



Community Based Research Canada (CBRC) Program Development Report

Executive Summary

January, 2017

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The Community Based Research Canada (CBRC) Program Development Report was commissioned to focus CBRC's mission in terms of program services and priorities in a time of rapid change in Canadian and global public policy, institutional and academic environments.

The Report consists of a Program Backgrounder, which charts CBRC's development path since its inception in 2008, and the findings of a consultation process which included 8 out of CBRC's 10 current University members, 9 national public and campus engagement leaders and 6 key informants for a graduate student internship program focus group. CBRC members gave insights on overall opportunities and focus areas for CBRC programming, and specific ideas for member services, communications and capacity building. National leaders, which included practitioners and consultants, researchers, indigenous and NGO group representatives, identified priorities for CBRC within the CBR and campus-community engagement movement, with specific ideas related to CBR capacity-building, programming and partnerships. The Graduate student focus group included PhD and post-doc students and trainers who identified needs, opportunities and specific components for a possible national CBR graduate student internship program.

CBRC University members expressed overall support for the vision and mission of CBRC, sharing the consensus that CBRC as a movement and organization is uniquely situated and relevant in Canada to support community-based action research for societal well being and to enable institutional transformation and policy change. They identified the need to enhance CBRC's communication services and on-line presence, and in particular to directly engage with and promote the profiles, needs and activities of its campus members. For capacity building, members generally want CBRC to facilitate and create increasing institutional infrastructure supports and services for networking and capacity building to enable CBR and respectful, dynamic partnerships between the broader society and campuses. Rather than lead research projects, members want CBRC to focus on supporting collaboration between existing and emerging CBR scholars, students, projects and initiatives with specific services such as curriculum and training programs, case studies, impact analyses, tenure and promotion strategies which support and reward CES and CBR, and by creating a simple and searchable on-line directory featuring people and projects. Facilitating the

alignment of CBR with other engagement initiatives on campuses, in particular service learning, teaching and offices of engagement, and through collaboration with national network and policy actions, were widely supported suggestions. CBRC helping facilitate regional hubs and collaboration, that reflect and accommodate Canada's geographic (urban/ rural, north/south) and cultural diversity, and include a particular focus on indigenous cultures and communities, was also mentioned by many members. Finally, in terms of CBRC events, face to face regional and national member gatherings, providing on-line and face to face learning opportunities in formats such as workshops and institutes, while continuing with the biannual CUExpo conferences, were all widely encouraged.

The National leaders interviewed also affirmed CBRC's mission and vision and were passionate about the need for CBRC, working as "a big umbrella" in collaboration with national and global allies, to increase the role of higher education in Canada as a key catalyst and space for public engagement, societal well-being, justice and innovation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2016 Call for Action was frequently mentioned as a foundational focus and opportunity for CBRC programming, especially with Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017. Many said that CBRC's visibility and presence could be much stronger and suggested that CBRC align and partner with other national and global engagement and CBR networks while improving its on-line services and social media presence via a communications strategy. Culture, systems change and transformative social innovation were mentioned as ways to frame the work and mission of CBRC and public engagement with higher education. This included valuing CBR scholars but also students, community partners and their contributions, CBR/ engagement practitioners and staff, and senior administration. Leaders expressed the need for CBRC to support and facilitate the building of a national CBR community-of-practice (COP) in CBR and CES (community-engaged scholarship), with training and support focused on community-based or led research partnerships between campus and communities such as indigenous groups, NGOs, governments, health care institutions, or with other non-academic bodies. They felt there was significant momentum in civil society including with non-academic funders (e.g. such as McConnell, the Community Foundations of Canada, and the United Ways of Canada) to engage students and communities and mobilize the assets of higher education bodies and funders to build a more equitable and inclusive Canada. Most felt that CBRC and other related national engagement initiatives and networks (e.g. Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE), the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN), Research Impact, Institute for KM, Community Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH)), and especially those working in the public domain, need to work together more to grow the collective pie for the common and greater good. CUExpo was mentioned often as a key focal point for aligning efforts and vision.

CBRC University Members and National Leaders were overwhelmingly in support of developing increased services, supports and piloting a national internship program

for graduate students and emerging scholars in Canada. Many campuses and engagement leaders already relied heavily on students, especially graduate students, for their own research and development needs, and believed an intentional program supported by campuses and funders could provide an excellent foundation for national CBR and community-campus engagement efforts. All members of the graduate internship focus group had extensive experience in training, teaching, and in doctorate or post-doctorate work in CBR and believed that there was a big demand and need for training on campuses and in civil society. Several had already been involved, especially in the health and HIV-AIDS CBR field, with graduate internship programs. Mentorships, training institutes, creating funding and scholarship opportunities, travel grants, skills building, and sharing case studies were mentioned as core components of successful capacity building programs.

For first steps in developing a program, graduate internship program focus group members suggested that CBRC do a proper scan of existing curriculum, training, funding and program resources and gaps in Canada. Documenting the resources and creating case studies and a repository would serve as the basis for developing a program, which could be piloted via CBRC members and key allies. Suggestions for resourcing such a program included engaging talk student and youth academic and non-academic funders and to engage MITACS, Canada's major graduate student funding body, in the early stages or as major partners. Again, CBRC playing a facilitative and convening role was recommended. Focus group members emphasized the need to frame such a program in terms of the centrality of the youth and student experience in society and to position a graduate student CBR program as an excellent way to also engage undergrads and even high schools, as the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) has done in the UK, in cutting edge research and public engagement projects. They agreed that, as Canada's next generation, graduate students and all students are looking for personally and socially meaningful training, research and learning experiences.

On the global front, interviewees encouraged CBRC to continue to collaborate and partner with key networks having similar missions or programs. The UNESCO Chair in CBR and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, <http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/> jointly held in Canada and India, and the UK's National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/> are two leading international initiatives considered most relevant to CBRC's mission, with Ireland's Campus Engage network www.campusengage.ie and the European Living Knowledge Network <http://www.livingknowledge.org/> also mentioned as key allies. The CBRC Program Report includes the International Collaboration Framework created in 2013 by CBRC and the NCCPE entitled "Stimulating Innovation in Engaged Practice and Developing Institutional Cultures that Support it" which articulates four key areas for joint programming: Capacity Building and Skills Development; Impact and Evidence; Research and Insight; and Culture and Drivers for Change available on the CBRC website. This continues to provide a helpful framework for connecting core

aspects of both CBR and the overall campus engagement movement relevant to different cultural and context settings.

The CBRC Program Report identifies three areas of recommendations arising from the interviews:

A. Program Development

- Develop a CBRC Capacity Building program including CBRC sponsored Institutes in regional centres, the creation of on-line training and resources, and the development of a Graduate Student Internship Program.

B. National Membership and Movement Building

- Be a leader and convenor in the creation of a national community-campus engagement network and action plan with key partners, networks and funders. Build on the C2UExpo 2017 Conference in May 2017 as a key opportunity for convening and promoting national action.
- Support and build members and services within and between community and campuses and via the piloting of regional CBRC hubs.

C. Communications Planning

- Develop a communications plan and strategy that includes social media functions and a simple searchable CBRC Directory (building on the Engaged Practice Learning Exchange) and Map.