# THE COMMUNITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

# Strengthening A Culture of Shared Research, Learning and Knowledge Exchange

**CRKN 2022** 

Heather De Forest, Dana McFarland, Kealin McCabe, and Aleha McCauley

THE COMMUNITY SCHOMARS PROGRAM



Heather De Forest



Dana McFarland



Kealin McCabe



Aleha McCauley



Kelsey Chaban (on leave)

Alison Horne



**Keltie Ross** 

## Where we've been

Since 2017 the Community Scholars Program has connected researchers in BC-based non-profit organizations with access to published academic research together with supporting library services.

## Where we've been



#### 2016

- Heather De Forest
- SFU & Mindset Social Innovation Foundation
- SAGE & Springer
- 100 Community
   Scholars



#### 2017

- + United Way of the Lower Mainland
- + 400 New Seats
- · CS Portal Launched
- New publishers & expanded collection
- Workshops



#### 2018

- + McConnell Foundation
- Place-based engagement
- VIU and UNBC join



#### 2019

- TRU joins
- Evaluation study undertaken with Dr. Andrea Whiteley (Mitacs grant)
- Two active journal clubs
- >400 Community Scholars in 60 municipalities



#### 2020

- UBC and KPU join
- + Conference
   Presentations
- Pandemic and + usage



#### 2021

- Receive evaluation report
- Begin Theory of Change



## Where we've been



#### 2021

- Receive evaluation report
- Begin Theory of Change

- Planning meetings May-July 2021
- Building on evaluation report, 2020-2021
- Focus groups included:
  - A. Research partners
  - B. Program participants
- Result: draft Theory of Change

# According to our Community Scholars...

### Program benefits include:

- strengthened proposals & reporting
- improved presentations
- helped us advocate & make better policy recommendations
- improved our understanding of the issues
- research was a catalyst for the design new programs
- supported evidence based approaches
- helped us to stay informed & up to date

- improved our engagement activities
- improved our decision-making
- allowed us to train and share new knowledge with other non-profits
- been a source of professional development for staff & (for a few) encouraged further learning
- a small number expressed benefits of connections with other non-profits (from workshops)

- Challenges and needs that the program is uniquely positioned to address:
- lack of time for research and learning is an ongoing challenge
- scholars want short, selfdirected, on-line training in conducting research and use of the portal
- Desire to connect with other
   CS and university researchers

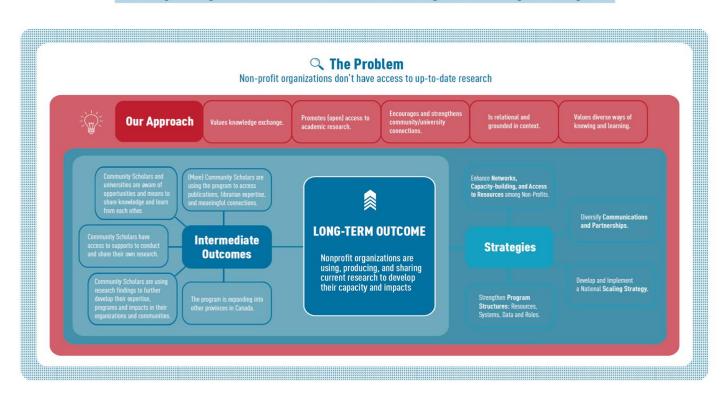


# What university researchers had to say...

- Lack of time to build relationships with communities and learn more about their work as a key gap
- University researchers also identified the barrier that make it harder to communicate and collaborate, including academic structures (like ethics policy, restricted student funding) and mindsets (data versus experiential evidence)

# COMMUNITY SCHOWARS PROGRAM THEORY OF CHANGE

"Strengthening a culture of shared research, learning and knowledge exchange."



# Our Approach

### Continue to build a program that

- Values knowledge exchange
- Promotes (open) access to academic research
- Encourages and strengthens community/university connections
- Is relational and grounded in context
- Values diverse ways of knowing and learning

# Long term outcome (...2026)

Non-profit organizations are using, producing and sharing current research to develop their capacity and impacts. The change targets:

- increase the # of program scholars and organizations in BC who are actively participating
- expand program offerings to advise and make referrals related to the research process
- expand opportunities for CSs to share research with others
- scale the program into other provinces

# Theory of Change: Our Strategies

1 ENHANCE DELIVERY OF TRAINING, RESOURCES, AND CONNECTIONS

- Continue to deliver journal clubs and workshops
- Facilitating opportunities to:
  - develop community of practice opportunities
  - o promote CS as researchers and experts
- · Ongoing needs assessment

2 COMMUNICATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- · Consider equity, reconciliation, and geographic priorities for scholar engagement
- Enhance online presence in communicating with CS
- · Create and share annual impact report
- Leverage / formalize relationships with other University research departments to enhance connections to CS
- DEVELOP OR
  FORMALIZE PROGRAM
  RESOURCES,
  SYSTEMS, ROLES,
  STRUCTURES
- · Identify priority funding, HR needs and options to secure resources
- Develop evaluation framework and standardize data collection and sharing
- Frame and consolidate partner agreements with growth and sustainability in mind
- Supporting librarian professional development
- DEVELOP AND
  IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL
  SCALING STRATEGY
- Document and create systems, roles, tools for evaluation and communication
- · Develop scaling options and models
- Convene interested parties to explore opportunities

# THE COMMUNITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Learn more!

CommunityScholars.ca