PRACTICE-BASED ARTICLE

Mobilising knowledge on newcomers: Engaging key stakeholders to establish a research hub for Alberta

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Abstract

As immigration to Canada increases, so, too, do the complexities associated with serving various groups of newcomers, including immigrants, refugees, temporary foreign workers and international students. A range of stakeholder groups, such as grassroots community organisations, immigrant service provider organisations and academic researchers, have developed knowledge about how to best serve newcomers as they integrate into life in Canada. To date, there have been few opportunities for members of these and other stakeholder groups to work together to ensure that the needs of newcomers are being efficiently met. In this article, we describe a multi-step process of reciprocal knowledge engagement involving diverse stakeholders and led by the Newcomer Research Network at the University of Calgary. This engagement has the ultimate goal of developing a knowledge mobilisation hub focused on building capacity in community-engaged research with newcomers. In order to understand how we will reach this goal, this article outlines the efforts, priorities, challenges and important lessons learned that occurred as part of the multi-step process undertaken to establish a knowledge exchange with newcomer communities at its core.

Keywords

Newcomer; immigrant service provider organisation; grassroots community; healthcare; social care; education

Introduction

In 2019, Canada posted the highest population growth of all G7 countries, and this growth was primarily due to immigration (Statistics Canada 2019). This means that the face of Canada is changing. According to the most recent Canadian census data from 2016, nearly 22 per cent of Canadians are immigrants, with 30 per cent of these newcomers arriving since 2006. No province has experienced the impact of immigration more than Alberta, which has welcomed more immigrants per capita than any other province since 2001. The number of newcomers to Alberta – including immigrants, refugees, temporary foreign workers and international students – nearly tripled between 2001 and 2016, with 17.1 per cent of new immigrants in Canada residing in the province (Statistics Canada 2016). Newcomers are diverse, hailing from a number of ethno-geographical backgrounds and exhibiting differences in their sociocultural and life practices, which, in turn, influence their settlement needs, including social care, education and health (Ahmed et al. 2015; Gérin-Lajoie 2008; Simich et al. 2005). Within the Canadian context, local immigrant service provider organisations (SPOs), funded by the federal government's Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, are a fundamental component within a decentralised model for newcomer settlement and integration. They ensure service provision and provide, for example, language training, job placement and community engagement opportunities (Neudorf 2016). In their study of 53 SPOs in Alberta, Salami et al. (2019) demonstrate the important role played by these organisations in compensating for the lack of diversity in local community organisations where newcomers live. They also found that SPOs help to strengthen the sense of community belonging, in turn improving overall newcomer mental health.

SPOs, including governmental and non-governmental entities, along with frontline practitioners and grassroots immigrant community organisations, face significant challenges in the development and implementation of appropriate settlement interventions to overcome the hurdles faced by newcomers (Kaushik & Drolet 2018; Miller 2017; Rajkumar et al. 2012). Given that a strategic approach to settlement and integration, through a continuum of formal and informal social supports, has an important influence on positive integration experiences (Shommu et al. 2016; Simich et al. 2005), it is imperative that academic researchers and SPOs work in partnership with the newcomers themselves to ensure that their needs are being efficiently met.

Currently, there are relatively few opportunities for knowledge mobilisation among SPOs, grassroots ethnic community associations and researchers. The purpose of this article is to outline a multi-step process for reciprocal knowledge engagement with diverse stakeholders that was led by the interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral Newcomer Research Network at the University of Calgary. The focus of the knowledge engagement is to identify and explore research questions, emerging issues and priorities in order to address these mutually identified issues and areas of opportunity. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to develop a knowledge mobilisation hub centred on developing competency in community-focused research with newcomers. We outline and critically reflect on the process undertaken in the hope that sharing our challenges, strategies and outcomes will be useful for others seeking to build

relationships among stakeholders that authentically brings together diverse knowledge and experiences.

Newcomer Engagement

Newcomers to Canada integrate to a greater or lesser extent into their communities. For the purposes of this article, we view integration as a dynamic two-way process of adaptation in which both the newcomer culture and the host culture adapt to one another (Jiménez 2011; Lindsay & Singer 2003). Integration is distinct from assimilation as it does not require newcomers to give up their language or culture (Wrigley 2012); the expectation is that newcomers will ultimately achieve equity and the ability to participate in their new society (Seat 2000, p. 9). We acknowledge that integration is a long-term, complex process that can be benchmarked against a number of factors, including, but not limited to, language proficiency, political participation, socioeconomic attainment and social interaction within the community (Wrigley 2012). Newcomer civic engagement plays an important role in integration (Jensen 2008; Wrigley 2012), and research conducted in a host of fields shows that engagement among newcomers is associated with educational success, increased happiness, healthier behaviours and more just access to housing (e.g. Georgis et al. 2014; Patten, O'Meara & Dickson-Swift 2015).

Within much of the literature on newcomer engagement, immigrants, refugees, temporary foreign workers and international students take part in research endeavours as participants from whom data are collected and analysed. In these situations, researchers set the agenda, establish goals, develop research questions, design instruments, and collect and analyse the research data (e.g. Deckers & Zinga 2012; Edward & Hines-Martin 2014; Georgis et al. 2014; Lowenhaupt 2014). For the purposes of our project, however, we extend the notion of newcomer engagement in a number of ways. Newcomers and SPOs are true partners in the research process from the outset. They both play a crucial role in identifying real-world problems that need to be addressed, and both are valued for their knowledge and experience and viewed as critical to the success of the project from start to finish (e.g. Pegno 2019; Wine et al. 2019).

Researchers such as Cook (2008), Macpherson et al. (2017) and Minkler (2005) point to the value of community-engaged projects in improving the relevance of research, the quality of the research process and the interpretation of research findings. Moreover, as Facer and Enright (2016, p. 8) note, partnered research projects allow for the 'creation of a new public knowledge landscape where communities, and the universities that form part of those communities, can collaborate to question, research and experiment to create new ways of understanding, seeing and acting in the world'. A number of previous projects have engaged newcomers and the agencies that serve them in the ways we have defined here. In the field of social care, Drolet et al. (2018) describe a project in which they partnered with SPOs in Edmonton to address the challenges faced by older Chinese immigrants in accessing mainstream services. The researchers worked with an advisory committee from the outset of the project, co-developing culturally appropriate and safe interview and focus group questions and ultimately participating in a knowledge-sharing forum at the completion of the project. Educational research has also made use of engaged approaches with school leaders and parents, taking on the role of research partner (see, for example, Georgis et al. 2014). Within the healthcare field, a number of projects have involved community engagement at multiple levels. Montesanti et al. (2017) partnered with Community Health Centers to determine how best to serve two groups of newcomers in Ontario. They describe a collaboratively designed

community development approach to expand capacity within the communities. McElfish and colleagues (2019) engaged Marshallese community stakeholders in southern USA to better understand and address the health disparities within the community. The researchers and community members worked together to interpret the data and set priorities.

At the University of Calgary, there has been a concerted effort to develop a strategy that encourages, recognises and rewards work in knowledge mobilisation, knowledge translation and community-engaged scholarship. Termed *knowledge engagement*, the university defines it as 'a dynamic and reciprocal process in which multiple stakeholders (including diverse groups such as corporations, community organizations, health and social service providers, academics, policy and decision makers, government, and public at large) come together to address mutually identified problems. The purpose of this deliberate engagement is for the co-creation, synthesis, and application of knowledge and evidence to benefit the community at large.' It is within this context that the work described in this contribution is currently taking place.

The Newcomer Research Network

The Newcomer Research Network (NRN) at the University of Calgary is an interdisciplinary community of researchers from the Faculties of Education, Nursing, Arts, Social Work and Medicine who work to advance and advocate for research that will inform intercultural practices supporting newcomers across the University of Calgary and the surrounding communities, nationally and internationally, through interdisciplinary collaborative partnerships. Since its establishment in 2016, the NRN has signed memoranda of understanding with SPO partners, including the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA), Immigrant Services Calgary (ISC) and the Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP). The NRN has also put forward a multi-pronged vision, the central aspects of which include:

- conducting research that is informed and endorsed by newcomer communities and community-based partnerships;
- contributing to cultural understanding as a form of literacy for collaborative and cross-cultural communication; and
- equipping the next generation with respectful and productive human interactions in a multilingual and multicultural society.

After establishing a web presence, carrying out a series of scoping reviews and engaging in focused research projects with community partners, the NRN and its community partners decided in 2018 to increase the scope of their work (Figure 1).

Making Connections Beyond the NRN

The goal of expanding the NRN has been carried out in three distinct phases to date (Figure 1). The first, a one-day Mobilizing Knowledge on Newcomers Symposium, was designed to build on the existing relationships between the NRN and its SPO partners and to expand the scope of collaborations by highlighting community-engaged research with newcomers. This was followed by a post-conference town hall meeting with grassroots newcomer community leaders, which had the goal of discussing their views on what the upcoming partnership's activities should look like. It was imperative to include their voices because this partnership has newcomer communities at its core. The third and final event was a debriefing event with

the SPO and newcomer socio-cultural organisation leadership to co-formulate the next steps
that will enable us to address the issues that were identified through the previous phases.
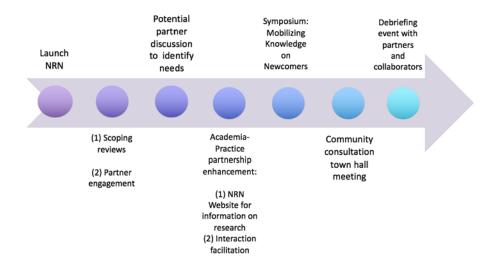

Figure 1   Process of connecting beyond the Newcomer Research Network

Mobilizing Knowledge on Newcomers Symposium

PREPARING FOR THE SYMPOSIUM: EARLY PLANNING

The Mobilizing Knowledge on Newcomers Symposium was sponsored by a Connection
Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This grant is
designed to support events and outreach activities that have knowledge mobilisation as their
goal. Specifically, the grant finances events that make scholarly knowledge accessible to wider
academic and non-academic audiences; supports strong collaborative relationships between
researchers; aids the creation of networks that facilitate academic research; and makes these
networks accessible to a larger community, including non-academic audiences (SSHRC 2019).

After one unsuccessful grant attempt, we determined that we had made a number of flawed
assumptions in our conceptualisation of the event. First, because the timeline was short,
we provided relatively little time for feedback from co-applicants and community partners.
Second, in spite of a real desire for true collaboration with SPOs and grassroots communities,
we initially framed the event as primarily an academic one with a series of presentations and
relatively limited interaction among the wide range of participants. In planning for a revised
grant application, we made a number of fundamental changes to the grant application process.
Importantly, we started our work well in advance of the application deadline and requested
written feedback from community partners and academic collaborators. This extra time
allowed for the organisation of a three-hour in-person meeting among all of the stakeholders,
at which we laid out our shared overarching goals for the grant, discussed practical
considerations for the event and engaged in detailed editing of the proposal document. The
joint discussion of goals and practical considerations (e.g. the need for opportunities for formal
and informal cross-sector discussions, the importance of newcomer voices) ensured that all
stakeholders established a sense of ownership of the symposium. Detailed editing of the
document, which was undertaken in smaller groups, ensured the proper use of terminology
(e.g. our use of the term 'immigrant serving organization' was replaced by the preferred term

of immigrant 'service provider organization' – SPO) and a more broadly accessible description of the event. This new approach better aligns with the central goals of knowledge engagement and ensures a more meaningful approach to knowledge mobilisation.

The co-constructed goals of the symposium were as follows:

- to give key stakeholders an opportunity to share their insights and strategic objectives;
- to inform SPOs, researchers and graduate students on the current state of the art of research with newcomers;
- to provide a theoretical context for the practice of service providers and help to improve service delivery through research; and
- to establish a research agenda for future knowledge mobilisation activities and research partnerships.

Because this was the first event of its kind in Alberta, we determined that knowledge sharing had to be the central component. All stakeholders agreed that every type of knowledge – practical, theoretical, research-focused – was equally important and deserved its space at the symposium and in follow-up discussions. Only in this way would it be possible to work together to effect change in a cross-sectoral way.

The grant requires additional collaboration: applicants must secure matching funds (either cash or in-kind contributions) along with letters of support from partners. In the case of the current grant, the NRN provided monetary support and two of the three SPOs offered in-kind contributions. Ultimately, a budget of just over $20,000 Canadian enabled us to hire a project assistant and two graduate student research assistants, rent a venue (rooms, audiovisual equipment, display boards for the poster symposium), and pay for materials and supplies (nametags, abstract books) and food (small breakfast, lunch, reception) for event attendees.

PREPARING FOR THE SYMPOSIUM: PLANNING THE EVENT

Planning for the symposium involved three key components: (1) communication; (2) soliciting and evaluating potential presentations; and (3) encouraging cross-sectoral attendance and active participation. Up to the point of preparing for the symposium, the NRN did not have a functioning website. Although there were plans to develop one, a clear and easily accessible website became an urgent need. Our project assistant oversaw the development of the website content, but all materials were uploaded centrally. This was because the site, which, due to the interdisciplinarity of the NRN, was permitted to reside on the main university website, primarily overseen by the Vice President (Research) Office at that time. While this ensured that the site was visually appealing and adhered to high standards, it also required more lead time for the posting of content. Additional communication took the form of emails to researchers across campus and established SPO and grassroots community partners, as well as a range of new SPOs and ethnic and sociocultural associations across the province.

Ensuring that all stakeholders had a voice at the symposium required appropriate messaging: community partners needed to know that their contributions were of central importance to the success of the symposium. Although we initially began by soliciting presentations through SPOs and grassroots community organisations, it became clear that more personal interaction was required. We reached out on a personal level to academics as well as organisations to share information about the symposium's aim and objectives. We encouraged partnered presentations from them to showcase the collaborative knowledge creation work. Because both academics and non-academics submitted presentations, we chose a free platform for abstract submissions

that was not tied to a particular research field. *Easy Chair* provided us with the sort of flexibility we were looking for, as well as enabling online evaluation of proposals on the basis of user-defined criteria. We also offered our guidance to those who wished to prepare an abstract for the symposium. Ultimately, we received more abstracts than we could accept, so we encouraged those participants whose abstracts were not accepted for a presentation to participate in the poster symposium. When making decisions about the content of the parallel sessions, we worked to ensure a relatively equal distribution of researchers and community partners.

A guiding principle for ensuring participation of the widest range of stakeholders was making sure the event was easily accessible. This meant that we did not charge for registration, the venue was readily accessible by public transport and there were opportunities for meaningful formal and informal discussion. A number of tools enabled online conference registration. Many of the tools – including those made available by the University – are for profit ventures that require a per-participant fee. *Eventbrite*, on the other hand, is free and easy to use, and it provides conference organisers the opportunity to customise registration (e.g. partial attendance, dietary preferences) and enables the downloading of a participation spreadsheet that can then be used to create email lists and conference badges. We planned to provide participants with all their meals as a way of ensuring that they would stay at the event venue and socialise while eating. We hoped that rounding out the day with a formal roundtable discussion would encourage more formal small group and ultimately plenary discussion about the outcomes and next steps.

CONDUCTING THE SYMPOSIUM

Presentations and posters highlighted projects in four main areas: healthcare, education, social care and grassroots community engagement. A central aspect of all of the research presented was newcomer engagement, and most of the presentations were co-delivered by community partners (SPOs, grassroots newcomer groups or newcomers themselves) and researchers. Table 1 presents a summary of the symposium's 199 participants and their affiliations.

Table 1   Participants in the Mobilizing Knowledge on Newcomers Symposium

Affiliation	Attendees
Academia	92
Local Government	2
Non-Government Organisations	49
Private Sector Newcomers Business	12
Medicine	29
Not affiliated	15

PRESENTATIONS AND OUTCOMES

The symposium was divided into five sessions: a plenary, two sets of parallel sessions, a poster session and a roundtable. The plenary session included presentations on the use of immigrants' health data in community action; identification of barriers to engaging a newcomer community in research; emotional wellness of refugees; transition programs for international medical graduates; and the creation of inclusion charters for temporary workers and their workplaces.

The first parallel session included a panel on education and one on grassroots community engagement. The education session comprised presentations on collaboration between teachers and parents of refugee children; an ethnographic study of newcomer youth and their integration into high schools; gender implications for newcomers as English learners; and evaluation of a skills and language training program for newcomers. The community session dealt with civic participation of ageing immigrants; a review of police strategies to engage emerging communities; collaboration with newcomer communities on research; and institutional transformation aimed at supporting marginalised groups.

The second parallel session delved into research on social care and health and wellness of newcomers. The topics of the social care session included integration needs of skilled immigrants; experiences of refugee youth; assessment of resettlement of refugees through a community-based approach; the experiences of newcomers with sport integration programs; and an institutional ethnography of resettlement services. The health and wellness session delved into the creation of a coordinated mental health system for refugee youth; the changes experienced by a refugee health clinic as they received more patients; programs to enhance clinicians' creativity and multicultural competency; patients' perception of care in a refugee clinic; access to healthcare services by immigrants and refugees based on their literacy levels; and the evolution of a shared care model to treat refugee patients with Hepatitis B.

The poster session was designed to highlight the work of grassroots community organisations and graduate student researchers. A total of 20 teams participated. As mentioned previously, posters focussed on the same key areas as the parallel sessions: healthcare, education topics, social care and grassroots community engagement. The highly interactive and informal session encouraged deep discussions among participants.

The final event of the day was a plenary roundtable. Designed to highlight key outcomes from the event and to set an agenda for moving ahead, this session addressed the issues summarised in Table 2.

Table 2   Roundtable responses by topic

Topic	Responses
Barriers to newcomer inclusion	• There is a need to convert the challenges in working with newcomers into opportunities by focusing on developing capacity among newcomers (e.g. building language proficiency, intercultural communication and work skills), which will benefit everyone. • Understanding and addressing the complex needs of newcomers requires an interdisciplinary, cross-sector approach. That said, the needs of newcomers do not always align with those of researchers. • Research without any action is meaningless. There is an urgent need to translate the findings into action. • Resources tend to focus on groups instead of individuals, but it is individuals who have unique needs. • Some of the greatest needs include more funding, the need for a quick turnaround from data collection to analysis, a housing program that goes beyond settlement, mental health data and programs, and greater capacity within the SPO sector.

Topic	Responses
Recommended next steps	• Involving more governmental agencies and NGOs in effective integration planning. • Establishing a repository of needs, resources and plans for knowledge mobilisation, current projects and plain language results would represent a positive next step. • Providing training workshops for researchers, SPOs and grassroots newcomer agencies to equip these groups with tools for moving forward. • Finding ways to connect newcomer agencies, SPOs and researchers with similar needs and interests would allow the establishment of partnerships from the outset of projects. • Organising an annual symposium and more regular world cafés would provide an opportunity for regular knowledge mobilisation.
Most important outcomes	• Reconceptualisation of the term 'newcomer' in order to understand their diverse needs. • Inclusion of newcomers (and especially refugees). • Awareness of the complexity of newcomer issues and taking this into account when dealing with them. • Moving away from a deficit view of newcomers. • Keeping up to date with research outcomes. • Developing effective ways to share research and knowledge. • Actively involving newcomers in projects through sharing research results with them and developing solutions together.

The challenges faced by diverse groups of newcomers and the unique needs of individual newcomers were understood differently by each of the stakeholder groups. The collective knowledge of participants in the room pointed to a number of complex issues, pressing needs and opportunities for collaboration that a sustained cross-sector engagement approach could best undertake. This points to a need to engage in partnerships early, conduct meaningful research, share findings and create effective solutions.

Post-Conference Town Hall Meeting with Grassroots Communities

A month after the symposium, a town hall meeting was held with champions from diverse newcomer communities from South Asia, the Middle East, Central Asia, East Asia, Latin America and Africa. The event began with an introduction to the NRN and its work to date and a discussion of the notion of community. According to the participants, the notion of community for them has to do with place (i.e. where they are from and where they are now) and language. In groups, they discussed the challenges that they found most pressing for their newcomer communities. The discussions revealed a vast range of challenges faced by the

newcomer communities including, but not limited to, issues of domestic violence, integration and resettlement, difficulties in obtaining employment, nostalgia for their home countries, building capacity for newcomers, and access to information on resettlement. Moreover, participants pointed to the need to become active members of the local communities in which they live – to get to know their neighbours and to contribute to the activities in their neighbourhoods.

After these group discussions, participants shared their perspectives on current research being done with newcomers. Attendees agreed that one of the biggest challenges in working with researchers is the difference in time scale. Pressing issues in newcomer communities deserve immediate attention, but researchers require time to obtain grant funding and ethics approval, and to develop instruments to collect the required data. In addition, leaders indicated that researchers often collect data from their communities but never return to report on the findings or work with communities to develop solutions to their problems. These insights demonstrate the need for a knowledge engagement approach that begins with collaboratively identifying problems, continues throughout the research process and includes the collective development of solutions.

Partner Debrief and Brainstorming for Next Steps

As a final preparatory step, we conducted a debriefing meeting with our existing and potential partners from the SPO and community-based sociocultural organisations. Participants included leaders from seven SPOs, academics from three universities and representatives from various levels of local government. Discussions were held after a brief presentation on the learning from the previous events. The discussions focused on three key themes: (1) facilitating a community of practice; (2) supporting community-based knowledge creation capacity; and (3) strengthening knowledge mobilisation. A clear need was expressed by all stakeholders for the development of a community-based knowledge platform, where all parties across service, research, education and policy would have the opportunity to work together towards the common goal of newcomer empowerment. Figure 2 illustrates the connection across domains and the central role played by the community.
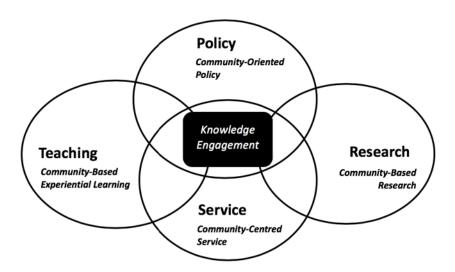

Figure 2   Proposed model for knowledge engagement with newcomer communities

The Role of Graduate Students

A central component of SSHRC's funding schemes includes the training of highly qualified personnel. This means that graduate students who are hired with the funds need to receive the appropriate training and perform meaningful work. The two graduate students who were hired for the event each received funding for about 60 hours of work. The work that they did ranged from routine tasks (e.g. setting up and printing name tags, checking in conference participants) to conference attendance, note taking and participation in the discussions, to summarising and presenting the results of this work at the town hall, in the current contribution and in the form of infographics created for community partners. Both graduate students involved in the organisation of the symposium reported learning a great deal from the experience. They highlighted an appreciation for the current work with newcomers, the insights they gained into collaborative projects generally, and the benefits of learning about conference organisation.

Lessons Learned

We learned a great deal from this experience, which we will rely upon as we move ahead with work related to this project and as we plan future knowledge mobilisation events. We invited key stakeholders to provide feedback for the purpose of this ongoing work. They all acknowledged the benefits of this diverse cross-sector collaboration and the mix of presentations from researchers and practitioners. They also appreciated the formal and informal opportunities for networking, the relatively large number of presentations throughout the day and the inclusion of grassroots community members in presentations. A community partner indicated feeling encouraged by the insightful work shared by students at the poster symposium. These same individuals also indicated that a more central location for the event would have enabled fairer access to the venue and that more involvement from grassroots community members would have been beneficial for all participants. In addition, although there were opportunities for networking, stakeholders indicated that it would have been beneficial to offer more planned opportunities for cross-sector discussion throughout the symposium. Everyone who provided feedback indicated a desire for future events of this nature, and the stakeholders from grassroots community organisations were insistent about the need to continue discussions to ensure that the events result in action as opposed to tokenism.

There are a number of things that we will do differently the next time we organise a series of large-scale events such as these. Firstly, we will apply for ethics approval early in the process. Because participants did not sign a consent form upon entering the events, we were unable to quote valuable data in the form of individual participants' contributions that we collected from the roundtable discussion, town hall meeting and partner debrief session. Moreover, data from the post-event survey are not reported here. The feedback provided by stakeholders for the purpose of this article was solicited after the event in response to emails sent to particular individuals. Secondly, we would charge a nominal fee for participation in the event. Although close to 200 people attended, more had registered. This meant that we ordered and paid for extra food and beverages. Thirdly, the event was originally scheduled to piggyback on an event planned by one of our partners. Because this partner relies on governmental funding for the majority of its events, it was unable to plan its event at the same time as ours. Finally, not all of the SPOs and community organisations had exposure to or experience in this field. Supporting the SPOs and community organisations to create abstracts and then present their work at future events will ensure meaningful engagement. This will also promote the culture of knowledge creation among these sectors.

Next Step: Towards a Community-based Knowledge Mobilisation Hub

The recommendations from the engagement work to date include promoting further knowledge sharing (through, for example, workshops, interactive activities and a defined set of events per year), promoting cross-sector research partnerships and including newcomers as equal contributors. This can be achieved through creating a community-focused hub.

FUTURE PLANS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE MOBILISATION HUB

The results of the engagement to date have demonstrated that the individual efforts of each research team have effected change within the relevant communities. The newly expanded group, which includes members of the NRN, additional SPOs and researchers, and grassroots community members, has dedicated itself to developing a knowledge mobilisation hub (online and physical) with the goal of encouraging collaboration across these groups. Plans for expansion include extending the reach to include government and non-government agencies, policy-makers and think tanks along the lines of that of Wine et al. (2019). The foci of this partnered initiative are as follows:

- Create a community of practice (CoP) that meets, at least online, at regular intervals. In addition to focusing on a specific newcomer issue each month, it will facilitate the development of community-based projects and enhance knowledge exchange and collaboration across projects.
- Support community-based knowledge creation capacity through the provision of research support, guidance and training. This will involve in-person office hours with members of the NRN as well as written and video-based guides.
- Collaboratively establish a research agenda for knowledge mobilisation activities and reciprocal partnerships after a series of inclusive discussions.
- Collectively define and prioritise research questions.
- Engage with communities involved at the conclusion of data collection activities to make the results accessible to them and to enable the co-creation of real-world solutions.

The combined engagement effort to create a collaborative network will enable a profound cross-sectoral impact.

Concluding thoughts

Pegno (2019) reminds us of the long-term nature of engagement of this sort, while Montesanti et al. (2017) recognise the diversity of newcomer communities and thus the need to rely on a range of approaches to engage them. Importantly, this is a participatory relationship that relies on reciprocity. That is, it is 'multi-directional, in that both service providers and the client population are actively engaged in the participatory process and equally benefit from improved knowledge and skills' (Montesanti et al. 2017, p. 647). Based on the work to date, we believe that our cross-sectoral, multidisciplinary and partnered approach will facilitate the multidirectional flow of knowledge among researchers and the community, which will enhance societal and economic benefits for newcomers.

As we move ahead with the creation of a community-based knowledge mobilisation hub, we will rely crucially upon the continued engagement of all of the relevant communities. Systematic evaluation of the proposed impact that takes both potential impediments (i.e.

funding concerns, differing time scales of the relevant stakeholder groups) and diversity of projects into careful consideration will increase capacity and ensure that the hub achieves its goals to serve its diverse stakeholder communities and ultimately lead to improved newcomer integration in Alberta and beyond.

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