

Learning from community-university research partnerships: A Canadian study on community impact and conditions for success

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This article reflects the growing interest and significant socio-economic contributions culminating from Community-University Research Partnerships (CURP) across Canada. It is based on a series of in-depth interviews conducted with community and university partners funded by Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The research partnerships represented various partnership arrangements and thematic sectors reveals the significant value inherent in partnership research in solving community problems, building institutional capacity, new ideas, management of skills and new technologies, while extending current, and new areas of research. These partnerships provide evidence that collaborative learning and action can accomplish much when they are able to pool diverse resources, skills, and forms of creativity. Partnerships also provide important opportunities for students to learn about community problems first hand, while developing leadership, communication, and research skills. The 'spill-over' affects of these partnerships are substantial, as articulated by those interviewed for this study: in terms of informing policy, leveraging additional funding, the development and maintenance of new projects, and in building strong relationships and social capital between university and community. This research was conducted by the Centre for Public Sector Studies at the University of Victoria between March and April 2012 using background documents supplemented by interviews with select award holders across Canada representing the various nationally funded partnership arrangements. The projects highlighted took place both in urban and rural settings across various sectors and forms of intervention