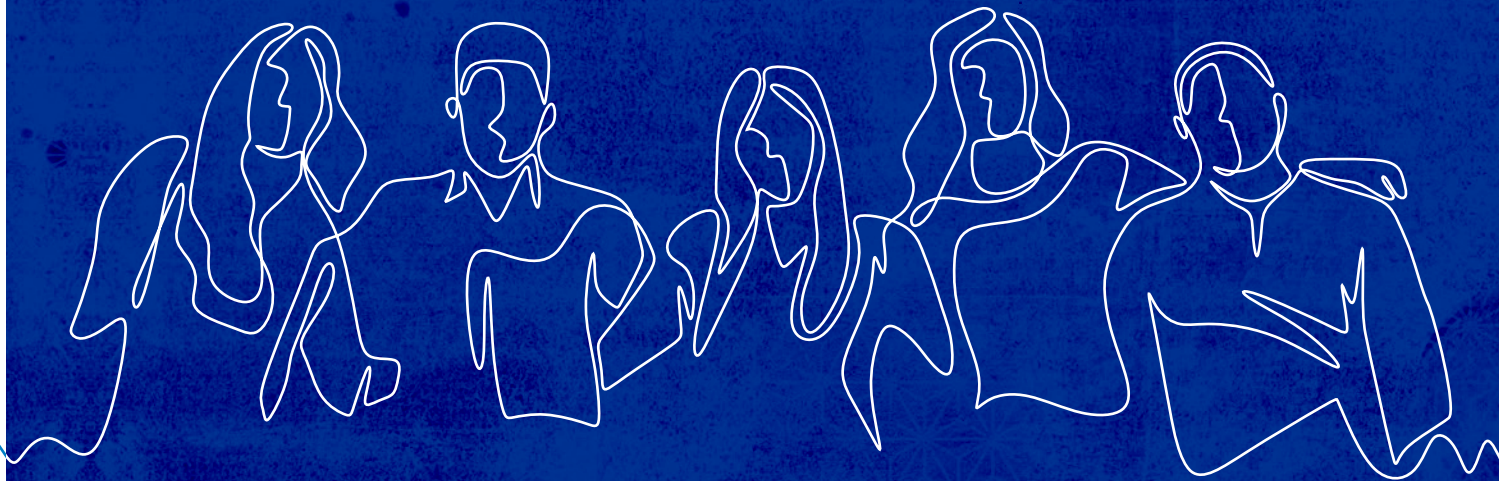


relationships

and the complicated commitment to
community-based participatory research

2021–2022
annual report



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

describe your relationships within CUP...

"If my work environment wasn't a healthy work environment, that would do me in. The people attracted to CUP are people that generally have the same kind of approach to life and ideas, the same struggles and concerns. And I need that warmth. I need these kinds of people around me."

– Maria Mayan

"CUP does feel like family to me. This is a space where you can be open, and you can get love. Relationships I have here and at the Women and Children's Health Research Institute (WCHRI) are all amazing. They are what drives the work for me and make it meaningful."

– Bethan Kingsley

"What enables me to work effectively within community-based organizations is having CUP. And really, no matter how difficult, we have each other's backs. We can come back and debrief and vent. We can do all that stuff, which I think is absolutely critical, and then go back and have some of those difficult conversations. It's because we do have that safe environment here."

– Jason Daniels

"I think CUP does a very good job of being a portal in and out of the university. It has always been this trusted space, and people can say, 'Come to CUP because you will be treated well. You won't be abandoned.' So I've taken those principles, and that's how we run the Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN) as well."

– Rebecca Gokiart

"I think that CUP really does promote a learning environment where you're doing things collaboratively with people of varying backgrounds and social positions. And CUP has great mentorship, which puts learning at the forefront of the work."

– Matana Skoye

message from the director

Nine months ago, when CUP decided to focus our annual report on the theme of relationships, we were thinking about how COVID-19 hindered our ability to build connections. In the discussions that followed, however, we learned that the past year has been less about pandemic-related challenges and more about realizations regarding how our relationships have evolved in recent times. This year saw CUP continuing to navigate its transition to the School of Public Health and its involvement in increasingly complex initiatives like the Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN) and EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE), which have put questions about relationships front and center in the minds of our staff and partners.

It is important to note that CUP has always been a uniquely collaborative environment. Take the Steering Committee. Rather than bringing people together to organize them toward a predetermined agenda, it focuses on creating safe spaces where individuals with diverse perspectives and experiences can form a common understanding of how CUP can move forward. This process requires trust, which develops gradually as people recognize one another's struggles, share ideas, and commit to shared strategies. This understanding of relationships is at the heart of all CUP's projects and is built into our approach to community-based participatory research (CBPR).

This report offers a glance into the reflexive nature of CBPR as our teams debrief, ask questions, express

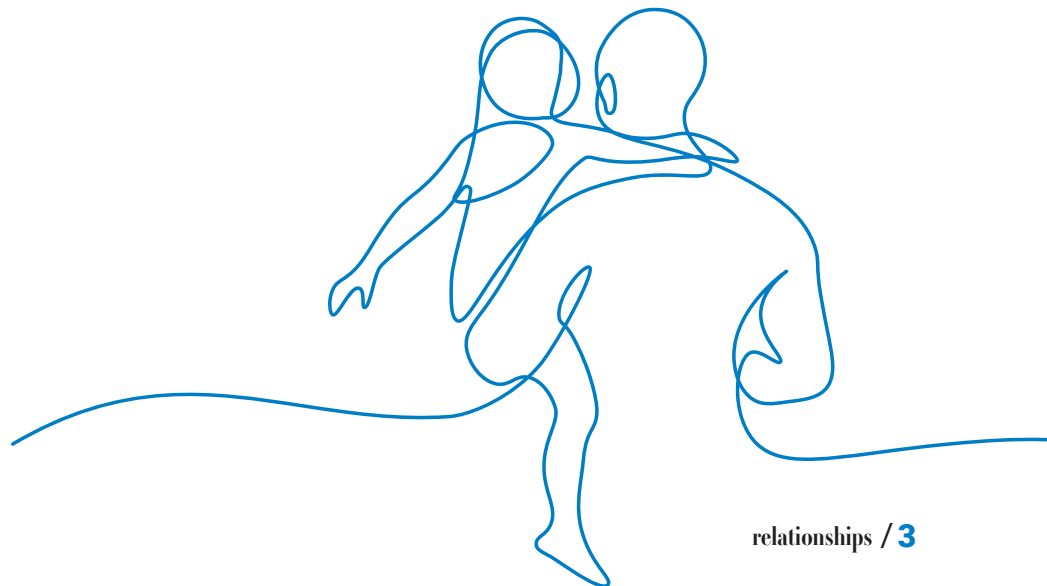


Karen Edwards: Director @ CUP

doubts, and celebrate successes. These stories demonstrate how interpersonal, muddled, emotional, inspiring, diverse, and sometimes challenging this work can be. Most importantly, the stories reflect what I believe to be the magic of CUP, which is the profound passion our staff and students have for community engagement. As a reader, you will learn the values underpinning CUP's work and gain wisdom from some of the most dedicated researchers I have ever known.

This report is also timely. Right now, the University of Alberta has

an amazing window of opportunity to reflect on how it can better support and engage communities and collaborate in research. If we desire a future where the benefits of knowledge are equitably applied, we would do well to learn the key lesson shared by CUP's researchers and partners: that the commitment to community-based research is, in a word, *complicated*.



the CUP Steering Committee

The CUP Steering Committee is founded on relationships. Each month, thirty volunteers representing dozens of not-for-profits, government agencies, funders, and academic disciplines gather to share ideas

and discuss emerging issues in the community. Their job is to help CUP understand community needs, identify areas to apply CUP's capacity and expertise, and guide CUP through its many complex partnerships.

The monthly meetings are designed as a two-way street between the community and the university, paved for the broad purpose of using evidence to inform practice, programs, and policy discussions. The meetings

"there will always be differences, and it takes time to work through them."

Deanna Williamson: Co-Chair @ CUP Steering Committee
Associate Professor @ Department of Human Ecology

"I've been on the CUP Steering Committee since, well, for a long time," Deanna says. "It's been around 20 years. Is that possible?"

If time flies at CUP, it also flies while talking to Deanna. Inside her office on the third floor of the Human Ecology Building, tucked against the far west perimeter of campus, she pivots on her chair and welcomes visitors with a smile. The pandemic and recent retirements have left the office bank nearly empty, silent except the echo of Deanna's infectious praise for CUP.

"One of the things I've always loved about CUP is the high level of

engagement from all participants. It impresses me, the dedication to the work that's being done, which is advancing knowledge for the benefit of the community. And I think that's pretty rare."

Deanna assumed a co-chair position in 2020 at the start of an administrative leave. She says this was an excellent opportunity to get more connected with Martin and the Steering Committee, even if the digital environment has put strains on communication.

"The pandemic has certainly changed the way we connect, and I found that to be a challenge when chairing meetings. It's hard to read people and get nonverbal feedback. You can't turn to the person in the Zoom box beside you and go, 'Hey, how are you doing? How was your weekend?' And I believe those kinds of conversations are very important for nurturing and developing relationships, even work-related relationships.



"At the same time, everyone has different comfort levels about in-person meetings. I think one of the biggest challenges going forward is figuring out how to make decisions about meeting in a hybrid environment so that we can be effective and, at the same time, continue to develop the authentic people-to-people connections that are going to enrich our work.

"This is necessary because, really, it's hard work to form relationships where the university and community members work together, particularly within our current context, which is so influenced by neoliberal ideas of productivity and efficiency. Forming authentic relationships requires people coming together from different perspectives, experiences, and positions in society to share power.

"Even if you think you're all coming from the same camp and have common goals, there will always be differences, and it takes time to work through them."

advice

"Developing relationships is not always an efficient process. It is important to take your time and connect to people like CUP who support community-based work."

are a unique space where members can step outside their organizational agendas, explore innovative ideas, have curiosity-driven discussions, and deepen their relationships.

Steering Committee meetings

also create opportunities for new relationships to emerge. Each meeting provides time for invited speakers who are new to CUP to present on community issues, programs, or research.

In 2021-2022, the committee was co-chaired by Deanna Williamson and Martin Garber-Conrad, representing the university and the community respectively.

"CUP researchers and the Steering Committee have always been seriously committed to their relationships with the community."

Martin Garber-Conrad: Former Co-Chair @ CUP Steering Committee
Former CEO @ Edmonton Community Foundation

"People tell you more things if you just sit there and listen."

At the downtown Credo, Martin takes long pauses between his words as a coffee grinder behind him whirs to a stop. His eyes scan the table covered with pens and printed articles.

"And that's not always easy for me to do, but I'm okay when I try at it."

Known among colleagues for his kindness, dedication, and dry humour, Martin has been serving on the Steering Committee for over two decades, first as the director of a community services organization and later as head of Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF). He recently stepped down as co-chair of the Committee in light of his retirement from ECF.

"CUP researchers and the Steering Committee have always been seriously committed to their relationships with the community. There may be some slight differences in understanding what that means, but these relationships always involve engaging

meaningfully with communities and respecting the knowledge that they have—even if it's not the kind of academic knowledge researchers are used to. It involves finding value in the perspectives provided by different cultures, ethnicities, worldviews, or income levels.

"Different masters, even."

Over the years, Martin says, CUP has been remarkably successful at mobilizing knowledge to benefit the community. A major factor in this success is that CUP and the Steering Committee have long been mindful of diversity and equity.

"Diversity serves us well in all the projects that we undertake. CUP researchers, either by inclination or by learning, are more open to embracing the diversity that comes with community research than other people might be in the university. In our case, diversity comes not only from staff but also from the range of community organizations that we work with.



"And the community is explicitly, at least nominally, half of CUP.

"Our focus on equity has probably increased over the past few years, but it has been a gradual learning. Both the university and the community recognize that nobody is perfect and that we still need to do more. As we move forward, I think the biggest change is that we'll return to having in-person meetings, and we're going to try harder than ever to make sure we're including as much diversity as we can."

advice

"The best way to learn about community-engaged research is to get involved.

Learn not just from coursework, but from lived experiences."

“take the time to form those key relationships because, once they’re formed, those are lifelong connections.”

She sits in her fourth-floor office, her door open to a cubicle block of students with heads bowed over computers. Some read reports about the community projects they are involved in. Others talk and laugh in the afternoon sun through the west windows of the Edmonton Clinic Health Academy (ECHA).

In this space, Rebecca comes to think of her relationships as “geographical.” They cross international borders, are built across institutional “hills,” and have degrees of emotional and political depth. Rebecca’s relationships include people in the non-profit sector, fellow researchers, government representatives, and the many undergraduate and graduate students who engage in her work.

Relationships can be on a



Rebecca Gokiert: Associate Director @ CUP
Director @ Evaluation Capacity Network
Professor @ School of Public Health

spectrum, she explains. On one side, you have more contractual partnerships, which are often founded around a particular issue or research project. On the other, you have relationships with community-based organizations or leaders, which can carry an emotional weight. Taking a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach often requires researchers to get to know their partners personally and understand their perspectives.

“I could have a deeper relationship with a work colleague or a community organization leader than I do with an actual friend. Do you know what I mean? It’s important to take the time to form those key relationships because, once they’re formed, those are lifelong connections.”

For years, Rebecca has been building the Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN) from the ground up, relationship by relationship. In the beginning, she was partially on sabbatical, affording her time to form the foundational relationships needed for the project to flourish.

“I don’t want to call it ‘friend-raising,’ but it is a little bit, right? So, when I was building this big network, I just started making these new relationships. And how do you do that? Well, I called people up. I invited them for coffee. If I was at an

international conference, for example, I would email the person and say, ‘Can we connect, grab lunch or a coffee?’ And they would always agree, and we would have the start of a relationship.”

As the ECN matured, so did these early connections. Informal research relationships became committed personal and intellectual ones. One group of women—who, Rebecca adds with a laugh, call themselves “The Eval Gals”—still meet regularly in the evening to share knowledge about the field of evaluation over virtual cocktails.

Building the ECN also led Rebecca to form lifelong relationships with community partners.

“Like Yvonne Chiu with the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op or Liz O’Neill with the Boys and Girls Club. These are very, very powerful women and mentors that I could call in a heartbeat, and they would connect with me and help with anything.”

As of August 2022, the ECN is mid-way through a SSHRC partnership grant and determining what comes next. At the same time, in-person gatherings are making new connections possible and community organizations are becoming increasingly interested in capacity building. Amidst such change, Rebecca expects the network will start proactively investing again in the “geography of relationships.” By now, the ECN is large enough that many of these relationships will form organically and at all levels. Students, communities, government officials, funders, and academics are all part of this vision.

When asked if she had any relationship-building tips for people doing CBPR, Rebecca says yes.

“Be okay with ambiguity.”

advice

“Make sure you put enough time and energy into key relationships. If you superficially invest, your relationships will be superficial.”

While “friend-raising” often happens in CBPR, meaningful community connections are not always synonymous with friendships. This is a lesson Rebecca often imparts to her students by asking them to read Maria Mayan and Christine H. Daum’s paper “Worth the Risk? Muddled Relationships in Community-Based Participatory Research.”

“I’m always very upfront with my students when I teach evaluation. I have a certain approach, and it isn’t about traditional outcomes. It’s very much about making a learning space and a co-created space, so we’re always working within a relationship or partnership to figure out what kind of evaluation is most meaningful to the situation.

“I don’t want to say that anybody can do CBPR because I actually do think it requires a certain personality type. Some students I work with are very adaptable. If they’re not, they will encounter some of their biggest learning challenges, while others get into that space and realize it’s not for them, that it feels really uncomfortable.”

Being okay with ambiguity, she says, means you need to be uncomfortable sometimes.

“You have to be flexible and adaptable. Literally in the moment. Like when I drove out to a community in a snowstorm 300 kilometres away, but the person who was supposed to be there didn’t show. Instead of being frustrated with the situation, I thought, ‘How do I use this as an opportunity?’ I had driven out there with two students and we had conversations along the way—so that was a great use of our time.”



ECN Students L to R:
Jenae Gauthier,
Jessica Haight, Giulia
Puinean, and Cristian
Neves

What’s the most important thing you’ve learned about forming relationships?

Giulia Puinean: “While researchers may possess the technical skills necessary for tackling complex societal problems, it’s really the stakeholders, especially those with lived experience, who are able to provide incredible insight into these issues.”

Jenae Gauthier: “Listening with an open mind, encouraging everyone to share their ideas, being receptive to new possibilities, and actively engaging stakeholders are key to the research process.”

Cristian Neves: “Good work with communities depends on including the voices of stakeholders, reaching consensus, persevering on long-term objectives, and recognizing shared values. The technical aspect of the research is secondary to the human aspect, which is what makes CBPR groundbreaking and refreshing.”

Jessica Haight: “Forming good relationships involves time, empowerment, adaptability, and communication. Partnerships are not linear. They require constant dialogue as community-based research projects evolve over time.”

“relationships are key to having the work feel like it matters.”

Rob still thinks of them as “synagogue projects.” It stems from his time doing community research in Texas. More than once, local synagogues contracted him to design surveys to inform their decision for a new rabbi. For Rob, “synagogue projects” came to stand for self-contained community projects with a clear need and list of stakeholders.

“Do I know the proper way to vet a rabbi?” he says softly from across his desk. “No, but I am able to help the process along. It was easy, mentally and emotionally, to do these projects because I knew someone benefitted on the other end.”

Rob’s work at CUP is more complex because the research gap or question is often undefined. Inspiration comes less from contracts and more from relationships.

“How do you do knowledge creation and mobilization if nobody asked you to? But I’m doing it because I’m hearing the community talk about their concerns. I would be lost if I were to just sit in this room and think big thoughts. The relationships determine what I do and, in a lot of ways, what I think success is.”

Rob’s network includes academics, community members, and partners like the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care (ECELC) and the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (AECEA). Nurturing these relationships means listening to the diverse people whose lives are affected by early learning and care policy.

“One of the overarching things I do



Rob Buschmann: Public Policy Research Associate @ CUP

is just interact and talk with people. Sometimes it’s not even around anything. Sometimes we’re just talking about what happened at your daycare, why people feel happy or frustrated. These things ground my work and lead to action.”

A wall-sized whiteboard overlooks Rob’s desk, filled with blue and green

lines illustrating how responsibilities flow across CUP and partner organizations. The lines create a circle, suggesting it is a cyclical process. He wonders aloud if one more marker, especially red, would make things clearer.

“Relationships are key to having the work feel like it matters. Part of the frustration is that there’s no way for me, individually, to cultivate them all to the extent that I’d like. But most days, I like the messiness that happens without the contract, where I can just dive in, sometimes without knowing how deep the water is.

“I feel like what I try to be is—this is going to be such a tortured image—I try to be the person sitting on the ledge of the ivory tower, dangling my feet, saying, ‘Can I help you? What’s going on?’

“Not only do I like dangling my feet, but I also like doing the work of it.”

advice

“Part of developing a good relationship is allowing people to understand that they have something valuable to offer, even if they feel that they don’t.”

“you must have the patience to explain the significance of the research and include everyone in the discussion.”



Jason Daniels and Maira Quintanilha
Jason: Research and Evaluation Associate @ CUP
Maira: Project Coordinator @ CUP

Jason has been involved in All in For Youth (AIFY) since its 2016 launch, while Maira joined at the end of the pilot year in 2021. Today, AIFY delivers wraparound support to youth in eight inner-city Edmonton schools. Jason and Maira’s role involves applying a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach to AIFY’s evaluation.

“We have a specific role to play in collecting data,” Jason says. “So one of the things we’re grappling with, as CUP, is balancing partnerships while also being rigorous in the evaluation and research methods we employ.”

They are calm and cross-armed but speak quickly and at length. Today is Maira’s first time on campus after six weeks of data collection with parents, teachers, staff, and students, and the team has their minds set on their upcoming annual report.

“Maintaining relationships in a community environment sometimes requires reminding people why we are still doing what we do,” Maira says. “When you collaborate with people outside of research, you’re reminded of the need to be less ‘research-y.’ You must have the patience to explain the significance of the research and include everyone in the discussion.”

Jason says the question of what,

exactly, constitutes the “community” in CBPR muddles the situation.

“Yes, we’re working with communities, but also with several organizations that can be considered their own community, so this project is often about managing multiple relationships, where interrelationships between partners influence our ability to interact with them. If two organizations are not seeing eye to eye, that would impact our ability to gather data.”

“Regardless of what conflicts may or may not exist,” Maira responds, “reporting data accurately means we are advocates for the voices that have the last say in the community, whom the data often represents. The question for us becomes, ‘How can we foster positive changes for communities with the data we have on hand?’”

“University researchers are often seen as sitting in an ‘ivory tower,’” Jason says, “but there are pockets of expertise here that can be important. What researchers bring to a community project is something like ‘evaluative thinking’ or improvement through questioning. It comes down to reflexivity, constantly re-examining your role, which is part of being a CBPR evaluator.”

“Reflexivity is a great tool to be honest with yourself,” Maira says. “But, in my opinion, the university is not the only ‘ivory tower.’ All organizations and institutions can benefit from reflexivity. I think that when everyone, regardless of their role, is able to recognize their values and what they are standing up for, we work better together, which leads to positive community impacts.”

advice

Jason: “You have to be patient. Things are not always going to run on your schedule. Not everyone’s going to be on the same page. And that’s okay.”

Maira: “The complexity of CBPR relationships requires us to accept our limitations and be forgiving of the things we cannot do alone.”

“there is much to be learned about relationships from Indigenous worldviews.”

Matana joined the Supporting Indigenous Language Revitalization (SILR) project last November, toward the end of the project’s first year, and Destiny joined shortly after. Before this, they spent seven years working on a past CUP initiative, the Métis Settlement Life Skills Journey project. With this experience under their belts, building relationships within SILR has been easier than expected.

“I feel like the relationships are fueled by everyone’s collective passion around community-engaged work and SILR’s mission of supporting communities to carry out their own Indigenous language revitalization.”

Evaluation work within SILR requires constant self-reflection coupled with an awareness of the university’s fraught history of colonialism.

“It’s about entering a space where you’re willing to learn in a respectful way,” Matana says. “It’s knowing what work you can or should take on as a settler and when you need to seek guidance. This is always at the front of my mind.”

“I am Indigenous myself,” Destiny says, “and I’ve never been afraid to challenge ideas that don’t seem right. And I’m also very cautious about keeping the research in the community’s best interest.”

One example of this, Destiny explains, is co-developing research tactics that align more with Indigenous methodologies, which in SILR’s case have included photovoice and sharing circles.

“Some people think language revitalization is about sitting in classrooms, but I’ve heard a few times now that the importance is in letting people authentically practice their culture and connect with the land



Matana Skoye and Destiny Chalifoux

Matana: Evaluation Coordinator & Research Assistant @ CUP

Destiny: Research Assistant @ CUP

together while integrating language into it.”

“Often, we hear from attendees that the main way the project impacted them was through relationships or making friends.”

Matana and Destiny say they have developed enduring bonds with project leads and participants. Recently, they were invited to an event through the Weaving Holistic Learning Experiences through Language Programming and Culture (WWhoLe) program, which speaks to the success of their relationships within that project. They also developed and delivered Photovoice workshops to instructors for Braiding Stories to Live By (BStLB), an initiative led by Trudy Cardinal.

“BStLB has been highly instructive,” Matana says, “because it really foregrounds the importance of relationality, where you come from, and who you’ve learned from. It emphasizes a way of relating to the land you’re on and your history.”

“Growing up connected to the land,” Destiny explains, “it’s always on my mind. And it’s not just the land itself—it’s also the water, the grass, the trees. It’s important to experience gratitude for everything the land has provided. I very much value the opportunity to connect this back to our work. Travelling into different areas to do evaluation, and getting to meet people and learn from them, is always appreciated.”

advice

Matana: “Think deeply about how you can reciprocate what people offer you and how you can exist in their spaces respectfully.”

Destiny: “There is much to be learned about relationships from Indigenous worldviews, even if you’re not working directly with Indigenous people. How you locate yourself within organizations and communities also comes down to reciprocity.”



Bethan Kingsley: Research Associate @ the Women and Children's Health Research Institute (WCHRI)

“hopefully we build enough momentum together to start to change the flow.”

In her book *Living a Feminist Life*, Sara Ahmed speaks to the experience of “going the wrong way” in a crowd when power has become a “mode of directionality” (43). “Once a flow is directed, it acquires momentum,” Ahmed writes. “Once a momentum is acquired, it is directive [...] Once a crowd is directed, a crowd becomes directive” (45).

Bethan explains over Zoom how, during her Ph.D. in kinesiology, she turned to community-based participatory research (CBPR) and began engaging with critical theory. As an interdisciplinary thinker, Bethan says she identifies with Ahmed’s idea of “going the wrong way.”

“It’s such a vulnerable position to be in because you don’t necessarily

fit anywhere. Everything feels new to some extent. You may enter academic spaces with the urge to fit in. But I don’t want to let go of my values in order to be in certain relationships. Because of this, I try to build research relationships quite intentionally with people who are open to expansion and changing the momentum.”

advice

“Rigor in community research is listening to people when they’re telling you something, even if it means you need to change your discourse, discipline, or worldview.”

In *Transforming the Non-Profit Community in Edmonton*, a report Bethan and her colleagues produced for the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO) in 2021, they suggest the non-profit community is stymied by political, economic, and cultural factors associated with neoliberalism. The document invites organizations and researchers to reimagine the sector and offers ideas for collective action. They are clear that this “reimagining” is in its initial stages.

Bethan says you often feel the “collective momentum” of the crowd as dead ends.

“It can feel unmovable. In relationships with the community, especially, you go between a sense of hope that change is possible and a sense of despair that the systems we work and live within are just too rigid. There are times when you say, ‘What on earth am I doing here? Now I’ve generated this sense of possibility and have no idea what can be done or whether anything will.’

“But that hopelessness can bring you such a depth of understanding and accountability. It helps you go back and do things differently, and a momentum can build from this. Unexpectedly, incrementally, you see some change—somebody hears about what you are doing, or you see some practices are changing.

“So I’m willing to walk in the opposite direction when I need to because that’s what I feel is important. But I’m not going to convince other people to walk with me. I’m just going to notice those people who are walking in the same direction, and hopefully we build enough momentum together to start to change the flow.”

*Ahmed, Sara. (2017). *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press.

"we all come from systems, and none of our systems are perfect."



Maria Mayan: Associate Director @ CUP
Professor & Associate Dean of Research @
School of Public Health

"I remember one comment a woman made years ago—we were somewhere in the middle of a 15-year project—and she said what she appreciated most was that we left our organizations at the door..."

Maria apologizes over Zoom. The topic reminds her of something she needs to write down. Nonetheless, she takes no time at all to answer questions and, when she's done, asks for further questions.

"When I think of my key relationships here, it's the people you can count on. Who see your strengths and weaknesses. Who let you know when to shine. And, you know, who acknowledge each other's systems and the difficulties within those systems."

Maria says her relationships with partners have been strong over the past year, despite small setbacks like trouble connecting during digital meetings.

"Drayton Valley is a really strong partnership. We're laying a fantastic foundation there. You've got some really good people trying to do something really bold for their community—you know, doing something concrete to bring

education to your community is a pretty admirable goal—and that's at the core of our connection to them.

"And not everyone agrees with the focus on education or with the Zero Fee Tuition program, so it's amazing to see our partners in Drayton Valley supporting such a valuable initiative. I admire that. So, from CUP's perspective, let's see what we can do to help you along.

"What is really cool about our partners is that we can contact them at any time and say, 'Hey, we have some questions for you,' and they

are amenable to that. I think they're excited to share their stories because they're really proud of themselves—as they should be."

When asked about the qualities that help community researchers form strong relationships, Maria shrugs.

"I don't know if this would make people go, 'Oh, that's earth-shattering,' but it's that humbleness. Giving people a lot of grace. A lot of space to struggle or be hurt. And again, acknowledge that we all come from systems."

Maria says this talk about how systems shape relationships reminds her of an individual she saw recently who was wearing a T-shirt supporting the right to carry guns—AR-15s in particular. She closes her eyes and brings the image to mind in order to turn it into a learning opportunity.

"Clearly, I find that offensive. But help me understand how that way of thinking was formed for you. How did you come to this point where you're walking around in that T-shirt? Help me see your struggle. I can't excuse the T-shirt, but if I can understand it, we have a connection. We have a starting point."

advice

"Acknowledge that we all come from systems, and none of our systems are perfect. Before you critique someone else's system, you have to critique your own."

community voices

CUP staff and students work extensively with non-profits, government agencies, and other community organizations. While each partnership is unique, they share the goal of

using research to improve community outcomes. CUP had the privilege of hearing some of our key partners reflect on relationships in the context of our work together.

Astrid Velasquez: Director @ New Canadians Health Centre (NCHC)

“When we started, Edmonton didn’t have a dedicated refugee health centre. Our board chair Vera Caine connected us with the University of Alberta, which invited us to give a presentation, and since then we have been working with CUP and the students on a variety of projects.

“The research principles we created at the beginning were a foundation that allowed us to accomplish many things including our evaluation. More recently, students have been helping us with our website and promotional materials and are involved in a project to tell the story of how the centre became what it is today. We also had a master’s student who did her practicum here, and many of the students keep working here after they graduate.

“It has been quite the challenge to establish a health centre during a pandemic and everything happening to refugees around the world. With our limited capacity, our priority has been seeing patients and clients, so we have been very thankful to CUP for helping us accomplish the other things we need to do. I believe very strongly in the University of Alberta because it has supported us through the whole process.”

Natalie Prytuluk: Co-Chair @ Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care (ECELCC)

“I will honestly say we couldn’t do our work without Rob and the value he adds on behalf of CUP. A big part of his work has been making connections, saying, ‘Here’s a piece of research that could help our cause’ or ‘Here’s someone else that could benefit us.’ He has been instrumental in unpacking how what’s happening provincially and federally impacts early learning and care in the City of Edmonton. The topics he explores are related to challenges we have advancing the work of early learning and care, so it’s been a mutually evolving relationship as things come up in our council meetings.

“If research is something your organization feels is beneficial, certainly reach out to CUP to explore possibilities. The quality of research you’re going to get will be top-notch, whether you’re working with faculty or students. I would also say that it’s economically feasible. When you partner with CUP, you’re working in a way that supports the university and maximizes your dollars for your own research.”



Carolyn Parkes: Communications and Public Relations Coordinator @ Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (AECEA)

“Rob is very relational. He takes time to figure out who everyone is in the context of early learning and care and has submerged himself in this world. Because he has such a good overarching understanding of the sector, he is able to make new and relevant connections between stakeholders. For example, because he understands the work and mission of AECEA, he connected us with the Evaluation Capacity Network (ECN)—specifically Mary-Frances Smith and the students working with her.

“I would never have imagined the direction our work with CUP and the ECN has taken this year. The relationship has leveraged the best of everybody by considering what we can do together. Going into the process with a bit of openness and willingness to be fluid, we have been taken into really incredible directions.”

Nicki Dublenko: Board Member @ Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (AECEA)

“The relationships AECEA has to CUP and the ECN add validity to what we’re doing. Working with them has helped us strengthen the legitimacy of our work and know that what we’re doing is the right thing. Rob works really hard to understand everything and explain it clearly to the rest of us, which is so valuable because we’re mostly all volunteers. And it’s fun work. The conversations we have with Mary-Frances Smith and the students working with her are the best time.

“We’re a group of people who have been around for a long time, hoping to see our vision and mission flourish. To see people getting behind it, to see researchers who are doing the work because they believe in it, is quite emotional for me.”

Erick Ambtman: Executive Director @ EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE)

“CUP is one of the few examples of a dynamic pocket of an academic institution that appreciates that there needs to be value added to the community, and you can’t just treat them like guinea pigs. CUP thinks consistently about how the research they need to do as academics is going to contribute to the betterment of the community.

“In a lot of ways, CUP has helped us understand our values. Our mission of poverty reduction creates a lot of pressure to demonstrate something tangible. Working with Maria has helped us articulate to our stakeholders that our value is in system change. She has helped us show that we are moving boulders because it’s so daunting to be staring at this mountain.

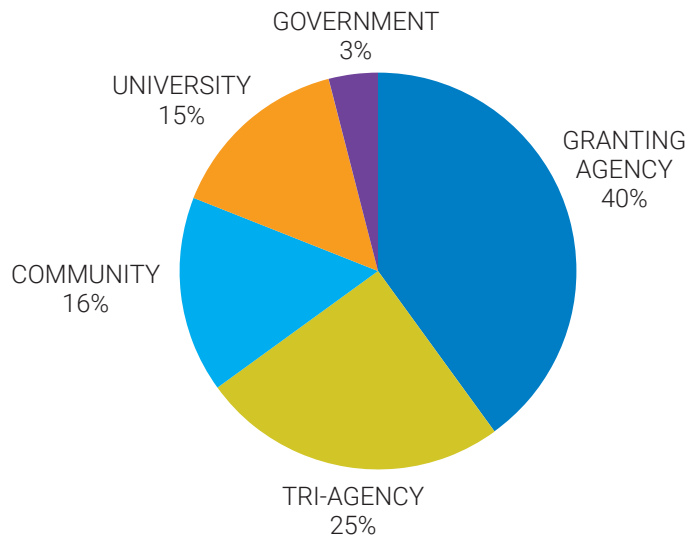
“One of the only challenges is not with CUP, really, but with the University of Alberta. There is tension if something we want to do may not produce a paper or make it possible to apply for grants. Resolving these situations is about finding a compromise based on trust. Maria understands our challenges and struggles, and I like to believe I understand her challenges and struggles.”

investing in relationships

Relationships are central to CUP's finances as well as our research. We are able to commit to community-based research thanks to our long-standing funding relationships with community partners, who support our core operations, and the University of Alberta, which invests in our infrastructure and faculty.

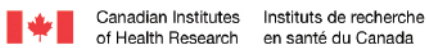
CUP's core operations allow us to build trusting partnerships, acquire an immersive understanding of community issues, organize complex collaborative research projects, and strategically mobilize knowledge to improve policies, practices, and decision-making. New partnerships rely on project-specific funding, which supports strong and diverse research teams that include coordinators, assistants, and graduate students.

This year, CUP managed \$2.58 million in combined operational and project funding from community partners, funding agencies, multiple levels of government, and the University of Alberta.



Total research funding since 2000:

\$31,593,268.52



publications

Articles, briefs, refereed publications,
book chapters, blogs

- Bisanz, J., & Buschmann, R.** (2021). Opinion: National child care would boost Alberta's economy and support families. *Edmonton Journal*. <https://edmontonjournal.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-national-child-care-would-boost-albertas-economy-and-support-families>
- Buschmann, R.** (2021). A Rough Two Months and a Worrying Future: Results from a survey of Alberta early learning and child care programs during the fourth wave of COVID-19. *Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta*. <https://www.ualberta.ca/community-university-partnership/research/policy-development/211122-a-rough-two-months-full-report.pdf>
- Buschmann, R.** (2021). Still More Work to Be Done: A Brief Analysis of the 2021 Changes to Alberta's Child Care Subsidies. *Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f170b16bf7d977d587e43c4/t/612525f5997ec208d76e0d4d/1629824502322/Still+More+Work+to+be+Done+2021-08-23.pdf>
- Buschmann, R.** (2021). Still Unaffordable for Low-Income Families? *Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f170b16bf7d977d587e43c4/t/61bcb0777d9f5a2d09679750/1639755895178/Still+unaffordable+for+low+income+families+2021-12-14.pdf>
- Buschmann, R., Brown, M., & Cleveland, G.** (2021). Two Ways to Help: How the Liberal and Conservative Early Learning and Child Care Plans Would Affect a Calgary Family. *Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f170b16bf7d977d587e43c4/t/613fb53d4995a32bcfce5a5e/1631565120460/ELCC+Federal+Policy+Comparison+2021-09-09.pdf>
- Buschmann, R., & Fischer-Summers, J.** (2021). Continuing an Unwelcome Trend: Rising Early Learning and Care Fees in Calgary. *Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f170b16bf7d977d587e43c4/t/609bfc70fc212614fee8bf56/1620835441644/Rising+Early+Learning+and+Care+Fees+in+Calgary+2021>
- Buschmann, R., & Fischer-Summers, J.** (2021). Continuing an Unwelcome Trend: Rising Early Learning and Care Fees in Edmonton. *Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f170b16bf7d977d587e43c4/t/608c67122d83805517c73b9c/1619814162571/Rising+Early+Learning+and+Care+Fees+in+Edmonton+2021-04-26.pdf>
- Challborn, M.** (2021). Why and How Cities Matter for Early Learning and Care. *Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f170b16bf7d977d587e43c4/t/6175a55588d7923d161de598/1635100012553/Why+and+How+Cities+Matter+for+ELC.+pdf>
- Conde, A.** (2021). The overlooked potential of Canadians living in poverty. *Blog post*. <https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/news/working-poor-part1>
- Conde, A.** (2021). Investing in Canada's workforce. *Blog post*. <https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/news/working-poor-part2>
- Conde, A.** (2021). Is working a pathway out of poverty?: Examining the working poor in Canada. *Policy brief for EndPovertyEdmonton*. https://www.ualberta.ca/community-university-partnership/research/poverty-reduction/working-poor-policy-brief_20210517.pdf
- Conde, A.** (2021). Race-based data collection primer. *Research brief for EndPovertyEdmonton and the Race-Based Data Collection Table*. <https://www.ualberta.ca/community-university-partnership/research/poverty-reduction/rbdc-primer-14102021.pdf>
- Conde, A., Ferdinands, A., & Mayan, M.** (2022). Working Hard or Hardly Working? Who are Canada's Working Poor? *Journal of Poverty*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2022.2071663>
- El Hassar, B., Poth, C., Gokiart, R.J., & Bulut, O.** (2021). Toward an Evidence-Based Approach to Building Evaluation Capacity. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjpe.69191>
- Fischer-Summers, J.** (2022). Exploring Licensed Early Learning and Child Care in Edmonton Day Homes. *Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f170b16bf7d977d587e43c4/t/6222c1b1e3cd1828c1b35ad3/1646444977380/Family+Day+Home+Paper+2022-02-28+%281%29.pdf>
- Fischer-Summers, J.** (2021). Recommended Actions for Alberta Children's Services in Support of Early Learning and Care: Rationale. *Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f170b16bf7d977d587e43c4/t/60ede9b6670c344ea75e5976/1626204601029/Rationale+for+Recommendations+to+City+2021-07-09.pdf>

- Fischer-Summers, J.** (2021). Recommended Actions for Alberta Children's Services in Support of Early Learning and Care. Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f170b16bf7d977d587e43c4/t/6132734affbc006b7f4f627e/1630696266715/ECELC+Provincial+Recommendations+09-03-2021.pdf>
- Gokiert, R.J., Poth, C., Kingsley, B.C., El Hassar, B., & Mejia, T.** (2022) Responding to the Evaluation Capacity Needs of the Early Childhood Field: Insights from a Mixed Methods Community-based Participatory Design. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjpe.70920>
- Gokiert, R.J., de Vos, P., Daniels, J., Jun, S., & Poth, C.** (2022). Chapter 9: It Can Be a Laughing Matter: Real-World Metaphors and Strategies for Program Evaluation with Humour in *Teach Program Evaluation With a Sense of Humor: Why (and How to) Be a Funnier and More Effective Program Evaluation Teacher and Laugh All the Way to Your Classroom* by Kishor Vaidya.
- Kingsley, B.C., Morley, K., Das, S., Mayan, M. & Wallace, E.** (2021). Attempting to Address Conditions of Poverty through an Inclusive Economic Approach in Alberta. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cjnser.2021v12nS1a415>
- Knoop, J.** (2021). Emerging strategies for a recovery for all. Blog post. <https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/news/emerging-strategies-for-an-economic-recovery-for-all>
- Mayan, M., Kingsley, B., Ngo, S., Misita, D., & Bell, R.** (2021). Considering the Role of a Bridge Person in a Community-University Partnership to Address Food Insecurity Among Migrant Families. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach & Engagement*, vol. 25, no. 4, pg. 167-182. <https://openjournals.lib.uga.edu/jheoe/article/view/1472>
- Puinean, G., Gokiert, R.J., Taylor, M., Jun, S., & de Vos, P.** (2022). Evaluation in the Field of Early Childhood Development: A Scoping Review. *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035719X221080575>
- Schindel T.J., Hughes, C.A., Makinova, T., & **Daniels, J.** (2022). Drawing out experiences: Arts-informed qualitative research exploring public perceptions of community pharmacy services. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2021.03.006>
- Schindel, T.J., Hughes, C.A., Makinova, T., & **Daniels, J.** (2022). The draw and write technique to uncover nuance in pharmacy and health services delivery. *Contemporary Research Methods in Pharmacy and Health Services* by S. Desselle, V. Garcia-Cardenas, C. Anderson, P. Aslani, A. Chen, & T. Chen (editors). <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-91888-6.00002-8>
- Tremblay, M., **Kingsley, B., Gokiert, R.J., Blums, T., Mottershead, K., & Pei, J.** (2021). Using Photovoice to Explore Teen Parents' Perspectives on Raising Healthy Children. *Journal of Adolescent Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07435584211034871>
- Tremblay, M., **Gokiert, R.J., Mottershead, K., & Pei, J.** (2022). Characteristics of Teen Families Accessing a Supportive Housing Program. *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth*. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cjfy29803>

presentations

Conferences, presentations, and guest lectures

- Boyce, A., Chouinard, J., Chiu, Y., & **Gokiert, R.J.** (May 2022). Culturally Responsive and Equitable Evaluation. Discussion panel. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj8fETIT1K4>
- Buschmann, R.** (February 2021). The New Child Care Affordability System in Alberta. Presentation to Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta membership. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1i59_MAXzQ
- Buschmann, R.** (September 2021). Early Learning and Child Care Availability and Affordability in Alberta. Presentation to Alberta Children's Services Supporting Alberta Working Parents Advisory Group.
- Buschmann, R.** (October 2021). Public Policy Analysis and Writing a Policy Brief. Guest lecture at MacEwan University.
- Buschmann, R.** (March 2022). Skipping Together Through a Tornado. Guest lecture at the University of Alberta.
- Buschmann, R.** (February 2022). Negotiating a Child Care Needs Assessment (and more) in Jasper. Guest lecture at the University of Victoria.

- Cleveland, G., & **Buschmann, R.** (October 2021). Measuring Child Care Affordability. Podcast conversation with the Business Council of Alberta. <https://www.businesscouncilab.com/podcast/episode-54-measuring-child-care-affordability/>
- Daniels, J., Keys, K., Gauthier, J.,** & Choong, L. (October 2021). Capture and Share the Impact of YOUR Mentoring Initiative – Demonstrating Impact to your School Administrators. Presentation at Alberta Mentoring Partnership Summit.
- Daniels, J., Keys, K., Tong, R., & Gauthier, J.** Series of webinars for the Alberta Mentoring Partnership Pre-Eval Series. Online
 –(October 2021). What is Program Evaluation & Why Do It?
 –(November 2021). When to Start Planning Your Program Evaluation.
 –(December 2021). Building an Organizational Culture of Evaluation.
 –(January 2022). Getting Started: Laying the Foundation for Evaluation.
 –(February 2022). Evaluating Within Your Means: Fitting Evaluation to your Resources, Capacity, & Scope.
 –(March 2022). Meaningful Methods: How to Collect Data that is Useful to You.
 –(April 2022). Ethical Considerations: Ethics in Evaluation & Working with Youth and Vulnerable Families.
 –(May 2022). Analyze & Mobilize: Using What You've Learned from Your Evaluation.
- de Vos, P.** (October 2021). Systemic Design. Guest lecture at the University of Alberta, POL S 527.
- de Vos, P.** (November 2021). Report Back from the Human Rights Action Lab, the Charter at Forty Conference.
- de Vos, P.** (May 2021). Mobilizing for Social Change. Presentation at the Canadian Nurses Association of Nurses in HIV/AIDS Care Conference (CANAC).
- Edwards, K.** (June 2021). City-university partnerships and the importance of community-engaged research. Presentation at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Science.
- Edwards, K.** (September 2021). Community-University Partnerships collaboration. Guest lecture for the Foundation of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry.
- Edwards, K.** (February 2022). CUP 101: The Why, Who, What & How. Invited presentation to the City of Edmonton, Family and Community Support Services program.
- Edwards, K.** (March 2022). 20 Years Engaging with Communities. Invited presentation to University of Alberta Senate.
- Fischer-Summers, J.,** Prytuluk, N, & Smith, C. (September 2021). Who is Responsible for Early Learning and Care? Everyone! Edmonton Social Planning Council. Online. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFyScZ7m4Pc>
- Fletcher, F.,** & Whiskeyjack, L. (May 2021). Experiential Learning for Indigenous Knowledge Collaboration. 67th Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE) annual conference and meeting. Online.
- Gauthier, J., Keys, K., Daniel, J., & Gokiart, R.J.** (March 2022). Building Evaluation Confidence, Knowledge and Skills in Low-Mid Capacity Organizations through a Lunch & Learn Webinar Series. Oral presentation at the Festival of Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities (FURCA). Online.
- Janzen, R., **Gokiart, R.J.,** & Kinzel, C. (May 2021). The Usefulness of Community-Based Evaluation. Webinar for Evaluating for the Early Childhood Development Program Series. Online.
- Knoop, J.** (2022). Evaluation collaboration. Webinar for the Alberta Mentoring Partnership.
- Knoop, J.,** Hanewich, B., & **Mayan, M.** (2021). Workplace development collaboration: initial results. Presentation to EndPovertyEdmonton and the Workplace Development Collaboration.
- Knoop, J.,** Hanewich, B. & **Mayan, M.** (2022). Collaboration within the workforce development system. Presentation to EndPovertyEdmonton and the Workplace Development Collaboration.
- Kusieuk, J., Pancholi, R., & **Buschmann, R.** (October 2021). Early Learning and Childcare. Facebook Live conversation. <https://www.facebook.com/KusiekWardF/videos/269053201779005/>
- Mayan, M.** (January 2022). How community-level organizations can work with partners and use innovative strategies to improve early child health outcomes. CIHR Best Brains Exchange: Supporting the Healthy Development of Young Children Facing Health Equity. Online.
- Mayan, M.** (February 2022). Knowledge mobilization: are you sure you want to do this? Guest lecture at Athabasca University, SOCI426: Knowledge Mobilization for Multiple Audiences, Sociology and MAIS.

Mayan, M., Cameron, S., & Hanewich, B. (December 2021). Inclusive Economy by Building Capacity with Supply and Demand. Mississippi Association of Community Action Agencies. Online.

Maria, M. & the EndPovertyEdmonton team. (October 2021) An inclusive economic approach to ending poverty. *This Is Public Health* lecture series, University of Alberta.

Morley, K., Mayan, M., Hanewich, B., **Wagner, D.,** & the Town of Drayton Valley Education Committee. (September 2021). Zero-fee education for a resilient, inclusive economy in rural Alberta. *Creating Inclusive Economies Conference*. Online.

issues and impacts series

To celebrate CUP's 20th anniversary in 2020-2021, we organized the Issues and Impacts Series, which engaged international field experts and local researchers to explore a variety of topics related to the wellbeing of children, youth, and families. These presentations fell under four categories.

Community-based participatory research

Sanchez-Youngman, Shannon. (December 2020). Leveraging CBPR Practices to Advance System and Policy Changes for Health and Social Justice. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiBuMyQxBHc&list=PLpeZJ5fHVCpjLU31ICk-aMDnOXBNbIVcn6&index=2>

Fletcher, Fay, & the Métis Settlement Life Skills Journey Team. (December 2020). Little "p" policies and their ripple effects on Community-University Partnerships. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYC-B3U52lo&list=PLpeZJ5fHVCpjLU31ICk-aMDnOXBNbIVcn6&index=3>

Early learning and childcare

Flanagan, Kathleen. (February 2021). Early Learning and Child Care: A National System for Canada. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Y4NIIKcYy0&list=PLpeZJ5fHVCpjLU31ICk-aMDnOXBNbIVcn6&index=4>

Buschmann, Rob. (March 2021). Local matters: Options for improving early learning and care in Edmonton. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Gim2j-sq1c&list=PLpeZJ5fHVCpjLU31ICk-aMDnOXBNbIVcn6&index=5>

Evaluation

Quinn-Patton, M., & Cabaj, M. (May 2021). Transformation: What it is, why it matters, how to evaluate it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YP2BmPcuGaU&list=PLpeZJ5fHVCpjLU31ICk-aMDnOXBNbIVcn6&index=7>

Gokiert, R.J., Mignone, J., & Bourgeois, I. (June 2021). Transformation Evaluation Capacity in the Social Serving Sector. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YP2BmPcuGaU&list=PLpeZJ5fHVCpjLU31ICk-aMDnOXBNbIVcn6&index=7>

Reducing poverty

McCormick, Jim. (September 2021). Ending poverty at a city level: what will it take? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQMkpQeqSgE&list=PLpeZJ5fHVCpjLU31ICk-aMDnOXBNbIVcn6&index=8>

Mayan, M., & the EndPovertyEdmonton team. (November 2021). An inclusive economic approach to ending poverty. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptAeCVJtsHU>

steering committee membership 2021-22

Jeffrey Bisanz

Department of Psychology

Vera Caine / Jordana Salma

Faculty of Nursing

Gloria Chalmers

Community Member

Kourch Chan

e4c

Yvonne Chiu / Hannah Goa

Multicultural Health Brokers
Co-op

Krysta Fitzgerald

Boyle Street Community
Services

**Ilene Fleming / Allan
Undheim**

United Way of the Alberta
Capital Region

**Rachel Foley / Owen
Livermore**

Edmonton Public School
Board

Martin Garber-Conrad

(Co-Chair)
Edmonton Community
Foundation

**Cory Habulin / Soni
Dasmohapatra**

Community and Social
Services

Wendy Hoglund

Department of Psychology

Beth Hunter

City of Edmonton

Elaine Hyshka

School of Public Health

Shanthi Johnson

School of Public Health

Tehseen Ladha

Department of Pediatrics

Susan Lynch

Community Member

Michelle Maroto

Department of Sociology

Christina Nsaliwa

Edmonton Immigrant
Services Association

Marni Pearce

Community Member

Michael Phair

Community Member

Christina Rinaldi

Department of Educational
Psychology

Farha Shariff

Faculty of Education

Cheryl Shinkaruk

Edmonton Catholic Schools

Christopher Smith

Muttart Foundation

Melissa Tremblay

Department of Educational
Psychology

Leslie Twilley

Alberta Education

Tanya Voth

Women and Children's
Health Research Institute
(WCHRI)

Dori Wearmouth

Alberta Health

Deanna Williamson

(Co-Chair)
Department of Human
Ecology

Sophie Yohani

Department of Educational
Psychology

