

An International Perspective: Successes, Challenges and Future Directions of National Organizations Supporting Community-Campus Engagement

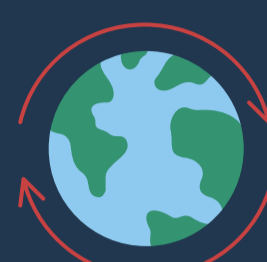
An international panel of leaders from national networks (in Canada, US, UK, Europe and Australia) was brought together in conversation at the C2UExpo 2023 conference in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The panelists, Norbert Steinhaus (Living Knowledge Network, Germany), Paige Castro Reyes (Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, US), Sophie Duncan (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, UK), Margaret Malone (Gateways Australia), Joanna Ochocka (CBRCanada), and Crystal Tremblay (K4C Salish Sea Hub) have over the past 25 years promoted, facilitated and supported community-campus engagement initiatives. The panel was moderated by Martin Taylor (CBRCanada) and Steve Dooley (Simon Fraser University) was the rapporteur.

Here are some key reflections from the discussion on the successes and challenges of these efforts and considerations for how international collaboration can be expanded to enhance their impact at local, national and global scales:

1

There is value in stronger international collaboration.

There are well established organizations in various countries committed to community-engaged research, stronger international collaboration among them can serve to strengthen our collective efforts by exchanging ideas and best practices, learning from each other, and inspiring new participants to enter the field. Sustaining enthusiasm between big events, such as C2UExpo and Living Knowledge, can however, be a challenge.



2

Efforts for international collaboration should leverage existing structures.

It is important to support international collaboration without creating additional burdens or inventing new structures. We can focus instead on utilizing existing structures and connecting points, such as the C2UExpo and Living Knowledge conferences. Creative approaches to funding diverse participation in this collaboration, such as crowdfunding, can be explored.



3

Trust and transparency are critical for community-campus relationships.

Trust and partnership are crucial in creating and sustaining strong community-campus relationships, especially, though not exclusively, in relation to public health issues. Understanding the specific contexts of communities and valuing diverse and lived experiences are essential.



4

Roles of post-secondary institutions need to change to adapt to community needs.

There is a growing demand for research to help solve societal problems and as such, how post-secondary institutions work with communities must adapt. Considerations can be made, for example, to train faculty and staff at post-secondary institutions to better work with communities. There is also an expanding interest from community to have opportunities for short micro-credential training on various topics.



5

SDG's can be advanced through global collaboration with an emphasis on local implementation.

Regional hubs and networks play a significant role in raising awareness, advocating for better funding and infrastructure, and avoiding duplication of efforts. Local implementation of community-based research, adapting global knowledge to local contexts, is critical, along with supporting partnerships with community organizations who have established community trust and can move quickly.



6

Publishers and post-secondary institutions must transform to embrace more forms of knowledge.

IT has significantly improved the speed and accessibility of publishing, enabling global participation. However, social and institutional barriers still exist. To decrease these barriers and have the opportunity to learn from diverse perspectives, alternative forms of communication, such as community film-making, art, and theater, should be recognized by publishers and post-secondary institutions. Journal policies, peer reviewers, and the academic system itself need to adapt to accommodate more forms of knowledge and knowledge outputs.



7

Facilitating mentorship, informal connections, and funding can support new leaders and researchers.

Passing the baton to the new generation is crucial. Through stronger international collaboration, there are opportunities to promote and share best practices, to support and mentor new leaders and researchers in community-based research, to offer inclusive and informal networking opportunities, and to recognize emerging talents. Funding opportunities need to be expanded and/or barriers removed to support networks and emerging scholars in underfunded regions and facilitate participation in national and global events.

