

CONCEPT PAPER

COMMUNITY-CAMPUS COLLABORATION INITIATIVE: MOBILIZING OUR RESOURCES TO CREATE A SMARTER AND MORE CARING CANADA

Prepared for:

**UNITED WAY – CENTRAIDE CANADA
SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL (SSHRC)
RESEARCH IMPACT-RÉSEAU IMPACT RECHERCHE (RIR)**

February 22, 2012

Prepared by:

ONE WORLD INC.
201-2141 Thurston Drive
Ottawa, ON K1G 6C9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY2
- 2. BACKGROUND/RATIONALE.....3
- 3. SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT3
- 4. THE COMMUNITY-CAMPUS COLLABORATION (CCC) INITIATIVE.....4
- 5. IMPLEMENTATION8

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canadian communities today face a range of complex and intractable challenges such as poverty and increasing levels of inequity, obesity, family violence, environmental threats or the multi-faceted deprivation experienced by Aboriginal peoples, to name a few. The overall goal of the Community-Campus Collaboration Initiative is to increase the capacity of Canadian communities to develop and implement innovative and sustainable solutions to address the variety of complex challenges that face them by linking more effectively to the resources and expertise of post-secondary institutions.

Responding to an invitation from the Governor General, the United Way Centraide Canada (UWCC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the ResearchImpact-RéseauImpactRecherche (RIR) knowledge mobilization network conducted a national scan of community-campus collaborations, developed a background paper and held a discussion with stakeholders from across Canada. This work has allowed the partners to identify two strategies to increase the range, scope and impact of community-campus collaborations:

A. Supporting a culture of collaboration

The CCC Initiative will create supportive environments and work to remove institutional barriers to collaboration between the community and post-secondary sectors by engaging leaders in the post-secondary institutions and the communities, and by identifying and sharing promising practices in collaboration. This work will focus on four broad areas:

- Community based research
- Integrating Community experience into Learning
- Knowledge mobilization
- Policies and institutional supports

B. Focusing on “big issues”

The CCC initiative will work to identify “big issues” where community-campus collaboration can make a difference. It will expand capacity and develop tools for foresight analysis within the community sector, and will help develop pilot programs to demonstrate the potential for “scaling up” community-campus collaboration. It will work with the philanthropic community and others to mobilize resources to support ongoing collaboration and to explore innovative funding models and mechanisms.

Further research on community-campus collaborations is underway. The CCC initiative has developed a roadmap to 2017, Canada’s sesquicentennial, and beyond. Working with pan-Canadian partners, the CCC initiative will help our communities become part of a smarter and more caring Canada.

2. BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

If Canada is to achieve the vision of becoming a smarter and more caring nation, we must develop strategies to mobilize all of our collective resources. The challenges we face as a society are dauntingly complex, and it is beyond the capacity of any one sector to solve them on its own. Tackling social issues like poverty and increasing levels of inequity, obesity, family violence, the environmental threats posed by climate change and loss of diversity, or the multi-faceted deprivation experienced by Aboriginal groups, calls out for a comprehensive approach that brings all sectors together in a concerted effort.

The Community-Campus Collaboration (CCC) Initiative aims to marry the resources of our communities with those of our post-secondary institutions to address these challenges. Its intent is to make Canada and Canadians more resilient, adaptable, and effective in finding sustainable solutions to long-standing ‘wicked’ problems, and thereby to contribute to Canada’s well-being and the vitality of its communities.

There are already a number of innovative and effective examples of community-campus collaborations. The CCC Initiative intends to learn from, and build on, this base. It will greatly enhance the impact and effectiveness of CCCs, as well as their ability to support social innovation across the country. It will also provide a focus for the development of partnerships and investment to support the scaling up that will be necessary to have a significant impact on some of these complex and intractable issues.

As we look forward towards Canada’s sesquicentennial and beyond, such an initiative would be a fitting platform to build our capacity and confidence to tackle the challenges of the future.

3. SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

At the United Way Centraide Canada (UWCC) Conference in Calgary in April 2011, the Governor General participated in a roundtable discussion with United Way and post-secondary representatives. Reflecting on the discussion, he asked the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and UWCC to explore how community-campus collaborations could bring together his interests in learning, research & innovation, philanthropy and volunteerism, in helping advance his vision of a *Smarter and More Caring Canada*.

Over the summer, in response to this request, UWCC, along with local United Way/Centraide organizations and the ResearchImpact-RéseauImpactRecherche (RIR) network of universities, conducted a preliminary mapping of community-campus collaborations. UWCC focused on relationships that exist between United Ways and post-secondary institutions.

A background paper based on the mapping provided a “snapshot” of current community-campus collaborations, as well as some of the issues inherent in these collaborations. This background paper served as a starting point for a meeting of key informants from the community and academic sectors held on September 26, 2011 and hosted by UWCC and SSHRC. This meeting was a brainstorming session to explore how to tell the “story” of community-

campus collaborations most effectively, and how to position these collaborations as mechanisms to support social innovation.

Several questions emerged from the discussion:

- Most of the collaborations have a local – or, at most, a regional – focus. Although these relationships are important and responsive to local needs, what would be required to scale them up and make them more *transformative* at a national level?
- Much of the work seems to be focussed on addressing existing issues; how much is actually looking ahead to *emerging* issues in Canada (e.g. changing demographics) and how can these collaborations be harnessed to help address some of the “big issues” facing the country?
- There is a potential to learn a great deal from these existing collaborations: What is required to make them *sustainable*? How can benefits accrue in an *equitable* way to both campus and community partners?

Participants at the meeting suggested a number of ways in which the potential of campus community collaborations can be unlocked – by more effectively telling the story of existing collaborations and developing metrics to gauge their impacts; by working with institutions to remove barriers to collaboration and share promising practices; by exploring new ways of leveraging public and community resources to support collaboration; and, by working to identify and focus on key challenges and issues facing Canada in the future.

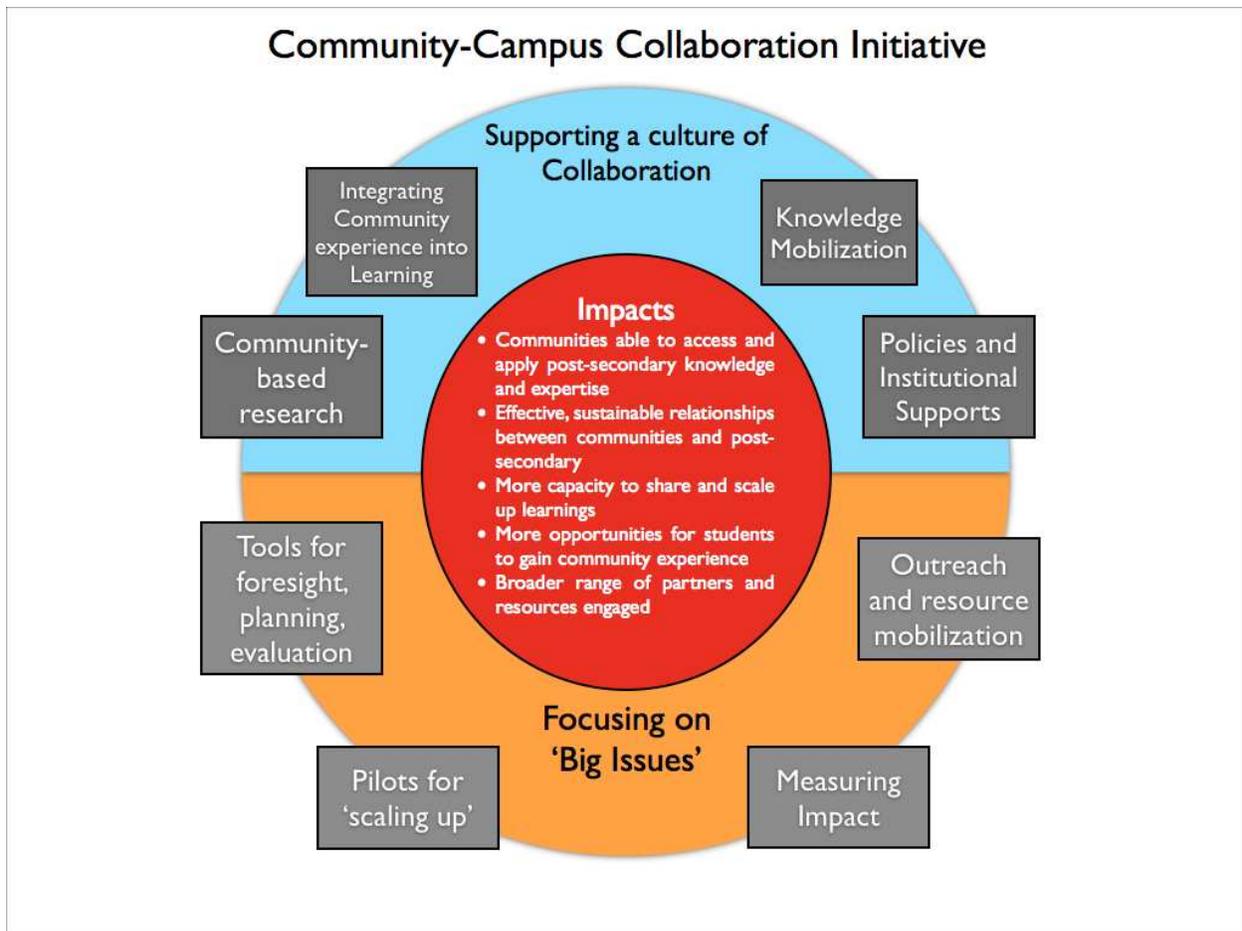
4. THE COMMUNITY-CAMPUS COLLABORATION (CCC) INITIATIVE

The Community-Campus Collaboration (CCC) Initiative is an effort to build on these discussions, in order to support and expand the scope, scale and influence of collaboration between the community and post-secondary sectors. The overall goal of the CCC Initiative is to increase the capacity of Canadian communities to develop and implement innovative solutions to address a variety of complex challenges by linking more effectively to the resources and expertise of post-secondary institutions. The anticipated impacts of this initiative include the following:

- Canadian communities have better access to relevant knowledge and expertise, and are better able to use this to support their decision-making;
- Canadian communities and post-secondary institutions develop more effective and sustainable working relationships;
- Canadian communities and post-secondary institutions are able to more effectively share and “scale up” the learnings that emerge from these collaborations;
- Post-secondary students have more and better opportunities to acquire experience in community settings as a way of rounding out their educational experience;
- A broader range of partners are engaged in – and contributing to – the development of CCCs.

The CCC Initiative consists of two broad strategies:

- **Supporting a culture of collaboration:** helping to create supportive environments and remove institutional barriers to collaboration between the community and post-secondary sectors by engaging the leaders, and by identifying and sharing promising practices in collaboration; and
- **Focusing on “big issues”:** mobilizing resources and partners around a small number of key challenges to Canadian society where community-campus collaboration can make a difference.



A. Supporting a culture of collaboration

The experience of community-campus collaborations to date demonstrates their potential. Yet there has often been relatively limited institutional support for the creation of CCCs from either the community or post-secondary sectors. Existing collaborations have come about, in most cases, through the efforts of individual researchers and community partners; as a result, they often have a relatively low profile and struggle for support. While there is a well-developed infrastructure to support links between business and post-secondary institutions (technology transfer offices, industrial advisors, training programs, targeted funding) links with the community sector are – with a few notable exceptions – more ad hoc, rudimentary and personalized.

There are signs of change. A few individual post-secondary institutions have taken critical steps to integrate community partnerships in their overall institutional plans, and to provide the people and infrastructure needed to support these collaborations. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) has recently launched a “new narrative” regarding the role of post-secondary institutions that focuses, in part, on the cultivation of better linkages between universities and the communities within which they operate. Similarly, the college sector is giving increasing attention to its role in promoting social as well as technical innovation, as evidenced in recent publications and statements by the Association of Community Colleges of Canada (ACCC).

By enabling a culture shift and providing specific institutional and cross-sectoral support it will be possible to create environments that encourage the creation of these relationships, and greater alignment between academic and community service priorities at the post-secondary institutions. Equally, changes in the community sector can help to increase the demand for collaborative research and other types of linkages, and to make community partners more effective users of – and partners in – post-secondary research.

The institutional culture shift can be supported through addressing four main areas (described below, with some potential examples of work listed under each):

Community-based research

Develop mechanisms and resources to support community-based research:

- Build the capacity of communities to engage in research as equal partners (knowledge co-production), and use research results effectively;
- Build capacity in both sectors to develop effective and equitable partnerships;
- Develop more mechanisms for mobility between research and community sectors (e.g. visiting professorships, scholars-in-residence, Social entrepreneurs in residence).

Integrating Community experience into Learning

Create an engaged scholarship through better integration of community experience with student training:

- Recognize community service as contribution to degree/diploma;
- Combine work assignments and academic programs via co-op programs and other forms of experiential education;
- Expand community internships to link student research directly to the needs of community partners;
- Develop integrated approach to curriculum, combining academics with experience working with non-academic partners.
- Make the close connection to the community a defining feature of what Canadian post-secondary education is known for internationally (so that international students might seek out Canada as a place to acquire such experience).

Knowledge Mobilization

Knowledge Mobilization is the social policy equivalent of the technology transfer office; it plays a vital role in helping to make research findings usable at the community level. It is strategic to support the development of Knowledge Mobilization capacity as a core element to support community-campus collaborations:

- Support development of Knowledge Mobilization units;
- Build capacity among Knowledge Mobilization brokers;
- Develop tools and standards for Knowledge Mobilization;

Policies and Institutional Supports

Develop policies and institutional supports that could support CCCs:

- Recognize work on community collaborations in tenure and promotion review;
- Recognize time and resources required to develop and maintain community collaborations, and factor this into teaching requirements.

The CCC initiative will build on the experience of groups like RIR, Community-Based Research Canada (CBRC) and the Canadian Association for Community Service Learning (CACSL), and will engage leadership in the university, college and community sectors via the AUCC and ACCC to identify and champion potential changes.

The CCC Initiative can be effective in fostering a culture of collaboration in the above four areas by engaging senior leaders in the post-secondary and community sectors (who can help build institutional commitment and support for collaborative endeavours, mobilize institutional resources, facilitate collaborations and recognize successes); and by identifying and learning from promising practices in existing CCCs (to identify the conditions, structures and policies that need to be in place to support successful, sustainable CCCs).

B. Focusing on “Big Issues”:

The second strategy is one that seeks to enhance the collective impact of CCCs – to strengthen synergies among them, and expand their effectiveness and impact.

To this point, CCCs have been mostly focussed on the local level, with some working at a regional level. There is great potential value in linking together CCCs with a common interest in complex issues to coordinate research strategies and share learnings in a dynamic way. This linkage could occur at a regional level (e.g. Atlantic, Northern, Prairie, Pacific), around common types of communities (e.g. urban, suburban, rural, remote), or around common issues (e.g. poverty, single-industry towns, Aboriginal issues, climate change adaptation). Such an approach could lead to more comprehensive research, and support more widespread dissemination and uptake of results at the community level.

The CCC initiative will work to identify “big issues” where community-campus collaboration can make a difference. It will expand capacity and develop tools for this kind of foresight analysis within the community sector, and will help develop pilot programs to demonstrate the potential for “scaling up” collaboration. The Initiative will develop tools and strategies to better evaluate the impact of collaborations. Finally, it will work with the philanthropic community and others to mobilize resources to support ongoing collaboration and to explore innovative funding models and mechanisms.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The chart below presents a very preliminary outline of how these strategies could roll out over the next few years. The two strategies are presented separately, but there is considerable complementarity between the two.

<i>Year</i>	<i>1) Supporting a Culture of Collaboration</i>	<i>2) Focusing on Big Issues</i>
2012	Planning. Analysis of existing CCCs; identification of promising practices and leading organizations/individuals.	Start to engage potential partners. Identify emerging initiatives and possibilities for collaboration on “big issues”.
2013	Pilot initiatives to build capacity in post-secondary and community sectors in four key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based research • Integrating community experience into learning • Knowledge mobilization • Policies and institutional supports. 	Engage sector leadership. Develop structure and flexible mechanisms to facilitate collaboration and ongoing exchange of learnings. Identify specific “big issue” collaborations for support (as pilots).
2014	Evaluate pilots; create learning communities to disseminate learnings.	Support collaborations and learning exchange.
2015	Scale up initiatives.	Evaluate pilots. Announcements, based on work to date.
2016	Provide ongoing support.	Further development of collaborations.
2017	Provide ongoing support.	Showcase results as part of sesquicentennial. Announce ongoing legacy.