THE MANY PATHS OF CUP
The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) is an organization that facilitates collaborations between the University of Alberta and CUP’s broader communities. CUP is unique to Alberta because it serves as a leader and facilitator of collaborative research and evaluation projects designed to advance knowledge, policies and practices in support of the well-being of children, youth, and families.

We are delighted to share our review of the past year’s work of the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP). CUP enables seamless interaction between the community and the university. It exemplifies both diversity and unity – diversity in membership, activities, methodologies and impacts, but unity in purpose - a commitment to enhancing the well-being of children, youth, and families. Thus, although CUP members walk along different paths, the unification of their diverse perspectives and approaches enables them to create effective solutions to complex social problems.

A broad spectrum of community and university members from diverse sectors and disciplines are engaged in CUP. They include policymakers, public and private-sector citizens, health practitioners, educational institutions, low-income families, Aboriginal communities, multicultural organizations, marginalized youth, and academic researchers. As an example, check out the youth engagement project on page three. As is often the case, this project began with a request from the community. A series of open-dialogue sessions were held with community members and the importance of engaging and working with youth living in marginalized conditions (e.g., poverty, racism, mental health challenges) was identified.

CUP engages in many different activities to achieve its mission. In addition to conducting innovative community-based research and evaluation, CUP brokers, consults, incubates new approaches and mobilizes knowledge among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. For instance, CUP partnered with the Women and Children’s Health Research Institute (WCHRI) to build the capacity of its members (clinicians, researchers and students) in community-based research, qualitative methods, and knowledge translation (see page six).

CUP also employs different methodologies to conduct its work. Different kinds of data are collected (quantitative, qualitative), from different sources (practitioners, policymakers, children, youth), using different kinds of tools (surveys, focus groups, interviews). As an example, check out the project with First Nation Communities on page four. Garett Strawberry, a Yellowhead Tribal College student, developed a visual graphic to represent how First Nation communities described healthy early childhood development, which will be used to inform program planning.

CUP’s work produces a variety of beneficial impacts for children, youth, and families. CUP members gain new knowledge, skills, and experience; connect with others in their field; discover new ways of working together; and share information that can be used to inform practice, policy, and research. As can be seen on pages eight and nine, through a variety of different learning opportunities (e.g., courses, workshops, practicums) and supervision of students, CUP helps nurture generations of practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and evaluators.

Through consensus and collective capacity building CUP unites partners from across sectors and disciplines to address key issues emerging in our communities. Through the dedicated work of CUP staff, steering committee members, community partners, and stakeholders, CUP is having a positive impact on the complex social issues that affect children, youth, and families in our communities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jane Drummond, University Co-chair
Gloria Chalmers, Community Co-chair
Dr. Yoshi Iwasaki, Director
THE PATH TO YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Marginalized populations are systematically prevented from accessing critical opportunities and resources that are available to others. Programs and services that are designed to support marginalized youth are often driven by agency-based agendas (e.g., funders, non-profits, government) and sectors (e.g., health, education, social services). The result is a fragmented service-delivery model that is very difficult for marginalized youth to navigate and access.

Since 2012, CUP began to incubate a youth engagement research initiative, led by Dr. Yoshi Iwasaki. This community-driven project is one of the first of its kind to involve multiple partners (including youth, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers) to better engage and support marginalized youth at personal, family and community levels.

During the preliminary stages of the project, relationships were built with youth leaders, stakeholder agencies and university researchers, and a partnership team was developed. The partnership team is currently creating a framework for youth engagement. Essential to this research is the role of 18 youth leaders aged 16 to 25, who come from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and immigrant populations. The youth leaders took the lead in brainstorming themes with marginalized youth that focus on relationship building, co-learning, mutual understanding and respect, and the use of strength-based, growth-oriented approaches. Once the framework is completed, the partnership team will create, implement and evaluate an action plan that outlines the practice, policy and social changes that will be necessary to better engage youth. The information will then be shared with relevant stakeholders to facilitate systemic changes and enhance the lives of at-risk youth, locally, regionally, and nationally.

FUNDERS: Faculty of Extension, Killam Research Fund, Interdisciplinary Health Research Academy
THE ROAD TO HEALTHY FIRST NATION CHILD DEVELOPMENT

“We want to look at how we can work differently as a community to meet our children’s needs.”

Jody Kootenay, Director of Education, Alexander First Nation

Over the past two years, Dr. Rebecca Gokiert and her research team have been collaborating with four Yellowhead Tribal Council (YTC) communities and the Yellowhead Tribal College on the First Nation Child Development (FNCD) Project. This collaboration is looking at healthy child development from a community perspective, identifying community strengths that support healthy development and informing early childhood programs within the communities. Community partners provide crucial guidance and knowledge that contributes to the success of this project.

This past winter, the research team spoke with over 100 people (youth, adults, and Elders) from the participating communities about what is important in raising healthy children. Community input was used to create three questionnaires (teacher, family, and community) that will add to a better understanding of healthy child development. Three students from YTC communities worked with the research team. Prior to their work placements, they participated in a community-based research course at Yellowhead Tribal College. One of the students, Garett Strawberry, developed a visual graphic to represent how communities described healthy early childhood development.

In May 2013, kindergarten teachers completed nearly 120 Early Development Instrument (EDI) questionnaires across four communities. This year, along with the EDI, teachers also completed a questionnaire which reflected aspects of healthy development that the communities felt were unique to their children. Also, families completed nearly 100 questionnaires about the cultural, first language, and spiritual development of their young children. In the Fall of 2013, community research committees will review all project data, identify key messages, develop a communication plan for leadership and the broader community, and consider ways in which project outcomes could impact planning for early childhood programs.

FUNDERS: Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council and Max Bell Foundation
The Early Child Development Mapping Project (ECMap) is working closely with communities to better understand how Alberta’s young children are doing and how positive development can best be supported at local and provincial levels.

Early development results so far show that the majority of young children are developing appropriately, but a significant percentage – about 27 per cent – are experiencing developmental difficulties in Alberta. Results, which are collected for kindergarten-aged children using a population-based measurement tool called the Early Development Instrument (EDI), also show that young children are doing much better in some communities and sub-communities than in others. In one west Edmonton sub-community, to give just one example, 45 per cent of kindergarten children are experiencing developmental difficulties while in an adjacent sub-community ‘just across the road,’ only 19 per cent are struggling.

What accounts for these differences? Communities are contributing an important piece to this research puzzle by looking at their community resources and their effectiveness in promoting early development. ECMap’s community-based focus is a central and unique aspect of the five-year project. Local early development results are not only released to communities first, but communities are actively engaged in:

- sharing and interpreting their data results,
- researching their community strengths and gaps, and
- preparing action plans to support healthy early development.

This work is spearheaded by early childhood development (ECD) coalitions made up of parents, professionals, business people, care providers and community members who are passionately concerned about the well-being of young children and families. Coalitions have been mobilized in 100 communities throughout Alberta, with the help of ECMap community development staff and seed grants. The grants are provided by Alberta Education, which also funds ECMap.

Numerous studies show that communities play a crucial role in creating the environments that shape critical early development. The ECMap project will add to this growing body of knowledge and arm practitioners, policymakers and communities with concrete information they can use to address local conditions and challenges.
CUP continues to partner with Women and Children’s Health Research Institute (WCHRI) to build the capacity of WCHRI members in community-based research (CBR), qualitative research methods, and knowledge translation. WCHRI members include clinicians, researchers and students from departments at the University of Alberta, such as the Department of Pediatrics, the School of Public Health, the Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Science, and the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine.

The CUP-WCHRI partnership also supports the Science Shop Program: Summer Studentship in CBR. The Science Shop is a training opportunity that brings together University of Alberta students and community organizations to pursue research projects related to the issue of women and children’s health. In the past year, five community and university partners were matched to investigate issues such as: parental engagement in discussing harmful effects of unhealthy food and beverage marketing to children; teaching two-wheeled cycling to children with mild cognitive disabilities; and communication and vaccination uptake by recent immigrant mothers in Edmonton.

In addition, CUP and WCHRI developed a multitude of collaborations and working relationships. Mutual representation on organizational boards, drawing on CUP and WCHRI expertise, and input on important decisions and scholarly collaborations are some of the activities that enhanced the capacity of partner organizations.
LEARNING FROM OUR PATHS

In addition to leading and facilitating community-based research and evaluation (CBRE) projects, CUP members also study the work that they do. CUP is committed to growing and learning about how to do CBRE effectively and creating opportunities for people in Edmonton, in Alberta, on campus, and beyond, to learn about and apply CBRE principles to practice. Below are some examples of what we are learning.

DOING CBRE WELL: COMPETING EXPECTATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

CUP defines community-based research and evaluation (CBRE) as an approach to creating knowledge in which partners from community, university, and/or government collaborate for mutually-beneficial outcomes. Partners develop principles for working together and jointly determine the scale and scope of their projects.

CBRE partners come from different sectors and disciplines and have various standards for quality work. Thus, in some contexts it can be difficult to determine when CBRE is done well. To learn more about rigour in CBRE, Dr. Sherry Ann Chapman facilitated a discussion during a national symposium at Douglas College, New Westminster, BC with CBRE practitioners from a variety of sectors. Participants valued conventional rigour criteria for data analysis, whether quantitative or qualitative. However, they also described having to navigate competing expectations across diverse CBRE partners and identified a need for the development of additional criteria to establish quality CBRE, in a language that is informed by flexible principles. Dr. Chapman integrated the findings from the discussion into the CBRE Workshop Series and the graduate course, "Introduction to CBRE" (INT-D 500), and continues to study how rigour is related to the contexts in which CBRE is done. This kind of on-going discussion helps inform CUP’s collaborative and capacity-building efforts.

DOING PARTNERSHIP WORK: AN INDIVIDUAL TUNE-UP BEFORE HITTING THE ROAD

The multi-sectoral research partnership, Putting the Research to Work (formerly known as Families First Edmonton) was formed 12 years ago to improve the lives of children and families living in poverty. Over the last decade, Dr. Maria Mayan, a researcher involved in the project, has learned much about partnerships. First, individuals enjoy being part of a partnership if the work of the partnership aligns well with their personal, as well as their professional values and goals. Second, it is important for individuals to critique their own system strengths and limitations before entering a partnership. And third, sometimes a partner needs to take the main stage and push for change, and sometimes, the same partner needs to become the “worker-bee”, and support other members of the team. Dr. Mayan continues to study partnerships to learn how her findings can inform the work that CUP does.
GAUGING OUR PROGRESS...

CUP engages multiple partners (practitioners, policymakers, researchers) across systems and sectors in dialogue on how to build collective capacity to enhance the well-being of children, youth, families. Through their connections to CUP, partners benefit by...

- gaining new knowledge, skills, and experience;
- connecting with others in their field;
- discovering new ways of collaborating and working together; and
- sharing research, practice, and policy information that can be used to inform decision making.

The voices of our partners and contributors provide deeper insights into the role that CUP plays in shaping the lives of the children, youth, and families in our communities.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

CUP worked directly with over 100 community partners during the last year from organizations such as, Boyle Street Community Services, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, and the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative. Here is how Yvonne Chui, Executive Director of the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative, perceives the benefits of working on the “Fulfilling Alberta’s Commitment to Children and Families (FACT)” project:

“FACT helped us bring legitimacy to our efforts to make the issue of poverty visible within immigrant and refugee populations in Edmonton. We learned about who these families are and what factors are affecting them economically and socially. As a result, we are now able to confidently speak up at tables addressing poverty elimination.”

GOVERNMENT

Many of CUP’s activities connect with a variety of government partners and collaborators, municipally, provincially, and federally. David Harvey, of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement in the Ministry of Alberta Education consulted with CUP about effective ways of mobilizing knowledge. He describes CUP’s impact on his work:

“The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) drew upon CUP’s expertise to provide information about how to move knowledge into practice for various school system audiences. CUP staff wrote articles and conducted a practical workshop for us. They were immensely helpful in building the knowledge, skills, and capacity of our audiences around effective KT practices.”

UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS

In the last year, CUP staff consulted, collaborated and worked with researchers at local, national, and international universities across the globe. Dr. Anna Kirova, professor and graduate coordinator in Elementary Education at the University of Alberta describes working with CUP:

“Dr. Rebecca Gokiert and I worked on a project aimed at understanding optimal child development in immigrant and refugee populations in Alberta. Our project team benefited greatly from the brokering of additional partnerships and the collective expertise that CUP staff provided. CUP is a tremendous resource to the academic staff in the Faculty of Education as it brings the issues that are of emerging concern to our communities to our attention and provides the expertise to address them in thoughtful ways.”
LIFELONG LEARNERS

Through learning opportunities (e.g., courses, workshops, practicums) and supervision of students, CUP helps nurture on-going generations of practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and evaluators. For instance, through standard and customized community-based research and evaluation (CBRE) workshops (2007-2012), CUP connected with over 600 diverse types of learners from 110 community-based and government organizations from Alberta, Canada and beyond, and from 40 units at the University of Alberta. Between 2009 and 2012, Dr. Sherry Ann Chapman (Assistant Director, CUP) also taught 53 students in the graduate course, INT-D 500 (Introduction to CBRE), and 21 participants in the CBRE Certificate Program.

Arnaldo Perez Garcia, a graduate student in Pediatrics at the University of Alberta and workshop facilitator at the Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre, commented that:

“The CBRE workshops series significantly benefited my work as a conflict mediator at the Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre. The knowledge and skills acquired throughout the workshops enhanced my ability to understand other people’s cultures, especially the values they place on things they feel compromised or at risk in conflict situations. As with most participants, I took the workshops for research reasons but realize the whole series informs many types of social interactions.”

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Children and families benefit in many ways from their participation in CUP’s CBRE projects. Dawn is a parent and the coordinator of the Lac Ste. Anne and Area community coalition, one of the 100 coalitions that work with the ECMap project. She commented that:

“The coalition brings a wealth of knowledge to the table from educators to health care providers. I have benefitted enormously from having access to this expertise. As a parent, I have also become aware of the resources that are available in my community to help me raise my child — like the free all day-camp that my daughter was able to attend while I worked.”

YOUTH

Depending on the project, youth may be directly involved in guiding the research process by developing, implementing and evaluating frameworks for practice and policy change. This is the case in the youth engagement project where youth leaders express the benefits that they received from participating in the project:

“I use this knowledge in my everyday life to help other youth because I know many youth who have been on the wrong path.”

“[Participating in the project has] improved my self-confidence by sharing and learning from experiences!”

Promoting the well-being of children, youth, and families is a shared responsibility across all sectors and disciplines. CUP continues to build collective capacity to create effective programs, practices and policies that improve the lives of everyone in our communities.
FUTURE TRAVELS

CUP is constantly discovering new ways to collaborate and work together to address issues that are of emerging importance in our communities. Turning toward the future, we look forward to several new roads that CUP will travel.

EVALUATION CAPACITY NETWORK
Community organizations have limited resources to meet the increasing requirements of funders who are seeking rigorous evaluation outcomes to inform funding decisions, improve essential services, and demonstrate accountability. In response to requests from our community partners, CUP is developing the Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN) to serve as a central point of contact for partners to access evaluation expertise, resources, educational opportunities, and networks. The ECN will enhance evaluation capacity building opportunities; serve as an evaluation broker by developing and implementing evaluations; develop an interdisciplinary network of evaluation stakeholders; and increase cross-sector dialogue to bridge funder and agency perspectives on evaluation. The ECN’s ultimate goal is to build evaluation capacity that informs program and policy decision-making.

MULTICULTURAL EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT
CUP, the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-Operative, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre, Alberta Education and the Faculty of Education, are initiating dialogue with multicultural families in Edmonton about how to support optimal development for their children. Information on immigrant parents’ understanding of the factors influencing health and development are being collected. This information will inform the development of culturally-appropriate measures for children. Educators, communities, and government policymakers are also being informed about the support needed for optimal early childhood development for multicultural families.

STUDYING COALITIONS IN ALBERTA
The Early Child Development Mapping Project (ECMap) and CUP have partnered with Alberta Culture (Community Development) on a project to study the sustainability of community coalitions in Alberta.

Coalitions have become increasingly popular as a way for community members to organize around social issues. A number of funding agencies now require that projects organize coalitions in order to receive funding. No systematic information has been gathered on how coalitions have developed and worked in this province, however. *Harvesting the Wisdom of Coalitions in Alberta*, as the name of the project implies, aims to fill this gap and pass on valuable learning by:

- reviewing the current research literature on coalitions,
- compiling an inventory of coalitions in the province,
- bringing together coalition leaders in order to document their experiences.

This project will be completed in the spring of 2014.
COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE STUDY OF CHILDREN, YOUTH,
AND FAMILIES STEERING COMMITTEE

Gloria Chalmers (Co-Chair)
Edmonton Public Schools

Jane Drummond (Co-Chair)
Faculty of Nursing &
Health Sciences Council
University of Alberta

Jeffrey Bisanz
Department of Psychology
University of Alberta

Katy Campbell
Faculty of Extension
University of Alberta

Al Cook
Department of Speech Pathology
and Audiology
University of Alberta

Michelle Craig / Judy Meintzer
Health Promotions, Disease &
Injury Prevention
Alberta Health Services

Julian Daly
Boyle Street Community Services

Sandra Davidge
Women and Children’s Health
Research Institute
University of Alberta

Lionel Dibden
Department of Pediatrics
University of Alberta

Richard Enns
Faculty of Social Work
University of Calgary

Cecelia Fenrich
Edmonton Catholic Schools

Donna-Mae Ford
Multicultural Health Brokers
Co-op

Sandy Forster
Edmonton Public Schools

Martin Garber-Conrad
Edmonton Community
Foundation

Jane Hewes
Early Learning & Child Care
MacEwan University

Jenny Kain / Cheryl Gagnier
Community Services
City of Edmonton

Carrielynn Lund
Community Member

Susan Lynch
Early Child Development
Mapping Project (ECMap)
University of Alberta

Liz O’Neill
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Edmonton & Area

Marni Pearce
Cross Ministry Services
Alberta Education

Christina Rinaldi
Faculty of Education
University of Alberta

Jane Springett
Centre for Health Promotion
Studies
University of Alberta

Allan Undheim
Community Building and
Investment
United Way of the Alberta
Capital Region

Deanna Williamson
Department of Human
Ecology
University of Alberta

Wendy Yewman
Edmonton and Area Child and
Family Services, Region 6
Support

CUP’s core operations are supported by contributions from community, government, and university sources.

Community Contributors
- Edmonton Community Foundation
- United Way of the Alberta Capital Region
- Edmonton Catholic Schools
- Edmonton Public Schools

Government Contributors
- City of Edmonton | Department of Community Services
- Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6

University
The University of Alberta supports CUP’s core operations by providing five tenure-track academic staff positions through the Faculty of Extension.

In addition to the financial support, the Faculty of Extension provides extensive administrative and infrastructure support to CUP.

In addition to core operating funding, CUP secures funding for projects. This chart highlights CUP’s cumulative project funding from its inception in 2000.
PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

PUBLICATIONS


Hollis, L. & Krishnan, V. (April 2013). Applications of Differential Item Functioning (DIF) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) on Alberta’s Early Childhood Development Instrument (EDI) data (Report). ECMap, CUP, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta, Edmonton.


Mousavi, A. & Krishnan, V. (June 2013). Setting the scope for Early Child Development Instrument (EDI): A psychometric re-examination of the tool with Alberta data. ECMap, CUP, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Mousavi, A. & Krishnan, V. (August 2013). Setting provincial benchmarks and cut-scores for Alberta’s Early Child Development Instrument (EDI) data. ECMap, CUP, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta, Edmonton.


FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS


PUBLICATIONS


Chapman, S. A. (Fall 2012) INT-D 500, Introduction to Community-Based Research & Evaluation (CBRE), University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.


Georgis, R., & Gokiert, R.J. (June 2012). The Potential of School-Community Partnerships in Supporting Newcomer Students and Families with Complex Needs. IV International Conference of Community Psychology, Barcelona, Spain.


Mayan, M. (June 2012) Community-based participatory research: Engaging people as agents of their own health. Workshop at the 2nd Annual Qualitative Health Congress, Milan, Italy.


Mayan, M. (June 2012) Constructivist Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory Summer Institute, Roverto, Italy (workshop)


Mayan, M., (February 8, 2013). Moving back the tipping point: Identifying TB cases earlier in Aboriginal populations. Workshop for Nurses Tuberculosis Interest Group including Standoff (Blood Tribe) and Piikani reserves, First Nations Inuit Health Branch, Alberta Region, Health Canada, Edmonton, Alberta.


At CUP we are passionate about generating, sharing and mobilizing new knowledge about the well-being of children, youth, and families. Bringing together all of our expertise, ideas, and resources generates tremendous power to build collective capacities and influence positive social change. Here are a few ways CUP mobilizes knowledge amongst its partners . . .