

Building Connections

Annual Report 2006/07

Community-University Partnership for the
Study of Children, Youth, and Families



CUP's Mission:

The Community-University Partnership is committed to improving the development of children, youth, families, and communities by:

- generating, sharing, and mobilizing new knowledge about child and family development,
- identifying and promoting the use of evidence-based policies and practices for optimizing child and family development, and
- nurturing a culture, both in the community and the University, in which rigorous research, evaluation, and practice are valued highly as critical components in efforts to understand and optimize development.

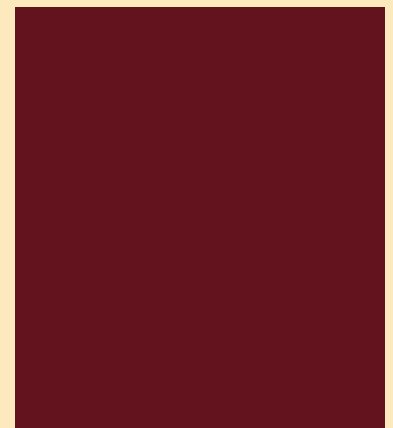
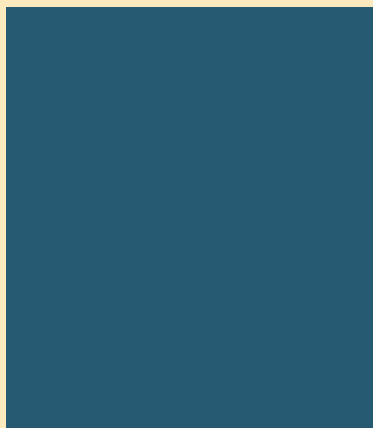
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Building for Tomorrow

Over the past year, CUP has continued to engage in research activities in partnership with community stakeholders and to expand its work in the areas of lifelong learning and knowledge sharing. We are working hard to build connections among research, policy, and practice. We support partnerships and collaborations through our brokering and consulting activities. We seek to increase capacity in the community to support healthy development and community-based research through the activities of the Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre, Mobilizing Knowledge About Development project, and many others. We continue to position ourselves as a link between the University and the community so that those working to support the healthy development of children, youth, and families can collaborate on shared goals.

In this 2006-2007 Annual Report we describe CUP's activities over the past year to show you the foundation we are building for the future. We hope you will see this document as not only a recollection of the last year, but also as a preview for what we hope to be building for tomorrow: a blueprint for the future.





University of
Alberta's emerging
vision:

“To inspire the
human spirit
through outstanding
achievements in
learning, discovery,
and citizenship in a
creative community,
building one of the
world's great
universities for the
public good.”

Letter from the Director: Daring to Deliver

After a one-year sabbatical, I returned to my role as CUP's Director in July 2006. I had imagined slowly easing back into CUP's activities while reflecting on the Partnership's directions. Instead, I was sucked into a vortex of activity created by Laurie Schnirer and Sue Lynch, who acted as co-directors in my absence.

The Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre (ECMERC) is up and sailing at full speed, with Rebecca Gokiart and Lisa Tews at the helm. The Mobilizing Knowledge About Development (MKAD) project is building on the knowledge-sharing and lifelong-learning components of CUP's work, with Sherry Ann Chapman, Lily Tsui, and Rhonda Breitzkreuz (CUP's new Assistant Director and Research Associate) providing much of the guidance and initiative. Families First Edmonton is well into its first phase of data collection, and numerous other projects are on course. I encourage you to read about these and other activities in this *Annual Report*.

As I consider CUP's many activities, I cannot help but be struck by CUP's role in the University of Alberta's emerging vision:

“To inspire the human spirit through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery, and citizenship in a creative community, building one of the world's great universities for the public good.”

In a new document, *Dare to Deliver*, the University reveals its academic plan for the next five years. To fulfill the University's vision, four institutional commitments are made: *discovery learning*, *incubating scholarship*, *community engagement near and far*, and *building the transformative organization*. CUP is delivering on each of these four commitments already, even before *Dare to Deliver* hits the presses.

Discovery learning is a commitment to providing students with a “wow” experience by fostering student engagement in diverse ways—including research and community involvement—that will connect their education to socially responsible citizenship. Students who work on CUP projects interact with community and university partners from diverse and interdisciplinary backgrounds, gaining research experiences that are distinctive and informative.

Incubating scholarship is a commitment to nurturing special environments, including interdisciplinary contexts, in which innovative thinking can take place. CUP provides links and supporting structures that are necessary for university and community partners to work together, to share knowledge, and to create innovative research projects, such as Families First Edmonton, that simply would not have occurred otherwise.

Community engagement near and far is a commitment to cultivate relationships between the University and external communities. The committed, continued engagement of community and university partners, including CUP's Steering Committee, is the very force that created CUP. Our ties to both the University and the community continue to direct our research, lifelong learning, and knowledge-sharing activities.

Building the transformative organization is a commitment to creating the institutional structures needed to facilitate positive change in a dynamic environment. CUP works to build bridges among researchers, policymakers, and service providers by engaging representatives from each group to work toward shared goals. CUP was invented for the very purpose of transforming how the community and university cooperate on topics related to children, youth, and families. CUP is a model for other units on campus on how to work with the community.

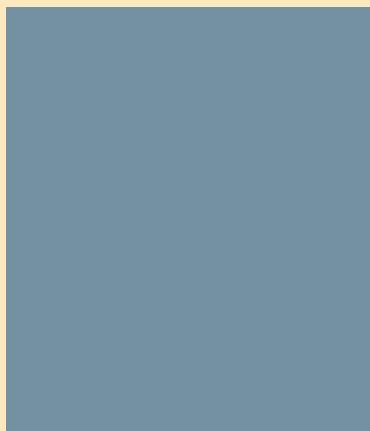
At CUP we continue to learn about how to deliver on the commitments in *Dare to Deliver*. This is one reason I am looking forward to the special retreat CUP has planned for June 2007. Maybe, at least for the one day of that retreat, I and others involved in CUP will finally get that chance to reflect on our directions!

Sincerely,

Jeff Bisanz
Director

“CUP works to build bridges among researchers, policymakers, and service providers by engaging with representatives from each group to work toward shared goals.”





Building Bridges Across the Research-Practice Gap: Research, Lifelong Learning, and Knowledge Sharing

The research-practice gap is the discrepancy between what is known from research and what is done in practice. This gap exists in part because researchers, policymakers, and service providers differ in training, goals, and priorities, all reflecting very different cultures.

Recognizing the differences among those who work with and for children, youth, and families increases the likelihood that research knowledge will be used in practice and decision making, and that the knowledge of practitioners and policymakers will be used to guide research. At CUP, we recognize that both the University and the community possess valuable knowledge and expertise about development. Bridges among researchers, policymakers, and service providers can be built and supported through increasing dialogue and consultation, partnerships and collaborations, and knowledge sharing.

Now in our seventh year of operation, CUP continues to work toward bridging the research-practice gap by focusing on research, lifelong learning, and knowledge sharing. Through these activities, we believe that we can promote evidence-based practice and decision making that will result in the best outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Research

Traditional discipline-based research, while valuable in building theoretical understanding and basic knowledge, has been criticized as occurring in isolation without consultation or collaboration with people in the community. This approach has sometimes resulted in the perception that research has limited use for improving policies and practice for children, youth, and families.

CUP works to build a body of research that is relevant and applicable to policymakers and service providers by engaging in community-relevant research and by involving stakeholders from the community throughout the research process. By creating opportunities for researchers, policymakers, and service providers to work together collaboratively, projects that build upon the collective knowledge of these groups are more likely to yield findings that will be used in practice and decision making. A number of CUP's research projects are described in this *Annual Report*.

Lifelong Learning

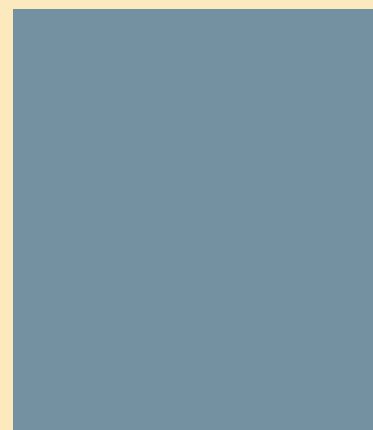
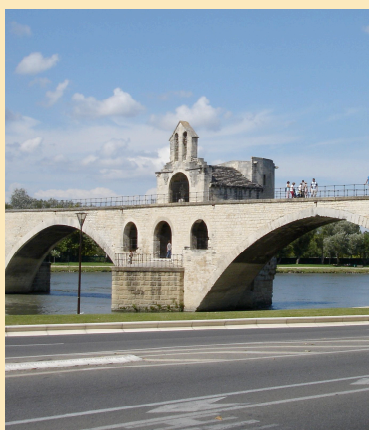
Researchers, policymakers, and service providers can all benefit from ongoing learning opportunities about the development of children, youth, and families. CUP aims to provide learning opportunities to build individual knowledge about development as well as increase the capacity of these groups to engage in research and other collaborations together.

Ongoing learning opportunities can improve the capacity of researchers, policymakers, and service providers to work together. Researchers can improve their understanding of the current issues and challenges that children, youth, and families face, resulting in the design of research questions that are more likely to yield relevant, practical knowledge. Policymakers and service providers can become more critical consumers of research, increasing the use of research findings in practice and decision making, as well as participate as partners in research activities. This year CUP began to develop two programs to support lifelong learning about community-based research (CBR): a certificate program about CBR for graduate students and a workshop series for people in the community and University. These programs are a part of the Mobilizing Knowledge About Development (MKAD) Project. For more information about MKAD and its funders, see pp. 22-23.

Knowledge Sharing

CUP is dedicated to building knowledge-sharing networks among researchers, policymakers, and service providers. By creating opportunities for knowledge sharing that go above and beyond making information available via print materials such as research and technical reports, we believe we can support the movement of knowledge among all who work with children, youth, and families.

One way in which CUP is sharing knowledge is exemplified by the Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre (ECMERC). Through research, consulting, and providing relevant resources, ECMERC promotes a vibrant community of early childhood professionals who share knowledge with one another in the areas of measurement and evaluation. For more about ECMERC and its funders, see pp. 13-15 .



Building Capacity Through Consulting, Brokering, and Leadership

CUP engages in research, lifelong learning, and knowledge sharing in three ways: consulting, brokering, and leadership.

Consulting

We are continuously gathering and sharing knowledge through participation in external committees, consultations, conferences, steering committees, and other meetings, and also through the use of our own communication vehicles, including but not limited to our newsletter, listservs, and website. Our involvement in these activities allows us to identify current issues related to children, youth, and families in our community, and guides us when we work with researchers, policymakers, and service providers. Through consulting, we share knowledge proactively in addition to responding directly to requests for help.

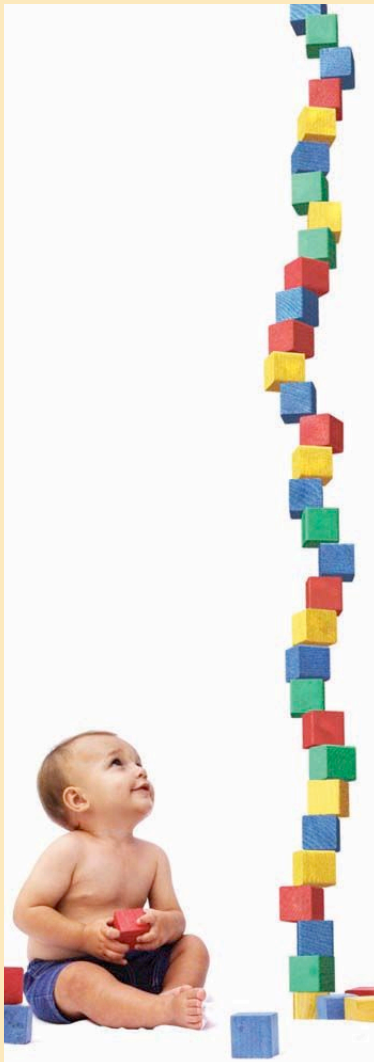
Brokering

We build research capacity by supporting the development and sustainability of collaborations among researchers, policymakers, and service providers. We broker relationships by finding appropriate partners, identifying potential funding opportunities, drafting and reviewing research proposals, and assisting with the ethics review process, as well as assisting in other ways to maximize the success of collaborative projects. We foster trust among collaborators by increasing participants' awareness of the resources, desires, and challenges involved in a project and supporting effective communication.

One example of CUP acting as a broker involves a course in community research in Educational Psychology. EDPY 612 places doctoral students for one day per week in community organizations to engage in community research activities. CUP works with the course instructor, students, and community organizations to find appropriate placements for each student.

Leadership

Above and beyond CUP's consulting and brokering activities, and in response to community needs, CUP also initiates and leads research and other projects on issues related to the development of children, youth, and families. The projects described in this report are activities led by CUP, or projects where CUP plays a significant leadership role.



People of CUP

CUP's day-to-day activities are carried out by our Core Secretariat and Project Staff, under the direction of the CUP Steering Committee. We also work with a number of researchers and project partners.



CUP Steering Committee 2006-2007

CUP's Steering Committee consists of both University and community representatives who meet with representatives from the Core Secretariat monthly to direct CUP's activities.

Gloria Chalmers (Co-Chair)	Edmonton Public Schools
Jane Drummond (Co-Chair)	Nursing & Health Sciences Council, University of Alberta
Rhonda Breitzkreuz	Alberta Children's Services
Al Cook	Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta
Darrell Dancause	Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6
Barbara Dart	Community Building and Investment, United Way of the Alberta Capital Region
Lionel Dibden	Medicine, University of Alberta
Michael Farris	E4C
Martin Garber-Conrad	Edmonton Community Foundation
Jane Hewes	Early Childhood Development, Grant MacEwan College
Susan Lynch	Child Study Centre, University of Alberta
Linda Phillips	Canadian Centre for Research on Literacy, University of Alberta
Delmarie Sadoway	Community Health Services, Capital Health
Carol Watson	Community Services, City of Edmonton
Deanna Williamson	Human Ecology, University of Alberta
Brenda Willis and Don Delaney	Edmonton Catholic Schools
Doug Wilson	Public Health Sciences, University of Alberta
Wendy Yewman*	Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6

We would like to thank Rhonda Breitzkreuz, Darrell Dancause, and Delmarie Sadoway for serving on CUP's Steering Committee. Their terms ended during the 2006-2007 year.

We would also like to welcome the following people who are joining CUP's Steering Committee for 2007-2008:

Michelle Craig	Community Health Services, Capital Health
Mike Mahon	Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation & Health Sciences Council
Marni Pearce	Alberta Children & Youth Initiative, Alberta Education
Dale Sobkovich	Alberta Children's Services

*New to CUP's Steering Committee in 2006-2007.

Core Secretariat

Jeff Bisanz	Director
Rhonda Breitzkreuz	Research Associate & Assistant Director
Miranda Diakiw	Office Administrator
Susan Lynch	Policy Associate
Laurie Schnirer	Research Associate, Assistant Director, & Families First Edmonton (FFE) Research Co-Director
Kelly Shaw	Project Development Officer & In-School Mentoring Coordinator



Project Staff

Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre (ECMERC)

Rebecca Gokiart	ECMERC Director
Lisa Tews	ECMERC Resource Coordinator

Families First Edmonton (FFE)

Nyla de Los Santos	FFE Data Collection Supervisor
Sanchia Lo	FFE Research (Collaboration) Coordinator
Maria Mayan	FFE Research Co-Director
Birdie McLean	FFE Administration Coordinator
Sylvia So	FFE Research (Outcomes) Coordinator

Mobilizing Knowledge About Development (MKAD)

Sherry Ann Chapman	MKAD Learning Coordinator
Lily Tsui	CUP Communications Coordinator & MKAD Knowledge-Sharing Coordinator

The skills and credentials of all CUP's staff members are too numerous to list individually. They include degrees in the areas of developmental psychology, early childhood education, education, educational psychology, environmental psychology, history, human ecology, museum studies, social psychology, sociology, special education, and zoology. Expertise in a variety of research methodologies—including applied measurement and evaluation, community-based research, critical ethnography, feminist methodologies, social policy analysis, and survey research—ensure CUP's ability to engage in multi-method research projects. Core Secretariat and Project Staff also possess experience in administration, communications, finance, government, human resources, marketing, and public relations. For individual staff biographies, please visit our website at www.cup.ualberta.ca.

Researchers

We gratefully thank all members of the research teams who work with us to make CUP's work possible. In addition to the researchers listed below, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of all the research assistants, data collectors, and other project staff.

The **Capacity Building as Crime Prevention: Kids in the Hall Evaluation** includes the following researchers from the University of Alberta:

Jeff Bisanz - CUP and Psychology
Andrea Dalton - Psychology
Nancy Galambos - Psychology
Tim Hartnagel - Sociology
Laurie Schnirer - CUP and Educational Psychology

The **Early Childhood Community Mapping Project** includes:

Susan Lynch & Deborah Morrison - Project Coordinators
Leanne DiMarcello - Social Geographer
Michelle King - Social Geographer

Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre: **An Examination of the Cultural Issues Surrounding Psycho-Educational Assessment of Aboriginal Children and Youth**

Janine Odishaw - Educational Psychology
Jessica Whitley - Educational Psychology



The **Families First Edmonton** project include researchers from four Universities:

University of Alberta:

Jane Drummond (Principal Investigator) - Nursing
Jeff Bisanz - CUP and Psychology
Robin Overall - Educational Psychology
Konrad Fassbender - Health Economics
Terry Klassen - Pediatrics
Kathy Kovacs-Burns - Nursing
Maria Mayan - CUP & International Institute for Qualitative Methodology
Barb Paulson - Educational Psychology
Linda Reutter - Nursing
Solina Richter - Nursing
Laurie Schnirer - CUP and Educational Psychology
Berna Skrypnek - Human Ecology
John Spence - Physical Education and Recreation
Deanna Williamson - Human Ecology
Natasha Wiebe - Medicine
Douglas Wilson - Public Health Sciences

McMaster University:

Gina Browne - Nursing

University of Calgary:

Richard Feehan - Social Work
Erin Gray - Social Work

University of Waterloo:

Ron McCarville - Recreation and Leisure Studies



The Research Team for the **In-School Mentoring (ISM)** project includes the following researchers from the University of Alberta:

Jeff Bisanz (Principal Investigator) - CUP and Psychology
John Burger - Alberta Learning
Jose da Costa - Educational Policy Studies
Julia Ellis - Elementary Education
Rauno Parrila - Educational Psychology
Christina Rinaldi - Educational Psychology
Phyllis Schneider - Speech Pathology & Audiology
Laurie Schnirer - CUP and Educational Psychology
Kelly Shaw - CUP

The Research Team for **Mother Earth Children's Charter School (MECCS) Longitudinal Study** include members from the University of Alberta (U of A), University of New Brunswick, and the Misericordia Community Hospital:

Lola Baydala(Principal Investigator) - Pediatrics, U of A and Misericordia Community Hospital
June Birch - Psychology, U of A and Misericordia Community Hospital
Julie Charchun - Human Ecology, U of A and Misericordia Community Hospital
Jeff Bisanz - CUP and Psychology, U of A
Merle Kennedy - Misericordia Community Hospital
Nicole Letourneau - Nursing, University of New Brunswick
Marni Pearce - Misericordia Community Hospital
Carmen Rasmussen - Pediatrics, U of A
Jody Sherman - Psychology, U of A



Project Partners

CUP works with a number of organizations on our various projects. Without their contributions, the scope and diversity of our work would be limited.

Early Childhood Development Community Mapping Project

Alberta Education
Capital Health
City of Edmonton
E4C
Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6
Edmonton Catholic Schools
Edmonton Public Schools
Success by 6
United Way of the Alberta Capital Region

Capacity Building as Crime Prevention: Kids in the Hall Evaluation

E4C
Edmonton Police Service

Mobilizing Knowledge About Development Project

Alberta Centre for Child, Family and
Community Research

In-School Mentoring

Alberta Education
Big Brothers Big Sisters Society of Edmonton

Families First Edmonton

Project Co-Chairs:

Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry
City of Edmonton Community Services

Service Delivery Providers:

Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
Edmonton YMCA
KARA Family Resource Centre
Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative

Members:

Alberta Children's Services
Alberta Health and Wellness
Alberta Mental Health Board
Capital Health
Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee
Edmonton Community Foundation
Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6
Quality of Life Commission
United Way of the Alberta Capital Region



Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre (ECMERC): Building Measurement Knowledge in the Community

Now in its second year of operation, the Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre (ECMERC) is working hard with the early childhood community to address issues related to assessment in all domains of child development (e.g., social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and linguistic). The Centre's goal is to build the early childhood community's measurement knowledge so that they can select and use assessment and evaluation tools best suited for their programs. ECMERC engages in research, community consultation, and resource provision to accomplish its goal.

Research

ECMERC engages in ongoing research in order to build on knowledge about the impact that measurement and evaluation can have on early childhood development and programming. We are currently conducting a needs assessment that was designed to determine which resources the early childhood community needs to improve knowledge and understanding about the purposes, use, and limitations of early child measurement.

We approached the needs assessment in three stages. In the first stage, ECMERC worked closely with local early childhood community programs and stakeholder groups and we gathered information about assessment use and needs. A literature review on early childhood measurement, including screening, assessment, and evaluation, was also conducted during this stage. In the second stage, we developed a questionnaire to capture the current assessment issues surrounding knowledge, practice, and tool use and efficacy in the early childhood community. This survey was followed by a focus group with community representatives including program directors, front-line workers, policymakers, funders, and researchers to review the questionnaire and provide recommendations for improvements. Revisions to the questionnaire were made based on the focus group's feedback, after which the questionnaire was distributed to individuals and agencies in the early childhood community. This project is currently in its third and final stage, when the questionnaire data will be analyzed to determine the greatest areas of need and reported back to the community. Based on the results of the needs assessment, ECMERC will be able to respond appropriately to the needs of the community by providing the most relevant resources, including workshops, tool reviews, and consulting services.



Research continued...

ECMERC is also working to identify different approaches to measurement and evaluation that best meet the needs of Edmonton's diverse communities. We are building our knowledge in this area by leading a project focused on identifying culturally-appropriate tools for assessing Aboriginal children and youth and for evaluating the programs they attend. This task will be accomplished through a review of the research literature in this area, an examination of the tools currently being used, and the development of a resource guide to connect the early childhood community with up-to-date research in a user-friendly format.

Consulting

ECMERC works with groups and individuals on in-depth problems in a consulting capacity. We work with various community and government-funded programs on scoring methodology, survey construction, evaluation support, and measurement of child development outcomes. ECMERC staff members also are part of advisory committees in the Edmonton area for early childhood programs and initiatives. Although ECMERC's primary role is to provide advice about measurement and evaluation, we also act as a voice for issues and concerns that have been brought to our attention by the early childhood community.

Resources

In addition to our research and consulting activities, we also endeavor to provide resources that promote knowledge sharing among measurement experts, researchers, policymakers, and front-line workers. We have produced a number of tool reviews that describe the characteristics of various screening, assessment, and evaluation tools, and more are continually being created. A resource library is also being developed so that anyone interested in early childhood measurement and evaluation can access materials useful to those working with young children.

At ECMERC, we want to build connections and support ongoing exchange between measurement experts, researchers, policymakers, and front-line researchers. We hope to do this through our research, consulting, and resource production activities.

For more about ECMERC, or to access tool reviews, please visit www.cup.ualberta.ca and select the ECMERC subsite.



About Tool Reviews

ECMERC prepares reviews of tools that are commonly-used to screen and assess children and to evaluate the programs that children attend. The tool reviews are meant to support tool selection and appropriate use by the early childhood development community, and include general information about each tool and specific measurement characteristics such as reliability and validity.





ECMERC Advisory Committee

The ECMERC Advisory Committee provides advice and support to ECMERC staff about connecting with the community and learning about the assessment and evaluation needs in the early childhood learning and care community. Members of the Advisory Committee promote the work of the Centre and acts as a link between ECMERC and the community.

Advisory Committee Members include representatives from the Edmonton community and the University of Alberta:

Debbie Bryson	Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6
Diane Dennis	Alberta Children's Services
Susan Lynch	CUP and Child Study Centre, University of Alberta
Bev Parks	Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre
Line Perron	Early Childhood Development Support Services
Avril Pike	Oliver Centre Early Learning Programs for Children and Families
Todd Rogers	Educational Psychology, University of Alberta
Laurie Schnirer	CUP and Educational Psychology, University of Alberta
Jim Scott	Edmonton Public Schools
Roxanne Tomkinson	Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6

ECMERC Funders

Early Childhood Development Initiative - Innovative Research Grants program
 National Crime Prevention Strategy, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada
 Social Development Partnerships Program, Social Development Canada

Capacity Building as Crime Prevention: Kids in the Hall Bistro Evaluation

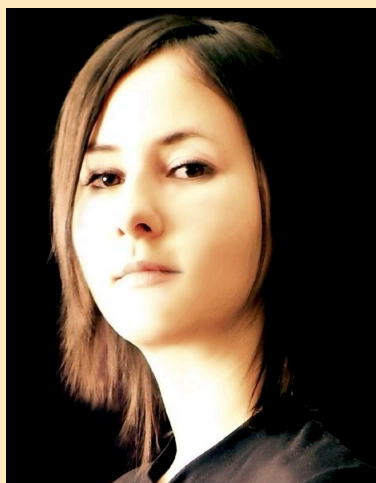
CUP has been leading the Capacity Building as Crime Prevention: Kids in the Hall Bistro (KITH) Evaluation since Spring 2002. CUP initially partnered with the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (now E4C), the parent organization of KITH, for this evaluation. A research model was developed and applied to KITH to explore the program's impact on participating youth. The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) joined the partnership in the developmental phase and the scope of the project expanded to an analysis of the criminal histories of KITH participants compared to youth who had enrolled but then did not participate in the program.

In Fall 2004, the project expanded further when additional funds were secured. The sample size for the study was increased, and the data collection phase was extended for a year. The additional year allowed us to collect data to explore questions such as: What are the characteristics of a “typical” youth who enters the program? Which factors distinguish between youths who complete the program, youth who drop out after the workshops, and youth who drop out immediately?

Data analyses began in July 2005, and are drawing to a close. One finding that emerged was that demographic, behavioural, and lifestyle characteristics of participants did not have an impact on their likelihood to complete the program. For example, participants of both genders were equally likely to complete KITH, as were participants who had engaged in higher versus lower rates of criminal activities. These results are meaningful as they suggest that the program is administered in a way that works equally well for participants with diverse backgrounds. Participants also experienced some positive and negative emotional and behavioural changes during their time in the program.

In general, the KITH program appear to foster some personal benefits such as improved eating habits, and it had at least a limited positive effect on reducing criminal activity shortly after youth enter the program. Further research that follow-up with participants in the program or examines the measures used in the evaluation may be informative.

The final research report, Capacity Building as Crime Prevention: The Kids in the Hall Bistro Evaluation Outcomes Report is currently being prepared and will be available in Summer 2007. A knowledge-sharing strategy will be developed by project partners to share project outcomes.



Funder

National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

About the Program

The Kids in the Hall (KITH) Bistro is a program for youth (ages 16-24) who are at risk for unemployment and poverty. KITH is an intervention program that hopes to address some of the root causes of criminal activity. Throughout the nine-month program, participants attend workshops that focus on life skills, career planning, and job search. The participants also gain hands-on restaurant experience at the Bistro, located in the Edmonton City Hall.

Learn more about the KITH program at www.e4calberta.org/kithb.htm



Early Childhood Development Community Mapping Project

“How are Edmonton's young children doing?” is a question of great interest to parents, service providers, and the general public. In order to learn more about the development of Edmonton's preschool-aged children, a group of Edmontonians, representing many agencies and levels of government, designed this project to build understanding about factors that may be affecting children's development.

Using the Early Development Instrument (EDI), a measurement tool that assessed five areas of development (physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; and communications skills/general knowledge), data were collected from Edmonton's kindergarten teachers on their students. This yielded EDI data on 2230 children living in 29 of 210 neighbourhoods in Edmonton. Maps of the city depicting these data by neighbourhood were then created.

One of the most interesting findings so far is that some of the most vulnerable neighbourhoods have children who are doing quite well according to the EDI, whereas in some of the least vulnerable neighbourhoods children are showing pronounced delays in development. Why are the children of some highly vulnerable neighbourhoods doing so well despite the hardships faced by their families? What is happening in those neighbourhoods that facilitate healthy development?

To answer these and other questions that arose from the neighbourhood maps, project staff members are going to the people who live and work in these neighbourhoods. This project is continuing to learn about early childhood development in Edmonton, and knowledge sharing is occurring through presentations to stakeholders and the community as well as regular updates through CUP publications.

Funders

Capital Health
Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6
Edmonton Community Foundation
Edmonton Public Schools
United Way of the Alberta Capital Region



Families First Edmonton

“How can health and social service providers connect low-income families to needed health and social services in proactive and cost-effective ways?” The Families First Edmonton (FFE) project was developed to answer this question and improve the delivery of health and social services. FFE's objectives are to:

1. Test the social, health, and economic impact of four service-delivery models on low-income children, their families, and their communities;
2. Establish the relative cost-effectiveness of service delivery;
3. Explain the collaboration among systems necessary for delivery programs; and
4. Describe evidence-based practices supporting program delivery.

Participant families are randomly assigned to one of the four service-delivery models. The four service-delivery models are as follows:

1. In the **Family Health Lifestyle Group**, families can access any available services and a Family Support Coordinator helps them solve problems and link them to education, health, and social services.
2. In the **Recreation Coordination Group**, families can access any available services and a Recreation Coordinator helps place children into recreational programs provided free of charge.
3. In the **Comprehensive Group**, families can access any available services and are linked to both education, health, and social services by a Family Support Coordinator. Families also receive help from a Recreation Coordinator to place children into recreational programs.
4. In the **Self-Directed Group**, families can access any available services on their own.

CUP is working to facilitate and coordinate the research component of FFE. This includes the coordination of the research team and all research administration. Three broad areas are being investigated by the research team: (1) child, family, community, and economic outcomes; (2) practices; and (3) collaboration.



Child, Family, Community, and Economic Outcomes

Participant families in FFE have expressed satisfaction with their involvement thus far. FFE has increased access to recreational activities for families, and given them new ways to engage with one another and with the community. Some families have also expressed their excitement in being part of a research process.

Practices

FFE includes a research component that is evaluating existing services, and is working to bring evidence to partners and funders to inform program and policy decisions. A research team is currently assessing which services families are currently accessing and the costs of access. By building knowledge about how to help families link to health and social services, health and social service agencies can use this information to engage proactively with families.

Collaboration

FFE is unique in the size of the project collaboration, involving partners from multiple sectors. One component of the research activities is to study the collaboration to determine what kind of leadership, governance structures, and personnel is needed to support a large-scale intersectoral initiative, and to learn about how researchers, policymakers, and service providers can work together effectively.

Beyond the Research Component

FFE is currently engaged in ongoing data collection and analyses. Due to the scope of FFE, this summary contains a brief description of the research component only. Please visit www.familiesfirstedmonton.ualberta.ca for a more detailed progress report and to learn more about FFE.



Funders

Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research
Canadian Health Services Research Foundation
Canadian Institutes of Health Research

In-School Mentoring

Despite the rapid growth of in-school mentoring programs, very little research has been conducted to determine whether and how they benefit children and mentors. In November 2000, CUP was invited to submit a proposal to evaluate the city-wide In-School Mentoring (ISM) program that was developed and delivered by Big Brother Big Sisters Society of Edmonton (BBBS).

The ISM Evaluation was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 was focused on the program's implementation and was completed in December 2001. Results provided valuable information on program design, goals and delivery, development of relationships, communications, program changes, impact and improvement, and overall satisfaction. Phase 2 is focused on mentoring practices, mentor outcomes, and student outcomes. Results from surveys, focus groups, and individual case studies reveal that (a) mentors seek to help their students develop socially as well as academically; (b) mentors use a wide variety of strategies for engaging their students; (c) schools vary widely in the extent to which they provide functional support for mentoring activities; (d) mentors and students tend to be highly satisfied with the program; and (e) mentors observe marked improvements in social development and reading among some of their students. Additional analyses are being undertaken to determine whether students who have been in the mentoring program longer tend to shower greater advances on measures of socio-emotional and academic development than students who have been in the program for less time.

The results from this evaluation will be used by program planners and policymakers to help shape the future of ISM programs across the country. As data analyses conclude, CUP will be developing a knowledge-sharing strategy with stakeholders (including BBBS, Edmonton Community Foundation, Alberta Education, and the research team). A final report will be available in Fall 2007.

Funders

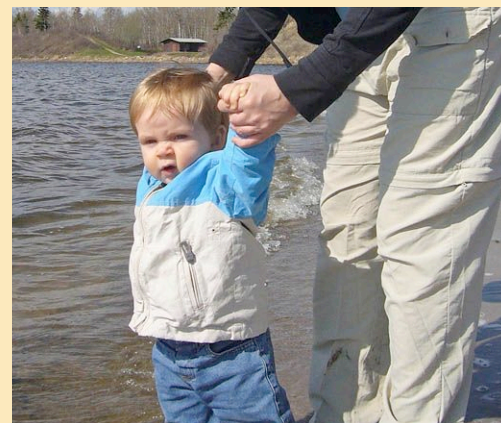
Alberta Learning
Anonymous donor
Big Brothers Big Sisters Society of Edmonton
Edmonton Community Foundation

About the Program

The Big Brothers Big Sisters Society of Edmonton and Area trains and supports mentors in over 50 schools in the Edmonton area. The In-School Mentoring (ISM) program links a child (ages 6-16) to a volunteer mentor in a school environment for an hour a week. Mentors work not only to improve children's academic skills, but also their self-esteem by acting as positive role models.

Learn more about the ISM program and Big Brothers Big Sisters Society of Edmonton and Area at www.bbbsedmonton.org





Mobilizing Knowledge About Development

In September, 2006, CUP launched the Mobilizing Knowledge About Development project (MKAD) in partnership with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research (ACCFCR). MKAD was created to promote knowledge sharing by providing opportunities for people to increase their capacity to do community-based research and to increase our understanding of knowledge mobilization. We aim to accomplish this through two initiatives: the Community-Based Research (CBR) Capacity-Building Initiative, and the Evaluation Initiative.

The CBR Capacity-Building Initiative aims to build connections between the university and the community by increasing knowledge about CBR, so that researchers, graduate students, and community members can work together to build a body of knowledge that supports the healthy development of children, youth, and families. We believe that CBR is an approach to research that builds on the expertise of all involved parties, with the added benefit of sharing knowledge throughout the research process.

The CBR Capacity-Building Initiative consists of:

1. A CBR Workshop Series for all community members, particularly service providers and policymakers who work with and for children, youth, and families, and
2. A Certificate Program in CBR for graduate students.

The Evaluation Initiative is designed to study and document the impact of the CBR Capacity-Building Initiative, as well as other knowledge-sharing activities in which CUP and ACCFCR engage. These activities include learning events (e.g., symposiums and workshops) hosted by ACCFCR, bringing together researchers, policymakers, and service providers to share knowledge about relevant topics, as well as print publications produced by both organizations.

The research and evaluation work being conducted as part of the Evaluation Initiative will help us to begin building a model of evidence-based knowledge sharing that can be used by researchers, policymakers, and service providers.

MKAD brings together CBR-capacity building and knowledge-sharing research and evaluation to support collaboration between universities and communities. This project, currently funded until August 2009, will set the stage for CUP's future knowledge-sharing activities.

MKAD Structure

The MKAD project is led by a Project Management Team that acts under the direction of an Advisory Committee.

The Project Management Team includes Jeff Bisanz, Rhonda Breitzkreuz, Sherry Ann Chapman, Laurie Schnirer, and Lily Tsui from CUP, with Monica Jack and Suzanne Tough from ACCFCR. The Project Management Team meets once a month.

The Advisory Committee is comprised of CUP's Steering Committee, with the addition of Nancy Reynolds from ACCFCR. This committee is chaired by Sue Lynch and Nancy Reynolds, and meets 2-3 times per year.

Funders

Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
University of Alberta: Faculties of Arts, Education, Medicine,
Nursing, and Rehabilitation Medicine & Office of Vice-
President (Research)



Mother Earth Children's Charter School Longitudinal Study

Traditional Canadian school curricula often are insufficient for accommodating the skills and learning styles of Aboriginal children, who sometimes face many challenges in school, including low teacher expectations and academic difficulties. Mother Earth's Children's Charter School (MECCS), the first and only Aboriginal charter school in Alberta, is designed to provide culturally compatible education to Aboriginal children. The MECCS curriculum includes modifications to instructional practice, classroom organization, and motivational management that are designed to meet the unique educational, cultural, health, and spiritual needs of Aboriginal children. This approach, if successful, will provide a model for developing culturally compatible education in Alberta and beyond.

This longitudinal study is evaluating the effectiveness of culturally compatible education as provided by MECCS on the mental and physical health of Aboriginal children attending this school. Preliminary data analysis has revealed a connection between behavioural and emotional indicators and academic achievement. As data analysis continues, relations among variables for each year of the study and the changes in these relations over three years will be examined.

Funders

Canadian Institute of Health Research,
Institute of Aboriginal People's Health:
Opportunities for New Researchers



About the School

The Mother Earth Children's Charter School (MECCS) focuses on traditional Indigenous teachings and culture in its teaching style and curriculum. The school's foundation and philosophy is based on the teachings of Elders and has a holistic approach to the educational development of its students, rather than a focus solely on intellectual development. All MECCS programming is delivered within an Aboriginal cultural context.

Learn more about MECCS at www.meccs.ca

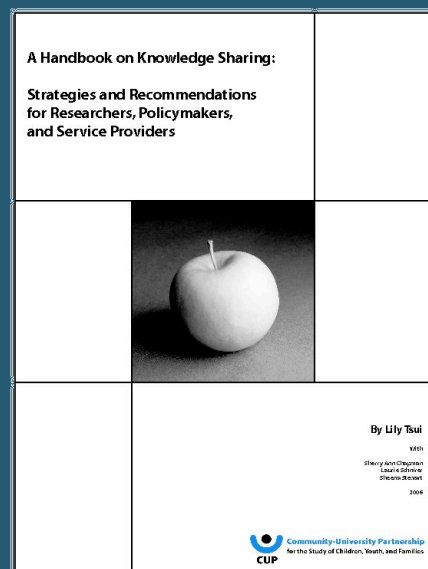
Publications and Presentations

A Handbook on Knowledge Sharing: Strategies and Recommendations for Researchers, Policymakers, and Service Providers

In 2005, Lily Tsui joined CUP for a Knowledge-Sharing Internship, a position funded by the Max Bell Foundation and the National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. The final deliverable for the internship was a handbook on knowledge sharing, which was completed in early 2007.

The handbook was created by CUP as a resource for those interested in knowledge sharing among researchers, policymakers, and service providers, and summarizes other existing knowledge-sharing resources. Combined with CUP's experiences working in research, policy, and practice, this handbook represents our attempt to bring together the diversity of knowledge-sharing information that was scattered across books and journals and held by organizations.

This document is available on our website in PDF format. Hard copies are available on request.



Academic Publication

De Wit, D. J., Lipman, E., Manzano-Munguia, M., Bisanz, J., Graham, K., O'Neill, E., Pepler, D., & Shaver, K. (in press). *Feasibility of a randomized controlled trial for evaluating the effectiveness of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Community Match Program at the national level*. Child and Youth Services Review.

Presentations

Bisanz, J. (2006, April). *Collision or collusion: Making research partnerships work*. Invited presentation at the national meeting of the United Way-Centraide Canada, Edmonton, AB.

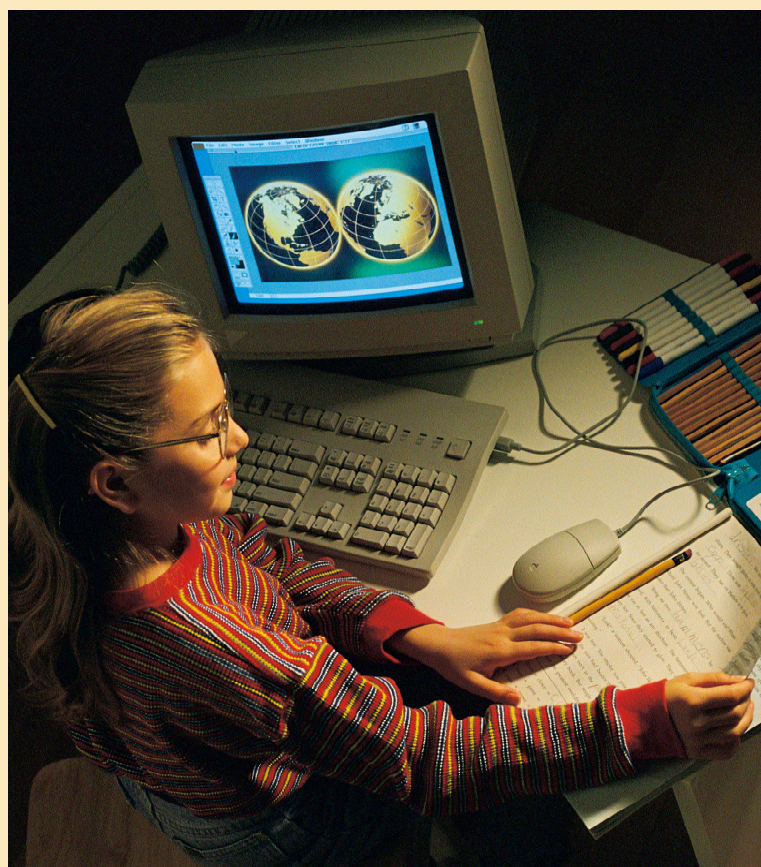
Bisanz, J. (2006, April). *Understanding the research process: A case study*. Invited presentation at the national meeting of the United Way-Centraide Canada, Edmonton, AB.

Bisanz, J. (2006, July). *Current research on in-school mentoring*. Paper and workshop presented at the national convention of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, Toronto, ON.

Bisanz, J. (2006, August). *Working together: The role of research networks and community partnerships*. Invited presentation, Access>Ability National Research Conference, Vancouver, BC.

Bisanz, J. (2006, December). *What can happen when communities and universities work together?* Invited presentation, “Lunch by the Books” series by the Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta, at the Edmonton Public Library, Edmonton, AB.

Tsui, L. K. (2006, June). *Meeting on middle ground: Effective knowledge-sharing practices*. Presentation, Canadian Psychological Association Annual Convention, Calgary, AB.



Financial Information

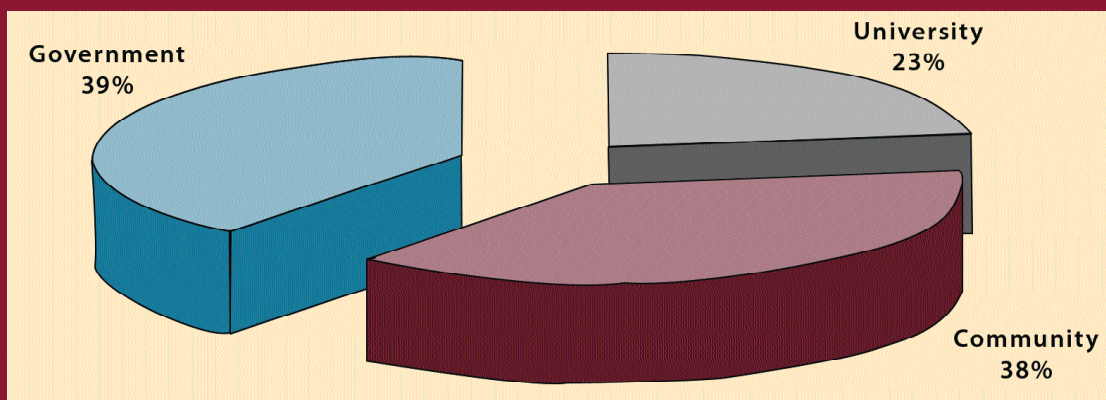
CUP activities are supported with funds in two categories: core operations and project development; and projects. Core operations and project development include administrative and coordinating functions fundamental to CUP's operation and the development of new initiatives. Projects are targeted activities that, typically, are funded with specific grants.

Over the last year CUP has created important new capacity with the creation of the Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre (ECMERC) and the Mobilizing Knowledge About Development (MKAD) project. Our financial picture for the past year reflects this expansion.

Core Operations and Project Development

Contributions to CUP's core operations were provided by a mix of academic, community, and government sources (Figure 1), mirroring our efforts to link these sectors together through their common interest in children, youth, and families. Contributions from the government sector increased both at the municipal and provincial levels, illustrating CUP's growing value to policymakers. We are very appreciative of our funders: Without their support, our consulting, brokering, and project development work would not be possible!

Figure 1: Sources of Core Operations and Project Development Funding



Operating expenditures increased across the board, not only in personnel costs but also in associated expenses such as supplies and equipment needed to support new staff. In the third quarter, CUP undertook a major renovation project to expand its offices, resulting in a significant increase in capital expenditures. Total expenditures were exceeded by contributions, indirect costs from projects, and our opening balance.

Funders for core operations and project development:

Alberta Children's Services

Alberta Learning

Capital Health

City of Edmonton

Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6

Edmonton Community Foundation

Edmonton Public Schools

Health Sciences Council, University of Alberta

United Way of the Alberta Capital Region

Projects

CUP managed over \$1.2 million in project funding. Contributions for projects administered by CUP come from numerous sources. Because projects such as ECMERC and MKAD significantly expand CUP's research, lifelong learning, and knowledge-sharing capacity, CUP must find ways to incorporate the costs of these projects into the budget for core operations over the next two years.

Project funders are listed with project descriptions in this *Annual Report*.



"I think it's just wonderful that the University and the greater community are working together to find solutions... to take that research and show how we can put that into actual operation. You really are making a huge difference to changing the attitude and the way things are being done in this city."

Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel
Keynote Speaker
CUP Annual General Meeting 2006



Our thanks to the parents of Cora, Ella, Kai, Kyle, Morghan, and Nicole for allowing the use of their photographs in this annual report.

Photograph on the cover (right-side), and on this page provided courtesy of adelberthophotography.com.





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