

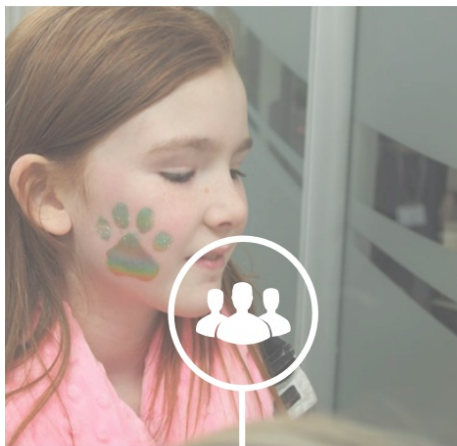


Impacting Community Strength & Sustainability:

Community-Campus Engagement & Poverty Reduction
at Station 20 West (Saskatoon, SK)

People

Relationships make this work possible.



Passion

To have impact we must engage the mind and the heart.



Place

Location and space matter.



What is the project about?

This community-based research (CBR) project (where community and university researchers share expertise, work, and learn together to make a positive impact on community) examines community-campus engagement (CCE) that is, how the University collaborates with community to make a difference difference at Station 20 West Community Enterprise Centre (S20W) in Saskatoon, SK.

Why did this project happen?

The project builds on the foundational work of all the project partners and their long-term formal and informal ties with those working on collaborative, multi-sectoral initiatives to reduce poverty and increase quality of life.

It builds on longer-term research (a) to evaluate S20W investments in a community economic development approach to social and economic fairness engaging the community in its own development while pooling capacity for collective impact and (b) to understand how innovation or new ideas and methods emerge, change, and impact communities.

The study was also supported by funding from the Poverty Reduction Hub (co-led by Carleton University and Vibrant Communities Canada) of Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE), an action research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada "to strengthen community-based non-profits, universities and colleges, and funding agencies to build more successful, innovative, prosperous, and resilient communities."

Where is Station 20 West?

Saskatoon is Saskatchewan's largest urban community, situated centrally in the province in Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis.

Neighbourhoods represent some of the most vulnerable, highest disparity, and most diverse communities. [1]

Station 20 West is a Community Enterprise Centre in the heart of Saskatoon's Westside Core Neighbourhoods.



What questions were asked?



How well does community-campus engagement support innovative capacity building that can make our community more inclusive, strong, and sustainable?



How does co-location (sharing the same place) of partner organizations affect service, how do their different mandates affect outcomes, and how do synergies (where organizations cooperate to achieve more than they can do alone) develop among them or not?



How does university presence impact the community enterprise model?



How can we best measure the impacts and outcomes of innovations for knowledge, frameworks, and tools that can be used in urban centres across Canada?

How was research conducted?

Participatory action research—research by the people, for the people—is the guiding approach and includes formal as well as informal capacity-building or capacity-sharing opportunities, such as story-telling, listening, engaging, and creating knowledge collaboratively.



Surveys



focus groups



interviews



literature review

Who was involved with the project?



Key learnings:

People



At the heart of CCE at S20W are relationships built on trust and reciprocity.

The people—staff, visitors, service users, professionals, community members—make S20W as successful as it is.

“A really diverse assemblage of co-locating partners, all of whom have a thread that ties us all together, and that's social justice.”—co-locator

The majority of the people here in the building have that capacity. They listen deeply when they need to listen deeply, they are responsive when they need to be responsive.”—co-locator

Passion



At the heart of the relationships are people who are determined, inspired and committed to working for justice and equity (social, economic, cultural, educational, and health).

“The importance of the Office goes beyond what any text on the S20W website could readily capture: You see these things happen that are synergistic and you can't necessarily always pinpoint them but the ripple effect is happening ... it's not just about the Office helping people navigate, but it's also the University understanding how members of the Core navigate their lives for success however they define it.”—University student

Place



S20W has a vision to contribute to social and economic equity in the community, using its place and space for collaborative community development that capitalizes on community assets and potential.

“I have probably 3 or 4 mentors from this facility, particularly Aboriginal mentors. Because I need a safe space to ask questions and learn.” —community partner

Reconciliation & Poverty Reduction

During the course of the project, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada released the Calls to Action. This intensified our decolonizing methods and guided thinking about the systemic factors that needed to be addressed for an end to poverty.

These Calls to Action made clear that ending poverty is about ending discrimination, ending the systemic barriers that reproduce inequality and poverty that are impacting Indigenous communities unfairly.



For more information contact The Office of the Treaty Commissioner

Community-Campus Engagement (CCE)

What does the presence of the University bring to the community and to co-location?

In answering the question, people found it difficult to speak only about the Office. Indeed, some people argued that evaluating the Office meant evaluating how well the University resourced, supported, and promoted the Office.

Our findings underscore the following:

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-  University policies and procedures pose challenges for CCE.
 -  Academic privilege collides with the lived experience of people in the Core Neighbourhoods.
 -  Questions remain about University support and long-term commitment to CCE.
 -  Community craves accessible engagement with and information about relevant research.

Lessons Learned

Managing effectively the multiple roles—buffer, bridge, guest, host, and ambassador—of the Office of Community Engagement and Outreach is key to CCE success.

Resourcing, supporting, and promoting the Office and CBR is a critical responsibility of the University.

There is a foundation of trust, relationship building, and capacity building at the heart of this innovation to build strong, sustainable communities.

CCE often shines a light on what shapes people's lives in the Core neighbourhood, helps attract investment in the community, and highlights educational, employment, and other community development possibilities.

CCE helps people understand the Core and creates opportunities for the Core to learn about itself.

CCE makes the University easier to understand and seem more accessible.

The Office pushes boundaries in overt, covert, and creative ways that sustain critical thinking, expanded educational opportunities, and new strategies to meet social needs.

The Office mentors for “solidarity-making or ally work” at the heart of good CCE.

The Office helps people navigate University bureaucracy, ethical issues, power imbalances, and a culture that undervalues the rigour of community-based research.

Station 20 West: A Model of Co-location

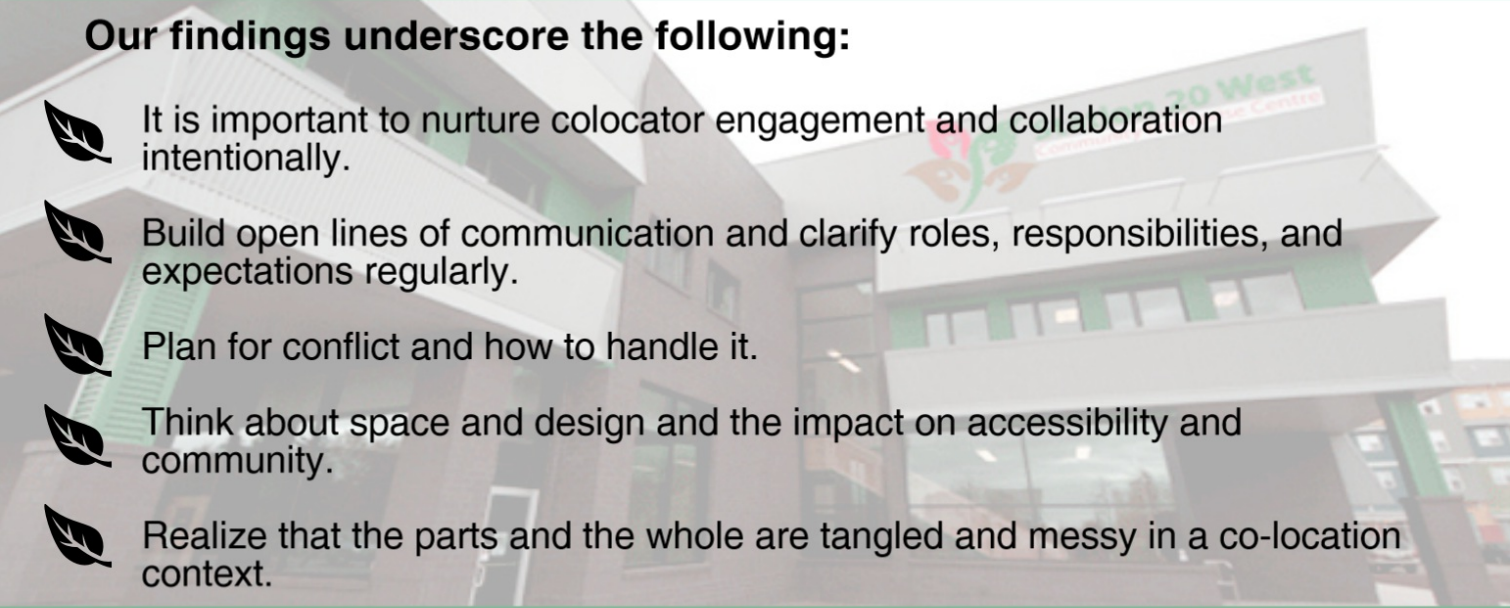





What did we learn about organizational co-location at Station 20 West?

The co-location model is widely associated with innovations in providing multiple points of access to various organizations, reducing the cost of access and inclusion, as well as facilitating community partners and the University in informal collaboration, relationship building, and resource sharing. In the case of S20W it is impossible to untangle co-location from location.

Overall, YXE Connects survey participants, many of whom had helped mobilize and promote S20W, underline the success of S20W in imparting a sense of security and belonging within the community as well as bridging the realms of community and University.

Still dismayed by the withdrawal of S20W funds by the Government in 2008 and at the closure of the Good Food Junction Co-operative grocery store in 2016, participants recommended expanding the range of services, especially for youth and people with disabilities, and promoting the remarkable story of S20W more broadly to the public.

Our findings underscore the following:

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-  It is important to nurture colocator engagement and collaboration intentionally.
 -  Build open lines of communication and clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations regularly.
 -  Plan for conflict and how to handle it.
 -  Think about space and design and the impact on accessibility and community.
 -  Realize that the parts and the whole are tangled and messy in a co-location context.

Lessons Learned

Synergies develop in planned and less planned, formal and informal, direct and indirect ways.

Relationships, respect, and reciprocity are key resources to building fairness.

Community ownership and engagement are critical to S20W success. Cultural inclusion and ceremony are critical.

Social justice is the thread that ties people together - People, Passion, and Place create a cocktail for success.

Education and learning that respects different knowledges and worldviews is the foundation to socio-economic justice.

The University's presence strengthens the work of CBOs, facilitating access to resources, education, and employment opportunities.

The University Office and CCE is at the heart of a "culture of learning," deep listening, critical thinking, inclusive knowledge, and social innovation.



Saskatoon Poverty
Reduction Partnership



Poverty Reduction and the project

The SPRP has 3 foundational elements:





- A city that bridges
- We are all Treaty people
- Nothing about us without us.

As a partnership we build capacity in each other
and in the community to

Create conditions which enable all
members of our community to
develop their talents and abilities, to
have the choice to actively participate
in economic, cultural and social life
and to enjoy a good standard of living
on a sustainable basis.

Our work is rooted in reciprocity and trust.

Our findings underscore the following:

-  Creating space for the lived experience of poverty in CCE is critical.
-  Perceptions of poverty are often rooted in stereotypes and a lack of experience.
-  Community feels researched-to-death
-  Outputs often don't meet the needs of community

Community members with lived experience
of poverty were consulted and included
throughout the research process.

Professors of Poverty

By: Vanessa Charles, Inclusion Advocate

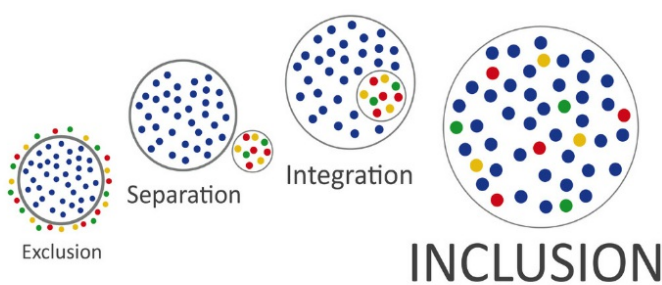
Professors, in general, are people that have extensive knowledge and are learned in a specific field. That knowledge has generally been gained through formal education. These professors are extremely gifted in their expertise.

Professors of Poverty are equally gifted and knowledgeable, though this education is delivered through their lived experiences. They have knowledge of the complexity of poverty as it relates to their lives. This knowledge is a unique gift and cannot be replicated or taught through the use of textbooks, lectures, or even research.

A Professor of Poverty once said, "You cannot learn what my life is like by reading or taking classes, you can learn my life by crawling into my skin and living my life."

Many of the Professors of Poverty have extensive knowledge of what it is like living with unsafe housing, lacking food, living with physical and mental health limitations, the experience of family violence, and the general feeling of isolation and the inability to "fit in" with community.

It is critical in poverty reduction work to include the voices and experience of Professors of Poverty so that policies, practices, and projects reflect the actual circumstances and not the perceptions of those with no experience.



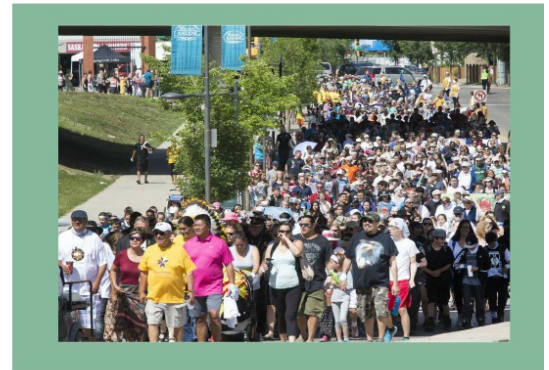
Are you looking for support to build a
culture of inclusion in your work?

The SPRP has created a guide for
community and employers to support
this work.

Email SPRPcoordinator@gmail.com
for more information.

Team Reflections

- Without reconciliation, there can be no end to poverty.
- We continue to depend on the expertise of those with lived experience, but institutions make it hard to recognize and reward them adequately or appropriately.
- People, place, and passion are the critical elements of this work.
- When we share CCE projects, we must make sure that the delivery is relevant and useful to the community and accurately reflects community input.
- Community-campus engagement is a key component of the reconciliation journey.



Place
Community
Clear
CCE
Content
Poverty
Passion
Innovation
People
Safe
Reconciliation
Community

Looking for more information or want to get involved with Community-Campus Engagement ?



Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) is a research project that studies how community and campus players work together to positively impact their communities.

For CFICE, being community first means engaging in equitable partnerships to co-create knowledge and action plans for addressing pressing community issues.

Through community-driven projects, CFICE participants test community first approaches to community-campus engagement (CCE). These collaborative approaches build healthier, more democratic and longer-lasting community-campus relationships.

Our research has generated a wealth of community-first stories and resources that you can use to make your CCE work more effective. (<https://carleton.ca/communityfirst/> or on FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/CFICECan/>)

Funding for this project was provided by



Social Sciences and Humanities
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Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

More about our local Saskatoon Partners:



The Community-University Institute for Social Research facilitates partnerships between the university and the larger community in order to engage in relevant social research that supports a deeper understanding of our communities and reveals opportunities for improving our quality of life.



The Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership is an intersectoral collaborative that convenes, catalyzes and coordinates partnerships in Saskatoon to improve policies and practices for our most vulnerable citizens.



Station 20 West is a Community Enterprise Centre (CEC) in the heart of Saskatoon's west-side core neighbourhoods and makes significant contribution to social and economic equity in these neighbourhoods, working to reduce poverty and build healthy communities through a collaborative community development approach.



We strengthen and build community-university relationships in Saskatoon's inner city aimed at growing social, educational, economic and health equity through research and experiential learning. We strive for deep collaboration and co-creation of knowledge, and prioritize projects that are community driven and meaningful for the communities with which we work.

Resource Cited:

[1] Engler-Stringer, R., Muhajarine, N., Ridalls, T., Abonyi, S., Vatanparast, H., Whiting, S., & Walker, R. (2016). The Good Food Junction: A community-based food store intervention to address nutritional health inequities. *JMIR Res Protoc*, 5(2), E52. <http://www.researchprotocols.org/2016/2/e52/> DOI: 10.2196/RESPROT.5303