Ensuring Community Comes First in Community-Campus Partnerships:
## Actions for CCE Practitioners

What have we learned about a community-first approach within CFICE?

Over the last five years, CFICE community and academic partners have worked together within 40+ community-campus engagement (CCE) projects, making a real difference on issues such as poverty reduction, community food security, community environmental sustainability and violence against women.

Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) is a Canada-wide project that seeks to **enhance research and teaching partnerships** between community-based organizations (CBOs) and post-secondary institutions (PSIs). For CFICE, being community-first means engaging in equitable partnerships to co-create knowledge and action plans that **address pressing community issues**.

We have learned to **increase our impact by seeking, first and foremost, to meet the needs of our community-based organization (CBO) partners who work on the front lines of social change**. Through this approach we have deepened our relationships, addressed challenges and developed a strong sense of how to work in the context of unique community challenges, opportunities and strengths.
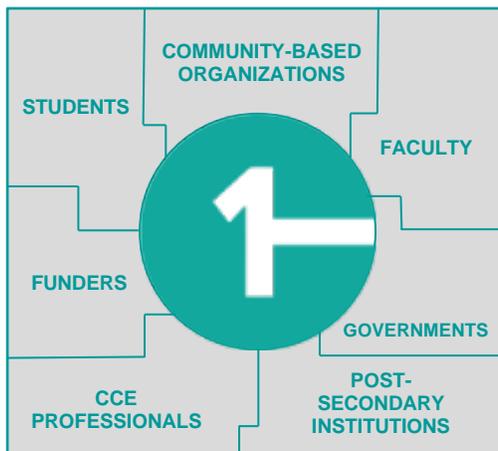
On the following pages, we offer recommendations for community-based organizations, faculty, students, governments, partnership funders and post-secondary institutions seeking to foster lasting impacts within their communities. These recommendations were proposed by a group of twenty community partners and twenty academics who participated in the CFICE Evaluation Symposium held in Ottawa in January 2017, and are based on data and experience from the first four years of the project. This document also shares stories that illustrate what happens when some of these recommended practices are followed.

Community-Campus Engagement (CCE) can take many forms. It includes Community-Based Research (CBR), in which academics undertake research alongside community partners, and Community Service-Learning (CSL), where students complete course projects for credit that meet community needs and promote civic responsibility. CCE also refers to the role that universities and colleges can play to build social infrastructure more generally.

For more information: https://carleton.ca/communityfirst/

Please note: These recommendations do not explicitly address Indigenous CCE partnerships. CFICE encourages readers to refer to the National Association of Friendship Centres' Guiding Ethical Principles: http://uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Guiding-Ethical-Principles-Final-February-13-2013.pdf

Community-based Organizations:

Community partners recognize the importance of strong community voices in helping to set the terms of engagement among CCE practitioners, in contributing to equitable decision-making processes, and in giving others greater access to community expertise within CCE projects. From our work with 50+ community partners within CFICE community projects, we have learned that **making community priorities clear to CCE partners at the start of a project -- and listening to partners' ideas and concerns -- helps all involved better understand each other's needs, roles and expectations**. Good communication also helps everyone recognize when project parameters or relationships may need adjustment.

In addition, when community partners connect with other community peers involved in CCE projects, they hear about experiences and gain insights that may help in navigating their own project hurdles. They also learn how to strengthen research capacity, and access resources and networks that can bring greater visibility to important issues in their communities.

> ## Actions CBOs can take to ensure community priorities come first:
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> - Engage strategically in CCE projects, clearly communicate organizational needs to partners, and opt out of projects that do not add value to your organization.
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> - Build reciprocal relationships with faculty members/PSIs in CCE projects to understand one another's cultures, realities and needs.
>
> - Develop peer-to-peer opportunities for information exchange and collaboration among CBOs about how to engage with post-secondary institutions (PSIs), and to help others translate information coming from PSIs.

When CBOs Choose 'Community First' Partners

Community-based organizations (CBOs) participate in community-campus engagement (CCE) projects for a variety of reasons. Sometimes they are approached by the academy, and at other times they have a need they hope an academic can address. Regardless of how the partnership may be initiated, **the best results occur when CBOs are strategic about partnering with academics that are 'community-first'**.

Community partners working with CFICE's Poverty Reduction (PR) and Violence Against Women (VAW) hubs are great examples of CBOs that achieved their goals through partnerships with academics that understand the value of heeding community priorities. While both sets of CBOs approached their partnership work in different ways, each group had clear ideas about how they wanted to work with academic collaborators.

Within the PR hub, the relationship between the main community partner, Liz Weaver, Co-CEO of the Tamarack Institute, and the academic, Karen Schwartz, Associate Dean, Research and International at Carleton University, started out as a bit of an arranged marriage. Neither partner knew each other, but they had a mutual contact in CFICE's original project Community Co-lead, Geri Briggs.

To ensure the partnership would be a good fit, Schwartz travelled to Tamarack Institute's office in Hamilton, ON to meet with Weaver and hash out goals and expectations.

"When we started our partnership within the PR hub, **we all decided we would focus first on equalizing power**," explained Liz Weaver, Co-CEO of Tamarack Institute. "This meant making all decisions together, especially as it related to the co-creation of measurement instruments and knowledge. We also outlined the principles we would follow in order to equalize power, including communicating clearly with each other and ensuring we, the community partner, held the strongest voice in setting the agenda for the work to be done."

"To me, it was important that the project be 100% community driven, and I told them that," recalled Schwartz of that first meeting. "As has been noted in the literature in CCE since early 2000's[1], my role as an academic in a partnership with community is to help to balance power by **recognizing that power resides, first and foremost, within the community**. That way we can ensure our efforts together work towards maximizing benefits to the community."

After initial governance discussions, Tamarack Institute outlined their desired agenda, which included evaluating the efforts to move the needle on poverty reduction with the assistance of community-campus engagement, and working with locally based CFICE student research assistants (RAs) to train them for future community work post-graduation. By being strategic in their partnership with a community-first academic, and **through honest, ongoing communication with CFICE RAs and academics, the CBOs in the PR hub achieved many of their goals**.

"We were successful at achieving community objectives in several of our poverty reduction project partnerships," said Schwartz. "For example, the 'Best Practices in Implementing a Living Wage Policy' project with the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction led to more than 100 employers in the Hamilton area committing to becoming Living Wage employers

Liz Weaver, Co-CEO of Tamarack Institute

as of December 2014. Another demonstration project—the Vibrant Communities Saint John/University of Saint John New Brunswick partnership—resulted in a citywide collective impact initiative to address and improve youth educational attainment. Overall, it was everyone's commitment to equalizing power and addressing community needs that helped us successfully achieve these outcomes."

As with the PR Hub, the CBOs in the VAW Hub had definite ideas about their involvement in CCE. From the outset, **these CBOs made clear their desire to work with academic partners that had a demonstrated history within, knowledge of, and respect for the VAW movement**. They also strongly advocated for framing the CCE research around CBO priorities and perspectives, including focusing on outcomes that would be of direct benefit to the VAW community.

As part of anonymous interviews conducted through a CFICE internal evaluation process, one VAW partner outlined their priorities to include, "putting the community at the centre, having the academics consider how they can use their academic effort, time and publication to support what a community is trying to do, and a movement is trying to do."

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[1] Strand, K., Marullo, S., Cutforth, N., Stoecker, R. & Donohue, P., (2003). Community Based Research and Higher Education, San Francisco, CA:Jossey-Bass

These strategic priorities led them to partnering with Diana Majury, a professor in Carleton University's Department of Law and Legal Studies.

"The community partners were really clear about their expectations from the start and I was very eager to have them take the lead on all the projects," said Diana Majury, academic co-lead of the VAW hub. **"Their active involvement in setting the priorities and direction of hub projects meant we were able to achieve their goals on their timelines."**

As the partnership progressed, community and academic partners had ongoing and honest conversations with each other about the diversity of expectations, limitations and languages that existed among the group. They also maintained a focus on recognizing the fundamental importance of contributions from within the community.

One VAW partner recalled, "It was great when [the academic co-lead] used her voice to give us credibility. She didn't use her voice to try and say you have to listen to my voice, or I am more credible, or anything like that. She absolutely used the power that she has in exactly the right way."

Diana Majury, academic co-lead of the Violence Against Women hub

In contrast to the PR hub, decision-making around the bulk of day-to-day administrative tasks in the VAW hub fell to the Academic Co-lead. **This alternative approach to CCE partnership helped VAW CBOs effectively advance community research efforts at a pace suited to their own time and resource constraints.**

The experiences of CBOs in both the VAW and PR hubs reveal that while there may be varied ways for CBOs to engage in CCE projects, those that are selective about the academic partners they choose to work with, and who approach CCE partnerships with clear ideas and a resolve to prioritize their needs often see the greatest results.

"As community partners, it's important for us to recognize our own power in these relationships," explains Weaver. "We need to approach these partnerships from a place of strength and make sure we're engaging strategically. When we work together in equal partnerships with community-first academics, we can make a much bigger difference in our communities. And that's really where the priority lies."

Community and academic partners in the Poverty Reduction hub

Faculty:

Faculty approach new research endeavours with hopes of making a meaningful research impact, publishing their findings and offering students unique research contexts and training. CFICE community projects have demonstrated that **personal commitment among academics really makes a difference in fostering community-first CCE**. For faculty new to CCE, being open about expectations and needs at the start of a CCE project contributes to a shared understanding of how to move forward on project goals. For experienced academics, recognizing the broad value of community expertise helps faculty gain access to new perspectives and a diversity of views. Being 'community-first' for faculty means communicating in ways that relate respectfully to community partners, and mentoring students to adopt this approach. It also means advocating for policies that encourage a community-first approach to CCE within their institutions so that newer faculty members can follow their lead.

Actions faculty can take to ensure community priorities come first:

- Assist in the development of equitable CCE principles and practices that include:
  - Clarifying roles, expectations and limits with regard to engagement/political action with community partners and ownership/control of community knowledge
  - Recognizing community experience, and valuing community knowledge (and opportunities to co-create knowledge) with honoraria and adequate funding
  - Engaging respectfully and strategically with partners *in* the community (recognizing that CCE takes resources and time)
  - Accessing plain-language training, and incorporating plain-language within diverse forms of knowledge mobilization

- Support students in developing long-term CCE relationships and projects, by:
  - recognizing existing community knowledge and skills held by students
  - training students in ethical practices of engagement with community
  - offering CCE mentoring and travel advances

- Support strengthened institutionalization of community-driven CCE, by:
  - Building a community contribution into research grant funds
  - Recognizing faculty involvement in CCE within tenure and promotion processes
  - Participating in CCE communities of practice
  - Advocating for CCE training for faculty (e.g. ethics, cross-cultural awareness, technological method)
  - Creating community pathways (e.g. promoting student recruitment stories)
  - Developing greater sensitivity to complex and diverse aspects of community
  - Addressing issues of power in CCE at intersections of race, class, gender, colonialism

When Faculty are 'Community First'

Engaging in community-first campus-community engagement (CCE) is an opportune way for faculty to achieve their goals as researchers and teachers. Charles Levkoe, an academic co-lead for CFICE's CCE Brokering Working Group and Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Food Systems at Lakehead University, offers a good example of what can be accomplished with a community-first approach.

Prior to entering academia, Charles worked in several community organizations, including non-profits and an agroecological farm. This activity was highly rewarding but also demanding. One of the biggest challenges however, was not having the time to ask the bigger questions about 'why we do what we do'. These bigger questions, in part, are what led Charles to pursue a career in academia. His passion for and experience working as part of various community organizations are what gave him the motivation and skills to put community first when engaging with communities from the other side of the community-campus engagement partnership. According to Charles, **being community-first is all about maintaining a close relationship between professors and community partners that is ultimately mutually advantageous**.

Charles has had the opportunity to take a community-first approach to all of his research, focusing on the needs and interests of the community. This approach is often extremely demanding; however, if done correctly, it can lead to greater impact. Being community-first allows both parties to build lasting partnerships, which can extend far beyond the short-term intentions of the initial research initiatives.

Being involved with CFICE has also helped Charles's work as an academic. As an early career academic, CFICE has given legitimacy to his craft.

"With academia, you are often driven to address social needs," explains Charles. "CFICE has given me the legitimacy to be able to say that this work means something, that it is valuable."

Furthermore, **the connections coming out of CFICE have provided a powerful network** that helps Charles further drive community-first engagement.

An example of successful community-first practices in action can be seen with recent Canadian national food policy work. Charles led a team that worked closely with Food Secure Canada to help engage civil society contributions towards a national food policy to help support a healthier, more just and sustainable food system.

According to Charles, the community-first collaboration between community and academia has had a big impact on the project's success. "Collectively, we have a lot of opportunity to move the needle on some of these issues."

Charles Levkoe, Academic Co-lead of the CFICE CCE Brokering Working Group

As for how other faculty members could take that first step in becoming community-first in their engagement efforts, Charles suggests **starting with an issue that sparks passion within**. "Being community-first is a serious time commitment, but it can be very rewarding. Take some time to think about how you can have an impact, what your interests are, and the skills you can mobilize. It's not just a short-term endeavor, but something made up of longer-term relationships. It is all about working together to make a collective impact."

Students:

Students increasingly look for opportunities to work on real-world problems and build key career skills through applied research. Community-first approaches to CCE **offer students the chance to understand community issues from multiple perspectives, as well as participate in meaningful community research efforts**.

Students contributing to CFICE projects over the last five years have brought energy, fresh perspectives and lived experience to their work on-the-ground with community experts, and they have deepened relationships by really listening to community partner voices. Moving forward, the student experience can be further enhanced by seeking out opportunities for CCE training, and by sharing experiences and reflections with others about how to navigate CCE cultures, relationships and hurdles.

Actions students can take to ensure community priorities come first:

- Listen and respond respectfully to community partners. Understand that you are part of a bigger relationship, and learn from the community.

- Seek out opportunities to enhance and co-create CCE skills and capacity (e.g. ethics, research project development, plain language writing skills).

- Make connections and get actively involved in developing longer-term CCE projects, alliances and networks.

- Take pride in CCE work, and share your experiences with/mentor other students.

When Students are 'Community First'

When Natasha Pei got a Research Assistantship (RAship) with the Poverty Reduction hub of CFICE in 2013, she never could have predicted the impact it would have on her career trajectory. **She attributes her success, in large part, to the community-first skills she gained** as a result.

"When I first started studying social work, I thought I was going to get into child protection services," explained Natasha. "Learning about systemic issues facing society through my Master's, combined with my community engagement work with CFICE, broadened my horizons about how I could contribute to addressing the larger, structural barriers people face every day."

While many RAships entail completing literature reviews, assisting with data entry, and occasionally contributing to academic articles, Natasha's RAship with CFICE was focused on studying and building the skills necessary for creating deep and meaningful partnerships between communities and academics.

"Like many students starting in community engagement work, I was eager to share what I'd learned in university to help solve community issues," said Natasha. "My experience with CFICE taught me how to listen to and learn from the expertise in the community, and how to develop long-term relationships that lead to far greater change."

The experience **gave Natasha skills that set her apart from her fellow Master's students**.

"I was a core member of the team," Natasha recalled fondly. "I helped organize meetings. I liaised with multiple community and academic partners from across Canada, presenting our research information back to the community members to discuss implications with them. Where other students were reading about community engagement models like collective impact, I was actually part of collective impact projects. It was a lot of responsibility but it was a great experience."

Pei graduated her Master's of Social Work degree with a job waiting for her at Tamarack Institute's Vibrant Communities, a core partner of CFICE's Poverty Reduction Hub. And her CFICE experience didn't stop there.

"I transitioned straight from being an RA for CFICE's Poverty Reduction hub to being the hub's community co-lead! It was great because I brought continuity to the projects, and I've been able to apply what I've learned, both in my position at Vibrant Communities, as well as with my ongoing work as part of CFICE."

Through her co-lead position, Natasha has continued studying effective ways to maximize the benefits of community-campus engagement for the community. She has also witnessed firsthand the impact of using a community-first approach in engagement, especially in her position as Community Animator with Vibrant Communities.

Natasha Pei, Community Co-lead of the CFICE CBO Tools Working Group

"You can actually see the difference this work makes for our community partners. So often in social work, you put your heart and soul into helping people escape poverty or homelessness. **With this job, I am in the privileged position of helping people pass knowledge back and forth so people can build the work from each other**, and do work more effectively to move policy and systems, as a result of our conversations."

Patricia Ballamingie and Natasha Pei at the CFICE Community Impact Symposium, January 2017.

When asked how CFICE's community-first ethos has changed her expectations and methods as a community partner, Natasha responded, "When we're engaging other community members, asking them to share their experience and expertise, we take the time to truly listen to and learn about the issues that they are facing. We are prepared to meet them where they're at, rather than imposing our own assumptions."

Natasha encourages other students to learn community-first practices as well.

"For students working with communities, it's incredibly important to **start by looking inwards, to value the community's perspective, and then identify how your role can best contribute** to bigger relationship and overall goals."

Governments:

Governments at all levels increasingly recognize the value of community-campus engagement in enhancing community resilience, contributing to diverse forms of innovation, and strengthening the knowledge base for evidence-based policy. Further, student engagement in CCE (e.g. through community service-learning) is valued by provincial governments in particular for offering a unique form of work-integrated learning. Our research shows that community-first CCE provides these students with meaningful civic engagement opportunities that allow them to bring their own rich backgrounds to benefit the common good, while building their confidence, and enhancing both workplace as well as livelihood skills.

Actions governments can take to ensure community priorities come first:

- Provide greater institutional and funding support for sustained multisector CCE partnerships between PSIs, the non-profit sector, and other key sectors.

- Recognize the value of community-based brokers in facilitating effective CCE partnerships, addressing community goals and supporting student advancement.

- Join collaborative networks (e.g. including partners such as provincial higher education authorities, local governments) that recognize the significance of work integrated learning and are committed to expanding CCE.

- Recognize and support Indigenous and community-based institutions as leaders of CCE partnerships.

When Governments are 'Community First'

Sometimes it's hard to trace the direct impact that government programs have on our communities. This is partly because on-the-ground projects leading to community change often receive funding from many sources, including private donors, industry partners, foundations, and various levels of government. In the end, the question remains: Who gets the (most) credit for project outcomes and impacts?

In Food Secure Canada's (FSC) case, a partnership through the government-funded Mitacs Accelerate program has had a direct impact on their ability to contribute to consultations on building a *Food Policy for Canada.* With the Government of Canada's extremely short *Food Policy for Canada* consultation window—May 29 to September 30, 2017 to be exact—**having a Mitacs Postdoctoral Fellow provided FSC with additional policy and research expertise at just the right time**.

"Being able to hire Amanda Wilson through Mitacs has given FSC the capacity to increase the number of voices being heard in the Government of Canada's consultation process," says Diana Bronson, Executive Director of FSC. "Amanda's efforts, our partnerships with entities like CAFS and CFICE, along with the work of the FSC team as a whole, have lead to a much more robust engagement process around national food policy."

According to the Mitacs website, the goal of the Accelerate program is to put "talent to work with an organization that needs it." They do this by matching community or industry partner funding for research projects that include a postdoctoral student, a supervising professor and a partner organization. The project submitted by FSC, in collaboration with Amanda and supervising Lakehead University professor Charles

Levkoe, was titled *Within Our Reach: Building Community Academic Partnerships in support of a National Food Policy*.

"Our goal with this project was to increase the capacity of community and academic partners to contribute to a national food policy process," explains Amanda. "We wanted to experiment with different ways of collaborating and sharing resources for policy impact, all with the goal of pushing for more just, healthy and sustainable food policy."

Through the project, Amanda has been able to take the lead on developing policy briefs (notably FSC's *Discussion Paper on National Food Policy* and their *Final Recommendations on A Food Policy for Canada*) and engaging with FSC members and academic partners to generate and refine policy recommendations. This included outreach to academic allies of FSC, as well as targeted engagement around New Farmers and Northern Food.

Amanda Wilson, Mitacs Postdoctoral Fellow with CFICE

FSC has a long history of community-academic collaboration. A partner in CFICE since the beginning of Phase I, FSC creates space and opportunities for academics, non-profits, and community organizations to work together on research and advocacy for a just and sustainable food system.

"From day one, working with Food Secure Canada has been a bit of a whirlwind," recalls Amanda. I've been involved in so many different events and processes. But it's been a great opportunity to build relationships with community organizations and academics across Canada and to hopefully have a real impact on the government's policy-building process."

While the results of FSC's advocacy efforts are not yet fully available—the first draft of *A Food Policy for Canada* won't be out until mid-2018—the impact of having matching funds for Amanda's position are clear.

Community and academic partners at the Ottawa Food Summit with Minister of Agriculture Lawrence MacAuley (centre)

"We wouldn't have been able to generate the same depth and breadth of policy analysis, or connect with our members to the same degree without Amanda's help," says Diana. "**The Mitacs funding has really increased our ability to meet our core goal of supporting the food movement to engage in meaningful policy change**. The best part is that the funding lasts for two years, which allows us to breathe and really maximize Amanda's contributions to our organization."

As for Amanda, she's happy she's had the opportunity to work on such a high-profile policy process that incorporates so many of the crucial issues facing our food system. "Working in a community context, there's a tangible impact of the work I'm doing that you don't get in a strictly academic context, which is something I really appreciate."

With another year of funding left for Amanda's postdoctoral position, this collaboration is sure to continue generating important policy insight that contributes to a stronger food movement in Canada.

Funders:

Funders of CCE play a critical role in providing the financial resources to make many good things happen. But not all funding programs are alike. A community-first approach to funding means **ensuring CBOs have a strong voice in how funds are directed**, and of reducing uncertainty and bureaucracy surrounding access to those funds. In addition, enabling **access to institutional resources**, such as libraries and meeting spaces, helps to **boost community capacity** and fosters stronger connections between faculty, students and community participants in CCE projects.

Actions funders can take to ensure community priorities come first:

- Address key funding challenges to CBO participation in partnerships, by:
  - encouraging co-governance of CCE funds by community and academic partners, and including CBO representation on budget committees;
  - providing increased and more direct funding of CBO participation;
  - recognizing true costs in time and resources incurred by CBOs for administration and reporting; and
  - flowing money to CBOs early on in the project timeline to demonstrate trust.
- Include CBO representatives with CCE experience on grant adjudication committees.
- Recognize Indigenous partners and community partners as leaders of CCE partnerships in ways meaningful to them.
- Join collaborative networks committed to expanding institutional support for sustained multi-sector CCE projects as equal partners, and not just as holders of purse-strings.

When Funders are 'Community First'

To CFICE community partner Ottawa Eco-Talent Network, there is no question that supporting community-campus partnerships focused on environmental sustainability initiatives is a worthwhile cause. When funders take a community-first approach to this support, great things can happen. However, it can be difficult to know where to start and where funding will make the greatest impact.

One way is by funding organizations and research projects that prioritize community-first practices like co-governance of funds and direct funding of community participation. The Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) project, and one of its partners, the Ottawa Eco-Talent Network (OETN), are good examples of how this type of support can lead to significant impacts.

As part of CFICE's Community Environmental Sustainability Hub, the OETN and CFICE collaboratively decided to channel some funding into an embedded research assistant (RA) position. In this position, the student hired would work directly with OETN, but be paid by CFICE. This decision allowed CFICE to maximize its funding by providing a valuable, integrated learning opportunity to Michael Lait, a sociology PhD candidate at Carleton University, while also increasing the OETN's capacity to accomplish key projects. And accomplish they did. During

his time with OETN, Lait worked with Executive Director Jason Garlough on several research initiatives as well as a proposal that resulted in OETN winning a Trillium Foundation grant of $160,000 over the course of three years.

"Funding is important to what we could do," says Lait. "Unlike other research [projects], this was less about publication and more about collaboration to tackle [environmental] issues that may otherwise be too daunting." OETN has since been able to maximize *its* funding by positioning itself as a go-to resource for all those in Ottawa trying to make the city more sustainable.

"[Ottawa Eco-Talent Network] is mobilizing talent to achieve a sustainable Ottawa," explains Garlough. "By providing local non-profit groups and community groups with pro bono expert advice, research capacity and other resources that they might need, we are empowering local organizations to have a larger impact within the community."

It is **through OETN's unique brokering of Ottawa's researchers and local organizations that has made it an important player in environmental sustainability** within the community.

"CFICE's CCE model brings together the wealth of knowledge of post-secondary institutions with the experience of community organizations," explains Garlough. "Together, we can identify the community's current and future environmental needs, then build strategies and tools to support relationships between these community-based organizations and the many universities and colleges that we are fortunate to have here in Ottawa."

(L to R) Professor Patricia Ballamingie, Jason Garlough (Ottawa Eco-Talent Network), and PhD research assistant Michael Lait worked collaboratively to tackle environmental sustainability issues. (Justin Tang Photo)

Since receiving the Trillium Foundation grant in late 2014, OETN has worked with a number of local organizations to complete more than 30 projects, and continues to accept new project proposals to improve Ottawa' environmental sustainability.

In addition, through CFICE's ability to provide salary research allowance funding, OETN has been able to continue its work with CFICE as a community co-lead of CFICE's Community-Campus Engagement (CCE) Brokering working group. This partnership will result in the development of important tools that will continue to support community-campus partnerships between Ottawa environmental sustainability organizations and the many colleges and universities in the city.

Post-secondary institutions:

The post-secondary landscape is changing, as more and more institutions come to acknowledge and revisit their roles as partners in the building of social infrastructure in their communities. This context is taking shape as institutions also work to attract exceptional faculty and students that will be equipped to address pressing community challenges both now and in the future.

Within CFICE projects over the last five years, we have discovered how **support from PSIs can help to set a path for broader research and community impacts**. Building on these experiences, PSIs can further shift institutional culture to strengthen community-first CCE and deepen connections to community, for example by supporting faculty in CCE work and enabling CBO access to institutional resources such as libraries and meeting spaces.

Actions PSIs can take to ensure community priorities come first:

- Develop and support a professional working circle (including faculty, professional staff, senior administration, and community partner representation) for CCE.

- Demonstrate a commitment to communities by supporting significant faculty and student involvement in CCE work (e.g. develop plans for mentoring faculty, include CCE as part of service role; invest in knowledge mobilization as part of research support).

- Provide expanded and ongoing CCE training for post-secondary administration, faculty and students (e.g. teaching about community expertise, cross-cultural awareness, plain language communication training, CCE curriculum and career guidance for students).

- Develop, promote and build networks for tenure and promotion standards that meaningfully reward community-engaged scholarship by:
  - Co-developing metrics with community partners for CCE impact and efficacy
  - Valuing non-academic outputs of CCE projects
  - Valuing community expertise (e.g. letters from CBOs to support tenure files)
  - Including CSL incentives related to teaching

- Provide institutional resources for community partners (e.g. online library access, space for in-person meetings, spaces/interfaces to encourage new initiatives, funding for community-based brokers).

When Post-Secondary Institutions are 'Community First'

When it comes to making community-campus engagement (CCE) more equitable, **a small policy change by a college or university can make a huge difference**. This was the experience of the Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) project when their host institution, Carleton University, decided to change how it interpreted and implemented its travel policy.

Prior to 2016, CFICE participants were expected to pay up front for their travel costs. Travellers could then submit their receipts for reimbursement after their travel took place. While Carleton's travel policy allowed for other means of travel funding to be distributed, having travellers submit expense claims *after* travel was a way of ensuring the university remained accountable to its grant funders.

"The university as a Public Institution is obligated to account for every dollar spent for any grants it receives. Government funding often carries additional restrictions," explains Genevieve Harrison, CFICE Project Administrator. "The easiest way for an institution to do this is to only release money after proof can be provided for how that money has been spent. This puts the burden of financial accountability on the traveller."

Depending on the travel requirements, the costs to CFICE participants could sometimes be well over $1,500. For CFICE members with limited financial flexibility, like students and some community partners, carrying this expense burden for weeks or even months after travelling was extremely challenging, and perpetuated a power imbalance that went against CFICE's community-first focus.

"The **original policy interpretation impacted our ability to equitably include community voices in our project planning**," states Peter Andrée, CFICE Principal Investigator (PI). "While we ensured community voices were present at meetings through technology like Skype, it wasn't ideal. For a community-first CCE project, we can't afford to not have community partners at the table."

Changing how Carleton University implemented its travel policy didn't happen overnight. Instead, it took months of deliberation by a special committee of university representatives. In late 2016, Carleton's Research Accounting office updated its interpretation of the travel policy, granting Carleton and associated individuals the ability to apply for travel bursaries under select circumstances.

Peter Andree shares his views on being community first at C2UExpo 2017.

Unlike travel expense claims, travel bursaries are granted based on travel *estimates*. They can therefore be provided to individuals in advance of travel to cover costs up front. This change has had a big impact on the ability of CFICE to remain true to their mandate of being community-first. For example, **the bursary has meant a stronger presence of community partners at CFICE events where project decision-making takes place**.

"The bursary [available for the CFICE Community Impact Symposium] meant more of our community partners could actually attend to help us interpret the data and shape the recommendations. That event changed how we planned to share our research results, which will help us reach more people in the long-run," says Andrée. The impacts of this policy change haven't just been felt at a project level. CFICE individuals have benefitted too.

"Support through the travel bursary created an opportunity for me to participate in a national conversation about CCE," explains Colleen Christopherson-Cote, Community Co-lead of CFICE's Evaluation and Analysis Working Group. "Without this support I would never be able

Community Partner Jason Garlough adds his input to CFICE's evaluation data.

to manage travel and participation in multiple events in Ottawa. In return, my expertise and community voice would not be included as easily in the dialogue at the CFICE table. Including, and resourcing, opportunities for equitable community participation is at the heart of the Community First approach."

This bursary is a start in addressing the costs to community partners of participating in CCE, but one significant downside is that the bursary is taxable, reducing the full amount of reimbursement that participants receive. Moving forward, it is important to keep trying to find even better resource solutions for communities. As Andrée notes, it's often the little changes that can have far-reaching impacts on community-campus engagement work.

As Andrée reflects, "This experience with Carleton University's travel policy is a reminder that **when institutions are more community first in their policies and practices, even in small ways, this can have a big impact on how they serve their communities**."

Community-Campus Engagement Professionals:

Please note: While the other sections of this report are based on data from Phase I of CFICE, this section has been assembled from interviews with three community-campus engagement professionals with experience in broader CCE efforts.

Community-Campus Engagement Professionals (CCEPs) are non-academic staff at post-secondary institutions, or members of not-for-profits, whose **role is to facilitate relationships between post-secondary institutions and the community**. Lina D. Dostilio and Lane G. Perry define these professionals from the campus side as "[s]taff whose energy, professional identity, and growth trajectory bring them to change-oriented and civically oriented community engagement" (2017, p.3). Community-based professionals also bring this change-orientation to their work to connect their organizations with post-secondary campuses

Sometimes called **brokers**, other times referred to as **boundary-spanners**, these professionals **differ from faculty and/or community professionals in that they often hold multiple responsibilities** with respect to community-campus engagement, many of which are administrative in nature. These responsibilities can include logistical planning and coordination, administering funding relating to the partnership, relationship building and maintenance, and providing training and development for faculty, students, and community.

While there is a variety of different structures that house CCEPs, from campus-based service-learning offices to community-based brokers such as the Trent Community Research Centre, the **main goal of these professionals is to prioritize inclusive practices for increasing the quality and diversity of partnerships** between community organizations and post-secondary institutions.

Actions CCEPs can take to ensure community priorities come first:

- Build relationships with community partners by:
  - Ensuring that partnerships are equitable by understanding community needs, experiences and perspectives.
  - Participating in the community through networking and being involved in community action.
  - Recognizing the research needs of community partners and choosing academic research that adds value.
  - Managing expectations about the outcomes of CCE work. For example, being realistic about chances for funding.
  - Responding to the evolving needs of community partners by customizing business practices, refining workflows and keeping current with changing priorities.
  - Sustaining relationships with community partners by building trust and increasing the level of engagement over time.
- Build support for community-driven CCE in post-secondary institutions by:
  - Advocating for CCE training for faculty and students.
  - Partnering with administration to promote and design CCE initiatives.
  - Network and form relationships with campus groups and faculty who are involved in CCE work.
  - Build partnerships with student or administrative groups that support student engagement and work to create new student engagement initiatives.
  - Support students who are currently working on CCE projects.
- Facilitate communications between community and academic partners by:
  - Deciding goals and roles from start of the project.
  - Understanding the constraints and available resources.
  - Ensuring that project's status is transparent throughout project.
  - Recognizing when support is needed.

When Community-Campus Engagement Professionals are Community First

Community-campus engagement professionals have the **valuable role of creating trusting, equal and reciprocal relationships with their community and academic partners**. According to Lynn Sutankayo, Partnership Coordinator at the University of Alberta's (North Campus) Community Service-Learning (CSL) unit, these relationships are "critical to the success of a partnership and the outcomes that can be achieved from a CSL project." One of UAlberta's most successful partnerships is with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN), a non-profit organization that works to enhance the quality of life for newcomers and all Canadians. UAlberta's work with EMCN illustrates the results that are possible when using community-first principles to foster good relationships.

When Lynn started working with the EMCN in 2012, UAlberta had already laid the groundwork for the successes that were to come. "They had a good relationship that was built over 7 years or so. There was a level of trust between the Partnership Coordinator staff and EMCN volunteer Coordinator staff due to years of co-creating successful, reciprocal CSL projects," says Lynn. At that time, UAlberta worked with instructors to provide student volunteers from Arts Faculty courses to support children and youth with homework, language and social skills in EMCN's Homework Clubs. As UAlberta's CSL unit grew in its numbers of affiliated courses, their capacity to offer CSL students valuable community engagement placements with the organization also grew. "When I began in 2012, EMCN hosted around 7 students from 1-2 courses per semester," says Lynn. "Now, given increased capacity from both our sides, they work with as many as 40 CSL students in a semester." Furthermore, the scope and responsibility of their shared work has also increased: "While continuing to host CSL students in homework club roles, CSL students also work on other aspects of the volunteer program. For example, this semester CSL students collaborated with staff and community members to film a mock refugee hearing to be used as an educational resource."

Lynn Sutankayo,
Partnership Coordinator at
the University of Alberta

While enjoying increased capacity for engagement with EMCN, Lynn believes that **the quality of their relationship is the real marker of success**. "'Increased engagement' doesn't necessarily equal more participants," she clarifies. "There is also a type of increased engagement that 'deepens' the relationship. For example, a deepened relationship is one where we can talk frankly about setbacks, yet agree to continue working together and to improve on the process for next time."

Lynn stresses **the importance of community-first thinking in creating the conditions for increased engagement**. She and her colleagues have readily adapted to the evolving needs of EMCN: "Something we strive to do well is listen to their needs and respond to the ideas that surface in friendly conversation. **Together, we decide the type of engagement that has the greatest chance for everyone**—students, instructors and the organization—to be successful. I think that is part of a community-first approach; starting where the community is at." Lynn acknowledges that "community organizations, like faculty, are at different points in their community engagement journey. Some organizations may not work closely with the university, while other organizations have their foot in many different aspects of university life."

From these early successes, EMCN and UAlberta's CSL office have been able to co-create a variety of initiatives both at the university and in the community. Lynn reports that the EMCN helped UAlberta educate students about working with and alongside community groups: "We partnered with EMCN to co-design a course called CSL 350, 'Introduction to Community-based Research'. It was taught by our CSL director, David Peacock, who is a member of the CFICE team, in collaboration with EMCN's researcher and volunteer coordinator. Based on the research

from that course, and their expertise, EMCN has developed a homework club best practices guide to be shared city-wide with practitioners who work with newcomers and youth." In response to EMCN's desire to provide even better support to the CSL students that volunteer in Homework Clubs, Lynn explains that: "we worked with UAlberta Libraries include a website link where CSL students could access curriculum guides and resources, which EMCN can reference in their CSL student orientation. This new relationship with the library is a way not only to support student learning, but also to share university resources with community partners."

UAlberta and EMCN are looking forward to expanding the scope of their work together in the future. Their most recent collaboration was to co-write a federal government grant proposal. The grant is for a program to "build the social capital of 40 to 50 newcomers and diverse youth to participate in community service-learning activities, based upon EMCN's unique family-centered approach to youth settlement," says Lynn. "The funding, if granted, will go towards EMCN and another community partner to implement the program."

The success of the working relationship between the EMCN and UAlberta's CSL office would not be possible without investing in community engagement work by CCEPs. In fact, Lynn says that, "one of the most significant drivers in this work we do together is the energy and innovation brought by EMCN's volunteer management staff. These staff saw the potential that CSL students could bring as volunteers in their programming." **Investing in CCEPs has proven to be a successful method of relationship building for UAlberta** as well as personally satisfying for Lynn and her colleagues. "A highlight for me is the relationship I have formed with EMCN's volunteer management team," explains Lynn. "It's trusting, it's energizing, it's motivating, and it's responsive in the ways we support each other's work. That kind of close working relationship has been really valuable."