IMPACT CASE STUDY 5

Strengthening Community-University Research Partnerships

March 2017 | Office of Community-University Engagement
This *Impact Case Study* was produced by Dr. Crystal Tremblay in collaboration with the faculty lead(s) identified in the following case study. All twelve *Impact Case Studies* were included in Dr. Crystal Tremblay’s research project, *Community-Engaged Research (CER) at the University of Victoria 2009—2015*, that scanned the impact of UVic’s involvement with community-engaged research over a six-year period.

Dr. Tremblay's research was supported by the Office of Community-University Engagement and the Office of the Vice-President Research. Learn more about this project at uvic.ca/ocue/research.
Strengthening Community-University Research Partnerships

UN Sustainable Development Goals addressed by this project

4. Quality education  
9. Industry, innovation & infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities  
11. Sustainable cities & communities

UVic's International Plan Goals addressed by this project

- International Development, Health and Education

A global study of effective institutional arrangements for the facilitation and support of research partnership between community groups and universities

Faculty Leads: Budd Hall, School of Public Administration

Partners: Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios (CEBEM), Makerere University (Uganda), and a number of regional and global networking organisations including the Living Knowledge Network, Talloires Network, and PASCAL Observatories.

Project timeframe: 2013-2015

Funding: International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada with significant additional in-kind resources from the University of Victoria, Makerere University, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada
About

The practices of community-based research (CBR) and all of its variations have developed and evolved over the past 35 years. With roots in the Global South the practices have spread throughout the international development community and supporting bodies such as IDRC. Over the past 15 years, CBR has been ‘discovered’ in the Global North as the Carnegie and WK Kellogg Foundations, the European Union, the Research Councils of the UK and Canada and the AUCC have been promoting research partnerships as key engagement strategies for higher education. A variety of institutional structures are being created to facilitate authentic and respectful research partnerships. Community-University research partnerships are therefore no longer a South or a North issue, but are an evolving global field of action with several global networks supporting them.

‘Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships’ is a global study of institutional arrangements for the facilitation and support of research partnership between community groups and universities. Our ability to benefit from the promises of drawing the resources of universities further into the solution of community problems on their terms depends in part on our answers to several questions: What are the institutional arrangements and processes that show the most promise in facilitating effective, respectful and impactful community university research partnerships? What are the institutional policies needed to mainstream CBR? and What are the most promising policies that national governments and funding bodies could implement to improve the quality of CBR and create effective structures and processes? To answer these questions we carried out five steps: A global survey, case studies, systematisation process, knowledge dissemination and policy dialogues. The deliverables include recommendations for the future development of the field shared on virtual platforms of the UNESCO Chair and through regional policy dialogues, development of targeted policy briefs, a practical e-handbook on best practices and an e-book on the theory and practices of facilitating community university partnerships.

"There has been system wide intervention in theory and practice. The project case studies led to first time documentation of practices of institutional structures, which achieved international visibility for these innovations. This also strengthened the network of people involved and which have remained in touch with each other and part of the movement"

Level of Impact: Individual Community Systems

Impact Summary

There are a number of outcomes related to knowledge creation, capacity building and policy as a result of the project activities and process. A study of this nature which purports to provide a look into the state of institutionalization of community based research at a global level is hard to summarize, however we note a number of key insights and knowledge outcomes including those related to the impact of higher education administrative leadership and middle level management in the promotion of Community University Engagement and the vital importance of long-term commitment and resources to partnerships, among others.

The project has also resulted in awareness generation, sensitization and capacity building of individuals and institutions in the areas of community university engagement and participatory research. The Indian leg of the UNESCO Chair has been involved in extensive awareness generation and capacity building of Indian policy makers, NGOs and HEIs on community university engagement and social responsibility of higher education. The most important among these has been the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), who sought assistance from the Chair on ideas of CUE implementation. In response, the Chair prepared a training manual for universities, which was submitted to AIU, which in turn, distributed it among various interested universities.

Extent of community collaboration throughout the project cycle 90%
Student role & Impact

Students played a major role in this project. In each of the country case studies, local students were hired to conduct the research and co-author the chapters. In addition to these 12 international students, 10 UVic undergraduate and graduate students were involved in various activities including a communication team during the 'knowledge democracy' conference in 2013 and as research assistants.

The impact was substantial for the students involved to be exposed and engaged in international research and networking in the field of higher education, and community-based research. Students gained valuable experience in research and communication skills that are applied in a variety of contexts.

"In terms of system-level impact, there were numerous symposia organized around the world (GUNi, Canadian Bureau for international education, International Association of Universities, the Indian Association of Universities, Talloires Network). There was direct Impact on the European Commission on Research, when they created the call for proposals for the SWAFS (The role of Science Shop in Society), the UNESCO Chair was the only organization mentioned in the call. This is evidence that the book on structures has had impact."

Key successes & challenges

Successes: Proper and effective coordination between the UNESCO Co-Chairs (PRIA & University of Victoria), situated at two ends of the globe, was a major lesson that was learnt while implementing the project and managing its activities. This being a global study, we also learnt to effectively manage the coordination between researchers and partners based in different time zones, belonging to institutions which differed in nature, and also, living in countries, which differed in culture aspects. All such variations, differences were some of the important points which were paid due attention to, while managing the project, and which proved to be a challenge and an opportunity both.

Challenges: There were a few challenges in the design of the survey stemming from a very diverse language and practice of CURP. Although this also provides interesting observation on the scope and culture of this practice globally, the dissemination was modestly delayed. Likewise, we received a low response rate from the Global South, despite continued efforts to target Community and University networks in these regions. This was the first open-source e-book published by the research team and we highly underestimated the lengthy process this entailed. At least twice the amount of time was needed then expected to go through the final editing process with the University of Victoria Press.

Key factors for a successful CER project

Clear communication, guidelines and adhering to deadlines enabled the successful completion of this project, given the number of partners involved at various stages of the research.
### Outputs

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open source book</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-refereed publications</td>
<td>20+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multimedia products</td>
<td>multiple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jointly prepared funding proposals</td>
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<td>Invited Presentations</td>
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<td>Workshops</td>
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<td>website platform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social media buzz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consulting with government/NGOs</td>
<td>20+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-authored publications</td>
<td>multiple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Outcomes

- Student skills & knowledge development
- Development of new and improved theory
- Increased inter-university linkages
- Increased interdisciplinary linkages
- New innovations including social & technological
- Partnerships secured through MoUs
- Building community sector organization capacities
- Strengthened community-university networks
- New institutional/organizational structures

### Select Key References


Global Trends in Support Structures for Community University Research Partnerships: Survey Results is a 40-page synthesis of the global survey “Strengthening institutional structure for Community University Research Partnerships”.


Community Engagement Practices in Assam, India. See more at: [http://unescochair-cbirs.org/unesco/pdf/Assam_Study%20Note.pdf](http://unescochair-cbirs.org/unesco/pdf/Assam_Study%20Note.pdf)


Consultation on new UGC scheme on community engagement in India. See more at: [http://unescochair-cbirs.org/unesco/pdf/](http://unescochair-cbirs.org/unesco/pdf/)