



# Engaged Scholar Journal

community-engaged research, teaching, and learning

Volume 9 Issue 1 2023



# Engaged Scholar Journal: Community-Engaged Research, Teaching, and Learning

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Canadian – Multidisciplinary – Peer-Reviewed – Open Access

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### Issue Statistics

#### A. Authors and Submissions

<b>Authors and Co-Authors</b>	
University-based	45
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Non-university-based partners	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>

<b>Article Submissions</b>	
Original proposals for peer and editor review	9
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## B. Peer-Reviewers and Peer-Reviewing

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<b>Non-University Based</b>	
Uganda	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

# Essays





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# A Poetic Tribute to the Spirit of Canada-Nicaragua Solidarity: Tools for Peace

Lori Hanson, Jonah Walters

**ABSTRACT** Tools for Peace (T4P) was a grassroots campaign in the 1980s that mobilized Canadians in every province and territory from diverse walks of life and extended large quantities of material support to Nicaragua's Sandinista revolution. Despite having been recognized by the Nicaraguan state as one of the most important international solidarity efforts of the Sandinista era, T4P has received strikingly little scholarly attention. The paper analyzes 27 interviews with Tools for Peace participants that were conducted in the mid-1980s for an anthology that was never published, the transcripts of which are now found in the public archives at McMaster University. The interviewees' words evoke the moods, sentiments, and dispositions that animated T4P. Weaving scholar-activism with arts-informed inquiry, this paper presents those sentiments in a series of found poems that seek to both engage and inspire their readers. Through these poems, the paper evokes the experiential and affective dimensions of international solidarity as it was enacted through this novel historical experience. We suggest that T4P was exemplary of the spirit of solidarity in the global movement in support of the Sandinista revolution, but also unique in its Canadian-ness, leading us to advocate a definition of international solidarity that emphasizes its situatedness, together with its experiential and affective dimensions.

**KEYWORDS** International solidarity, Nicaraguan revolution, poetic transcription, Canadian social movements

*“Solidarity is not something you have, it is something you do — a set of actions taken toward a common goal. Inasmuch as it is something experienced, it is not a given but must be generated: it must be made, not found. Solidarity both produces community and is rooted in it and is thus simultaneously a means and an end. Solidarity is the practice of helping people realize they — that is to say, we — are all in this together.”*

Astra Taylor and Leah Hunt-Hendrix, “One for all”  
*The New Republic*,  
Aug 26, 2019

At once arising from and producing community, the concept of solidarity has long conditioned and inspired the work of engaged and activist scholars (Hanson, forthcoming).<sup>1</sup> A flexible and capacious concept, solidarity was considered in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by sociologist Durkheim as underpinning social cohesion, regarded by anarchist Kropotkin as fundamental to mutual aid, exemplified for socialist internationalists by the collective organization of workers across national boundaries, and more recently resurrected as an ethical ideal by community health and social movement scholars. As activist scholars within communities and social movements, solidarity “guides the consideration of our mutual entanglements” (CCGHR, 2015). Yet solidarity remains an ontologically slippery concept. Functioning to express the abstract ideal of common struggle with those who are understood to be oppressed, solidarity nonetheless appears in highly situational and specific forms, and often serves simultaneously as an organizing principle, an aspirational horizon, a set of practices, a template for geopolitical alignment, and a core value motivating a set of actions through emotion (Power & Charlip, 2009; Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix, 2019). So how do we capture and portray its power and potential? How do we inspire solidarity?

This article links the disposition of activist scholarship and the methods of arts-informed inquiry to reflect on such questions. In it we explore international solidarity as expressed in Tools for Peace (T4P), a large, decade-long, pan-Canadian political and material aid campaign in support of Nicaragua’s Sandinista revolution in the 1980s.<sup>2</sup> As well as recovering and recording this important historical Canadian instantiation of international solidarity, our purpose in this article is to evoke the experience of solidarity as expressed in T4P through particular attention to its experiential and affective dimensions, with the hope of inspiring by example. To do so, we draw on our own solidarity experience as activist-scholars to offer an arts-informed portrayal of the spirit of solidarity as it played out in that campaign through “found poems” (Pendergrast, 2009). We derive these found poems from personal stories of solidarity recovered in 27 hitherto unpublished interviews with T4P and solidarity movement participants, the transcripts of which are now stored in the public archives of McMaster University.

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1 Somewhat distinct from other forms of engaged scholarship, activist scholarship (AS) is more overtly political and is borne from a positionality in which researcher and activist identities fuse in the service of social movements’ political aims. Rather than engaging *with* community, scholars are activists in and *of* the community; agendas are shared and enacted together. Through this kind of scholarly participation from within, knowledge useful for political struggle becomes more readily discernible, as do the contradictions and tensions within movements. Activist-scholars in this sense might be said to embody solidarity. In this paper we position ourselves as both solidarity activists and activist-scholars and use the terms interchangeably (See also Cox, 2015; Hale, 2008; Hanson, forthcoming; Sanford & Angel-Anjani, 2008).

2 Nicaragua’s Sandinista revolution arose through the armed overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979. Over eleven years, the revolutionary government led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) undertook extensive reforms to health, education, and land tenure systems. Thousands of volunteer internationalists supported the left-leaning regime, as did most Western countries. A notable exception was the United States government, which instead armed a counter-revolutionary force, prompting a protracted civil war. In 1990 the Sandinistas lost a national election, effectively ending the revolutionary experiment. U.S. political pressure continued in the post-revolutionary era and contradictions within the FSLN intensified, fomenting the current anti-democratic spiral into tyranny within the party. The Sandinista government today, under the leadership of President Daniel Ortega, bears little resemblance to the earlier regime. (See also Gonzalez, 1990; La Botz, 2018; Ramirez, 2012; Robinson, 2021)

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We follow this introduction by situating ourselves vis-à-vis Nicaraguan solidarity. Next we briefly situate Tools for Peace in the wider history of Canadian and global solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution. After an explanation of our methods, we turn to the material that is at the heart of the paper: we present the results of our analysis in the form of found poetry derived from the words of the transcribed interviews. We conclude with our reflections on international solidarity in the context of Nicaragua today.

### **Who We Are**

*Lori (LH):* I am a white settler woman from the Canadian prairies. I have been a professor and an activist-scholar for 23 years. I have been a Nicaragua solidarity activist and community organizer in both Canada and Nicaragua for more than 40 years. I entered solidarity work not as an academic, but as a revolutionary internationalist (*internacionalista*) volunteering in the promising social struggles of Central America in the 1980s. Living in war-torn Nicaragua for six years in the 1980s, my solidarity involved witnessing and accompanying, community organizing and strategizing, and occasionally, taking part in unloading the shipping containers sent by Canadians through Tools for Peace. After moving back to Canada in the 1990s, I continued to visit Nicaragua for several months every year working within Fairtrade, feminist, and anti-mining movements, until the uprising of 2018 and the deepening of the ongoing political crisis in Nicaragua. Currently I focus on supporting exiled student activists in their organizational and scholarly work.

As an activist scholar I take cues for my scholarship from within social movements, using those cues to guide action research projects and transformative education-inspired courses in both Canada and Nicaragua. Working outside of strict academic confines and conventions, I've come to appreciate that being true to a solidarity ethos also means experimentation — with form and content as well as with audience and method. Arts-informed research, and poetry in particular, is a promising recent addition to my toolkit as part of that commitment.

*Jonah (JW):* I am a white settler U.S.-American man in my late 20s. I came to international solidarity work not as part of the wave of revolutionary internationalists Lori describes, but rather in the uneven and often contradictory aftermath of that collective historical experience. I traveled to Nicaragua for the first time with my mother, who had in the 1980s been actively involved in the U.S.-based solidarity movement. We made the trip in 2008, when I was a high school student, as members of a biannual delegation organized by the university faculty where she was employed. I returned to Nicaragua in 2010 to work for an anti-poverty NGO that sustained itself, in large part, through the labor of affluent, but downwardly mobile, volunteers from Spain and North America. Simultaneously driven and disoriented by this experience, I returned to the United States the next year, where I became involved in new social movements that tended to be conspicuously domestic in their orientations and demands, especially in comparison with recent precursors like the Central America solidarity movement and the alter-globalization movement of the 1990s. A few years later, I returned to Nicaragua as a doctoral student. Perhaps predictably, then, my personal engagement with Nicaraguan politics remains

tightly associated with academic routines that are largely external, and sometimes detrimental, to the formation of durable political solidarity.

Both of our experiences were shaped by the withdrawal of social movement-based solidarity activities and organizations in North America during the 1990s and the Nicaraguan regime changes since then. Furthermore, both of our experiences eventually involved roles within academic institutions. To different extents and from the vantage points of two different generations and countries, we each continue to seek ways to define and portray international solidarity that might function to revive its inspirational and political appeal. This project is part of that effort.

### **Tools for Peace and the Canada-Nicaragua Solidarity Movement**

The Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua was supported by one of the most dynamic and socially influential international solidarity movements of the twentieth century. Historians and participants have taken significant strides towards documenting various instantiations of this movement in the United States, Europe, and Latin America, not only providing details of the global movement's internal dynamics but also uncovering the personal stories of participants who were often transformed by their experiences as solidarity activists (Agreda Portero & Helm, 2016; Bretlinger, 1995; Christiaens, 2014; Fernández, 2015; Gosse, 1995; Helm, 2014; Lovato, 2020; Miller, 2008; Perla, 2013; Rich, 1986; Walters, 2021).

However, there has been very little scholarly attention paid to the Nicaragua solidarity movement as it unfolded in Canada. This omission is striking considering the fact that Canadians mobilized in the thousands in every province and territory to express their support for the Nicaraguan revolution, maintaining their mobilization for more than a decade. The historical archive attests that these Canadians did so in historically and geographically situated ways that diverged from the solidarity movements of other countries. Engaged scholars must therefore endeavor to understand the Canadian solidarity movement on its own terms, through analytical approaches that are sensitive to the particularities of place and time.

Tools for Peace, as a large and sustained campaign within the broader Nicaraguan solidarity movement, provides an especially rich opportunity to perform this kind of historically situated and locally sensitive analysis. Extensive archival materials consulted for this project suggest that by scope, T4P was the largest and longest people-to-people international solidarity campaign of the twentieth century in Canada. Newspaper clippings, meeting minutes, and hundreds of reports describe how over the course of a decade, T4P established 126 committees across Canada, with thousands of volunteers from diverse sectors including church, school, union, farming, fishing, healthcare, and leftist political organizations. While participating in an array of political lobbying, educational, and organizing activities, T4P volunteers also annually collected, stored, packed, and shipped approximately \$1M of material aid to Nicaragua. Given Canada's geography, coordinating donations shipped by truck, train, rail, and air from both small communities and huge warehouses in urban centres across Canada to Vancouver's port was a gargantuan task, and eventually a small staff and national office with requisite non-

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profit incorporation were assembled to facilitate it. T4P was so successful that it was publicly recognized by the Sandinista government at the revolution's tenth anniversary celebration. But with the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990, T4P and the entire edifice of the Central American solidarity movement began to disintegrate (Van Gosse, 2020). In 1996 the last known T4P committee folded, leaving a largely unpublished legacy of Canadian solidarity (Tools for Peace, c. 1982-1990; Tools for Peace National Office, 1982-1991).

As activist-scholars engaged in international solidarity, we have each found ourselves repeatedly drawn to a similar set of political and theoretical questions: what remains of the solidarity that expressed itself so strongly from within the Nicaragua solidarity movement in general, and campaigns like Tools for Peace in particular? What lessons might we still learn from the era of the Nicaragua solidarity movement about how similar feats of solidarity might be generated, sustained, or reproduced? And, most importantly, how might any such lessons be usefully communicated to those engaged in political and social struggles today?

### **Methods**

Diverse and multi-disciplinary sources converge on several ideas about arts-informed research: that it acts as a “complementary methodology” to traditional forms of qualitative inquiry; that its use of artistic forms and expressions help explore, understand, represent, and even challenge human experiences (Searle and Shulha, 2016) potentiating research for social justice purposes (Faulkner, 2019; Hanson, 2007; Keifer-Boyd, 2001); that it allows for different types of analyses and sense-making; and that it expands the repertoire of representational forms in reporting results (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Searle and Shulha, 2016). Knowles and Coles's 2008 textbook on arts-informed research identifies several key elements of arts-informed inquiry: adhering to a particular art form, which serves to frame and define the inquiry and “text” produced; employing methodological integrity; and openly acknowledging autobiographical influence, or reflexivity, and intended audience.

These tenets of arts-informed research resonated with our research aims, with poetic inquiry seeming the most apt approach, given the affective and emotive nature of our data (Pendergrast, 2009), and having some experience with the use of poetry (Hanson, 2007; Hanson, 2020). From among the more than forty forms of poetic inquiry utilized in academic literature, we chose poetic transcription or “found poems,” (Pendergrast, 2009) a form that, through “the creation of poem-like compositions from the words of interviewees” (Glesne, 1997, p. 203), construes data in poetic as opposed to prosaic ways (Pendergrast & Belliveau, 2011).

### **Data Capture and Analysis**

LH carried out archival research between 2018 and 2023, examining more than eight metres of Tools for Peace fonds in public archives at the City of Vancouver, McMaster University, York University, The University of Calgary, and the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa, as well as additional materials stored by T4P volunteers in Saskatoon, Regina, Ottawa, Toronto, and Halifax. The fonds included meeting minutes, educational and lobbying materials,

media clippings, personal correspondence, office correspondence, photos, posters, advertising materials, shipping materials, financial materials, many local annual and regional reports, including evaluations, and one box containing interview transcripts.

The transcripts and a 1-page summary describe a planned anthology project led by University of Regina professor and activist Lorne Brown in collaboration with Janice Acton, the education and outreach coordinator for T4P, and Maia Kagis, a Nicaragua activist and cooperant. The anthology was to include poignant articles and interviews with community leaders of Central American solidarity efforts. It is unclear whether the project was undertaken as a research project, as no funding sources or ethics certificates are mentioned. The transcripts suggest that the interviewees understood and agreed to the project's goals, which were to make Canadians "more aware of Tools for Peace, Salvaide, the Farmers' brigades, [and] trade union brigades... with emphasis on genuine international solidarity with the idea that the struggles for more democracy, justice and self-determination in Central America are related to those same struggles, however different the specific circumstances, in our own country" (Brown, L., ca. 1989). The anthology was never completed, and the interview transcripts were submitted to the McMaster University archives some years later. In total, the archives hold 800 pages of transcripts of 52 interviews with 59 key informants from trade unions, NGOs, churches, solidarity organizations, and other groups active in solidarity efforts.

We commenced our analysis by filtering out French language transcripts<sup>3</sup> and those that did not mention Tools for Peace specifically. We analyzed 27 transcripts of interviews with 30 people remained; 17 identified as women, 13 as men. Five were from Ontario, nine from B.C., 10 from the Maritimes, five from the prairies, and one from Quebec. Each of us separately read and manually open-coded the transcripts, identifying and highlighting quotes and stories that relayed the moods, sentiments, and dispositions—key affective and experiential dimensions—that animated T4P solidarity. We met by videoconference regularly throughout this phase, sharing our separate lists of emerging themes, which were highly convergent. After agreeing to five themes (described in the results section) that we considered most salient to present for the purposes of the paper, we then each worked to extract quotes and stories that best represented those themes, entering those in a document in preparation for the poetic transcription. We then created poems using exact words, phrases or sentences from the interview transcripts that had been extracted. We chose to make the poems composite, with the words and stanzas belonging to many vs. one individual interviewee. Some words and phrases from every interviewee are present in the poems.

Using secondary data in publicly available archives is considered ethics exempt under the guidelines of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS-2, 2022) Chapter 2, and it is unclear whether the original project by Lorne Brown (now deceased) had obtained an ethics certificate or was even conceived of as a research project. We nonetheless consulted with the archivists at McMaster University, and in an abundance of caution, have used pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants when names appear in the poetry.

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3 Due to language limitations, three transcripts were not included.

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## **Tools for Peace in Poetry: The Results of Our Study**

In this section, we present the found poems, derived from the words of the interviewees using the process described above. The poems evoke what we see as the key affective and experiential dimensions of solidarity as they were enacted through Tools for Peace and recorded in the interview transcripts — namely: inspiration, commitment, Canadian-ness, the practice and politics of community-building, and the transformative power of solidarity — but no one poem is instrumentally dedicated to any one theme. Instead, we have divided the poems in three sections which roughly correspond to initial, mid- and later phases of T4P solidarity. We offer brief introductions to each section to offer insights into our decision-making and selection. Despite these preludes, however, nothing prevents one from reading the poems in any way they wish or from deriving meaning connected to their own experience and affect; this is the nature and purpose of poetry.

### ***Part One***

The first two poems are from the words and phrases of informants that were among the dozens of Canadians who traveled to Nicaragua on organized political tours in the early years of the Sandinista revolution. While some of those quoted were seasoned development workers or politically aligned socialists, for others, it was their first trip to a “Third World” country.

We begin with a short poem, “Anything Was Possible,” that takes as its inspiration the exhilaration and anxiety of that initial encounter. In “Grounding,” we proceed to explore the common experience of traveling from Canada to Nicaragua as a member of a solidarity tour — a potent induction experience shared by a great number of Tools for Peace participants, (and for many, the circumstances in which the ecstatic encounter evoked in “Anything Was Possible” took place).

#### ***Anything was possible***

They were wonderful schools.  
 A way of being with people  
 We came back moved by the revolution  
 The feeling it was unstoppable  
 It was euphoric  
 Bursts of culture and song  
 Women organizing  
 A new dawn  
 We were so moved.  
 They had lost so much  
 But people weren't burnt out yet  
 And you felt that energy. I don't know what else to call that.

Why Nicaragua?: Because it's working.

***Grounding***

We wanted to know what had happened.  
We wanted to know!

There had just been the triumph.  
The peasants were getting land.  
The future looked hopeful.  
Everybody was up.

*Devoting my energy in Canada working for socialist revolution,  
I wanted to know what had happened  
In a country that was two years in.  
I wanted to know.*

We were so welcomed there  
We were so moved  
We were one of the first large delegations (I mean from Canada)  
We got swept up.

What power in those tours of the early years!  
They were a rallying point,  
A very intense encounter with the Third World,  
A springboard for organizing back home.

Back home, I got right into a union convention  
and they asked me to speak  
So I did.  
In about 18 communities and 28 public meetings!

Nicaragua was the catalyst and the context.

***Part Two***

In the first poem of this section, “Canadian Flavours,” we offer three glimpses into what we interpret as the particularly Canadian character of Tools for Peace. In these stanzas we hear stories of the practical nature of the work of organizing that illustrate the local manifestations and regional pride that both informed and were informed by the growing national organization. These words come from the grassroots organizers, popular educators, and members of myriad formal and informal community networks who were the backbone of T4P.

The poems are not without tensions — some playful, some deeply political — borne of uniquely Canadian regional expressions and collective experiences, in particular Quebec’s fight for sovereignty. We chose informants’ words that capture the creative, eccentric, touching,



hard and detailed organizing work of putting together annual campaigns, and we included phrases that relay the chaos, and sometimes the burnout, of doing so over and over. To reveal something of the powerful T4P sectoral organizing strategy, we include words by Canadians engaged in fishing and farming (who were living through the economic recession of the 1980s) that relay powerful sentiments of solidarity borne from experiences of shared oppression and a sense of connecting to a larger picture of global injustice.

### *Canadian flavours*

1.

After that tour, Shorty and friends had gone around and collected some fishing goods  
And then they found out that the Monimbo was heading back to Nicaragua  
With room for it!

And when we saw that possibility,  
(that a ship would go back and forth)  
We said: We could fill it up every time.

And then other people heard about it. People in Saskatchewan. In Cape Breton.

No one really sat down and said: OK this is how we are going to start Tools for Peace  
Quite the opposite  
It has grown from the bottom up

*We started with a flea market booth in a town of 50 people*

Here we ended up with an eclectic assortment of people:  
Catholic priests and a nurse  
And old left wing trade unionists  
(They had a real advantage because they had already a world view that explains why this  
is happening.)  
And that bunch of fishermen with nets to donate  
(so they showed up with a pick-up truck full of nets and buoys).  
People kind of came out of the woodwork with old tools and all kinds of things  
And every year a few more people would get involved.

It was just something we could do  
A Canadian-kind of tie-in  
It was the most interesting campaign you could imagine.

No want to be like European countries where there's one national umbrella committee  
That wasn't the way in Canada.

No top-down management  
We were a campaign, not an NGO

And were we organized!!

126 committees

Regional reps, national meetings, tours, brigades  
Warehouses, transportation  
Letter-writing, lobbying,  
Elementary school curriculum, even.  
Some 100,000 people contacted each year.

And we never give ourselves credit for what that means, to become organized.  
to make consensus decisions  
to work with one another  
to celebrate; so much fun is built into this!  
and yes conflict, but tolerance, too

Like we found ways to talk with people.  
Excellent respectful discussions: Christianity versus Marxism  
Someone from the United Nations (his perspective was quite different).  
Another a journalist.  
Another from the Communist Party  
Another was an independent leftist.  
I was the only Christian!

And you'd find out what is going on across the country.

In Quebec some were rightfully contrary to English Canada.  
And they're thinking if we join, we're gonna get stuck with the same contradictions as  
any other Anglo coalition.  
But then others said we *could* be linked to the national — and be autonomous at the  
provincial level. And so it was. Eventually.

It all took a while in practice.

Maybe that's just the nature of solidarity...

Maybe truth is, we needed solidarity among ourselves as much as among countries.

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2.

It's different organizing in a small community,  
It's not the big city.  
More organic, it seems to me.  
It happens by word of mouth, or by the grapevine.

Take Cape Breton: like a Third World country.  
De-industrialized  
Sure, we have unemployment insurance  
we have transfer payments,  
we have some income support.

But we feel for people who are in a situation like ours

Garth: A steelworker and a stalwart  
Saw Nicaraguan miners sharing their gumboots to go down the mine.  
He never forgot it.  
Poverty way beyond anything he'd seen  
yet they'd had struggle

He never forgot it.

John: comes up with the idea  
Miners' boots from the DEVCO mines!  
The coal miners get boots from their employer,  
one of them gets a hole in it  
and they both get thrown out  
Well, John (he's in his 70s, retired from the pit)  
he collected them all,  
took them out in his backyard,  
scrubbed them off,  
tested them all personally to make sure that they didn't leak,  
then sized them  
and paired them.  
And that very first year,  
he brought in 16 pairs of them,  
The second year, a couple of hundred pairs of them.

And so it went.

People here understand depending on one or two main exports,

Understand what that economy's like  
Decisions made somewhere else  
Co-ops and the trade union movement, trying to take some kind of control.  
In that way Tools for Peace wasn't a charity thing ... we could understand

I'm not sure that people in other places get that as clearly.

In Cape Breton we feel solidarity.

3.

We were Alberta farmers  
Left of the mainstream, (well, some got political by being involved)  
We were a farmers brigade — not tourists  
We built a farm equipment repair shop,  
We lived with Nicaraguan farmers

Back home we showed slides, saying:  
that they want support in their cause  
they want self-determination  
they don't want charity  
And we started Farmers for Peace

In Brandon it was the NFU  
Well, some were National Farmers Union  
Some political activists  
Some NDP<sup>4</sup>  
Some church-people  
Some of the farm people were both or at least two of the above  
And Farmers for Peace and Tools for Peace and NFU and Development and Peace, too...

New Brunswick farmers sent potato seeds  
Not to oversimplify  
There was so much learning!!  
About struggle,  
about the system,  
about the politics,  
about organizing.

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<sup>4</sup> The social-democratic 'New Democratic Party'

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It would lead us to say: what is happening in the world?

Here a lot of families gone under and lost their land  
and still don't know what happened.  
But there you saw that resolve.

And we saw a tremendous amount of connections  
And saw how in Nicaragua farmers are getting more organized  
And they were getting their land back!

*They were 50 years ahead of the Canadians because they were getting their land back.*

### ***Part Three***

Our final poems are more retrospective. In both “What We Remember” and “Transformation,” participants draw on the benefit of hindsight to reflect on the ups and downs of solidarity organizing in words and stories that evoke growing pains, burnout, and transformation. These up-and-down words reflect the uncanny sensations of recollecting visceral experiences of international solidarity and finding them simultaneously wondrous and disorienting.

#### ***What We Remember***

First of all we were new at warehousing.  
We were new at packing.  
We probably did just about everything the hard way that first year.  
A group of carpenters to build the crates.  
We had one, a beautiful, beautiful crate  
Well, it housed 5 or 6 guitars that were going down.  
(And some medical equipment.)  
They were handcrafted.  
They were gorgeous.  
They weighed a hell of a lot.  
And we never did that again!

*Once, I was crossing Harbord on my bicycle  
and all of a sudden everything lets loose  
from my backpack and there's thousands  
of Tools for Peace leaflets all over Harbord Street.*

That first time I witnessed an unloading,  
my feelings of elation (look what WE'VE done)  
turned to embarrassment.  
Nicaraguan friends opened crates and boxes  
to find outdated medicine,

a box of broken toys,  
a pair of used runners.  
We knew we had to make a major shift  
in helping people understand the difference between charity and solidarity.

*There have always been ups and downs, and that's true for any group.*

We had all kinds of people working together on this thing  
Just a real flurry of activity.  
People sawing and making crates and lugging all this stuff around.  
It was great.  
We had real community building.  
A real payoff.

That's one of the joys of solidarity work.  
It's a school.  
But you don't have to sit down and study.  
You can learn while you are stapling and folding.

But sometimes the meetings would go very long.  
And people do get tired  
And they leave.

*There have always been ups and downs*

Or they just have to.

*Nobody seems to be able to afford to be unemployed.  
The lack of jobs if there are any  
you've got to grab one and hold. It's not just us  
more and more preoccupied with survival — getting  
to work  
getting home  
getting the dishes done,  
It just takes that much more time and energy when there is no money for day-care.*

And people involved in the trade union movement got swamped.  
They said the best solidarity we can make with the Latin Americans peoples with future aspirations is to build a better and stronger labour movement here.

*There has always been ups and downs and that's true for any group.*

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### *Transformation*

1.

It seems overwhelming - the power of the United States  
*if* you only look at it like that.

But when you look at the support internationally,  
You look at the networks that are building over time.  
You look at that community that's building.  
And you look at the impact of words in action  
And you start to see that we can make a difference.

We in the trade unions,  
we in solidarity groups,  
we in the churches,  
We actually can make a difference.

I think Nicaragua made quite an impact on the Canadian consciousness.

2.

Sometime revolutions are needed to turn over  
and turn upside down  
or whatever.

Nicaragua just shook up his life.  
There was a point  
when he would just not consider any other work.  
He has written poetry  
to Nicaragua, Nicaragua. No work but Nicaragua.  
Nothing would defuse it.  
His whole heart was in it.

He cut his hair off in Nicaragua.  
His hair was practically down to his knees.  
And one night I remember (the first night he got there)  
and he realized that a revolution had happened  
and he handed a pair of scissors to one of the women  
and he said okay,  
and asked her to cut off his hair.

### Discussion/Reflections

Poetry is hardly a conventional medium for conveying research results, much less on topics such as international solidarity and social movement history. But poetry distinguishes itself from other genres of writing through its capacity for evoking affective experiences that elude rational analysis. Poems are also uniquely economic in their use of language; successful poems accomplish feats of distillation and compression, capturing in miniature the kinds of affective experiences that might take hours or pages to describe in conversation or prose. We contend that the construction of poetry through anonymized interview transcripts represents an overlooked technique through which ethnographers, oral historians, and especially activist-scholars might seek to understand and communicate observations gleaned from interview data. This is particularly true in cases such as ours, when the embodied, relational work of conducting the interviews is severed by circumstance from the later work of secondary review and analysis.

Furthermore, poetic transcription is a method well suited to understanding and communicating a phenomenon as varied and difficult to grasp as international solidarity. Solidarity is not dissimilar to humor: it is an undeniable and often profound subjective phenomenon that is nonetheless maddeningly difficult, even impossible, to define. Just to perceive it requires a learned sensitivity that is always temporally and spatially situated, yet never perfectly shared, even across apparently superficial lexical or cultural differences. Because of its ontological slipperiness, there is limited utility to attempting to crystallize a single working definition of solidarity, much less *international* solidarity, as it might exist as a pure concept untethered from any specific struggle or moment in time. Indeed, it is our contention that a phenomenon like international solidarity is only accessible to activist-scholars in specific manifestations, and never as a general or transhistorical essence. For this reason, it is critical that activist-scholars generate rich descriptive accounts of specific instantiations of international solidarity as it has been enacted by intentional communities of political actors at particular moments in time.

The found poems above capture something of the emotional vernacular generated and sustained by Tools for Peace, imbued as it was with a particular set of moods, dispositions, and sentiments, each of which was irreducibly tethered to the specific historical and cultural contexts in which T4P was enacted. The Canadian solidarity movement was historically and geographically situated: its protagonists stood upon, and indeed collectively established, a lexical ground of their own — a Canadian-ness — that is worthy of study on its own terms. Although T4P was but one component of that movement, it was the largest international people-to-people solidarity campaign of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Canada. The interpretative work undertaken in this paper is therefore valuable not only in that it provides a unique model for arts-informed and activist scholarship, but also because it provides insight into an understudied, yet undeniably significant, instantiation of international solidarity.

This act of preservation is especially vital in the present context, as contemporary Nicaragua presents a fraught puzzle for those of us committed to the practice of international solidarity. The Sandinista revolution continues to inspire nostalgia among international activists who



recall its totemic status as a rare radical success story, arriving during the demoralizing and disorienting twilight of the Cold War. But today, the Sandinista political party, in power under the leadership of the corrupt and authoritarian president Daniel Ortega, advances a program diametrically opposed in many ways to the ideals many international solidarity activists have long associated with the Nicaraguan revolution (Hanson, forthcoming; La Botz, 2018; Robinson, 2021). Indeed under ‘foreign agent’ laws that were created in the wake of a popular anti-government uprising in 2018 (Ley de Regulación de Agentes Extranjeros, 2020), acts of material or political solidarity across national boundaries — or, for that matter, works of activist-scholarship involving any critique of the regime — can result in arrest or deportation. Many activist scholars have posed the question of what went wrong in Nicaragua (Gonzalez, 1990; Hale, 2008; La Botz, 2018). That question can only be answered by the true protagonists of the struggle, the Nicaraguans themselves. Perhaps we, as North American solidarity activists, might ask ourselves if there is some truth to the Karl Marx quote: “In history, as in nature, decay is the laboratory of life” (Marx, 1965).

Recognizing that poetry lends itself more to reflection than conclusion, we end by offering brief personal reflections on how our work on this paper has affected how we think about our own trajectories as scholars and activists, as well as our thinking about the larger questions identified earlier.

### *Lori*

A sense of betrayal, despair, or failure can dishearten solidarity, whether with Nicaragua or elsewhere. Histories of transformative and hopeful solidarity need to be not only documented, but also re-enlivened in ways that make them politically useful and affectively engaging, in hopes of renewing the promise of solidarity in new ways and in new movements. Finding these interview transcripts in the McMaster archives was thus a watershed moment in my research on Tools for Peace. For these were not merely data; these were the animated voices of friends connected through an especially inspirational campaign in a historically unique moment in a country that is, as author Giaconda Belli puts it in the title of her memoir, “under my skin.” Converting those words and sentiments into an emotive art form as a political act was a small contribution to countering despair in these times.

As someone in this for the long haul, though, I understand each such contribution as but the enduring, persistent, ant-like work of political solidarity. Knowing much more is urgently needed, how else might we, as engaged activist-scholars working today — while an imperialist war is being waged against Ukraine, while the state of Iran has begun executing protesters, while Nicaragua is once again a police state governed by a dictatorial regime — find a way to transform the demise of one solidarity movement into the nourishment of another? How else, but to seek to engage in doing something, doing something differently, doing what we can?

### *Jonah*

It is undeniable that in Canada T4P succeeded in mobilizing the spirit of solidarity to generate a community-in-struggle that proved remarkably durable. This community sustained itself across

swathes of time and space and became fused to a diverse set of aspirations and affectations that were, in almost every instance, rooted in social and spatial imaginaries particular to Canada and its varied regions. What lessons might my generation take from Tools for Peace? Perhaps lessons is the wrong word. Perhaps “take” is, too. T4P constitutes a part of a hemispheric radical tradition, a tradition expansive in its diversity and irreducible to any one of its many local instantiations, in which the spirit of solidarity may periodically find, like a match-flame behind a cupped hand, the safety and protection it needs to develop, to survive, to spread.

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# Training To Be A Community Psychologist In The Age Of a Digital Revolution

**Sherry Bell, Martin van den Berg, Renato M. Liboro**

**ABSTRACT** Reflecting on pedagogy and curricula that have shaped the field of community psychology, we review the history of training community psychologists since the field's inception in the United States. We then examine relevant academic literature documenting how digital technologies in the 21st century have been successfully used in community-based participatory research (CBPR) studies conducted by community psychologists to promote engaged scholarship, the field's core values (e.g. sense of community, social justice, collaboration), and its commitment to social change. While early ideas for improving scholars' training emphasized adopting practices to meet changing community needs, our review of literature on CBPR and other community-engaged scholarly work by community psychologists in the last two decades has revealed that digital technologies' ability to promote the field's values and goals still needs to be fully harnessed. Lastly, we offer practical recommendations for community psychology undergraduate and graduate training programs to consider and implement so they can incorporate digital technologies into their programs and harness their potential to promote engaged scholarship, the field's core values, and its commitment to social change.

**KEYWORDS** community psychology, community-based participatory research, core values, digital technologies, training

Community psychology expands the scope and practices of clinical and applied social psychology to incorporate community input into addressing contextual barriers and facilitating mental health and wellbeing. While clinical psychologists have traditionally emphasized the study of individuals and personal choices from an expert level of analysis, community psychologists have historically explored human behavior and interaction using socio-ecological frameworks, system levels of analyses, and approaches that cultivate more interpersonal and interdisciplinary collaborative efforts (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Kloos et al., 2012). Similarly, while applied social psychologists have primarily focused on improving social services to offer assistance and support to those who need them, community psychologists have concentrated on the impacts of capacity building, community-led mutual aid, and self-help organizations (Nelson et al., 2007; Prilleltensky, 2001). Since the emergence of community psychology as a division of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1967 (Reich et al., 2007), it has amassed a significantly large and active membership and offered numerous graduate and undergraduate community psychology training programs across the United States.

The origins of community psychology pedagogy and the development of its influential curricula have been traced to 10 key founders and the subsequent influencers who followed in their footsteps, e.g., founder James Kelly was influential for both Julian Rappaport and Edison Trickett (Fowler & Toro, 2008). For instance, after Kelly (1970) presented his early ideas for improving the training of community psychologists, Rappaport (1977) subsequently identified central values such as participation, collaboration, and diversity to guide community psychologists in their scholarship, research, and practice. Not long after, Trickett (1984) further expounded on these community psychology values, hoping to create a distinctive agenda for the field. These early fundamentals of community psychology curricula have not only been key to training scholars and turning them into active community practitioners and resources, but have also inspired generations of researchers to broaden their approaches when interacting with relevant stakeholders and essential partners in diverse communities (Kloos et al., 2012; Newbrough, 1973; Rappaport, 1977; Trickett, 1984).

While these archetypal ideas for improving community psychologists' training have remained relevant in the last five and a half decades, the main thesis of our article is that adapting the field's existing pedagogy to incorporate digital technologies into community psychology training would better prepare future community psychologists to address challenges in their research and practice, as they could maximize the potential advantages of using innovative technologies in their scholarly work. In this article, we will first present a brief review of community psychology training in the United States over the last five and a half decades. This review will include a discussion of the changing trends impacting community psychology training over the years, as well as its increasing emphasis on community-based participatory research (CBPR) as an ideal approach to promoting engaged scholarship and community psychology values. Next, we will define digital technologies for the purposes of our article's discussion and discuss the digital revolution's impact on healthcare, specifically underscoring how the rapid increase of digital technologies at the turn of the century has provided individuals and communities with greater capacities to gain social support through efficient networking, expanded health education, and increased anonymity (Bucci et al., 2019). Then, we will argue for the importance of incorporating digital technologies in the training of community psychologists, particularly in tandem with a sustained emphasis on using CBPR to bolster community engagement and meaningful stakeholder involvement, followed by a short commentary on the missed opportunities for improving community psychology training in recent decades. Finally, we will offer our recommendations on how digital technologies could be incorporated into community psychology training, especially to enhance the value of CBPR in promoting engaged scholarship, collaboration, and other community psychology values; ensure high levels of practice competencies among community psychologists; and support recommendations for community psychology education and training advanced by other community psychologists in the past decade.

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### **Training to Be a Community Psychologist: Then and Now**

Since the inception of community psychology in the United States at a momentous Boston Conference on the Education of Psychologists for Community Mental Health held in May 4-8, 1965, at Swampscott, Massachusetts (Bennett et al., 1966), universities across the country have gradually developed their own undergraduate and graduate courses in community psychology (Kloos et al., 2012). By the mid-1970s, a tradition of conducting surveys to assess community psychology training programs across North America had begun and has continued to the current decade as a useful tool for critically examining and improving the training of aspiring community psychologists (Barton et al., 1976; Feis et al., 1990; Kornbluh et al., 2019; Meyer & Gerrard, 1977; Nelson & Tefft, 1982; Roehrle et al., 2020). Additionally, the development of community psychology as a field in the United States has led to a divergence of community mental health and community psychology trainings, as community psychology increasingly leaned towards a greater focus on social change and social justice (Kloos et al., 2012).

The early community psychology writings of the 1960s and 1970s were largely visionary, focusing on the education and training needs of early community psychologists and presenting historic recommendations, many of which were perceived as ahead of the times (Bennett et al., 1966; Jimenez et al., 2016; Kelly, 1970; Libo, 1974). For example, Kelly provided recommendations for the socialization of a new profession, advancing seven ideas for improving the training of community psychologists: (1) incorporating field assessment when selecting community psychologists, (2) emphasizing continuous interagency interaction, (3) developing a longitudinal perspective, (4) mixing theory and practice, (5) taking advantage of community events, (6) identifying community resources, and (7) updating the community psychologist. These earliest visionary writings paved the way for the development of fundamental concepts and frameworks, core values, training models, and practice priorities and competencies for community psychology in succeeding decades by setting up critical ideologies and commitments for the field that distinguished community psychology from other divisions of psychology and related fields of study (Iscoe et al., 1977).

The 1980s and 1990s led to an even sharper focus on training in community psychology practice (Jimenez et al., 2016). Ecological frameworks introduced in the 1970s continued to be well received and espoused in the field, and additional community psychology values were proposed to guide scholars in training (Barton et al., 1976; Kelly, 1971; Trickett, 1984). New roles for community psychologists (e.g., as consultants, academic partners, industry specialists, and advocates) were also explored during these decades, along with the introduction of fresh training models to develop novel expertise and community-driven interventions (Meyers, 1984; Weinstein, 1981).

In the 2000s and 2010s, three notable events significantly impacted community psychology training: the 2007 publication of Reich et al.'s *International Community Psychology: History and Theories*; Dalton and Wolfe's 2012 column in *The Community Psychologist*; and a boom in publications on CBPR and community-driven scholarship. Realizing how American-focused and ethnocentric community psychology training was in the United States at that time, Reich et al. began a journey that eventually resulted in the publication of *International Community*

*Psychology: History and Theories*. Not only did their book highlight community psychology's diverse roots, rich histories, and global scale, it also provided significant opportunities to learn more about distinct local and indigenous theories, research, and culturally appropriate practices of community psychology scholars in countries from North America, Latin America, the Asia-Pacific, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (Montero, 1996; Montero & Varas Diaz, 2007; Nelson et al., 2007; Nelson & Tefft, 1982; Reich et al., 2007).

Five years later, another crucial influence on community psychology training was published, this time as a joint column in *The Community Psychologist*. In their article, Dalton and Wolfe (2012) described the earliest iteration of what was later to be established as the 18 competencies for community psychology practice, which were reviewed, ratified, and made more accessible to scholars and to community psychologists in training by the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA, Community Psychology, APA Division 27). Today, these 18 community psychology practice competencies continue to be accessible on SCRA's official website, along with teaching and training resources such as graduate and undergraduate syllabi, sample course projects and papers, evaluation templates, and community service learning materials (SCRA, n.d.).

Finally, in the last decade, numerous community psychologists focused their attention on producing academic and empirical work emphasizing the value of CBPR to successfully conducting community-driven and engaged scholarship that upholds the long-standing core values of the field (Kaufman et al., 2016; Kornbluh et al., 2019; Kloos et al., 2012).

### **Using CBPR to Promote Community Psychology's Engaged Scholarship and Values**

To help guide decisions for community psychology research and action; monitor the match between the field's values, action plans, and items; better understand diverse communities; and foster a shared sense of purpose, Kloos et al. (2012) proposed seven core community psychology values for scholars in the field: (1) individual and family wellness, (2) sense of community, (3) respect for human diversity, (4) social justice, (5) empowerment and citizen participation, (6) collaboration, and (7) empirical grounding (2012). They described these values as crucial to promoting engaged scholarship, particularly to collaboratively developing research questions and sustaining community partnerships.

Some of these core values overlap with Kelly's (1970) highly cited ideas for the training of community psychologists. For instance, Kelly called for researchers to increase interagency and interdisciplinary interactions to gain collaborative experiences with those outside of the social sciences. Similar calls for interdisciplinary work have highlighted the importance of achieving a systematic change in health services, and research has suggested that strategic partnerships should be fostered across discipline silos, such as those in the health and social sciences (Dooris, 2013), particularly in their CBPR work. A recent review of vital researcher qualities conducted by community psychologists noted the additional importance of creative resourcefulness among researchers to build stronger relationships with community partners and other collaborators in CBPR projects (Liboro & Travers, 2016).



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In the next section of this article, we will review the use of innovative digital technologies in CBPR projects as an exemplar of creative resourcefulness that we believe should be incorporated in the current and future training of community psychologists.

### **Digital Technologies and CBPR**

Broadly, digital technologies are defined as a wide array of technologies, tools, services, and applications using various types of software and hardware that facilitate activities and the use of other services by electronic means to create, store, process, transmit, and display digitized information (Rice, 2003). All electronic instruments, technical equipment, automated systems, and online or virtual resources that produce, process, or store digitized information are included in this definition of digital technologies. For the purposes of this article, we will refer to this broad definition when discussing digital technologies, but we will also focus on specific technologies that are most relevant to our discussion, including (but not limited to) the internet, academic and professional websites, online platforms and campus learning management systems, personal computers, smartphones, social media, social networking, video conferencing, video streaming, and other virtual services.

In the past several years, digital technologies have dramatically revolutionized almost every aspect of human existence, including communication, entertainment, travel, banking and finance, healthcare, social services, education, and research. Digital technologies have progressed faster than any other human invention in history, reaching more than half of the world's population in just two decades and forever changing our civilization (Pew Research Center, 2021). Recent data have shown a growth in internet usage among adults in the United States from 52% in 2000 to 93% in 2021 (Pew Research Center, 2021). Furthermore, in the United States the percentage of adults with broadband service at home has grown from 1% in 2000 to over 75% in 2021. Similar rates of growth have been observed in smartphone usage among adults in the United States, which was at 85% as of March 2021 (Pew Research Center, 2021). Global reports of internet and smartphone usage have shown a similar growth pattern in developing countries (Poushter et al., 2018). The increased access to home internet and the availability of smartphones globally have provided researchers and clinicians with innovative avenues for developing communication tools, sharing information, increasing accessibility to services, and identifying local needs (Jimenez et al., 2016; Liboro et al., 2021). Drawing from the evidence on the prevalence of internet usage and other digital technologies both nationally and globally, we will discuss the significant power, potential, and role of digital technologies in CBPR and the promotion of engaged scholarship and related community psychology core values (e.g., the promotion of wellness, sense of community, civic participation, collaboration, empowerment, social justice, and respect for human diversity). We will also discuss the importance of incorporating digital technologies into community psychologists' training.

Increased access to the internet and other digital technologies has created many exciting opportunities to solve community-level problems using digital technologies. The most powerful of these digital technologies are smartphone applications, online communities, virtually accessible healthcare or service resources, social networking sites, and software that can provide

broadband services to resource-limited communities. For example, smartphone applications specific to community needs have been developed to increase Latiné families access to parenting strategies (Doty et al., 2020), provide accessible health information for people with disabilities (Russ et al., 2020), map community resources and share local street knowledge in food deserts (Akom et al., 2016), and inform African American communities of culturally relevant health practices to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease (Brewer et al., 2019). Additional innovative uses of digital technologies to conduct community-level interventions have included creating and using videos to aid in HIV prevention (Hswen & Bickman, 2018), redesigning health literacy websites to provide culturally relevant content (Smith et al., 2014), and developing new online platforms to facilitate community conversations and actions (Ohmer et al., 2021). While online networking platforms can be vulnerable to cyberbullying or other aggressive behaviors, researchers using this form of technology have successfully navigated these spaces and issues (Kornbluh et al., 2016; Lichty et al., 2019). For instance, researchers collaborating with secondary school teachers in a CBPR study have successfully monitored a youth Facebook group shared across three schools aimed at developing student-led civic participation and solutions to mental health disparities (Kornbluh et al., 2016).

The increased availability of digital technologies has also changed how researchers and clinicians approach communities today. Notably, this shift has been highlighted by healthcare and teaching professionals who pivoted to digital technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve the accessibility and quality of health information and services for communities that have historically had limited access to such services. To illustrate, during the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth visits (e.g., virtual clinical services from healthcare facilities and providers) increased by 135% because of public health guidelines (Koonin et al., 2020). A similar shift in how service providers engage with communities has been observed among teaching professionals. A review of the literature shows that institutions that have offered online courses with more flexible schedules have been better able to reach underserved populations (Li & Irby, 2008). This applies to both synchronous and asynchronous courses, as well as web-based (pre-recorded) and web-live (real time) courses.

However, there are some growing pains. While telehealth services have resulted in increased access to personalized health care, there are issues such as limited broadband service in rural communities and other barriers to navigating digital technologies (Koonin et al., 2020). Additionally, the challenges associated with the online delivery of services have not been limited to telehealth providers but have also surfaced in the context of educational systems. A review of online classes has found that teachers lack access to resources to help navigate new online services and meet the specific needs of diverse students (Kebritchi et al., 2017). In light of these challenges, efforts have been made to promote engaged scholarship and incorporate digital technologies in CBPR approaches (Gibbs et al., 2020; Unertl et al., 2016). The use of CBPR approaches has provided researchers with opportunities to address social inequalities and promote sense of community and wellness by drawing on local knowledge to create meaningful collaborations with communities (Kloos et al., 2012).

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While CBPR projects uphold the community psychology values guiding those training to become community psychologists, additional recommendations for trainees and training programs have been presented in recent years (Jimenez et al., 2016; Liboro & Travers, 2016). Building on Liboro and Travers' (2016) call for creative resourcefulness in community psychology work and CBPR, we believe that researchers training in community psychology would benefit from considering and evaluating digital technologies as potentially powerful and creative resources.

By using digital technologies in their CBPR studies, academic researchers and their community partners have successfully promoted engaged scholarship and community psychology core values. Used judiciously and skillfully, digital technologies in CBPR studies (1) increase community engagement, (2) disseminate findings more widely, and (3) expand the knowledge of relevant stakeholders, as discussed below.

### ***Increasing Community Engagement***

Several studies have demonstrated digital technologies' ability to increase community engagement. Researchers working with African American populations to facilitate citizen participation and collaboration noted that access to online services via personal computers or smartphones increases community engagement and promotes culturally diverse and relevant interventions (Brewer et al., 2019; Hergenrather et al., 2013). Current literature has also explored the benefits of digital technologies in CBPR conducted in developing countries. For instance, Veronese et al. (2019) have conducted interviews and focus group discussions about barriers to accessing HIV testing and prevention services for men who have sex with men in Myanmar. Their results indicate that concerns about maintaining anonymity are a key barrier. Veronese et al. have concluded that there is a critical need for community-based approaches that use anonymous and confidential online spaces when developing HIV prevention programs and providing access to prevention services.

Recent challenges brought to light by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic have pushed community-based organizations and community psychologists towards developing virtual services and using digital technologies to keep individuals and communities engaged in CBPR. Researchers collaborating with community-based organizations have shifted in-person protocols to online formats to better fit the needs of their participants (Teti et al., 2021; Valdez & Gubrium, 2020). For instance, Valdez and Gubrium (2020) have described their experience transitioning from an in-person to a virtual Photovoice approach as convenient and beneficial: Photovoice's virtual format allows researchers more opportunities to actively engage with communities that lack adequate transportation or childcare (Lichty et al., 2019; Valdez & Gubrium, 2020). Likewise, using Photovoice in private blog platforms helps develop a sense of community and supportive relationships due to the perceived safety of speaking freely in an online environment (Lichty et al., 2019).

### ***Disseminating Findings More Widely***

Digital technologies also help to disseminate findings more widely. For example, researchers have explored how access to the internet and digital technologies has impacted Indigenous communities in North America. Across the United States, over half of American Indians and Alaskan Natives reside in remote and rural areas (Deweese & Marks, 2017). Comparable findings have been reported in Canada where 60% of Indigenous peoples reside in rural areas (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2020). Additionally, while Indigenous communities in rural areas have typically had trouble accessing internet services, CBPR approaches have revealed Indigenous communities' preference for online health information and services to scale up and disseminate findings (Craig Rushing & Stephens, 2012). To illustrate, Craig Rushing and Stephens (2012) have collaborated with American Indian and Alaskan Native tribes to develop guidelines for technology-based health interventions aimed at reducing HIV risk among youth. With 91% of participants reporting the importance of computer and online services, subsequent interventions have incorporated online platforms that are popular with youth. Youth-developed suggestions have underscored the importance of developing age-appropriate content for online platforms that would widely disseminate health information (Craig Rushing & Stephens, 2012). Additional support for leveraging the power of online platforms has been highlighted in Canada among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth who have collaborated with researchers to investigate strategies for scaling up youth engagement, information sharing, and empowerment in youth-led programs (Halsall & Forneris, 2016). Results from a needs assessment and Photovoice exploration in a CBPR study by Halsall & Forneris (2016) revealed the potential power of social media to not only increase youth participation and engagement, but also facilitate the rapid dissemination and use of information. Support for this strategy of scaling up youth participation through social media applications has also been documented by previous youth participatory action research, where findings have emphasized the importance of social media to increase civic participation and socially just knowledge dissemination among youth who are geographically isolated from peers (Frasquilho et al., 2018).

While rural areas often lack easy access to internet services, using a CBPR approach to collaborate with communities has unearthed new strategies to overcome internet access barriers, resulting in the increased dissemination of studies that incorporate digital technological components. (Friedline et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2020). Native American youth collaborators have guided researchers in adapting tools and survey methodology to their studies' rural environments (Kim et al., 2020). Specifically, the lack of internet access has encouraged researchers to use software that can function offline for collecting and storing mobile technology survey data, as well as disseminating information.

### ***Expanding the Knowledge of Relevant Stakeholders***

Finally, digital technologies can help expand stakeholders' knowledge. Among adult populations in rural communities, CBPR approaches to developing HIV prevention interventions among men who have sex with men have explored using online platforms to expand the knowledge of relevant stakeholders (Hubach et al., 2014; Tanner et al., 2016). Hubach et al. (2014)

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have collaborated with community-based organizations to develop an appropriate study design for identifying the unique needs of men who have sex with men in rural communities who require more knowledge of HIV prevention and care. Self-reported survey results indicate that the majority of participants have used social networking sites and video conferencing platforms to seek sexual contact with other men. Consequently, the researchers proposed developing an online platform to provide useful health information (e.g., on risks related to specific sexual behaviors and barriers to condom use) and intervention programs to expand relevant stakeholders' knowledge of online HIV prevention and care options pertinent to them (Hubach et al., 2014). Similar studies have explored the importance of anonymity to marginalized groups in rural communities, who specifically seek out information on HIV prevention and care in online spaces so as to reduce any risk of incidental disclosure and discrimination (Gamariel et al., 2020; Veronese et al., 2019).

### **Recommendations for Incorporating Digital Technologies into Community Psychology Education and Training**

Recognizing the significant potential of digital technologies in CBPR and the promotion of engaged scholarship and related community psychology values, we believe that as a field of study, community psychology has missed significant opportunities over the last two decades to fully harness the power of digital technologies in the development of its theory and the conduct of its research and practice. Despite the numerous examples we have cited that showcase how digital technologies have considerably helped community-engaged studies and CBPR projects, we believe that these accomplishments are only a small fraction of what digital technologies could actually do for the field of community psychology.

To remedy this, we believe that community psychology should, first and foremost, incorporate digital technologies into community psychology training. To accomplish this important task, we offer six practical recommendations for current and future graduate and undergraduate community psychology training programs to consider: (1) establish an ad hoc or standing committee that would assume the primary responsibility of developing and carrying out the plans to incorporate digital technologies into their community psychology training program, (2) secure the involvement of an individual with content and technical expertise on digital technologies (preferably one from the community) who will collaboratively work towards incorporating digital technologies in their community psychology training program, (3) survey and assess their current training program for opportunities to incorporate digital technologies, (4) review previous recommendations from community psychology founders and current scholars on how to improve community psychology training and examine how the integration of digital technologies into their recommendations could further improve the training of community psychologists, (5) design and finalize a plan on how to incorporate digital technologies into their community psychology training program, and (6) amend, ratify, and implement the plan in collaboration with other representatives from their department (i.e., faculty members, staff, graduate and undergraduate students) and/or community partner agencies of their training program and prepare for its future evaluation.

### ***Establish a Committee to Incorporate Digital Technologies into the Training Program***

An important first step is for relevant stakeholders (in the psychology department or elsewhere) to establish an ad hoc or standing committee that would assume the responsibility of planning and carrying out the effort to incorporate digital technologies into their community psychology training program. Depending on the judgement of those involved, they could establish an ad hoc committee created solely for the aim of developing and carrying out a plan to incorporate digital technologies and maintain the committee until this aim is satisfactorily achieved. Alternatively, they could establish a standing committee that would remain as a regular department committee and that would ensure the department incorporates digital technologies in its training program and, perhaps later, in other aspects of their department's agenda. The decision to establish an ad hoc or standing committee will understandably be influenced by the department's priorities, resources, and changing needs. As an alternative, a decision could be made to start with establishing an ad hoc committee, which could later on transition into a standing committee.

Ideally, the committee members should be as diverse and inclusive as possible, potentially including faculty members with different statuses (e.g., tenured, promoted, tenure-track, non-tenure-track, and/or teaching stream), graduate and undergraduate students, staff, and, if possible, representatives from community partners who also have a stake in the training of community psychologists. Other considerations include the members' knowledge of and proficiency with digital technologies, interest and investment in the training program, and levels of power and privilege. The committee would establish aspects such as shared governance, shared responsibility, and shared ownership of the plan to incorporate digital technologies into their community psychology training program.

While this recommendation would likely be feasible in large, resource-rich departments with already existing ad hoc and standing committees (e.g., executive, personnel, graduate/undergraduate, symposium, grievance, social, and/or diversity, equity, and inclusion committees), we recognize that departments from smaller universities and colleges may find it difficult to establish such a committee for reasons related to manpower, resources, and/or priorities. Because of this, it is crucial to note that our subsequent recommendations need not be contingent on the establishment of an ad hoc or standing committee. These recommendations could be carried out by as few as one or two dedicated members of the department—and they need not carry out all of our recommendations to benefit from them.

An example of this would be one faculty member and their graduate student integrating one or more of our subsequent recommendations into a CBPR project with internal or extramural grant funding. Another example is a determined and motivated faculty member who sees the value, and even the urgency, of incorporating digital technologies into their training program and customizes our recommendations into specific, doable tasks at a more appropriate scale. Some of our recommendations may even be considered by students advocating for change in their training programs. In other words, we present our recommendations here not as ideas that have to be rigidly followed but as suggestions that can be flexibly implemented into different contexts.

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### ***Secure the Involvement of a Digital Technologies Content and Technical Expert***

Another important recommendation is securing the meaningful involvement of a digital technologies content and technical expert who understands what digital technologies can bring to a community psychology training program, its community psychology values, engaged scholarship, CBPR, and commitment to social change. Ideally, this expert is a known community partner to the training program or a key stakeholder. This expert would work very closely and as equitably as possible with the individual(s) or committee from the department responsible for incorporating digital technologies into the community psychology training program. Ideally, this expert would receive just remuneration for their work. If there are no department or program funds for remuneration, consider other sources of funding, such as disbursements from within the university, college, or school the department belongs to; internal or extramural grants or scholarships; and benefactors from the community. The committee could also look for individuals whose job responsibilities include collaborating with academic researchers. In this case, remuneration may not be necessary, especially if their job prohibits remuneration for community-academic partnerships.

### ***Assess the Training Program for Opportunities to Incorporate Digital Technologies***

Our next recommendation is for departments to survey the current state of their training program and assess possible opportunities, venues, and aspects that could incorporate and benefit from the use of digital technologies, ideally with the guidance of a content and technical expert. For example, they could review the undergraduate (e.g., Introduction to Community Psychology, Research Methods, Community Service Learning) and graduate (e.g., Program Evaluation, Community Psychology and Social Interventions, CBPR) courses offered in their program to identify where digital technologies content and technical skills could be embedded to best benefit trainees. Departments could also consider developing a course about digital technologies in community psychology theory, research, and practice, as we anticipate that the value and use of digital technologies will become increasingly relevant to CBPR and community psychology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### ***Review Previous Recommendations of Community Psychology Founders and Other Community Psychologists***

Existing academic literature already offers important ideas and recommendations for improving the training of community psychologists (Jimenez et al., 2016; Kelly, 1970), and training programs should seriously review and consider this literature. For example, looking into Kelly's ideas for improving the training of community psychologists with the guidance of a digital technologies expert could offer ideas on how to promote continuous interagency interaction, develop longitudinal research or practice perspectives, take advantage of community events, identify community resources, and update community psychologists using digital technologies. As has been documented, digital technologies allow individuals and communities to improve communication and information sharing and gain social support through social media, social networking, video conferencing, and video streaming; increase health education through

academic and professional websites and online platforms and campus learning management systems; and use software to maintaining anonymity (Bucci et al., 2019; Jimenez et al., 2016).

Another example would be for the responsible individual(s)/committee and digital technologies expert to review the recommendations of Jimenez et al. (2016). They argue that community psychologists should use social media to stay current and relevant, as well as to influence how people in the field of community psychology socially interact. A logical extension of this recommendation is to use digital technologies to support or implement the other recommendations of Jimenez et al. (2016) for improving community psychology training, including having community psychologists serve as a major resource to communities; promoting a sense of community within the field; diversifying students, faculty, and leadership; systematically evaluating the field's efforts; enhancing the visibility and growth of community psychology; and fostering globally minded and innovative community psychology scholars and researchers.

As a final example, consider Dalton and Wolfe's (2012) work. Their research, which was later reviewed and made more accessible online by the SCRA Community Psychology Practice Council and Council of Education Programs (SCRA, n.d.), shows how digital technologies can be incorporated into community psychology training to augment psychologists' community psychology practice competencies. Based on the CBPR work of various community psychologists and other scholars we reviewed in this article (Craig Rushing & Stephens, 2012; Frasilho et al., 2018; Halsall & Forneris, 2016; Kornbluh et al., 2016; Lichty et al., 2019; Ohmer et al., 2021), digital technologies can bolster community psychology trainees' practice competencies in promoting community inclusion and partnerships; community leadership and mentoring; consultation and organizational development; collaboration and coalition development; community organizing and advocacy; and community education, information dissemination, and building of public awareness (SCRA, n.d.).

### ***Finalize the Plan to Incorporate Digital Technologies into the Training Program***

Once the individual(s), committee, and/or digital technologies expert have completed their review of previous recommendations for improving community psychologists' training and explored the opportunities for feasibly and appropriately incorporating digital technologies, they should then begin to devise, design, and finalize a plan to improve their community psychology training by incorporating digital technologies. Ideally, this plan would be based on sound community psychology theories, core values, and evidence derived from CBPR and prior scholarly work. When this plan is completed and finalized, the next step would be to present it to the greater community of stakeholders, such as other faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, staff, and community partner agencies of the training program.

### ***Implement the Plan to Incorporate Digital Technologies into the Training Program***

The last recommendation is the implementation of the plan to incorporate digital technologies into the community psychology training program. In genuine collaborative fashion, the implementation will immediately follow the review, amendments, and ratification of the plan by the greater community of relevant stakeholders who have an interest and investment in



improving the training of the program's community psychologists. A protocol to conduct sequential evaluations after designated periods of time (e.g., mid-implementation, post-implementation) should be in place prior to the plan's implementation. These sequential evaluations will fall under the purview of the individual(s) or committee responsible for incorporating digital technologies into their training program, and who will report the evaluation findings to their respective department and community partners.

### **Conclusion**

A strong commitment to improvement is an important part of the spirit of community psychology as a field, and improving the training of community psychologists is an integral aspect of this ongoing commitment. In this article, we argued that when incorporated into CBPR, digital technologies are excellent resources for advancing not only the promotion of engaged scholarship and community psychology core values, but also community psychology's strong commitment to consistently improve its theories, research, and practice. It is high time that community psychology harnesses the power of digital technologies, particularly by incorporating them into the training of community psychologists. While the task of incorporating digital technologies into community psychology training will not be easy, it is our hope that the advocacy and recommendations in this article will prove a worthwhile starting point for the community psychologists who choose to take on this task in the years to come.

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## **‘You’re Getting Two For One With Me’: Difficult New Sites of Community Engagement Leadership Within Higher Education**

**David Peacock, Katy Campbell**

**ABSTRACT** This article profiles the professional identities of two postsecondary staff leading the adaptation and adoption of the elective Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement in their institutions in Australia and Canada. It explores the tensions and frustrations, as well as opportunities, experienced by these “third space” or “community engagement professional” staff, who often struggle to find recognition of the value of their work within their institution. These staff portraits point to two sources of both personal and institutional misrecognition of community engagement professionals and the community engagement practice more generally: gender intersecting with race, and the relegation of community engagement to an external relations function that runs parallel to the core academic purposes of the institution.

**KEYWORDS** Carnegie Community Engagement Classification pilots, community engagement professionals, Australian and Canadian higher education

As postsecondary institutions are facing increasing pressure from governments, private funders, employers, and their host communities to demonstrate their value beyond the academy, they are clearly looking for evidence to validate their impacts for local as well as global communities (Hazelkorn, 2016; Benneworth et al, 2018). The Carnegie Foundation’s Elective Community Engagement Classification system – a kind of quality assurance model — has expanded beyond the United States and is now partnering with Australian and Canadian postsecondary consortia (a pilot project was ultimately abandoned in Ireland; see McIlraith et al, 2021) to expand its own impacts and to learn if and how this model can be adapted to suit other higher education systems and cultures (Simon Fraser, n.d.; University of Technology Sydney, n.d.). These pilots represent an emerging movement within higher education that seeks to bolster the relevance and impacts of a postsecondary institution’s engagement with its host communities (Benneworth et al, 2018). The internationalization of the Carnegie Community Classification system is also a phenomenon being enacted, at least in Canada and Australia as will be seen below, primarily by professionally designated staff in postsecondary institutions working in partnership with academics carrying administrative roles.

In this article, we highlight the role of two of these postsecondary staff – one Australian, and one Canadian - who are leading this work across their institutions and are collaborating

with other institutions within their country to create new and culturally relevant standards and benchmarks for the practice of community engagement. The first author is a dual Australian-Canadian citizen and has experience across both jurisdictions in the field of community engagement theory practice in postsecondary education. Through their current role within their institution leading community engaged learning, they have informed their institution's participation in the Canadian pilot. The secondary author, as a feminist scholar and senior leader in community engaged scholarship in Canada and of the U.S. movements (like the Carnegie Classification Community Engagement Classification system), has personal experience of the misrecognitions of the value of community engaged scholarship within the academy.

The article seeks to add to the existing body of research on "third space professionals" (Whitchurch, 2012) and their functions within postsecondary education, which have effectively hybridized the traditionally distinct practices of academics and managers. By providing an empirical account of the functions and identities of these third space professionals within the community engagement field, across Canadian and Australian jurisdictions, this paper advances the scholarship of "community engagement professionals" (Dostilio, 2017; Schyndel, Pearl and Purcell, 2019) and reveals the tensions, frustrations and opportunities for staff leading community engagement activity. By attending to the operations of power as they flow through racialized and gendered practices in community engagement, the paper provides new insights into the struggle for recognition and acceptance faced by many community engaged professionals, most of whom identify as women.

Finally, by listening to and amplifying the perspectives of third space professionals engaged in community engagement practice, the article recognizes their leadership and demonstrates new possibilities for professional staff within contemporary higher education (Vales & Carter, 2016).

### **Defining Community Engagement**

As postsecondary institutions in both Canada and Australia are adapting and adopting the U.S. based Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement system, it is helpful at this point to understand the Carnegie definition:

The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. (Public Purpose Institute, n.d.)

The Carnegie classification purposes to mark out a distinctive space of practice that is not concerned with technical knowledge transfer, patents, and business development, but with the broadly socio-cultural and democratic outcomes which arise when engagement is embedded across the research and teaching functions of a postsecondary institution.



The staff responsible in the Australian and Canadian Carnegie Pilots for leading, organizing, supporting and maximizing the value of an institution's research, teaching and service for the benefit of communities are those we are calling community engaged professionals. As will be demonstrated, these staff often face a precarity in their work, and frequent misrecognitions of their roles and value. These are the paradoxes and dilemmas (Whitchurch, 2012) experienced by third space professionals as they face entrenched work place cultures often resistant to their emerging roles.

### **Third Space Professionals**

The literature on community engagement professionals sits within a larger literature on the rise of what have been called “new higher education professionals” (Schneijderberg & Merkator, 2013). The increasing complexity of postsecondary institutions has required a heightened “differentiation and professionalisation of functions” and the emergence of new, specific knowledges and competencies not shared by all those engaging in the traditional roles of higher education (p. 53). In the European context, as Schneijderberg & Merkator (2013) note, the primary work of the higher education professional has been to prepare and support management decisions and to establish services to support the core academic work of research and teaching. Celia Whitchurch (2008, 2012) has developed the terms “third space” and “blended” professionals to describe these new positions within higher education, and to those staff, often with graduate degree training, whose work occupied spaces between or across professional and academic activity. Dostilio (2017) has helpfully summarized Whitchurch's “third space professional” as follows:

...we leverage professional and academic expertise; straddle on and off-campus environments; facilitate internal and external boundary-crossing projects; exert relational leadership that often activates networks rather than hierarchy; and maintain portfolios of work that include management, teaching, program administration, and research. (p. 6).

Clearly in Whitchurch's conception, the third space professional can be undertaking traditional academic functions, such as research and teaching, as well as managerial functions and project management, regardless of that staff person's institutional designation. Community engagement functions require staff with transdisciplinary (across academic and community knowledge cultures; see Kreber, 2009) and interdisciplinary capabilities (working through disciplinary articulations within the academy).

### **Carnegie and Community Engagement Professionals**

In the United States, the development and enactment of the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement process (beginning in 2006) has further advanced the work of academic professionals in community engagement (Welsh & Saltmarsh, 2013). Weerts and Sandmann (2008; 2010), reflecting on this work and the subsequent development of scholarly

and professional community engagement networks such as the Outreach and Engagement Practitioner Network of the Engaged Scholarship Consortium (n.d.), took up the discourse of the “boundary spanner” to interpret the new roles and functions of community engagement activity. Particularly within research-intensive institutions, community engagement involves boundary-spanning activities performed by “community-based problem solvers, technical experts, internal engagement advocates, and engagement champions” (Weerts and Sandmann, 2010, p. 651). These are complex roles performed by people across differing levels of the institution; community engagement cannot be “confined to the jobs of community relations staff” (Weerts and Sandmann, 2010, p. 651.).

Dostilio (2017) describes an emerging identity and set of practices for community engagement leaders, scholars and practitioners, and administrators, and in so doing moves beyond structural analyses of community engagement units developed in response to the Carnegie classification (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). Dostilio and Perry (2017) define the role of the community engagement professional as “professional staff whose primary job is to support and administer community-campus engagement”, inclusive of staff directing centres of engagement who maintain active scholarly agendas (p. 1; p. 10). They are concerned with developing not only a set of knowledges and technical competencies for community engagement professionals, but also, uniquely in the literature to date, an ethics to support the professionalization of community engagement staff (Dostilio and Perry, 2017, pp. 6-8). Dostilio and Perry (2017) see community engagement professionals as “change agents” engaged in the task to involve higher education in work required to achieve the ultimate goal of “a more peaceful, just, and sustainable world” (p. 2). Community engagement professionals are “change agents who exert transformational leadership within specific institutions of higher education and within the field of community engagement more broadly”, and help to realize “postsecondary education’s civic purpose” (Dostilio & Perry, 2017, p. 2). Our research seeks to develop this scholarship, and to understand more clearly the roles and emerging identities of community engagement scholars, practitioners, and professionals, and the changes they seek within their institutions and wider communities. Our point of departure is the current roles of the staff leading the Carnegie Community Engagement Pilots in Australia and Canada, whose work seeks not only to further the tasks of faculty or staff specific community engaged scholarship and learning projects, but coordinates the scholarly and practice based work across the post-secondary institution and national field.

### **Community Engagement Professionals and Gender**

Both Whitchurch and Dostilio theorize the work of third space professionals and community engagement professionals without explicit reference to the operations of gender. Yet community engaged scholarship and practice is arguably a feminized discipline and associated with feminized disciplines like education and health care (Abes, et al., 2002). Although there is no comparable research published for the Canadian higher education field, higher education research in the United States has found that staff occupying middle-level, academic

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and managerial positions have been found to be disproportionately gendered and racialized (see Guarino & Borden, 2017; Lechuga, 2012; Hanasono et al., 2018; Miller, Howell & Struve, 2019).

Community engaged professionals are also typically engaged in heavily relational work with external partners to the university, with their colleagues, and with students. Fostering, sustaining, and developing these relationships and partnerships is core to the work of creating mutually beneficial outcomes for all participants. Yet this requires emotional labour which, as has been noted by many, is borne unequally by women (Lawless, 2018) and particularly by racialized women (Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Ispa-landa & Thomas, 2019; Stewart, 2019). Emotional labour comprises the time and attitudes toward in-depth caretaking, relationship development, and relationship maintenance (Lawless, 2018, p. 88). Academic “service” work, including teaching diversity classes or working with diverse students, counselling, mentoring, service-learning, committee membership, and faculty development are all higher education workplace practices overwhelmingly undertaken by women (Harley, 2008; Lechuga, 2012; Miller, Howell & Struve, 2019; Turner, Myers & Cresswell, 1999). To better trace the emerging identities and practices of community engagement professionals, specific analyses of the operations of gender and race within the academy are required.

## **Methods**

We provide an analysis of two staff portraits, one from Australia and one from Canada, in a purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015) of our wider group of 15 participants. One woman staff member had a PhD and identified strongly as an academic. The other, male participant had an MBA and identified as a professional in external relations and communications. These two identities of the community engagement professional — a woman leader and academic struggling for legitimacy and security, and a professional leader more generally mediating between the needs of communities and the virtuous story-telling of the institution — represent two dominant experiences within community engagement leadership in Australian and Canadian postsecondary education. Together these accounts demonstrate the tensions, exclusions, conflicts and opportunities for the work of contemporary community engagement professionals.

Our study of the Carnegie Pilot projects in Australia and Canada was a part of a wider research project examining the sociocultural influences at play in the institutionalization of community engagement (University of Alberta Research Information Services, Pro00090705). We produced data for this paper through semi-structured interviews with staff from the Australian and Canadian Universities actively engaged in the leadership of their institutions’ Carnegie Classification applications. From the 16 Canadian universities and colleges participating in the Pilot, we recruited seven staff for interviews from across these institutions. Of the 10 Australian universities participating in their pilot, we also recruited eight staff. Additionally, the authors provided advice to our own institution’s planning committee tasked with producing the Carnegie application, and through this participant-observer status (Siegel, 2018) were able to make presentations on our research to both the Australian and Canadian cohorts, from whom we also sought to recruit participants. Presentations, recruitment, and

interviews were conducted in person in Sydney at an Australian cohort gathering over February 3-4, 2020 (between the bushfires and the onset of COVID-19!), while the presentation and recruitment occurred online for the Canadian Cohort on April 24, 2020, with subsequent interviews conducted online through the Canadian spring and summer of 2020.

We communicated our research plans and objectives to the scholar with responsibility for the international pilots, the Visiting Fellow of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching who was based, at the time, at the Swearer Centre for Public Service at Brown University. They acted as a kind of gatekeeper who enabled the research to progress, with the consent of staff and institutions. After a recent period of instability in governance in the elective community engagement classification (Whitford, 2022), all the Carnegie Classifications are now administered through the American Council of Education (ACE, 2022).

Each participant interviewed had institutional responsibilities for organizing the Carnegie classification work within their institution. Although all, in different ways, were performing the work of a community engagement professional (Dostilio, 2017), whose leadership was emerging from a 'third space' (Whitchurch, 2012) that blurred the lines between academic and professional leadership, they did so with particular challenges and tensions. Our 15 interviews of staff from Carnegie Pilots in both the Australian and Canadian contexts suggest community engagement leadership to be a gendered practice conducted by highly educated people, mostly located within middle and sometimes upper levels of management (unit directors and managers, deputy-vice chancellors). Four of the 15 interviewed were located in External Relations units, while in other instances staff were connected to an Engagement office or unit with structural connections to external or community relations units, sometimes connected to a Provost or Vice-Chancellor's office.

The majority are women (12 out of 15), and nearly all are highly educated (seven PhDs, six Masters, one Bachelor degree, one Diploma). Significantly for us, however, in light of the critical academic work involved through this Carnegie classification process that positions the institution for enhanced and sustained community engagement flowing from research and teaching, only two of the 15 people interviewed were defined by their institution as occupying an academic position. The vast majority of people providing a vision and policy coherence for community engagement work in Canada and Australia postsecondary institutions were professional staff.

As was noted in an internal report with Carnegie feedback to Canadian institutions after they had each submitted their institutional plans, community engagement was closely aligned with 'external relations', or 'community relations' offices and functions, and was seldom housed on the academic side of the institution, as is more often the case in the United States (Carnegie, 2021). Our access to this internal report reflected our participant-observer status within the Canadian cohort, with both authors participating on our own institution's Carnegie Pilot committee. We pick up this theme on external relations and community engagement below in our conversations with the Canadian participant, Mark.

We asked participants about their academic and professional backgrounds and how they came to lead community engagement work within their institutions. We also asked about their

aspirations for the classification work in their country, and if and how the classification process would advance their own institution's engagement agenda. A narrative inquiry method was utilized, sensitive to feminist perspectives related to power dynamics, and the experiences of institutional misrecognition (Fraser, 2000). Fraser (2000) defines misrecognition as a "social subordination in the sense of being prevented from participating as a peer in social life as a result of institutionalized patterns of cultural value that constitute one as relatively unworthy of respect or esteem" (p. 23). Close attention was paid to reported exclusions in staff work, acknowledging that stories, and storytelling, is gendered (Woodiwiss et al., 2017). We traced through the interviews any alignment, or conflict, between the institutional designation of their work and position, and the participant's own identities in their work. Our presuppositions for the interviews were that professional identities are never entirely stable constructions, and are shaped by complex personal and contextual factors (Clarke et al., 2013). We were also attentive to how the structural relations of race and gender mapped onto personal identities, and how the hierarchies of the field of postsecondary institutions structured the range of academic and professional identities available for actors (McNay, 1999).

Acker's (2014) review of women's experiences in university management provided another lens for our interviews and narrative inquiry. We probed in the conversations the "persistence of 'masculinist' ways of working (Kloot, 2004; Priola, 2007); the emotional management work involved in women's leadership (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007)... women's caring responsibilities and the 'care-less' expectations for managers (Grummell, Devine, & Lynch, 2009)...(and) differences among universities in creating a climate supportive of women managers" (Griffiths, 2012; Ledwith & Manfredi, 2000; as cited in Acker, 2014, p.74.)

### *Portraits of Two Community Engagement Professionals*

**Akinya: Manager of Community Engagement.** Akinya is a manager of community engagement at an urban, "innovative research university" in Australia and reports to a senior deputy Vice-Chancellor (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020). Born and educated in West Africa, Akinya pursued post-graduate work in the United States before coming to work in Australia. She brokers partnerships for community engaged learning at her institution and assists the university in strategically thinking through its extensive community engagement initiatives and commitments. Akinya provides, she says, a 'critical data source' for the Carnegie application, recording initiatives and practices from across her university, and co-chairing a university-wide engagement network. She holds a PhD in Educational Policy from the United States, focused on service-learning pedagogies, and is now studying for a second PhD in the social sciences.

In our interviews with her, Akinya consistently identified as an academic, despite the fact that she was designated by her institution as a professional staff person as she conducted her Carnegie-related work. Positions that have spanned the academic and professional divide have been a feature of her employment within higher education in Australia. She describes the somewhat arbitrary nature of these designations as follows:

A job I held prior to this one...as a curriculum advisor, there I was a professional staff. And prior to that, I did the same work for another institution, even though I was classified there as an academic director of programs. It was pretty much the same job, just different institutions, different classifications... regardless of the fact that in the engagement space, you are both doing such similar things - connecting with partners, organizing things. (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020)

This “role ambiguity” (Smith et al, 2018) Akinya describes relates not so much to a staff person’s insecurity about their competence in undertaking the activities themselves, but rather how the they are being (mis)recognized by the institution though an institutional designation at odds with their own identity in their work. The institutional designation of one’s work does not always align with how one understands their own identity within the institution. Three interviewees of the 15 identify differently to their institutional designation: a man in a senior executive position is ascribed as an academic within his role, while he identifies himself as a professional. On the other hand, two women identify as either a “pracademic” or academic, while being ascribed as professional staff. The experiences of these two women, including Akinya, describe a misalignment of their work and self-identity with that which their institution affixes.

Akinya suspects that some of this misrecognition of her academic abilities through the institutional professional designation comes about because of her gender and race. She noted:

One... of the things that I’ve found quite interesting is that intersection between being female and being of African descent. So half the time, you’re not really sure which one to point a finger at, but you do know sometimes they’re both at play. Sometimes it’s one at play sometimes it’s the other at play. (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020).

Akinya interprets the lack of recognition of her capabilities by her institution according to her gender. While in her case, race and gender intersect for her in ways she experiences negatively, it is gender she attributes most to her exclusion.

I think that gender role ... has been the primary reason for a lot of my exclusions or lack of recognition in some areas... there’s almost an expectation that this is a profession that’s more inclined towards females and in many platforms you will find there are more females represented in that space than there are males. (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020).

Working together in complex yet powerful ways, gender and race-based discrimination is understood by Akinya as leading to misrecognitions from her colleagues and institution.

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Akinya tells the following story about her experience of the “boys club” working against her desire for an academic appointment as a community engagement expert:

I found (it) quite curious...that I did the exact same workload as did my male colleague. When it came to decisions ... that my position be transformed, or recognized as an academic appointment, which my male colleague enjoyed...I was told that it would not be considered at this point in time because enough favours had already been done. It was a role that was sitting with the main decision making powers - well, in ... the boys' club. What was quite explicit here was that it was not about the role, but about who the social connections were. Since I'm not in the boys' club, I was excluded from a number of conversations that are made (there). My male colleague who performed a similar role to what I was performing in my community engagement space, continued to enjoy the benefits of his work being classified as academic work. Whereas my work was considered professional, and I attribute that primarily to gender and the exclusion from spaces where these conversations as to who gets recognized and who doesn't get recognized. (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020).

As a woman of West African descent, Akinya also sees race as contributing to her experiences of misrecognition and “tokenizing” in her work, intersecting with these primary gender based exclusions.

I was selected to lead a project on inclusion of African diaspora...I had done some work in that area just a few months before that particular appointment. And I was a natural fit because of my African descent. This experience highlighted the whole tokenistic approach – taking race and giving you the sort of currency that is needed to support a rhetoric, as opposed to the deeply integrated need to function and recognize people of different races. I ended up working quite a bit on frameworks for inclusion and that sort of thing. But... this never went anywhere. This is yet another area where I cannot quite put my finger on whether the issue was based on race or whether the issue was anything other than race. But one thing that was clear was that my selection to prepare that project was due to my race, which in many ways was an advantage. But in some ways it was a tokenizing, versus the project being able to stand on its own two feet and actually be taken as an objective project in and of itself. (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020).

Akinya understands her appointment as a tokenistic gesture by the institution instead of a genuine attempt to recognize the ongoing work of social inclusion, and to institutionalize this function through an academic and ongoing appointment. She further describes this “tokenism”

as simply “checking boxes as opposed to actually recognizing the sort of power and potential knowledge that they bring to the table” (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020).

This misrecognition, and even suspicion, of Akinya came from other non-academic staff in the institution as well. In fulfilling the role of a community engagement professional with an academic background, Akinya also notes how for some she was not “really” a professional:

A lot of (my) colleagues...were professional staff and we worked very well together. But when you get into the formal setting, academics would say, “Oh, professional staff do this,” and professional staff, they always had snide remarks about academics. And so they’d make a snide remark and then they look at me...,”Okay, but we’re not talking about you”. There’s also a particular culture around you being of greater value as an academic and you being of lesser value as a professional staff. And because I had my doctorate...I mean, every breath of me reeks that of an academic - I really felt the brunt of it where you would then have even another professional staff member just trying to put you down... (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020).

Akinya expresses feelings of frustration of not really being part of the team, or recognized by her professional peers. This is the difficulty of those boundary-spanning community engagement professionals – they are often misrecognized on both sides of the academic/managerial divide. Akinya’s presence among her professional colleagues, alongside her (apparent) strong academic identity, causes mistrust from her professional colleagues, who see in her someone unlike themselves. We suspect race and gender also operate here to Akinya’s detriment, in addition to the cultural differences between those the institution designates as “academic” and then “non-academic” or “support staff”.

An academic, with extensive community-based experience, can bring many strengths to a professional position within higher education. Akinya describes this as the university getting double the value for her work:

You’re getting two for one with me...you’re getting a professional staff, everything that comes with that plus with the added benefits of academic thinking. So you have an academic hat on and a professional staff on...I think a lot of institutions are getting a lot of (two-for-one) nowadays, because when I look at the position title itself for the job, it really does not require a doctorate. But a lot of them are being filled by people who have doctorates. (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020).

Akinya recognizes here that, on the one hand, a PhD in contemporary higher education is not sufficient for being employed as a tenured or continuing academic appointment. Yet universities are employing people into these professional positions because they have higher degrees, even a PhD, because there is a recognition that they bring value to the institution.



It is also because in the case of community engaged scholarship and practice, the institution knows that the work requires advanced knowledge of the purposes of higher education. The disjuncture seems to be that this value is not attributed, institutionally, to the staff person in the role. It is likely that by not employing someone like Akinya in an academic role, the institution would be saving money over time. The Carnegie classification pilot process requires community engaged professionals with a high degree of professional project management skills. Yet it also benefits from staff such as Akinya, who have the academic sensibilities and capabilities to be able to articulate the value of community engagement within the academy.

As an academically trained woman of West African descent managing community engagement and coordinating her institution's Carnegie pilot application, Akinya still experiences a suspicion of her academic bona-fides. In a particularly condescending example of this behavior from colleagues. Akinya notes:

A lot of times I would propose things and I'd be told, "No, no, you're punching above your weight." ... I got a lot of government funding for some of the service-learning programs that our students do. But then as soon as I changed over in terms of reporting lines, the person who came in next was very restrictive and would make remarks like, "How did you get permission to even apply for that as a professional staff member?" So he would forget that I'm actually a doctor by, right...you can call me whatever you want, but you cannot take my nominals away from me. (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020).

One of the core institutional distinctions among classes of employees in an academic institution, especially the more research-intensive institutions, is whether staff are authorized to apply for, and then hold, external research funds. Akinya proved she was successful at doing this, expressing her view that it was core to her role. In most institutions of higher education, this policy does turn on whether one has a PhD. There are many contract instructors with doctoral degrees that also cannot apply for, and hold, external research funds. These ambiguities and arbitrary applications of policy are prevalent in the world of community engagement professionals in contemporary higher education. These misrecognitions and refusals to validate successful work can take their toll on staff, and lead to a heightened sense of frustration and precarity.

Neither professional enough, nor academic enough, despite progress towards a second doctorate, Akinya's experiences are not unique to community engagement staff occupying a still indeterminate, risky third space (Whitchurch, 2012) in higher education.

Akinya's experiences resonate with those found in Acker's (2014) study of women university leaders. There, the micropolitics in higher education placed lower middle managers, especially those reporting to males, in "helper" roles where they encountered higher expectations for caring and unrecognized "glue work" (Acker, 2014, p. 79). Akinya's academic managers rely on her to lead the work of engagement yet misrecognize it as "helper" work.

Still, what attracts people like Akinya to these roles is the creative possibilities they afford, and the enjoyment of working on interdisciplinary and cross-institutional projects.

I like it quite a lot just simply because of that latitude it gives you to bring in your thoughts around this sort of creative space and creative environment and just how we can then work together on things. This particular project [Carnegie classification] has been a good one. (Akinya, interview, February 6, 2020).

As a community engagement professional working on high level strategic planning around community engagement, Akinya both enjoys the creativity and freedom within her work, while at the same time experiences the frustrations of institutional and inter-personal misrecognitions of her role and capabilities.

Since we interviewed her, however, Akinya has moved on from her Carnegie work, now supporting a work-integrated learning agenda for her institution. She did manage to negotiate an academic appointment as a “consultant”.

**Mark: Director of Community Engagement.** Mark, a white male, directs a community engagement centre at a Canadian university. He reports to a Vice President of External Relations. If Akinya’s disposition is academic in bearing, Mark’s is that of a professional. He began his work in the postsecondary sector as student recruiter and gained an MBA in partnership and business development. Mark has a vital leadership role in the Carnegie Pilot process, both within his institution and beyond. He describes the classification process as it has unfolded in his institution in the following way:

It is a very long, robust set of questions that really encourage people and institutions to explore possibilities in partnership in a pretty significant way. [Our] submission, for instance, is going to be over 100 pages of work. In some places it’s reporting out some things but in most places it’s about identifying that there are places, there are lots of gaps in [our] infrastructure, for instance, when it comes to supporting community engagement and the opportunities that come with it that need to be addressed for the institution do this well and respectfully with community. (Mark, interview, September 30, 2020).

Mark’s institution has invested in employing a full-time staff person to write the Carnegie application. This staff person takes advice from an advisory committee that Mark participates on to represent the community engagement unit he leads. Although not all participating institutions in Carnegie pilots have been able to mobilize these institutional resources for the work, those that have done so have signaled their intention to centre community engagement within the institution.

In his current role, Mark defines his purpose as follows:

The leadership role that I have at the university is really around supporting people, supporting partnerships and working to grow [our university’s] capacity for community engagement that enriches scholarship and offers opportunities

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for community-engaged learning. (Mark, interview, September 30, 2020).

Many so called “non-academic staff” define themselves, and are defined by their academic colleagues and institution, as providing support for others. They are “support staff”. While for Akinya this support function tended to diminish her status within her academic collaborations, for Mark, this support is understood and experienced as leadership. It is leadership producing positive outcomes for communities via community engaged learning and community-based research. As a community engagement professional, Mark sees his role and identity as both supporting community engagement and practicing it. When we asked him whether his outreach and engagement unit did community engagement work directly, or supported others to do so, he responded as follows:

I would characterize it as both. There are particular initiatives that we steward directly with personnel in the office. (For example) we run a centre...called the [Corporate sponsored and named] Community Engagement Centre that has...35 different partnerships and approximately the same number of programs in place. We have one person in the office that manages that entity. But we also direct a number of incentive-based programs to encourage others at the university take part in building partnership including a seed fund that allocates approximately \$120,000 per year to around 20 partnerships per year. (Mark, interview, September 30, 2020).

The work involves building the capacity and structuring incentives for community engaged learning and research to be taken up by others to create and sustain partnerships serving public ends. It also involves adroit relations with organizations seeking to contribute philanthropic or corporate social responsibility funds to boost the work. The tradition of philanthropic giving for community engagement is more developed in North America than in Australia, even if there is less of this tradition in Canada than the United States. Strong links between community engagement and the advancement, alumni and external relations units, however, sometimes can create a suspicion from academics over the academic merit of certain engagement activity. Particularly in research-intensive institutions, competitively won research grants and income are the gold standard, and philanthropic support, while often vital to sustaining community engagement, has less prestige for the academy. That is a core role that Mark attends to as a community engagement professional, structuring community engagement as a core mission of the institution and preventing it from being reduced to an exercise in brand reputation and management. When describing the origins of his position, Mark notes:

...community engagement has been seen...as residing in the Vice-Provost External Relations portfolio, even though there’s all kinds of really good and really important community partnership work happening between specific faculty members and community in a whole bunch of different ways... But

this was an opportunity to put community engagement at the front of folks who are in the Vice Provost Academic and Vice Provost research portfolios in a way where they had control to mobilize things, so that community engagement could be further socialized as a way to enrich teaching, learning, research and creative activity. [This involves] the combination of community partnership work together with scholarly work in recognition of both academic knowledge, but also of community knowledge and the ability to bring those knowledge forms together to provide options for partnership and co-creation. (Mark, interview, September 30, 2020).

As a community engagement professional, Mark positions his work squarely as serving the academic work of the institution. From his interview with us, Mark noted that he and his team “build the infrastructure” for a coordination of community engagement beyond the work already taking place in the faculties to “offer opportunities to enrich the mission of the university when it comes to academia and research” (Mark, interview, September 30, 2020). Mark describes the motivations for his work as follows:

My interest in working in community engagement is to look for opportunities for knowledge mobilization, learning and research that results in differences in communities, which are supportive of the people in those communities (Mark, interview, September 30, 2020).

While community engagement activity serves the academic mission of the institution it secondarily, for Mark, supports the institution itself.

When asked specifically whether community engagement was a strategic branding exercise for this institution, Mark explains:

If [institution] is able to engage in this in the right way... the reputational aspects associated with being... a leading community-engaged university will come in time as well. But the exercise is not one of trying to build our brand first; from my perspective it's about building partnership with communities and then your organizational brand follows that. You might get a different answer if you ask people in our marketing communications department and external relations but we're working on them too (Mark, interview, September 30, 2020).

Mark expands on the tensions within the academic side and marketing side of community engagement within his institution:

The realities of being an office of community engagement within the Vice Provost external relations group, which also includes the university's communications and marketing group, a big group compared to any other

department, is that the communications and marketing folks are always thinking about [our institution's] reputation and brand and stewarding brand and reputation. Whereas our [community engagement] office's point of view or perspective is that we want to spend time with partners and in partnership to give voice to those partners and to our university at the same time, equally, and to the best of our ability. To tell those stories together (Mark, interview, September 30, 2020).

As a community engagement professional navigating his institution's dual imperative to create compelling stories of its virtuous involvements in community and to create meaningful partnerships generating mutually beneficial impacts, Mark straddles the practices of a marketer and a partnership developer; external relations and the practices of community-based research and learning. He does so with a self-confidence and security not often afforded a racialized, female "support staff" like Akinya (Einarsdottir et al., 2018). We asked Mark explicitly about whether he felt his leadership in community engagement had been accepted and recognized at least in part, both institutionally and nationally, because of his gender and race. Mark answered as follows:

Within the Canadian Pilot Cohort of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and within my own institution, I am one voice of a large and diverse group of constituents who are working together to center and value EDI [equity, diversity and inclusion], reciprocity, and Reconciliation in learning, discovery, scholarship, partnership and change (Mark, personal correspondence, April 13, 2022).

Although admirably humble in perspective, given Mark's influence within the Canadian field, his response also displays a reticence to acknowledge and/or lack of awareness of how gender and race structure the career possibilities of community engagement professionals. We return to this point in the discussion below.

Nonetheless, emerging as a crucial leader of community engagement within his institution, and having become a director of community engagement, Mark ultimately identifies with the impacts of community engagement for communities:

And so the cherry at the end of things for us is a stronger relationship and a stronger partnership with a community group, whereas for the marketing communications folks the cherry is [the institutions] reputation, how we're doing in the rankings, that kind of thing (Mark, interview, Month Day, Year).

It is this identification of "community first" ethic that aligns Mark with Dostilio and Welch's (2019) conception of the community engagement professional, in his case within a non-academic, external relations portfolio.

## Discussion

The experiences of these two community engagement professionals leading their institution's Carnegie community classification applications reveal several tensions, conflicts and opportunities within their work. They point to some of the difficult sites of new community engagement leadership in contemporary higher education.

First, there is a precarity to the work of the community engagement professional, even when that staff is in a continuing position. Since we conducted the interviews, six staff (of the 15) have left their positions for other roles in their institutions or moved to the not-for-profit sector. Akinya has moved from community engagement to a position in work-integrated learning, although Mark has further secured his position as a leader within the Canadian Carnegie Pilot. Clearly the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on all participating postsecondary institutions in the past two years or so, and the resources for inter-institutional collaboration of all kinds have been harder to come by. The community engagement agenda, however, remains as vital to local communities as ever, with not-for-profit sectors in particular facing major restructuring, financial and human resource challenges. The pandemic saw frozen international student revenues, and declining government supports for postsecondary institutions in Australia (Zhou, 2021), and at least for some of the Canadian provinces such as Alberta (Lambert, 2021). Community engagement activities face increasing internal competition for scarce resources from faculty and executive leadership. In times of austerity, community engagement work is an easy target for institutions seeking to rationalize their operations. Its status as "core work" for the institution has often been contradicted in times of resource constraints, despite the rhetoric of senior executives. If community engagement is to be an institution-wide mandate and woven into research and teaching practices, and not simply "third mission" (Carl and Menter, 2021), it will need to be recognized as core academic work for the institution.

Second, the leaders of community engagement through the Carnegie pilots have been primarily women, and sometimes racialized women, which has both reproduced community engagement as a traditionally feminized field of practice and compounded at least some staff's experiences of misrecognition and the devaluing of their work within the institution. It has also contributed to the perceptions of community engagement as lower status work within the institution. As Akinya had told us above, although she brings a "two for one" value to her institution through her academic abilities and project management competency in her engagement of diverse communities, she was consistently devalued and questioned in her work. This moves beyond simply a paradox and dilemma (Whitchurch, 2012) for the community engagement professional to a case of racist and gendered discrimination, and exploitation, from the institution. Contemporary universities clearly need people such as Akinya, with her competent mix of academic insight and professional capacities with diverse communities, to create the social license and local community goodwill for much of their research and teaching that has less obvious connection to local taxpayers and those who have no higher education. The ability to create mutually beneficial partnerships for the benefit of both the academy and its host community and society is needed by institutions. Yet, in Akinya's case, the value

created by the community engagement professional is being siphoned off to the institution without sufficient return to the staff member. Although community engagement professionals are genuinely concerned with not exploiting community partners through their work, their own labour seems at risk of being taken for granted. While the exploitation of non-tenured or, in Australia, non-continuing academic workers is common, it is the academically trained, community engagement professional who seems particularly vulnerable given their field's low status within the academic community.

Mark's success in community engagement leadership as a white man is significant. Our reading of the literature and careful attention to our interviews suggest that race and gender may be significant in Mark's success in leading community engagement. Put another way, Mark's, obvious abilities for the work have been bolstered by their face-value acceptance by others, and their lack of second guessing of these competencies and exercise of leadership. In feminized professions, such as the field of community engagement professionals, men can sometimes perform their masculinity in a way that accrues advantages ("masculine capital", Huppertz and Goodwin, 2013). That Mark does not name or recognize this in his own career should not be surprising, nor interpreted unduly harshly on his professionalism. As Berger, Benschop & van den Brink (2015) have noted, "[p]ractising gender...is usually routine, nearly invisible to practitioners, and difficult to see or name overtly. The level of reflexivity with which gender is practised varies for different people (men and women) and is context-dependent" (citing Martin, 2001; p. 560). As Akinya narrated above, and as Einarsdottir, Christiansen, & Kristjansdottir (2018) have explained:

Women believe their gender reduces opportunities for professional development; they are seldom consulted in connection with major decision making, and because of their gender, they are not offered the most attractive types of work, promotions, or pay increases. (p. 4).

Perhaps unlike Mark, Akinya does not have the privilege to ignore the operations of power working through her gender and race.

Third, the community engagement professional is likely to face various misrecognitions and devaluations in their work if the practice of community engagement is aligned too closely with external relations. As was astutely observed by Mark, above, when community engagement becomes entangled with public relations and marketing, it risks becoming, and being seen by the academy as becoming, a crass form of brand and reputational management. Without embedding the community engagement function across research and teaching and learning, as well as "service", community engagement will have no academic legitimacy, and remain a marginalized activity within the institution. Community engagement professionals, regardless of their academic talents, are also more likely to become ignored or devalued in their work. Mark clearly was a successful leader of community engagement within his institution. This may have been because he did not have a PhD and did not identify as an academic, proving less of a competitive threat to other academics. Further research may assist here. Certainly Mark saw

his role as bridging the institution's academics and marketers to both create and extol the virtues of the impacts of authentic community engagement for all partners. Still, Mark's experience suggests the community engagement professional will need to have a clear-eyed understanding of the differences between institutional self-promotion and strategic competition and creating impacts for communities.

Finally, this ethical commitment to place communities first in the work of a community engagement professional came through strongly in all our interviews. This finding supports the research of Dostilio (2017) and Dostilio and Welch (2019), who regarded this ethical commitment as flowing from their "critical commitments" crucial to a community engagement professional, such as the ability to infuse practice and scholarship with examinations of power, privilege, and equity. This search for social justice and inclusion for communities remains a core, distinguishing feature of the community engagement professional within the wider class of new "higher educational professionals" (Schneijderberg & Merkator, 2013). It also creates a deeper affinity with the habitus of most academics than with other roles within the institution. Creating mutually beneficial partnerships for greater social impact requires, especially within Australia and Canada — both settler/colonizer societies after all — commitments to epistemological justice and a decolonizing of academic thought to create space for Indigenous academic and professional leadership on campuses. This remains a core challenge for community engagement professionals as they adapt the Carnegie classification for community engagement to local cultural contexts.

## **Conclusion**

This article has advanced the scholarship on community engagement professionals through examining new, contested sites for community engagement leadership in Australian and Canadian postsecondary institutions. The Carnegie Pilots, designed to provide a framework for adaptation to further the institutional goals of community engagement practice in both jurisdictions, has provided us a unique moment to study the practices, identities, struggles and opportunities for contemporary community engagement professionals. Their work to construct, organize, measure and account for institutional community engagement outcomes is an essential task in postsecondary education. We have shown how this work is being taken more seriously through the Carnegie Pilots, on the one hand, yet also in some cases, on the other, remains tangential to the core academic work of the institution. Our two staff portraits have shown how race and gender intersect with the lower status of community engagement practice in mutually reinforcing ways. When women (and especially racialized women) lead institutional engagement efforts, they can experience resistance and even hostility. Our interviews suggest professional men are more likely to experience success in their leadership of engagement, and less explicit resistance to and acceptance of this leadership. This seems more likely when community engagement leadership becomes support of academics and their work, rather than an academic practice in itself. More research is needed here to confirm this finding.

Although a challenging experience for many community engagement professionals, leading and managing community engagement efforts for an institution can also be a rewarding



role. Both Akinya and Mark, as they lead their institutions in the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification process, expressed their enjoyment of their roles that traversed many traditional boundaries within higher education — campus and community, academic and professional — and the brokering of collaborations across disciplinary divides. Being a community engagement professional means having increased freedom to enter diverse spaces both on and off campus, and to form relationships beyond those possible in traditional departmental and faculty structures within the university and across universities. The staff were involved in modes of engagement which sought to specifically highlight and promote community based knowledges and practices to the campus. As these positions and careers develop, community engagement roles will be enticing to those seeking to make meaningful changes to their communities. If campus leaders can become more creative with recognizing the contributions of community engagement professionals to the campus, and sustain their career trajectories, they will enable high quality people to support their social impacts and improve community goodwill for the institution.

Much research remains to be done in order to understand more fully the distinctive roles these staff play, and the identities they forge and have forged upon them. More theoretical work is needed to trace the connections between the relations of power among the fields of gender, race, and the hierarchies of postsecondary institutions themselves and how they interact in complex ways to produce and impact community engagement professionals' identities. More empirical study on the 'churn' of community engagement professionals through projects and into other areas of institutional work, or into other careers, would also be useful for understanding the unique challenges and opportunities for this much needed and yet still emerging practice.

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# How Can Community-Based Participatory Research Address Hate Crimes and Incidents?

**Landon Turlock, Maria Mayan**

**ABSTRACT** Reports of hate crimes in Canada have increased by 72% from 2019 to 2021 (Moreau, 2022). Hate crimes harm those directly victimized and members of targeted communities (Erentzen & Schuller, 2020; Perry & Alvi, 2011). Many Canadian stakeholders advocate for increased community engagement in preventative and responsive interventions to this increasing concern. This article poses that Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is an appropriate approach for further exploring hate crimes and incidents and suggests strategies for this area of study, including: building community partnerships; advocating for trauma-informed practices; prioritizing cultural humility and intersectionality; preparing for lengthy pre-participation communication with potential participants; anticipating out-of-scope volunteer participants; and accounting for unanticipated actions of participants.

**KEYWORDS** community-based participatory research, hate crimes, hate incidents, community-based research, Canada

Reports of hate crimes to police in Canada have increased by 72% from 2019 to 2021 (Moreau, 2022). Hate crimes harm both those directly victimized as well as members of targeted communities (Erentzen & Schuller, 2020; Perry & Alvi, 2011; Perry, 2015). Many Canadian stakeholders advocate for increased community engagement in preventative and responsive interventions to this increasing concern. Considering this advocacy and the impacts of hate crimes and incidents on communities, there is a space for Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) to address hate crimes and incidents. However, there is little guidance or discussion about conducting CBPR in this field. This article argues that CBPR is well-positioned to further explore hate crimes and incidents as well as offering strategies to approach this area of study.

## **Definitions and Impacts of Hate Crimes and Incidents on Communities**

It is challenging to define hate crimes (Chakraborti, 2015). Although there is no shared definition of hate crime in Canada or elsewhere, Perry (2001) offered this definition:

acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups. As such, [a hate crimes is] a mechanism of power,

intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterize a given social order. It attempts to recreate simultaneously the threatened (real or imagined) hegemony of the perpetrator's group and the appropriate subordinate identity of the victim's group. (p. 10)

However, Perry's definition is not a legal definition. Some scholars point out the weaknesses of a legal definition in Canada by suggesting that legal definitions of hate crimes individualize these behaviours instead of locating them socio-politically in contexts of power imbalances and inequality (Bell & Perry, 2015; Mercier-Dalphond & Helly, 2021; Perry, 2001). Mercier-Dalphond and Helly (2021) suggest that hate crime definitions fail to recognize the cumulative impacts of repeated, often daily, exposure to harassment on individuals and communities, and do not adequately address online hate crimes. Chakraborti's (2015) and Mason-Bish's (2015) observations of the intersectional nature of hate crimes reveal a potential deficit in how hate crimes are currently defined legally in policy, and in research. There are further criticisms of Canadian definitions of hate crime for not directly addressing "the complex, layered, and historical issues that affect [Indigenous] people, distinct as these issues are from those facing any other population living in Canada" (McCaslin, 2014, p. 22).

While there is no central legal definition of hate crimes in Canada (Camp, 2021), four specific charges in the Criminal Code of Canada are often associated with hate: Section 318(1): Advocating genocide; Section 319(1): Public incitement of hatred; Section 319(2): Willful promotion of hatred; and Section 430(4.1): Mischief relating to religious property, educational institutions, etc. There is also the 718.2a1 sentencing principle, which facilitates a court's ability to increase sentencing if the prosecution can prove that an offence was motivated by hate or bias.

In addition to hate crimes, Bell and Perry (2015) observe that many noncriminal acts motivated by hate also cause significant harm and should be taken seriously. These noncriminal acts are defined as hate incidents, as articulated by Chaudhry (2021) and Facing Facts (2012). Facing Facts (2012) offers this definition of hate incidents

an act that involves prejudice and bias-motivated by hate, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor but which does not amount to a crime. (p. 9)

The direct impacts of hate crimes and incidents on victimized individuals have received considerable attention in research (Perry & Alvi, 2011). However, in addition to the effects on individuals, hate crimes and incidents can also severely impact members of the affected community (Perry & Alvi, 2011). In this way, hate crimes send an exclusionary message to members of communities that experience marginalization (Perry, 2001).

When hearing about hate crimes targeting a member of their community, research participants in earlier studies indicated feeling emotional and psychological harm, reduced safety, fear, vulnerability, suspicion, shame, a sense of being unwelcome, a lack of trust in the

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community of the perpetrator, concern that people did not intervene to stop the incident, and fear that a similar incident could happen to themselves or other community members (Mercier-Dalphonnd & Helly, 2021; Perry & Alvi, 2011). Many felt fearful of other people in the perpetrator's community, a lack of belonging, a desire for revenge, that they did not have the same rights as others, and doubts about Canada's multiculturalism and tolerance (Perry & Alvi, 2011). As a result, people from communities targeted by hate may engage in behavioural change, including altering their appearance, their schedule, where they spend their time, how they travel (with others as opposed to alone), to whom they disclose their identity, and with whom they associate (Bell & Perry, 2015; Mercier-Dalphonnd & Helly, 2021; Perry & Alvi, 2011). At the same time, many felt motivated to become involved in stopping harassment and discrimination (Perry & Alvi, 2011).

### **Defining Community**

Hacker (2017) and Yoshihama and Carr (2002) discuss the complicated pursuit of defining the term community. Geographic and political boundaries, common interests and perspectives, and social ties are elements considered in various understandings of the term (Hacker, 2017). For the purposes of this article and the study we discuss, the community we refer to largely is limited to the geographic area of the city where our study took place, but specifically considering groups and individuals impacted by hate crimes and incidents and the organizations seeking to support these people within this city.

### **Community-Based Participatory Research as a Way to Address Hate Crimes and Incidents**

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is a collaborative and equitable research approach that brings researchers and community stakeholders together to address social inequities facing community members (Janzen & Ochocka, 2020). Alternative but comparable terms like "community-engaged scholarship," "community-based research," "action research," and "participatory action research" are also used (Janzen & Ochocka, 2020, p. 5). Janzen and Ochocka (2020) note that unifying elements of this type of research includes being action-oriented, community-driven, and participatory. This kind of engaged research involves working in collaboration with people impacted by an issue to define a research problem, conduct a study, and use insights gained from the study to benefit the participating community (Checkoway, 2015; Janzen & Ochocka, 2020). Considering the community impacts of hate crimes and incidents, CBPR seems well-suited to exploring and identifying various ways to address the harms resulting from these issues.

The scholarly CBPR literature on hate crimes and incidents is minimal. Gauthier et al. (2021) identified using a CBPR approach to understand the experiences of victimization and reasons for underreporting hate crimes amongst members of the transgender community in Los Angeles. They created an advisory board of service providers serving transgender people who co-developed the research design, supported participant recruitment, provided venues for focus groups, offered context and recommendations based on the study's outcomes, and

assisted in disseminating findings. The available paper did not provide a significant discussion of using a CBPR approach to study hate crimes, but researchers did note that theirs was the first study they were aware of that used CBPR to study hate crimes.

Burch (2022) worked with six organizations in England to research disability hate crime. Burch explored the importance of relationship building, informed consent, flexibility, and arts-based “mood boards” to facilitate participants being treated as experts on their own experiences. Burch (2022) reflects upon this methodological approach to support meaning-making, and facilitate more collaborative, participatory research processes while using the mood boards to disseminate knowledge in meaningful ways.

Although there is a lack of scholarly CBPR literature on hate crimes and incidents, several community organizations have worked to fill this gap. For example, some Canadian reports discuss victim support and referrals, university campus responses, media appearances, community dialogues, vigils, restorative justice, and peer-to-peer support (Archway Community Services, 2019; Coalitions Creating Equity, 2020; Kochar et al., 2019; The Lead Fund, 2019,).

However, roles for community engagement to respond to hate crimes and incidents are not limited to community organizations. A lack of trust between police and communities may limit the kind of collaboration, dialogue, and information-sharing necessary for police to address hate crimes in a way that reflects the voices of community members (Perry & Samuels-Wortley, 2021). Angeles and Robertson (2020) and Erentzen and Schuller (2020) outline how some people do not report hate crimes to police due to fear of experiencing racism from police, or a lack of faith in the efficacy of police or that the perpetrator would be prosecuted. Perry and Samuels-Wortley (2021) identified that police must build relationships and trust with diverse communities to respond to hate crimes effectively. To do this, Perry and Samuels-Wortley (2021) recommend that police commit to inclusivity while understanding and recognizing the harm caused to individuals and communities victimized by hate crimes. The researchers further recommend that police practice increased awareness building, public education, outreach, and transparency.

Considering the ways communities and institutions in Canada call for community engagement to respond to hate crimes and some emerging scholarship in this area, there is a clear space for the application of CPBR to address hate crimes.

### **CBPR Study Design on Participants’ Experiences Reporting Hate Crimes and Incidents**

One of the two authors has dedicated much of their professional and volunteer work and research career to preventing and responding to hate-motivated violence, while the other has pursued engaged scholarship at the intersection of government, not-for-profit, and disadvantaged communities. Together, alongside research partners, we used a CBPR approach to answer the following research questions: What are the experiences of people who report hate crimes and/or incidents to organizations in Edmonton? How do individuals who have reported hate crimes and/or incidents experience organizational responses to these reports? What are the policy and practice implications of these experiences for organizations that respond to hate crimes and/or incidents?



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A descriptive qualitative research method was the most appropriate to answer the stated research questions. A descriptive qualitative method may provide a basic summary and description of the studied phenomenon (Sandalowski, as cited in Mayan, 2009, p. 52). Healy (2020) noted that a qualitative methodological approach better captures hate crimes and incidents' emotional and psychological impacts. Consistent with a descriptive qualitative method, sampling in this study was purposeful (Sandalowski, as cited in Mayan, 2009, p. 53). We recruited 18 participants who met the following criteria: participants were 18 years old or older; spoke English, or spoke a language that \_\_\_\_ partners could translate, or had access to someone to translate; and had reported hate crimes or incidents to organizations in the city within the last five years. As research partners, we prepared and disseminated a social media graphic, email and email address, and recruitment script to recruit participants. Study participants then emailed us to participate in the study. Study participants also recommended additional participants with similar experiences, incorporating snowball sampling.

We completed 20 semi-structured interviews with 18 participants over five months. Consistent with a descriptive qualitative method, we decided that qualitative content analysis was a coherent approach to analyzing the data gathered in this study (Sandalowski, as cited in Mayan, 2009, p. 53). Once we determined the initial themes, we shared them with research participants and partners to ensure validity, accuracy, and clarity in alignment with a CBPR approach (Janzen & Ochocka, 2020). Consistent with the online nature of our data collection, we contacted participants via email to ask for their input on the findings, recommendations, and knowledge mobilization tactics. Ten of 18 participants responded, and all shared a high degree of agreement with the themes as presented. Participants also shared input that led to clearer and more comprehensive theming. Once we received feedback on the themes from participants, we shared the updated themes with research partners to gain additional thematic clarity and specificity of the recommendations. This approach aligns with Janzen and Ochocka's (2020) recommendations for CBPR rigour and trustworthiness. Interpretations have been co-constructed by the research participants and researchers. We have taken steps to ensure rigour in the findings according to both qualitative descriptive methodology and principles of CBPR. The findings and recommendations of this study are the subject of a separate published work, but taught us lessons on conducting CBPR in this field that will be discussed in the following section.

### **Community-Based Research Strategies for Studying Hate Crimes and Incidents**

We learned a number of lessons about how to approach CBPR and qualitative research as it pertains to hate crimes and incidents while conducting this study. Some align with existing best practices in the field, such as determining appropriate compensation for participants (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018), practicing reflexivity and concurrent data analysis (Mayan, 2009), planning for appropriate knowledge mobilization (Gauthier et al., 2021), and accounting for the emotional nature of researching acts of violence (Cullen et al., 2021). The following section outlines emerging learnings that will advance CPBR in the area of hate crimes and incidents and possibly related emerging areas, including: building community partnerships; advocating for trauma-informed practices; prioritizing cultural

humility and intersectionality; preparing for lengthy pre-participation communication with potential participants; anticipating out-of-scope volunteer participants; and accounting for unanticipated actions of participants.

### ***Building Community Partnerships Prior to the Research***

A consistent feature of CBPR is that an equitable partnership should exist between community partners impacted by the research issue and researchers along with an understanding that such research should be in the service of community members (Cargo & Mercer, 2008; Hacker, 2013; Janzen & Ochocka, 2020). Checkoway (2015) poses research as an approach to community building, which begins by determining how a problem is defined and approached. To begin, we approached a network of community organizations and stakeholders that one author has been involved with for several years to discuss if there was any research that would benefit their work in anti-racism and responding to hate-motivated violence. Interest arose and we struck an informal subcommittee of eight members that assisted with defining the scope of the study, research design, data collection materials, compensation, recruitment, and analysis. The members in our partnership had worked for years in anti-racism and preventing hate crimes and incidents. Most had lived experiences as members of communities affected by hate crimes and incidents, with some also having lived experiences of hate crimes and incidents. Working together with community partners to establish our research questions and ways to answer them helped ensure that this research study could help gather information that would support survivors of hate crimes and incidents, and the organizations who serve them in providing high quality evidence-based practices.

One author had been a member of this network of organizations for nearly three years in a professional capacity before their role changed to a researcher. As such, by the time the initial conversations about this research began, meaningful relationships had been established among participating research partners. It may not always be possible for community-engaged researchers to build multi-year working relationships with community partners prior to conducting research, even though CBPR processes often grow out of existing community relationships (D'Alonzo, 2010). However, a meaningful working relationship will likely be needed for research on a sensitive topic such as hate crimes and incidents. In our experience some effective ways to build relationships with community partners include: being open-minded, humble, and willing to learn; practicing transparent communication and openness; being present frequently at community events, spaces, and initiatives in alignment with Yoshihama and Carr (2002); volunteering to support initiatives with community partners even when they do not specifically benefit our research purpose in alignment with D'Alonzo (2010); and finding ways to add value to the work of community partners that pertain to your skillset (for some researchers, this may include public education and facilitation, completing literature reviews, or supporting funding applications). Checkoway (2015) discusses building community relationships through collaborative projects such as collaboration-oriented university courses. D'Alonzo (2010) and Hacker (2017) discuss how 'Community Advisory Boards' or 'steering committees' that are formalized or fluid can also be effective ways to be engaged throughout a CBPR project. In

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our case, as described above, a relatively informal research subcommittee grew out of a more formalized coalition of community organizations to collaborate on our study.

### ***Incorporating Trauma-Informed Research Practices***

Trauma-informed practice is typically applied in social work and social service settings (Levenson, 2017). However, recognizing that research participants likely have lived experiences of trauma, defined as, “an exposure to an extraordinary experience that presents a physical or psychological threat to oneself or others and generates a reaction of helplessness and fear” (American Psychological Association, as cited in Levenson, 2017, p. 105), it was necessary to apply a trauma-informed lens to this research. Our research design incorporated principles of trauma-informed practice like trust, safety, collaboration, choice, and empowerment (Levenson, 2017). While some of the approaches described below align with existing best practices in community-based and qualitative research, we suggest that these practices should be viewed and enacted through a trauma-informed lens when studying hate crimes and incidents. Similar trauma-informed practices have been previously utilized in Ahmad’s (2019) study with Muslim women regarding their experiences of Islamophobic violence.

We applied a trauma-informed lens to the development of the interview guide. This guide was created in collaboration with community partners to ensure questions were strengths-based and as minimally invasive or distressing as possible, aligning with Levenson’s (2017) trauma-informed principle of empowerment and Isobel’s (2021) perspectives on trauma-informed qualitative research. In addition to establishing a sense of comfort and rapport, we followed typical informed consent protocols (e.g., discussing the research project with participants, outlining how their information would be used, and how confidentiality would be maintained through not sharing contact information, using code names to link individuals to their data, and storage of data using encrypted software) (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018), aligning with Levenson’s (2017) principles of building safety and trust. Furthermore, ensuring each participant knew that participation was voluntary, they could skip any questions they chose to, and they could withdraw their information from the study upon request, incorporated the trauma-informed principle of choice and trauma-informed research methods (Ahmad, 2019; Isobel, 2021; Levenson, 2017). Finally, we offered participants a role in interpreting data and knowledge mobilization, aligning with trauma-informed principles of collaboration and empowerment (Levenson, 2017).

As per Gill et al. (2008), participants also had the opportunity to choose the interview location, with flexibility for online or in-person options due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We also offered participants the opportunity to have a support person present during the interview due to its sensitive nature, aligning with the trauma-informed principle of safety (Levenson, 2017) and Isobel’s (2021) writing on trauma-informed qualitative research. However, no participant opted to have a support person present during their interview. We provided a brief list of local resources that support people victimized by hate crimes and incidents to participants in advance of the interview and checked in with participants within twenty-four hours after each interview.

While the above-established research practices mirror trauma-informed practice, we encourage further training and professional development for researchers in this area. However, a trauma-informed lens does not just apply to interactions with participants. We suggest that a trauma-informed lens be brought to bear on the overall purpose of the research. We do not need more research on the existence – or prevalence and incidence – of, for example, domestic violence, houselessness, or substance dependency for the sole purpose of knowledge creation. Continuing to ask groups who are marginalized about their experiences of marginalization and trauma, without working alongside them to remedy their concerns, can be voyeuristic and retraumatizing (Isobel, 2021; Newman et al., 2006). What we need is research with built-in knowledge mobilization or action so we can learn about the processes that will work to address these issues. This is why CBPR is a promising approach to hate crimes and incidents research, as well as other research involving participants who have lived experience of trauma. Since CBPR aims to address social issues affecting participating communities, we have a responsibility to conduct trauma-informed research to support the people impacted by hate crimes and incidents in meaningful and tangible ways. Practicing this way of research means prioritizing practical and applicable research that centres the voices and needs of people who have survived victimization from perpetrators of hate crimes and incidents.

### ***Prioritizing Cultural Humility and Intersectionality***

Cultural humility can be understood as, “[the] ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]” (Hook et al., 2013, p. 2). Study participants experienced hate crimes and incidents due to their identities and may lack confidence in institutions or researchers (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018).

Recent Canadian studies on hate crimes regularly focus on the experiences of a specific demographic group experiencing the phenomenon (Angeles & Robertson, 2020; Mercier-Dalphoné & Helly, 2021). In the proposal stage of the research, an academic committee encouraged us, for methodological purposes, to narrow our focus to a particular demographic group. However, since people are often victimized by hate crimes based on the intersections of their identities (Erentzen & Schuller, 2020), our partner organization research subcommittee opted not to limit our research to a particular group. This decision was further supported by the observation that several local organizations supporting people who report hate crimes and incidents do not specialize their services to one demographic group. Indeed, this study involved participants who reported hate crimes and incidents related to transphobia, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, ableism, and sexism as well as at the intersections of these motivations. When cultural or linguistic interpretation was required, partner organizations were available to support. Future CBPR on hate crimes and incidents should be guided by culturally informed and intersectional research practices developed alongside community partners.

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### ***Anticipating Out-Of-Scope Potential Participants***

There is no widespread awareness or agreement on what constitutes hate crimes. Inconsistent understandings of the concept, and a lack of legal definition, have led to various interpretations and applications across countries (Chakraborti, 2015) and local jurisdictions (Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, 2009). Even among police officers who ultimately need to assess and charge individuals with hate crimes, there is a lack of familiarity or confidence with these concepts (Perry & Samuels-Wortley, 2021).

When conducting CBPR on hate crimes and hate incidents, it is vital to anticipate how the ambiguity of these terms can impact the research. In developing our study, we were guided by Perry's (2001) definition of hate crimes and the four entries in the Canadian Criminal Code pertaining to hate crime (see above). We were also informed by definitions of hate incidents as discussed earlier in this paper (Chaudhry, 2021; Facing Facts, 2012), especially recognizing that many harmful acts motivated by hate are not necessarily criminal (Bell & Perry, 2015). However, we did not opt to provide these definitions in our recruitment materials. As a result of this decision, research participants were recruited based on their self-definition of their experience as a hate crime or incident.

While the decision not to define hate crimes or incidents for prospective research participants was intentional, a complication that arose from this decision was that it was occasionally challenging to screen potential participants for inclusion in the study. It was clear that many of the potential research participants who contacted us to participate had encountered some very challenging and traumatic experiences. Many expressed a passion for sharing their stories. However, not all potential participants fit the study's criteria (in this case, having reported a hate crime or incident to an organization in Edmonton over the past five years). There were three issues.

First, some individuals had made reports outside of Edmonton, made a report more than five years ago, or had not reported their experience at all. Second, others had experienced crimes while being a member of a community often targeted by hate crimes but did not believe their victimization was hate-motivated. For example, an individual whom another member of their same community had assaulted was unsure whether or not such an assault, because it involved members of the same community, would be considered hate-motivated. This observation suggests a lack of certainty about how hate crimes are defined. Third, there was significant interest from individuals who encountered self-defined hate crimes while in foster care and considered the foster care system the perpetrator of the crime. While we had not considered a system in the context of our research, there is an opportunity here to reconceptualize who or what may be considered capable of committing a hate crime or incident. This observation has the potential to generate new scholarly discussion about hate crimes perpetrated in other systems or institutions.

If a study is proposed on a sensitive topic, it is advisable to work alongside community partners to discern whether a definition is appropriate to provide to participants and agree upon a working definition of the phenomenon being researched. If research partners decide to provide participants with a definition, recruitment and data collection tools should then clearly

communicate that definition while also clarifying inclusion and exclusion criteria. For example, in their CBPR study to understand experiences of hate crime victimization and underreporting among the transgender community in Los Angeles, Gauthier et al. (2021) provided research participants with a definition of a hate crime before participants completed a survey.

### ***Planning for Extensive Communication Prior to Data Collection***

Because our study occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic when in-person contact was limited, we exclusively communicated with potential research participants in advance of data collection via email or phone. Much like Burch's (2022) study, it was a priority that potential participants were well-informed about the study in advance of their participation and had opportunities to ask questions. Many potential participants emailed a great deal of information before their interviews, including excerpts from memoirs or screenshots of communications related to their experiences. Further, some communication with potential participants involved research partners who assisted in coordinating the interview, providing a venue for the interview, and acting as interpreters. Lessons learned from these experiences include that it is crucial to anticipate lengthy communication in advance of data collection, approach these communications in a trauma-informed way, include permission in ethics to use these materials (e.g., screenshots) as data, and ensure informed consent both before and throughout participation in the research.

### ***Recognizing Potential Unanticipated Actions and Responses of Participants***

CBPR research participants are co-creators of knowledge (Janzen & Ochocka, 2020). In this way, how participants choose to act or respond throughout the research process is meaningful to consider. For example, participants had several unanticipated responses to the research process in our study. One participant asked a researcher to attend court with them and validate the participants' experience. Another participant shared their experience being interviewed for this study through a video they posted on social media to an audience of over one thousand followers. Others expressed that participating in the interview motivated them to move forward on a complaint process related to their experience or start a book about their lives. In situations where we were unsure how to navigate these situations, we sought advice from fellow research partners and debriefed the situation while identifying potential next steps. These internal discussions helped us to identify that a priority in addressing these situations was open communication and transparency with research participants about the research and the confines of our roles as researchers. While none of these actions have directly impacted the research study, they certainly have the potential to, and additionally they illustrate ways knowledge co-creators can engage with the research process.

### **Conclusion**

Hate crimes and incidents can cause significant harm to individuals and communities (Bell & Perry, 2015; Iganski & Lagou, 2015; Mercier-Dalphonnd & Helly, 2021; Perry & Alvi, 2011). Further, the reporting of hate crimes in Canada has been increasing (Moreau, 2022).

Academic, community, and institutional actors have called for community engagement as one vehicle for addressing hate crimes in preventative and responsive ways. However, there is limited CBPR on hate crimes and incidents, and even less available literature on how to approach CBPR on these topics. As literature in this area develops, more researchers may recognize the importance of applying CBPR to hate crimes and incidents and pursue this type of research, while considering the above-mentioned issues and practices. Considering the complex community impacts of hate crimes and incidents, as well as the ability of CBPR to address social inequities, CBPR is a research approach well-suited to exploring and addressing hate crimes and incidents.

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# **Reports from the Field**



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## Centering Reciprocity and Accountability in Community-Based Research: How Meaningful Relationships with a Community Advisory Group Impacted Survey Development

Rebecca Godderis, Jennifer Root

**ABSTRACT** Community advisory boards (CAB) or groups (CAG) are frequently included in qualitative community-based research (CBR), particularly in the early phases of assessing need, impact, and design of a research project. Projects with emancipatory, liberatory, or decolonial emphases include CAGs in the spirit of inclusivity, representation, transformation, truth-telling, and participation, but the methodological value and impact of such groups often remains under-explored in reports about the research. It is also relatively uncommon to use CAGs in quantitative research. In our survey research about post-secondary instructors' experiences of receiving student disclosures of gender-based violence, we used a time-limited, task-specific CAG to assist with survey development. In this report from the field, we discuss our approach to the inclusion of a CAG in our research, which emphasized reciprocity and accountability to community, and we explore how the use of a CAG directly impacted and strengthened the quantitative study.

**KEYWORDS** community advisory group, community advisory board, reciprocity, accountability, survey development, community-based research, gender-based violence

For scholars engaging in community-based research (CBR) it is relatively common to incorporate some form of a community advisory board (CAB) and/or group (CAG) (D'Alonzo, 2010; Koné et al., 2000; Newman et al., 2011; Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). This practice is particularly the case for projects with emancipatory, liberatory, or decolonial goals to ensure inclusivity, representation, transformation, truth-telling, and participation (for an overview see Cargo & Mercer, 2008). However, the methodological value and impact of CAGs remains under-explored in the actual reporting of these studies. In most empirical manuscripts and research reports, the work of a CAG is frequently described in just a sentence or two. We present a more fulsome description of how a time-limited, task-specific CAG positively impacted the creation of a survey tool, thereby meaningfully improving and impacting the overall study design. Furthermore, as part of this discussion, we thread throughout it our reflections on how this group contributed to building reciprocity and accountability between us, as university researchers, and the communities we engage with through our scholarship and activism.

## **The Project**

The goal of our empirical study was to explore how post-secondary instructors responded to student disclosures of gender-based violence (GBV) and the impact (if any) these disclosures had on teaching and learning. Over the past 10 years, there has been a heightened awareness of GBV on campuses, giving rise to our questions about how instructors were engaging with survivors of violence inside the classroom. We had a sense, based on our own experiences of receiving disclosures (Root & Godderis, 2016), that instructors might be struggling with supportive responses to disclosures. We and others have also previously written about the collective responsibility of everyone on campus to address GBV, including viewing the classroom as a space where violence may occur and disclosures of violence may be shared (Godderis & Root, 2017; Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). The aim of this specific survey project was to better understand how receiving disclosures of GBV impacted university instructors' approaches to teaching. To do so, we designed a survey instrument to be administered to all instructors at our home institution. Our principal goal in undertaking this work was to better support survivors by improving the quality of teaching and learning within post-secondary classrooms. The guiding research questions for the project asked about when and how disclosures were received by instructors, how instructors responded, and whether these experiences changed instructors' approaches to teaching. We incorporated a CAG to assist with the development of the survey. Vaughn and Jacquez (2020) propose that methods and tools often not considered inherently participatory (i.e., surveys) can be thought about and (re)designed in participatory ways, especially if the researchers tend to be collaborative by nature. This perfectly describes our intention when formulating a time-limited, task-specific CAG to inform survey design.

## **Creating a Community Advisory Group**

There is a robust literature establishing the value of CAGs in relation to CBR. For example, a recent World Health Organization ([WHO], 2020) report outlines how best to bring together a CAG that authentically represents the community and highlights the importance of including those who have the least amount of power in that community. In relation to the study of GBV, a review of research using CBR suggests frequent use of CAGs, often composed of anti-violence advocates, activists, service providers, and/or survivors (e.g., Khan et al., 2018; Wolferman et al., 2019). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to fully determine the utility of CAGs in GBV studies, we did observe a seeming absence of in-depth descriptions about why and how CAGs are used in CBR projects examining violence. Moreover, in general there appeared to be a limited number of studies utilizing CAGs in quantitative research. Two articles in the health field provide in-depth descriptions of using CAGs in creating a survey. Flicker and colleagues (2010) engaged youth to develop a sexual health survey while Abelsohn and colleagues (2015) built on this work in the context of women living with HIV/AIDS. Beyond these two studies, the literature is quite sparse in terms of detailed descriptions of how CAGs work and how they can be used to strengthen quantitative research, especially in the field of GBV research.

During the early stages of conceptualizing the project we began to discuss the possibility of creating a task-specific CAG to support the development of the survey. The central reason for

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this approach was to uphold accountability and reciprocity in our personal and professional relationships with individuals we work alongside in the areas of GBV prevention. For us, accountability and reciprocity are overlapping concepts that, when taken together, highlight our responsibilities as researchers to ensure *all* aspects of a research endeavour are beneficial not only for us as researchers, but also for the communities we work alongside. This mutually beneficial relationship also necessitates a focus on identifying and mitigating/eliminating harms that can be caused by research itself (e.g., extractive and exploitative relations). Our hope was that even though this CAG would be time-limited, it could provide an additional opportunity to build and nurture meaningful relationships within the context of our ongoing engagement as scholar-activists in GBV.

In terms of thinking about who made up “community” for this project we purposefully identified individuals from both inside and outside of the university who we felt could offer a variety of expertise, experiences, and perspectives in the areas of GBV, teaching and learning, and survey methodology. Moreover, in line with the WHO (2020) report, we worked to include representation from communities often ignored and/or intentionally exploited within the university community. For our specific context this involved inviting individuals from each campus (our home institution is a multi-campus university with one campus often classified as the “main” or “primary” campus) and ensuring there was representation from faculty who held limited-term (one to three years) and contract/part-time (course by course) appointments in addition to full-time permanently employed faculty.

Once we determined the general areas of knowledge and demographics we aimed to have represented, we worked to identify individuals with whom we had existing relationships including faculty colleagues throughout our home institution who held various teaching positions, individuals from the university-based Diversity & Equity Office, Gendered Violence Task Force, Centre for Teaching Innovation & Excellence, and Accessible Learning, as well as partners external to the university including the local community-based Sexual Assault Centres. Connecting into existing relationships was important to us to confront and challenge one-sided relationships that can occur within research contexts (Maiter et al., 2008), especially given that the CAG for this project was going to be a time-limited arrangement. Researchers engaging in CBR continue to grapple with how to balance relationship-building and reciprocity with the power differentials arising between university and community partners, and many have noted the value of long-term relationships to challenge power hierarchies and increase the success of meaningful CBR for both researchers and community members (e.g., Hanson & Ogunade, 2016; Yang et al., 2019).

Our goal was to connect with individuals who we knew, and with whom we had worked in various capacities, so that their involvement with this CAG would not be a one-time interaction that felt extractive and tokenistic but rather was part of on-going, reciprocal engagement with us as scholars, activists, and colleagues. Over the past decade of being employed at the university, we have been dedicated professionally and personally to eliminating GBV on and off campus. This activity has involved attending Take Back the Night marches organized by the local sexual assault centre, responding to multiple requests from GBV community organizations for

assistance with grant applications, research projects, and strategic consultations, and taking on formal and informal roles within the university to establish GBV policies, support survivors, and more. As passionate teachers, we have also worked to build strong relationships with fellow instructors who work at the university on a part-time or full-time basis, including answering requests about how to incorporate GBV materials into classes and respond to disclosures. We relied on these relationships to build the CAG.

We also thought carefully about how much time was fair to ask of the CAG. While there is literature suggesting a successful CAG requires extensive time commitment from members (Arnold et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2009), we intentionally designed a time-limited CAG. In the case of our study, we asked CAG members for approximately 6 hours over a two-month period, which involved attending two 2-hour meetings with other CAG members plus reviewing a draft survey instrument. We were explicit about the amount of time in the initial email so invitees could make informed decisions about whether participation would fit into their schedules. We understand this transparency as part of the practice of accountability and reciprocity towards communities because it provides individuals with the information necessary to make the best decision for themselves (rather than demanding their participation). This aspect of the process felt particularly important to us when it came to requesting participation from representatives who were engaged in frontline support work because time spent with us generally came at the expense of providing support for survivors. In the end, the CAG had a total of 12 people. This size of group worked well to balance a diversity of experiences while also ensuring the group was small enough that everyone had an opportunity to participate in the meetings.

### **Benefits of Including a Community Advisory Group**

Below we provide more detailed explanations of the benefits of engaging a task-specific CAG to assist in the development of a survey and speak specifically to the ways the group contributed to reciprocity and accountability.

#### ***Refining and Developing the Survey***

The CAG made numerous important contributions to survey development. The following select examples illustrate the evolution of survey items and concepts based on the input of the CAG. Specifically, CAG members clarified how to more fully account for instructor diversity and positionality, and how to make the concepts of GBV and disclosure accessible to those with little to no professional experience in the area of GBV.

#### **Accounting for diverse instructor positionalities**

The CAG identified the need to account for a wider range of instructor positionalities than we originally conceived, for example: personal characteristics, discipline/department *and* main area of teaching, and likelihood of engaging with GBV content in course instruction. Their assistance in widening our understanding of instructor identities and demographics resulted



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in richer data collection and, therefore, more meaningful understandings of GBV disclosure. This strengthened our ability to draw conclusions about how student disclosures are received by instructors and identify issues unique to different contexts (e.g., different campuses, specific departments or disciplines, etc.). These seemingly small shifts provided us greater specificity in contextualizing responses to disclosure, particularly our ability to examine potential connections between both discipline and/or subject of teaching and receiving disclosures.

Another major contribution of the CAG was their suggestion to include a question about instructor attitudes related to GBV, a survey item that we had not previously considered. The CAG identified a global ‘umbrella’ question that dramatically changed the analytic power of our study: “Q: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: GBV is a significant problem on university campuses?” Responses to this question were scored on a Likert scale and allowed us to engage in a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between potential non-believing/blaming/misinformed attitudes about GBV on campus and the experience and outcome of receiving a disclosure.

Finally, the CAG helped us better understand the unique experiences of part-time instructors. Part-time faculty often teach at multiple institutions simultaneously during the academic year and, in some cases, are teaching different subject matter in different disciplines/departments. Identifying this nuance is not simply about accurately capturing demographic details, rather making these distinctions allowed us to broaden our thinking about teaching contexts, institutional expectations, and the culture of GBV on various post-secondary campuses. In the end, this new understanding led us to shift from the question, “What department do you teach in?” to the final survey question, “Check the item that most closely aligns with your primary teaching area (this may not necessarily be the same as your department or program).” Determining the scope and variety of teaching responsibilities allowed us to better reflect the positionality of all instructors who may take the survey, as well as considering how instructors may receive disclosures at multiple institutions and thus need to navigate different procedural and cultural expectations regarding how to respond.

### **Making gender-based violence and disclosure accessible and concrete**

A central contribution of the CAG was the various ways they expanded our conceptualization of disclosure, capturing a wider range of types of disclosure, thereby helping us to create more accessibility for survey participants who may not be experts in this area. For example, they pushed our thinking beyond the assumed verbal disclosure scenario to include written disclosures, in-class disclosures, non-disclosures (anonymous, third-party disclosures), electronic disclosures, and hallway disclosures. We also added a category of “unsure/maybe” when asking participants about receiving disclosures; that is, the CAG helped us to account for indirect disclosures (perhaps not even verbalized) that left the recipient wondering if a disclosure was shared. Thus, the CAG afforded us the ability to formulate questions capturing the complexity of disclosure and opened the scope of our survey. In the end this allowed for deeper analyses and theorizing on the concept of disclosure.

Another example of how the CAG helped us to articulate complex ideas in clear and concrete ways was the transformation of a single survey question (nominal variable) to a table (nominal and ordinal variables). In addition to responding to the question, “In your capacity as a post-secondary instructor, has a student ever disclosed an experience of GBV to you? [yes/no/maybe]”, we added a table with nine concrete examples of GBV, and the opportunity to indicate the frequency of each type of GBV disclosure. This valuable addition to the survey allowed us to name specific types of GBV, from rape to denial of essential services, and unwanted attention to online harassment. By providing concrete examples of GBV and using plain language (in addition to providing terminology and definitions within the survey) participants who were less familiar with the complexities of GBV were able to participate in the survey more meaningfully.

### ***Growing Reciprocal Relationships and Remaining Accountable***

The use of a task-specific CAG provided us with another opportunity to deepen our connection to members in our communities. CAG members commented that they appreciated having an opportunity to share their knowledge, learned from other members of the CAG, and enjoyed having the opportunity to talk about the topics they were passionate about (and we did too!). The meetings gave us, as researchers, the opportunity to demonstrate how much we value and take seriously the expertise and experiences of community members. We came to the group with some basic ideas, but we wanted these ideas to be questioned, changed, and challenged. Thus, like Flicker et al. (2010) and Abelsohn et al. (2015), the CAG members were involved at the earliest stages of survey conceptualization, contributing much more than just usability testing after the survey was already designed. The CAG had an opportunity to frame and develop the survey rather than to simply respond to the parameters already set by the researchers. For us, this approach fundamentally challenges the idea that we, as university-based researchers, are the experts—an assumption commonly upheld by the Western research paradigm (read: colonial, patriarchal, classist, racist, ableist, etc.).

In addition to this reciprocity, creating a CAG was about accountability, which includes mitigating potential harms related to undertaking research. For example, if those we were in relationship with—and particularly those who work directly with survivors—had expressed to us that we should not complete this study because it could cause more harm than good, then we would have listened and discontinued the research. In other words, the CAG gave us the opportunity to meaningfully check in with community members about the potential impact of our research. Accountability also meant identifying what information would be especially significant to community members by having members share what they felt would be most useful from the research. Thus, the inclusion of a CAG ensured our research processes produced an outcome that was meaningful to CAG members and their communities, which overlaps with the idea of reciprocity as articulated in Swartz’s (2011) concept of “intentional ethics of reciprocation” which emphasizes “an ethics of reciprocation is to give back both ownership of knowledge and material benefit to those participating in the research” (p. 49).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Our goal in outlining our approach to the use of a CAG to assist with the development of a survey instrument was to emphasize the utility of this community engagement technique while also highlighting how it can contribute to deepening relationships of trust with community members. While a one-off use of a time-limited, task-specific CAG could be extractive and exploitative, our experience was that when a CAG was part of on-going engagement with community it contributed to building reciprocal relationships, deepening accountability processes with community partners, and significantly improving the research. In terms of limitations and future GBV research, we consider ourselves, ultimately, accountable to survivors of GBV. One of the limitations of our study was our intentional decision to not ask student survivors to join the CAG because the survey was focused on instructors. This is an element of the research we may change in future projects. Further, in our study we did not provide compensation to the CAG and we continue to wonder if the unpaid labour provided by CAG members unfairly added to their workload, especially for already burdened community workers. Additional research could examine the experiences of CAG members to better understand what meaningful compensation and mutual benefit means to them. Overall, given our positive experience with the CAG, we encourage other researchers to consider the reciprocal and accountable use of CAGs in their own research and to include fulsome descriptions of CAGs in their reporting of research results.

### **About the Authors**

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## Co-Authorship with Community Partners as Knowledge Co-creation

**Julia Fursova**

**ABSTRACT** This report from the field provides reflection on the author's experience of co-authoring a peer-reviewed manuscript with community partners for publication in an academic journal. The report reflects on the existential, logistical, and process-related challenges of applying community-based research and delivering its promise of knowledge co-creation while grappling with inequities imbedded in the realities of academic and non-academic life. Reflecting on the lessons learned, this paper probes into further considerations for the operationalization of ethical principles for equitable collaboration in community-based research.

**KEYWORDS** community-academic partnership; co-authorship; engaged scholarship; knowledge co-creation

Community-based research (CBR) has been known to enhance research validity and increase meaningful democratization of knowledge creation. In CBR, knowledge creation is considered a public good that should support and enrich communal life rather than benefit individual academics and private interests (Sandwick et al., 2018). Yet there is dearth of knowledge regarding operationalization of research co-creation principles and ethical practices concerning partnered knowledge mobilization (Castleden et al., 2010; Su et al., 2018). The process of implementing community-based participatory research and the subsequent work on mobilizing co-created knowledge provided rich ground for reflecting not only on the power differentials between university and community-based researchers, but also among community-based researchers as the systemic inequities occurring at institutional levels are easily reproducible in participatory processes of smaller scales (Sandwick et al., 2018). I offer here a reflection on the experience of co-authoring a peer-reviewed manuscript with community collaborators interrogating the existential, logistical, and process-related challenges of applying CBR and delivering its promise of co-creation.

The co-authored peer-reviewed publication titled “‘Participation – with what money and whose time?’ – an intersectional feminist analysis of community participation’ is informed by the doctoral dissertation research *Common Health*, a participatory action research and institutional ethnography project examining the role of non-profit organizations in supporting

grassroots action for health equity and justice. The co-authored publication focuses on the experiences of resident participation in community development projects convened by non-profit and public agencies in a lower/mixed income, racialized neighbourhood in Toronto. It offers a critical analysis of race/class power dynamics in community engagement and provides some signposts for recognizing settler-colonial, white supremacist, and patriarchal capitalist discourses in community engagement. The paper proposes community generated characteristics for instrumental versus transformative community engagement in the form of Community Engagement Continuum.

Inviting community partners as co-authors was my attempt at enhancing community participation in research and knowledge mobilization. However, this was my *first* attempt at writing in co-authorship with community partners and I do not position myself as an expert on co-authorship. I humbly share my experience with the process, its limitations, lessons learned, and aspirations for the future.

### **Why Co-authorship is Important**

*“Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged.”*

– Audre Lorde

We are a group of four co-authors. Julia Fursova was the lead researcher of the dissertation project that informed the manuscript. Kisa Hamilton, Gillian Kranias and Denise Bishop-Earle were research participants, as well as members of the research advisory team, a governing body for the research project. Kisa and Denise are also residents, activists, and frontline workers in the neighbourhood where the research took place, while Gillian and Julia have experience as outside professionals facilitating community development work in the neighbourhood.

In the co-authored publication we introduce ourselves as “a group of long-time community development collaborators with diverse experiences of privilege and oppression” (Fursova et al., 2022) acknowledging the differences in our race, class, and immigration history as well as other differences related to our identities while respecting our rights to confidentiality. The history of our collaboration goes back to our years of community development work in Toronto neighbourhood improvement areas, formerly known as ‘priority neighbourhoods’ (City of Toronto, 2015). All of us identify as community-based researchers, and our diverse expertise includes adult/popular education, Afrocentric and Indigenous history, trauma-informed practice, health promotion, community engagement, evaluative learning, and participatory action research. We approach knowledge creation as a common good intended to enrich public life and advance civic discourse and democratic participation. We came to this work from different social locations and professional standpoints, bringing in diverse lived experiences. Our commitment to drawing on multiple expertise and identities results in enhanced thinking, greater relevancy of data and analysis, and a greater potential for transformative change (Sandwick et al., 2018).

Co-creation of knowledge mobilization (KMb) products with non-academic partners is an important component in regenerative CBR practice. In CBR a researcher and community partners become critical friends to each other on the collaborative research journey (Su et al., 2018). Such critical friendship prompts knowledge creators to reflect on their positionalities, differences in power and access to resources, and how these shape our roles and input in knowledge production: “Acting as critical friends requires us to call out/call in others with care and respect, paying attention to how larger forces have shaped difficult decisions” (Su et al., 2018, p.16). The co-authored manuscript stemmed from such critical friendship.

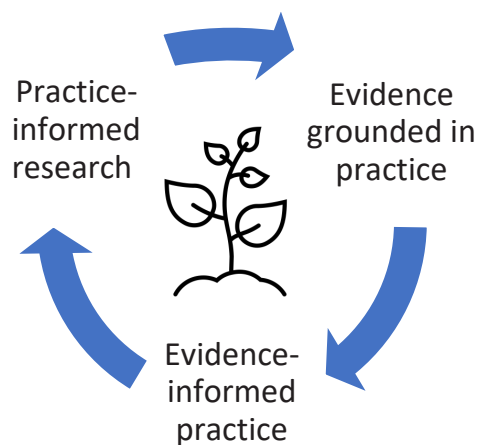
Our collective aspirations as a group of community-based researchers and practitioners draw on the well-known action-reflection-action spiral model (Freire, 2000) to support a regenerative research praxis where research is informed by practice to generate evidence grounded in lived experience to further inform and advance practice (see Figure 1). Such regenerative praxis challenges the extractive research process still dominant in academia that often exclusively benefits researchers/academics resulting in little or no benefits to communities involved and may cause harm, especially for equity-deserving and Indigenous communities (Castleden, et al., 2010).

The resulting co-authorship process itself became part of our evidence-informed practice where the main goal and the challenge have been to avoid the reproduction of precisely those abusive dynamics that we critiqued in the manuscript while facilitating the engagement of co-authors. Below are my reflections on this imperfect process with the goal of learning from it and doing it better next time.

### Our Co-writing Journey and Review Process

It took us over a year to write the manuscript and see it to the publication stage. The writing began in spring of 2021, at the end of the first year of COVID-19 pandemic, while each of us was dealing with an added burden of caring responsibilities and economic uncertainties that were greatly heightened during the pandemic. Those uncertainties were unique to each individual and household, yet they followed the same pattern of intensified extraction of caring labour and increased risks for gendered, racialized, and otherwise ‘othered’ bodies involved in the provision of care and human services.

At the start of the process, I did not have a structured, well-thought-out approach to the very first draft of the manuscript to fully ground its development in the idea/lof co-authorship. I was preparing a manuscript for a special issue of an academic journal rushing to meet a deadline. This was an example of ‘pandemic writing’



*Figure 1.* Reflection-Action Cycle in Regenerative Research Praxis



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as I was balancing numerous responsibilities, while transitioning to a full-time, university-based job. Such pressures contributed to a blurred focus of the very first draft, which was identified as a critical flaw in the first round of review with community partners. The next version of the manuscript had a different title and a sharpened focus. I clarified that the manuscript would be developed in co-authorship and I formally invited my community partners as co-authors. At the same time, we also decided as a group of professionals to come together as a non-profit worker co-op. The co-authored manuscript was one of our first collaborative projects as co-founding members of the Transform Practice co-op. I identified as the lead author and clarified that I would do the heavy lifting of the re/writing, inviting co-authors to contribute to the draft, in particular to those sections that described the local context and presented the findings. Coming together formally as a co-op supported a more a structured and intentional approach to co-authorship as the manuscript review became one of the agenda items during our co-op planning meetings.

Most of the input to the manuscript was provided online to a shared file on OneDrive. I incorporated co-author input into the text using the 'track changes' function and reported afterwards on how I integrated the suggestions. In addition to online collaboration, we also had two in-person review sessions: one before the first submission and one after the peer review before the final submission of the revised manuscript.

One of the co-authors preferred to work with a paper copy of the manuscript, so in response to this preference I printed the hard copy to share and then followed up with a phone call. During our first in-person review session we focused on testing the practical application of Community Engagement Continuum and refined its language for accuracy and accessibility. After that we continued collaborating online.

The draft for submission was finalized by the end of fall 2021 and submitted to the journal in late December. We received the results of the peer review in May 2022, only minor changes were recommended and both reviewers commented on the high quality of our analysis and presentation of findings. As the leading author, I took on the responsibility to make the changes and write the response to reviewers. We reviewed the edited manuscript together during in-person meeting and made some refinements to the text including wordsmithing sentences for greater clarity and minimizing the use of academic jargon. The revised draft was submitted to the journal in early June 2022 and accepted for the publication in mid-August.

### **Challenges: Co-authorship as a Balancing Act**

The greatest challenge of the co-authorship process was balancing our intense schedules, which included full time jobs and caring responsibilities as well as the start-up of the co-op. The fact that at the time of the manuscript writing I was not holding an academic position, served as an equalizer of sorts as we were all involved in doing this work in an unpaid capacity. The downside of this was that I had no budget to adequately and equitably resource community co-authors' participation. In terms of the benefits distribution, we anticipated that the publication would raise the co-op's profile. However, one could say that for myself, as an aspiring academic and the leading author, the publication could yield more benefits in terms of increasing the

likelihood of an academic job, promotion, and tenure. We also had to accommodate and adapt to varying degrees of comfort with and access to technology, e.g., Microsoft Office suite, One Drive, and file sharing. This required continuous sharing of skills and technical troubleshooting. We also continuously negotiated the language of the manuscript focusing on accessibility and minimization of academic jargon. I am especially grateful to the co-authors for this as sometimes I can get particularly attached to certain academic concepts or terminology that preclude accessibility. Highlighting the diversity and intersectionality of our privileged and marginalized identities while respecting the individual right to confidentiality was another balancing act and an important aspect in identifying us as a group of co-authors while affirming our commitment to co-creation.

### ***The Value of Co-Authorship***

The co-authorship process resulted in multiple benefits for the quality of data analysis and presentation, as well as for the relationships and level of trust among us as a group of collaborators. The conversations that took place during the review, the iterative process of re/writing, and collaborative meaning-making greatly enhanced rigor and validity of findings, interpretation, and presentation. In CBR practice research and action are rarely a linear progression, the co-authorship deepened the entangled and synergetic aspects of CBR as praxis (Sandwick et al., 2018).

The co-authorship became an integral part of the research and knowledge co-creation methodology. The review and input from community partners, who were residents, activists, and frontline workers in the neighbourhood added depth and accuracy to the sections of the manuscript that describe the local context and its implication in broader global dynamics of extraction and dispossession. Community Engagement Continuum co-creation enabled more precise description of the characteristics of extractive/instrumental versus transformative community engagement process. Co-authorship generated an enhanced attention to the accessibility of the language and resulted in the minimized use of academic jargon, as community partners were reading each iteration of the draft with a practitioner's eye. All together it led to a publication that we hope has a greater relevance and accessibility to practitioners and thus a greater impact.

### **Considerations and Aspirations for the Future**

*“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”*

– Maya Angelou

This experience of co-authorship with community partners provided important lessons that informed the following process-related aspirations and resource-related considerations.

### ***Process-related aspirations***

Establish clear criteria for co-authorship and acknowledgement depending on the level of community partner involvement from the early stages of research project planning (Castleden, et al., 2010). To gauge the level of interest, potential involvement of community partners, and the supports required, generate a menu of KMb products. In the process of co-authorship be transparent and accountable at every step. Explain how you integrated feedback and input, clarify the moments when you were not able to do so, or made some content related decisions that differed from community partners' expectations. Keep your co-authors informed about the stages of the submission process.

While it is important to use the advantages of online collaboration, do not underestimate the value of in-person meetings. Sitting in a circle and sharing food makes the co-writing and review process less dry, more personal, and adds to the synergy and engagement so that the final product becomes something more than the sum of its parts. Last, but not least, celebrate your collective progress, take a stock of your learning, and support and nourish each other every step of the way.

### ***Logistical and resource-related considerations***

To make the process goals a reality, there are some important logistical and resource-related aspects of co-authorship to consider. Identify and agree on an effective and accessible file sharing system that allows for tracking changes. Discuss accessibility aspect with partners as not everyone may have a paid subscription for the online suite of Microsoft Office. Collectively decide on a manageable review schedule, while being realistic in your assessment of the time/effort the review may require. Ask your community co-authors how many days/weeks they need to provide their input. Be guided by internal deadlines that make sense for your co-authors and the integrity of your process rather than external deadlines. When external deadlines take priority, consider publishing solo, or with other academic partners, while acknowledging community input but without pursuing co-authorship with community partners. For those in formal academic positions and/or applying for research grants (e.g., SSHRC Connection, PEG, PDG, PG programs) that call for greater engagement with community partners, request funding to support community partners' participation in the co-creation of KMb products, including but not limited to peer-reviewed publications. Bear in mind that any kind of meaningful collaboration takes time and usually contributes to a longer timeline for project implementation schedules. As such be realistic in your assessments, allowing sufficient time for partner participation.<sup>1</sup>

Most importantly, never expect unpaid labor from your community partners. Think of your community partners as consultants whose expertise is essential and reward their time and input accordingly. Budget funds for salaries, honoraria payment, travel, including local travel such as public transit and mileage, meals at meetings, and, where appropriate, child- and eldercare. Budget for software to make sure everyone has access to a platform for file sharing,

<sup>1</sup> The formula I use for time assessment is: 'how long I think it would take' x 3 = 'how long it will actually take'.

and consider also budgeting for tech support to troubleshoot online collaboration problems. Accommodate the provision of hard copies of the drafts and ‘pen and paper’ reviews, as these afford deeper engagement with the text and greater attention to nuances that otherwise may escape authors’ attention.

### **Conclusions**

These reflections on the limitations, successes, and lessons learned during co-authorship with community partners add to critical conversations concerning good practices and accountability that enhance meaningful democratization of knowledge production (Su et al., 2018). The lessons learned reiterate the importance of early, open, and transparent communication between community partners and researchers, the value of co-authorship for relationship-building, trust, and deepened collaboration. As CBR practice is highly context-specific, there is no “one size fits all” approach, and it is absolutely necessary to maintain ongoing and reflective conversations among practitioners about wise practices, ethical considerations, and solutions for ongoing challenges.

### **About the Author**

**Julia Fursova** (she/they) is Assistant Professor, Leadership Studies, Renaissance College, University of New Brunswick. Julia is a community engaged scholar applying participatory methods and techniques, including arts-based, to facilitate collaborative reflection and inquiry with a purpose to support transformative practice, leadership, and action that contribute to healthy, just, and sustainable futures for all. Email: [julia.fursova@unb.ca](mailto:julia.fursova@unb.ca)

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# **Book Reviews**





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***Replanting Cultures: Community-Engaged Scholarship in Indian Country*** by Chief Benjamin J. Barnes, Stephen Warren (eds). United Kingdom: State University of New York Press, 2022. 376pp. ISBN 9781438489957.

Chief Benjamin J. Barnes and Stephen Warren's edited collection *Replanting Cultures: Community-Engaged Scholarship in Indian Country* cultivates the seeds of ethical and reciprocal relationships between Indigenous peoples and researchers, both academic and non-academic. The book's primary focus on replanting Indigenous-led community engagement within historical research nurtures an understanding of the importance of respectful collaboration and knowledge exchange between Indigenous communities and researchers. As such, this is a much-needed collection in community-engaged history and scholarship, as methodology-focused books like this are sparse in the field. More often than not, community-engaged methodologies are minor notes within larger academic histories. Although this book engages directly with community-engaged historical research, these collaborative practices can inform other fields including but not limited to Indigenous studies, political science, psychology, Canadian studies, anthropology, and archeology. Barnes and Warren's collection came to my attention as I am a community-engaged historian of settler ancestry that works closely with Indigenous peoples. More specifically, with an Advisory Council of six We<sup>n</sup>dat/Wa<sup>n</sup>dat women, I am currently collaborating to complete my dissertation on We<sup>n</sup>dat/Wa<sup>n</sup>dat women's activism to protect their land and treaty rights in Kansas City, Kansas, during the later nineteenth century. *Replanting Cultures*, and the work of the scholars and communities within it, has pushed me to adopt some of the community engagement practices in my own research practice.

The collection contains several main objectives that the authors hope take shape within community-engaged research. First, they hope that the studies within the collection initiate real change in community-engaged histories that integrate team-based research practices. Second, the authors anticipate that these studies will push universities to seriously re-evaluate their treatment of Indigenous peoples and tenure requirements that do not acknowledge or support Indigenous ways of knowing, engaging in knowledge sharing, and conducting research activities (13, 20). Third, Barnes and Warren want researchers to question current ethics and grant systems for studies on Indigenous people, as these systems are created and assigned by colonial institutions that exclude Indigenous voices, community needs, and, often, community protocols. Fourth, these authors clearly state that researchers of all backgrounds need to explicitly ask Indigenous peoples they are interested in working with "What do you want to know?" and create studies that take these community needs and desires seriously (14, 21). Putting this into practice, each chapter in this book is a study driven by questions posed by Indigenous peoples. And finally, Barnes and Warren hope the community-engaged scholarship in this collection will "seed future generations" of collaborative and ethical relationships between researchers and Indigenous peoples (36). Likely, these objectives will take some time to take root in community-engaged Indigenous history and other disciplines, such as Indigenous studies and social sciences. This collection has certainly planted a seed within me to continue collaborative, community-engaged studies in the future.

Each of the essays uses community-engaged methodologies built on reciprocal relationships that feature collaboration and repatriation. The collection is broken up into three main parts that highlight particular themes and areas of community-engaged Indigenous history. Part I focuses on community-engaged scholarship with the three federally recognized Shawnee tribes, emphasizing practices for partnerships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous scholars. For example, Chief Benjamin Barnes demonstrates the innovative ways that Shawnee citizen-scholars are “reversing the research power structure” through their engagement with universities and academics to explore ancient pottery traditions (48). Part II tells the history of the Myaamia Center and the ongoing linguistic and cultural revitalization taking place there. Early career academic Cameron Shriver from the Myaamia Center shows how researchers can engage with Indigenous peoples in ways that will both improve their work and address the needs of the community through negotiations. Part III showcases relationships and studies between Indigenous peoples and courts, libraries, laboratories, and living history museums to demonstrate the innovative and complex practices of community engagement outside of academia. April K. Sievert and Jessie Ryker-Crawford exemplify the significance of establishing successful, accessible, and proactive training programs for managing museum and archival collections, specifically in relation to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the ethical considerations surrounding repatriation. Their work emphasizes the need to conduct repatriation efforts in a manner that respects the Indigenous peoples to whom these materials rightfully belong. Together, authors from diverse backgrounds, institutions, and career stages weave themes of reciprocal relationships, Indigenous-driven research questions, and community obligations/protocols throughout the collection.

This collection has several implications for anyone practicing community engagement methodologies. The essays within push researchers to conduct their work according to what Indigenous nations actually want to know. In other words, this collection advocates for studies that add to community archives, knowledges, and goals. However, the authors are careful to understand and acknowledge the trauma of settler colonialism and harm of research conducted in the past; they further assert that this past research has not only been exploitative and extractive, but that these practices have been normalized in the university setting. The collection also underscores the importance of research being done outside of the ivory tower of academia, research currently taking place in spaces like libraries, labs, museums, plays, movies, and so on. And, finally, the book calls on universities to recognize that community engagement comes in a variety of forms that might not always be represented by current tenure requirements and/or single-authored peer-reviewed papers. Rather, the current tenure requirements place academics in precarious positions having to navigate between community needs and university requirements. Moreover, according to Barnes and Warren, these requirements also leave Indigenous peoples and their communities on the outside looking in.

Collections like this, that demonstrate many of the “dos and don’ts” of community engagement with Indigenous peoples in academic studies, are rare, especially outside of journal article publications. This book therefore has several practical implications for Indigenous-focused academic studies. This book would lend itself well to both undergraduate and graduate

courses that focus on historical methods, interdisciplinary studies methods, Indigenous studies methods, and community engagement methods. In these types of fields, the book could be analyzed as a whole or through select studies from the collection. In all cases, readers will be able to gain invaluable insights into how to conduct their own work with Indigenous peoples in a good way.

Notwithstanding these significant contributions, *Replanting Cultures* is limited in scope to federally recognized Nations in the United States and Canada, leaving many questions as to what community engagement looks like for non-federally recognized Nations. Moreover, this book is limited geographically, with a heavy focus on the Nations that reside in America's mid-western region, such as the Shawnee and the Miami. That being said, no book can achieve everything, nor include all Indigenous peoples. As such, as the book's contributors desired, this book invites other community-engaged scholars to complete more studies, edited collections, articles, and books on community engagement with non-federally recognized Nations as well as Indigenous peoples across the globe. In doing so, studies like this will hopefully continue to close the gaps between researchers, colonial institutions, and Indigenous peoples.

Reviewed by

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# **About the Artwork**





**“Filtering”**

Ink and acrylic paint on Mulberry paper

42”h x 18”w

Cheryl Buckmaster (2023)

**Artist's Commentary:**

This “draft” painting was created as I researched constructed wetlands and new findings in the application of genomics to enhance constructed wetland treatment systems (CWTS) in northern environments. “Filtering” uses imagery to symbolize a constructed wetland and humans’ responsibility within the whole ecosystem. Slender Wheatgrass is uptaking toxins in oilsands processed water and the question of what happens to the toxins is evident.

Such amazing abilities these plants have! They bestow on us their assistance, possibly saving us and the ecosystem from poison. But we don’t know the whole process—nature is full of chaos, and unpredictable webs of interdependence—thus, the Coyote, the original trickster, hides within the scene. The Coyote represents the innate mystery of the natural world, and the tricks it will play are for us to learn from. If nature is to be “used” to work for humans, we invite the unknown and let go of control. Let’s honor nature’s innate balance, mystery, and powers. Let humans work for nature. Slender Wheatgrass seeds are blowing in the sun and blood is running from the bunny. The bunny eats the grass, the coyote eats the bunny, and we drink the water — our life source, running and filtered through everything. The blood falls onto the larger hand which holds the responsibility to ensure safe, clean, water into the child’s hand and to the people for generations. In-depth and relative preliminary research, acting on knowledge from the surrounding people and ecosystems, and public education, are all essential to this foundational project.

**Water experts that informed this artwork:**

Douglas Muench’s team (Mitchell E. Alberts, Jeremy Wong, Ralph Hindle, Dani Degenhardt, Richard Krygier, Raymond J. Turner, Douglas G. Muench), and Christine Martineau NRCCanada, Graham Strickert and Lori Bradford from the GELS team.

**About the art-science collaboration:****GROW: Genomics Research for Optimization of constructed treatment Wetlands Art Science Collaboration: Research-Creation to Support the Balance of Power for Decision-Making in the GROW project.**

Scientists across Canada are conducting studies and creating marsh-type labs to clean toxic oil sands processed water(OSPW). This research will identify the optimal conditions for OSPW degradation by plant, bacteria and algae, and enhance our understanding of the genes and mechanisms associated with the biodegradation of toxic naphthenic acids (NA’s) in OSPW.

Keeping with the goal of regenerative sustainability CWTS’s have the potential to work with nature as a whole and give back to the surrounding ecosystems. Douglas Muench’s team have detected the uptake of naphthenic acid into root and shoot tissues of Sandbar Willow and Slender Wheatgrass. This exciting research finding indicates a direct role for plants in the remediation of OSPW.



# GROW

Genomics Research for Optimization of constructed treatment Wetlands  
for water remediation.

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I found an overall sense of the unknown and great hope that all aspects of safety for the surrounding ecosystem and humans living in the area are secured. For example, Muench states: “Future studies that identify biotransformation products and their volatility are essential in understanding the fate of NAs in a phytoremediation setting.” In other words, more studies are needed to understand what happens to the toxins within, and outside of, the plant after uptake. The research-creation involved in this project takes place in many sites located in Treaty 8 and Treaty 6 Territories and the Homeland of the Métis. Partners on the project include Fort McKay First Nation, Fort McKay Métis, McMurray Métis, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Clearwater River Dene Nation, and Fond du Lac Denesuline Nation. Other university partners and industry partners include the University of Calgary, Brock University, University of New Brunswick, NRCan, Simon Fraser University, and Imperial Oil.

The oil sands region in Athabasca, Canada, is the largest deposit of crude oil in the form of bitumen in the world, spanning 142,000 square kilometres, of which about 1030 square kilometres is in active extraction (Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, 2022).

The overall project will use genomics approaches to investigate how wetland plants and microbes can work together to help remove contaminants from the OSPW in cold weather (Northern environments). While there is some understanding of the microbial genes and biochemical pathways involved, the natural science team will learn more about the molecular aspects of remediation and the role of plants in these processes alongside the social, legal, ethical, economic, and other aspects that people will be concerned about. The research will provide insight into the commercialization of OSPW remediation through constructed treatment wetland systems as a part of a suite of solutions to return safe water back to its ecosystem.

Cheryl Buckmaster has direct involvement in the observation of the researchers doing their individual projects, the project team members coming together in regular meetings, workshops, and output generation; and visiting sites (labs, pilot wetland sites, mesocosm labs), Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities who may be impacted or concerned, and in liaising with industry partners. She will also be involved in the interpretation of social network analysis of the team members over the years of the project to understand the human dimensions of how these research networks evolve over time. It is a quasi-ethnographic study, with researchers as subject, voluntarily, from which we will create new knowledge as art. There is a multi-directional exchange of information so that all team members, participants, industry partners, and the funding agency will be in communication with Cheryl Buckmaster. Fred McDonald, an artist from Fort McKay, will be joining Cheryl to collaborate artistically on the GROW project.

**About the Artist**

Cheryl Buckmaster's professional art career of 30 years includes exhibiting, private, public, and corporate commissions, instruction, social work, art studio management, and collaborating with Indigenous communities and establishments. Today she is the first visual artist to pursue a transdisciplinary Masters in the School of Environment and Sustainability at USASK.

Website: [www.cherylbuckmaster.ca](http://www.cherylbuckmaster.ca)

*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.

We welcome contributions from community and academic partners, educators, researchers and scholars who pursue their work in collaboration with various communities in Canada and the world. For submission guidelines visit <http://esj.usask.ca/index.php/esj/information/authors>.

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Volume 9, Issue 4 – Regular/non-thematic

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