society organizations (CSOs) [the 'community'] and higher education institutions (HEIs) [the 'university']. An online global survey, along with the gathering of in-depth case studies from around the world, was conducted during 2013-2015 in order to assess how community-university research partnerships are (or aren't) operating globally.

The book uniquely and effectively combines voices from the global South and North and from scholars and community leaders who work in a variety of disciplines. By combining policy and practice as well as specific examples of partnerships from a variety of specific universities, the book comprehensively achieves its purpose to demonstrate that high quality research can and is being done in many universities around the world, and provide practical and achievable guidelines as to how this can be achieved despite challenges. The book is presented in a clear and matter-or-fact tone and is objective, yet analytical, in its presentation.

Overall, the book is scholarly yet accessible, and would be quite useful for students, academics and community organizers alike who are looking to partner to do research in a more community-based or participatory way. Policy and decision makers in HEIs (who focus on community engagement) would likely benefit the most from this book as it describes, in great detail, the different policies, funding streams, incentives, capacities and organizational strategies that institutions globally have put in place (or begun to) to ensure communities and universities collaborate. Innovation and creativity are found within this book with respect to what many individuals and institutions around the world are doing to make research more meaningful and impactful to civil society.

Situated against a well-developed backdrop (Chapter 2) of the challenging institutional and political realities of HEIs (particularly in the Global North), and current global trends in university-community partnerships (Chapter 3), the editors introduce three core themes (Chapter 4) from each case study: policies, institutional practices in HEIs and civil societies and community networks. Twelve (12) detailed case studies (organized by country) then follow, which were selected "based on prior information, and also from the broad findings emerging from the survey" (Tandon & Singh, 2015, p.45). The countries highlighted throughout the book were placed into two categories: 1) those wherein national/provincial policy for supporting community engagement and partnership already existed (Argentina, Canada, Indonesia, Netherlands, Palestine, South Africa, United Kingdom and USA); and 2) those wherein such policy was in the making or the possibility of securing institutional policy was high (Brazil, India, Ireland, Jordan).

Each case study presented incorporates the same information presented in similar order, which makes the book predictably easy to follow. The case study is presented as 1) an analysis of policy framework with respect to community-university research partnerships; 2) an analysis of two HEIs selected from each country with respect to institutional structure and provisions in place for community-university research partnerships; and 3) an examination of the local civil society network that has been actively partnering with HEIs. While helpful to know in advance how each case study will be presented, the length and amount of detail in each case study, at times, is repetitive and extensive. I suspect the editors had a hard time choosing which countries to highlight, and therefore decided to include more than they likely needed to. While the book includes a comparative analysis chapter (Chapter 5) and a conclusion, a summarizing table or chart of key findings would have been nice to see at the end. By the end of the book, the unique characteristics of each country became difficult to recall, with the exception of extreme outliers. Indonesia stuck out as having the most progressive institutionalization of community-university research partnerships, while the country of Jordan appeared to have the most challenges.

This research project was supported wholly by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) as well as the UNESCO programme on Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education hosted at the University of Victoria. The editors themselves are contributors to the research and are well-established, engaged scholars in community development, community-based research and participatory action research. Their experiences as researchers with civil society organizations and as leaders in their respective academic institutions make them invaluable sources and conveners on this topic. As far as I could tell, this is the most up to date book on the current state of university-community research partnerships as well as the most 'international' book in scope within this field of research.

This edited volume of 12 case studies contains rich data. The authors used a variety of sources for each case study including interviews, field visits, focus groups, secondary sources and knowledgeable persons who were vital to the local scene. The methodology was appropriate for gathering as much information as possible, in a variety of ways. The online global survey indicated which countries and cases were to be elaborated further.

In closing, this book provides more answers than questions for those interested in pursuing and promoting community-university research partnerships, but also realistically exposes the reader to the varying challenges that come along with doing this type of research. I was left feeling more hopeful than discouraged, although institutional buy-in and financial resources will likely continue to act as deterrents for this type of research within the academy. As someone who believes this academy could do more to reach out to its local civil society (community) in an equitable, meaningful and non-hierarchal conversation, I was grateful to read a book that demonstrates that more is not only possible, it is achievable.

References

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Engaged Scholar Journal: Community-Engaged Research, Teaching, and Learning is Canada's online, peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary journal committed to profiling best practices in 'engaged scholarship' informed by community-academic partnerships in research, teaching and learning.

Our Mission

- to promote and support reciprocal and meaningful co-creation of knowledge among scholars, educators, professionals and community leaders, in Canada and worldwide
- to inspire and promote productive dialogue between practice and theory of engaged scholarship
- to critically reflect on engaged scholarship, research, and pedagogy pursued by various university and community partners, working locally, nationally and internationally, across various academic disciplines and areas of application
- to serve as a forum of constructive debate on the meanings and applications of engaged scholarship among partners and communities

The Journal invites previously unpublished original reflective essays and research articles, review articles, reports from the field, testimonies, multimedia contributions and book reviews focusing on community-engaged scholarship.

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