

Committed to improving the development of children, youth, families, and communities.



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



Impacts 2015

How Full is Our CUP?

- 3** CUP members (Maria Mayan, Vera Caine, and Melissa Tremblay) received prestigious academic awards.
- 11** new research grants were received to support the development of CBR projects totaling over \$500,000.
- 2** CUP staff are participating in the Max Bell Public Policy Training Institute.
- 100** early childhood coalitions are sustained through Alberta Education and Family and Community Supports Association of Alberta.
- 3** CUP postdoctoral fellows led early childhood, youth, and evaluation CBR projects.
- 28** steering committee members, from across the community and university, ensure CUP's work reflects issues that impact the broader community.

Informing Edmonton's Poverty Elimination Planning

CUP has worked collaboratively with City of Edmonton partners over the past decade on the Families First Edmonton (FFE) study to explore how communities and governments can work across systems and organizations to better deliver services to families living in poverty. In March 2014, Mayor Iveson established a Task Force to develop a Strategy and Road Map to set priorities and guide actions that aim to end poverty in Edmonton in a generation. As contributing members of the Task Force, CUP applied findings from the FFE study to identify the most significant needs of low-income families to help the Task Force assess how their draft priorities aligned with families' lived experiences.

Since early 2014, CUP directors, Steering Committee members, and staff have served in various capacities in EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE). CUP is now supporting the development of a research and evaluation plan to track the impact EPE makes on individuals and families living in poverty. CUP's involvement and dedication to this work has significantly molded EPE, exemplifies the strength of community-university collaborations, and supports dynamic strategies for the future of poverty elimination in Edmonton.

Mobilizing Multicultural Knowledge of Early Child Development

The Multicultural Early Childhood Assessment and Learning (MECAL) project is addressing a significant knowledge gap by synthesizing and mobilizing knowledge about immigrant and refugee children's development. A Knowledge Exchange Advisory (KEA) inclusive of 9 different partner organizations - school boards, government, community agencies, and University- guides the project. An ECD conceptual framework for immigrant and refugee child was developed that assesses the cultural validity of ECD assessments and investigates developmental outcomes of immigrant and refugee children in Alberta. In the past year, the team has:

- hosted a forum with 22 stakeholders from diverse, cross-sectoral groups to discuss ways to address knowledge gaps and build local capacity in immigrant and refugee assessment and learning;
- created a plan to support knowledge mobilization activities and resource development;
- secured funding from SSHRC (Connection Grant), the Faculty of Extension, and Killam Research Fund; and
- engaged four graduate students in supporting this community-based research partnership.



Informing Public Policy Development

In the past year, CUP has explored ways our work can better support evidence-informed policy processes. We want to ensure the knowledge we generate in our CBR projects has the best chance of impacting practice and policy. Our partners want to ensure their program and policy investments are well founded and have the desired outcomes. As part of this process, CUP is carefully exploring:

- how evidence informs the policy development process,
- what are the best methods of sharing evidence with decision makers, and
- how partnerships can help inform the policy development process.

We encourage all our partners to join in this conversation as this new area of work unfolds.

For further information on any of these projects or partnerships please contact us directly @:

Email: cup@ualberta.ca
Phone: 780-492-6177
Web: www.uab.ca/cup

2-281 Enterprise Square
10230 Jasper Avenue
Faculty of Extension
University of Alberta

Building Evaluation Capacity Across Sectors

Advancing Evaluation Practices in Early Childhood Development

The Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN) has had an exciting year! During this time CUP has been engaging stakeholders across the province to develop a strategy for building evaluation capacity. As part of this engagement process, CUP developed an evaluation capacity building survey that was distributed to a range of stakeholders across the province to gauge individual and organizational strengths and needs. CUP then hosted four stakeholder dialogues in Edmonton, Lethbridge, Calgary and Grande Prairie to generate ideas and possible solutions for collectively meeting these evaluation needs. The dialogues were attended by 122 stakeholders and made possible with the support of 14 facilitators. To accomplish all of this work, we have expanded our team to include a postdoctoral fellow, three PhD students, and five practicum students. The next phase of CUP's work involves using all of the information we have gathered to develop an evaluation capacity building strategy for Alberta.

To connect with the ECN, email us (ecninfo@ualberta.ca), follow us on twitter (@eval_ecn), or check out the website: (www.evaluationcapacitynetwork.com).

Developing a Model of Supportive Housing for Teen Families

Children are connected to their surrounding environments, and for this reason, supportive structures and healthy relationships are essential to promote their immediate and future success. In order to establish effective supports for the children of teen parents in Edmonton, Terra Centre and Brentwood Housing Society have come together with the Community-University Partnership (CUP) to develop a model of supportive housing for teen families using an evaluative approach.

Through evaluation, the partnership will learn about and improve the current model of support, while understanding the impacts of these supports on the children and parents. To increase the project's capacity, initial funding from Brentwood Housing Society was leveraged to secure matching funds from the Mitacs-Accelerate Graduate Research Internship Program. The partnership also received a Homeward Trust Community Research Project Award. The evaluation is developmental in nature, and multiple methods are being used to capture the range of activities and learning that exist within the partnership.

Empowering Underserved Youth Through Music Education

CUP partnered with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the Edmonton Community Foundation, and UofA researchers to evaluate the Youth Orchestra of Northern Alberta Sistema (YONA), an intensive afterschool music education program for underserved students in Edmonton. The evaluation measured students' academic achievement, emotions, and behaviours as well as gathered parents/caregivers and volunteers' perspectives on program strengths and challenges, students' skill development, and retention practices.

The outcomes have helped YONA better understand their internal processes, student impacts, and the broader effects of socially-focused intensive music education for underserved youth, their families and community. This collaboration has led to new partnerships, enhanced understanding of how to effectively measure the impacts such programs over the long term, and increased community-based research experiences for students.