Knowledge Exchange Session Summary
December 2, 2024

The **Community-Campus Responses to Crisis (CCRC) project** explores how post-secondary community engagement teams may effectively support community initiatives to address social impacts of climate change.

On December 2, 2024, CCRC project partners came together for the third Knowledge Exchange Session of the series. Participants heard about case study updates, and were invited to consider questions posed by Case Study Partners.

December Update on the CCRC Project

Co-directors Amber Fletcher (Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Regina) and Magda Goemans (Manager, Community Campus Engage Canada) started the session with an update on the CCRC project.

Amber spoke about some important themes and revelations that have been revealed through project interviews and Knowledge Exchange Network discussions, including:

- How student involvement has enriched project activities, for example by bringing in new ideas and questions;
- Interesting differences in scope among the regional case studies (e.g., an in-depth partnership with one community organization within one case study, versus partnerships with multiple community organizations in another study);
- Some concerns about institutions' dependence on individuals (e.g., faculty) to establish and maintain relationships with community partners (where there are not formal community engagement offices).

Magda then mentioned the CCRC web page and encouraged project participants to check the site frequently for updates.

Case Study Updates and Questions

Brief updates were presented by participants in three of the case studies. Amber encouraged each group to pose a question to the Knowledge Exchange Network about an issue that case study has been working through:

University of the Fraser Valley: Mariano Mapili (Associate Professor, School of Land Use and Environmental Change) commented that the project is going strong despite a hiccup in their schedule involving a workshop on extreme heat. He posed the question: "What do you do when you reach a bottleneck?" Stefania Pizzirani (Associate Director, Food and Agriculture Institute) added that their project has been doing a review for a different project about the effectiveness and usefulness of tools and toolkits. She asked: "What are we doing with outputs? Have we taken a critical review of ourselves, of what we're creating, and why?" She also asked, "Is there anything we can be doing to help reward early career researchers and students to benefit their resumes?"

University of Regina: Adhika Ezra (Master's student) spoke about the progress of the U of R's project, which has been looking at extreme weather challenges for populations experiencing homelessness in Regina. The research team has conducted 22 interviews with service providers (municipal government, health authorities, grassroots service providers, non-profits, shelters, etc.) and examining the city's experience with extreme weather strategies. Within this community-campus partnership, Adhika has also been providing support to a community organization to help provide food and free haircuts to people experiencing homelessness. Amber (case study lead) asked the group: "Are there other forms of resource sharing that universities can/should engage in with communities? Should CCE offices advocate for this?" and "How can community networks more effectively draw upon university resources to support their work?"

Acadia University: Mary Sweatman (Associate Professor, Community Development) described how the Acadia case study is working with organizations dedicated to issues of housing in their region (which has seen a massive increase in housing insecurity and homelessness), within the context of climate change impacts. Acadia has worked with over 40 service-learning undergrads in this project within the courses Mary has taught. A fourth-year course consisting of six students put on a beautiful engagement for service providers who are helping those experiencing homelessness and creating the understanding and care that they need to continue the work that they do. Mary asked: "How can we better promote and tell the stories that universities are doing to lean into their role around climate justice and housing? How can we help universities do more and share these stories to create momentum?" Mary also asked if members of the KE Network have any "creative solutions in better compensating community members for their time and knowledge."

Shasta Grant (Master's student) talked about interviews that have been conducted with the community partner Homeless No More. Shasta is working on writing a summary of the case study findings that can potentially be used for more of Mary's courses in the future. Acadia has received interesting feedback from its partners on the successes and challenges in the collective movement to end homelessness. They have seen successes in: significant financial impact for organizations and funding projects, creating temporary roles for students, and providing hope and education to the community surrounding addressing homelessness. They have seen challenges in: the decolonization of the work they are doing, and in educating the community on racism and anti-immigrant rhetoric. Shasta asked the group, "What structure can Homeless No More take on if they plan to bring in more paid roles", and, "How they can increase government understanding so that the sector can get the resources that it needs?"

Knowledge Exchange Network Response to Case Study Team Questions

Following these presentations, Amber invited the wider KE Network group to answer any of the questions that were posed by case study partners.

- In response to Mary's question about compensating community members, Mariano spoke about what UFV and the CityStudio project have been doing to show recognition to community members, and suggested writing articles about their contributions in their local papers as a form of non-monetary compensation.
- Regarding questions posed about resource sharing, Stefania noted that the longevity of community practice is important, and stated that although the projects have a start and end date, the issues themselves do not.
- Responding to the questions about community compensation and resource sharing, Shahad Al-Saqqar from McMaster University spoke about the importance of accessible, interactive community practices, and the voice that community engagement professionals can have with universities to financially compensate the important work being done by community members.
- Christian Tremblay from the University of Ottawa talked about the work that university is doing to produce a community engagement framework, and acknowledged that they need resources to support local, accessible campaigns.
- In response to the question about resource sharing, Stephanie Warner from the University of Calgary spoke about the importance of having a plain language summary alongside any academic publications that come out of their work, to make project findings more accessible to a wider audience.

Amber then suggested that the session could be summarized with the theme *going beyond*: thinking about the things that universities can do that go beyond what they've been traditionally positioned to do.

Moving Forward

Magda posed a series of questions for the KE Network to think about over the rest of the CCRC project, including:

- What are some promising practices in addressing climate change and supporting boundary spanners within community-campus engagement?
- How might climate change impact efforts build relationships?
- Who should be at the table in climate change conversations?
- How do we fuel continuity and build momentum in partnerships?
- How should differing vulnerabilities be adequately recognized in talking about climate change?
- How can we support the wellness and mental aspects of climate change for students and boundary spanners?

Magda then discussed the activities and outputs that have been proposed for the remainder of the project, including:

- Podcast episodes (including an episode dedicated to boundary spanners)
- A research summary report
- A promising practices guide for adapting to climate change through community-campus partnerships

To end the session, Amber and Magda wished the group a happy holiday season and invited all to contact via email with any questions or updates.