



FSC
Food Secure Canada



Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) Community Food Security Hub

Project Overview

Background: **CFICE** is an action research project aimed at strengthening Canadian communities by asking the question: How can community campus partnerships be designed and implemented to maximize the value created for non-profit, community-based organizations? CFICE has five self-managing research hubs:

1. [**Poverty Reduction**](#), co-led by the [**Vibrant Communities**](#) network;
2. [**Community Food Security**](#), co-led by [**Food Secure Canada**](#) in cooperation with the *Canadian Association of Food Studies*;
3. [**Community Environmental Sustainability**](#), co-led by [**Trent Centre for Community-Based Education**](#);
4. [**Violence Against Women**](#), co-led by the [**Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies**](#);
5. [**Knowledge Mobilization**](#), co-led by the [**Canadian Alliance for Community-Service Learning**](#).

Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the CFICE research project aims to strengthen Canadian non-profits, universities, colleges and funding agencies to build more successful, innovative, resilient and prosperous communities. The program was launched in 2012 and will receive \$2.5 million over seven years.

The over-arching **research question** that CFICE investigates is:

- How can community-campus engagement, including community service learning (CSL) and community-based research (CBR), be designed and implemented in ways that maximize the value created for non-profit community-based organizations?

CFICE combines community-based demonstration projects with critical policy analysis to work towards these goals. This research is being conducted in two phases. The **first phase**, between 2012 and 2016, focuses on research carried out by each of the hubs.

Between 2016 and 2019, the project's **second phase** will shift to a focus on policy change. This phase will be conducted by the **Knowledge Mobilization Hub** and will produce a wide range of online and hard copy knowledge products, learning events, and policy initiatives. This hub will be co-led by the **Canadian Alliance for Community-Service Learning** across Canada and internationally.

Through these two phases of research, the project seeks to answer the following **sub-questions**:

1. How does community-campus engagement take place across various scales, and how might successful partnerships be more widely replicated?
2. How do non-profit community organizations define, evaluate and utilize the value created by community-campus engagement?
3. How can non-profit community organizations effectively exercise or share control over the design and implementation of CSL, CBR and other engagement activities?
4. What processes of engagement, governance, evaluation, feedback loops and course design on the part of universities and colleges serve to maximize value creation for non-profit community organizations?
5. What types of impacts are generated by community-campus engagement, particularly for nonprofit community organizations and the interests they serve, and how might these be captured, both quantitatively and qualitatively?
6. How do ethical issues influence the value created by community-campus partnerships? Do ethical issues affect engagement strategies differentially? Do the partners see ethical issues differently? What actions can be taken by the partners, separately or together, to address ethical issues?

Overview of the *Community Food Security Hub*

The Community Food Security (CFS) Hub: Campus-Community Partnerships in the Canadian Food Movement seeks to understand how we build strong and supportive

relationships between universities and non-profit organizations working to build sustainable, just, and healthy food systems in Canada.

There are well-established links in Canada around community food security (CFS) issues. **Food Secure Canada** (FSC) acts as convener for the whole range of organizations associated with Canada's food movement at a grassroots level, while the **Canadian Association for Food Studies** (CAFS) connects many of the academics researching food issues across the country. The CFS movement in Canada is at a historical juncture that is particularly ripe for further academic-NGO collaboration. While efforts through FSC and related organizations have focused over the last ten years on building a shared movement that sees their concerns through a "community food security" or "food justice" lens that seeks to address both food access and sustainable production and distribution issues simultaneously, this social movement has increasingly been engaging in the policy-making process in Canada. Examples can be found in the many provincial initiatives (e.g. Food Matters Manitoba) dedicated towards establishing provincial "food charters", municipal initiatives geared towards the establishment of food policy councils and municipal food policies, and most recently the efforts of Food Secure Canada, working with a wide network grassroots organizations across Canada (many of whom will be members of the CFS hub), to pull together a comprehensive "People's Food Policy".

While there are existing partnerships around community food security, these tend to be organized on an ad-hoc basis, and there is little sector-wide guidance available on how to ensure that the needs of each of the partners (community organizations, faculty members, students) are met, let alone that benefits to the non-profit community partners are prioritized and optimized.

CFS Hub Objectives

The overall **research goal** of the CFS hub is to try to make sense of the many models that currently exist and to articulate "best practices" in the areas of community-engaged teaching and community-based research in the context of furthering Community Food Security in Canada. In keeping with the "community first" mandate of CFICE, the hub will take its cues from its core partner, Food Secure Canada (FSC). A central goal of the CFS hub will be to provide core support for a network of community-campus partnerships that will intersect with FSC's other program areas.

At the level of assessing individual demonstration projects, "**theory of change**" evaluation methods will ensure that all of those affected by the project, including both project instigators and their collaborators (e.g. university administrators responsible for giving

ethics approval, the staff in community organizations beyond immediate project proponents, or the beneficiaries of the organizations with whom community-service learning is carried out) have an opportunity to participate in the process of planning, monitoring, and evaluating the impacts of the projects.

Planned Outcomes

1. A series of workshops and presentations at four conferences: FSC 2012, 2014 and CAFS 2013, 2015.
2. An ongoing stream devoted to campus/community partnerships within CAFS.
3. Core support for a new network under the FSC umbrella in the area of campus/community partnerships what can we do with CAC that can't be done through CAFS? Should we do an inventory of FSC members engaged with academia and do some sort of analysis?
4. Workshop reports, web-based videos and blogs that allow academics and community organizations involved in campus/community partnerships in CFS to share their experiences, successes, and challenges.
5. Guidelines/best practices for campus-community partnerships in the field of food studies for professors, students, community practitioners, and academic administrators among others.
6. 3-5 demonstration projects/year for four years (16 projects)
7. A series of papers or book chapters co-authored between community members and their academic partners.

Governance

The CFS hub will be led by an Academic and Community co-lead, as well as one representative from each of the demonstration projects and others wanting to learn and share best practices. Students from the demonstration projects, as well as hub research assistants, will also be involved. The hub will meet bi-monthly. The role of the hub will include:

- Serving as a site for active research on past and current community-campus partnerships
- Participating in research on, or carrying out, demonstration projects on CSL/CBR in the area of Community Food Security
- Periodic participation in broader CFICE dialogue and activities.