

**Knowledge Sharing Methods in Community-University Research Alliance
Projects: In Search of Best Practices**

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Introduction and purpose

Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) funding is intended “to support the creation of alliances between community organizations and postsecondary institutions which, through a process of ongoing collaboration and mutual learning, will foster innovative research, training and the creation of new knowledge”.¹ An important challenge for all CURA projects is to find suitable mechanisms for knowledge sharing. To help address this challenge, CURA projects are required to develop a knowledge dissemination/communication plan, including an evaluation component.² The Common Ground Research Forum (CGRF) developed a comprehensive and detailed start-up dissemination/communication plan in August 2009. This report is intended to supplement that plan by reviewing knowledge sharing methods used by other CURA projects, both past and present. The specific research questions this report addresses are:

- 1) How have other CURA projects shared their results?
- 2) How did they engage their stakeholders?
- 3) Were they able to measure how successful their knowledge sharing was?
- 4) If so, what methods did other CURAs find useful and what did not work so well?
- 5) What are some unique, innovative techniques that other groups have used?

The report starts by looking at the various methods used for knowledge sharing in other CURA projects. The methods are grouped by type and analyzed by intended use and intended audience, to get a full picture of who is involved in knowledge sharing and how who is involved affects the choice of method. This discussion is followed by a review of some of the more innovative methods discovered and how they may be relevant to the CGRF. Included in this section are several case studies of those that are the most innovative and pertinent to the CGRF project. Finally, the report looks at how these CURA projects measured the success of their knowledge sharing methods and what

¹ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. (2010) Programs: Community-University Research Alliances. Retrieved from www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/site/apply-demande/program_descriptions-descriptions_de_programmes/cura-aruc-eng.aspx

² Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. (2006) Milestone Report (for CURA grant holders) – Form V2 (2006)

their criteria for success were. But, to begin, the key terms used in the report are defined.

Key terms

For the purposes of this report, knowledge sharing was viewed as a continuum at one end of which is *knowledge dissemination*, defined as the sharing of research outcomes through traditional academic techniques such as journal publications, conference presentations and books. Further along the continuum is *knowledge transfer*, where academic knowledge is put directly into the hands of community groups and citizens for their reference or use. Third is *knowledge mobilization*, defined as putting research outcomes into active service for the benefit of society. Finally, *co-production of knowledge*, which is the joint creation of knowledge by academics and community groups, results in mutual learning and thus is in itself a form of knowledge sharing. The divisions along the continuum are fuzzy, and a particular method of knowledge sharing can often belong to more than one category depending on the context of its use.

The term *stakeholder* has various meanings, ranging from narrow conceptions (e.g., the formal partners in a given undertaking, and people or groups with a legal interest in a matter) to very broad definitions (e.g., members of the general public who live in or use a certain geographic area). For the purposes of this report, a narrower definition has been adopted: stakeholders refer to the formal partners in a CURA project.

Research methods

The research began by compiling a list of all 109 past or current CURA projects in chronological order. This initial list was pared down to 25 projects (Appendix 1) that were similar to the CGRF in topic, theme or the stakeholders involved. Of those 25, only 18 had publically available information online (Appendix 2), which was the primary source of information on the projects themselves. A detailed spreadsheet was created to keep track of the information found and to aid in listing the varying knowledge sharing methods used by the CURAs.

Finding answers to the research questions was seldom straightforward as few projects posted their knowledge dissemination/communication plans on their websites. Often, the information had to be gleaned by looking at reports, newsletters, and blogs, and by following links around a project's website. Outcomes of projects were referenced much more often than knowledge sharing methods, however, many of the outcomes were themselves the knowledge sharing method. Occasionally, additional information was found on the websites of the projects' stakeholders or in community news articles.

Few projects had their milestone or final SSHRC reports available online. Those that did, however, made the research much easier as many of the questions asked by SSHRC in the milestone and final reports are the same as or similar to the questions investigated by this research. It is unfortunate, for the purposes of this research, that these reports were not more widely available because they certainly would have given a more complete picture.

Few websites contained information on measuring the success of knowledge sharing methods. There was no mention of failures, although a handful of success stories were found. The successes often involved new or novel techniques used by the project, and these have been included in the section below on innovative methods.

In addition to the various project web sites, two other sources of information were reports prepared by SSHRC concerning the CURA initiative. The first of these was completed in 2002, following the initial three years of the CURA program.³ The second, published in 2004, summarized the milestone and year-one reports from the founding CURA projects, covering the years 1999 to 2003.⁴

³ Kishchuck, Natalie. (2003). Performance Report: Phase 1 of the Community-University Research Alliances (CURA) Program, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Retrieved from http://www.sshrc.ca/about-au_sujet/publications/cura_e.pdf

⁴ Barrington Research Group Inc., (2004) Community-University Research Alliances (CURA) Program: Analysis of Data Contained within the Milestone and Year 1 Reports, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Retrieved from http://www.sshrc.ca/about-au_sujet/publications/CURA_milestone_e.pdf

In researching the various methods of knowledge sharing, the audience is an integral part of the process. With this in mind, the report focuses not only on different types of methods but also which methods are used for which audience.

Results

The knowledge sharing methods reviewed in this study were many and varied, and some were rather innovative. This section groups the methods into five overlapping types: promulgating (e.g., lectures, journal papers), education (e.g., museum and art exhibits), participatory (e.g., workshops), traditional media (e.g., newspaper articles), and new media (e.g., podcasts). It also analyzes the methods in terms of intended use (i.e., the knowledge sharing continuum presented earlier) and in terms of intended audience (e.g., academics, community partners, businesses, the general public and policy makers).

The methods reviewed in the study cover the continuum from knowledge dissemination to co-production of knowledge. The greatest emphasis by most projects was on knowledge dissemination through traditional academic works that are easily measurable through numbers of publications, reports and presentations. Beyond academic knowledge dissemination, the methods were often highly individualized, i.e., tailored to each project's specific context. Some methods were found in multiple projects, but often the intended use or intended audience type was different. For example, videos were used in one project as an introductory tool for knowledge dissemination to the general public, in another project as an educational resource for knowledge mobilization in the school system, and in a third as a workshop tool for co-producing knowledge with project stakeholders.

Types of knowledge sharing methods

Promulgating

Promulgating methods include presentations of research to an academic body or at a conference, poster presentations and installations, reports and the publishing of books and papers in academic journals. Such methods are typically used for knowledge

dissemination purposes. Nearly 100% of the CURA projects in the review used all four of the methods noted above.

Some of the methods categorized as promulgating were also used for knowledge transfer whereby research findings were communicated to a community group or the general public to increase their knowledge of a certain topic. This was usually done through a presentation, but some projects installed poster presentations at shopping malls and community events to help the research gain a larger audience within the community.

Promulgating methods are generally not suitable for, and typically were not applied to, knowledge mobilization and co-production of knowledge purposes. However, there has been some movement by recent CURAs to change this. Increased involvement of stakeholders and other community members within the research process itself creates more opportunities for the co-production of knowledge, examples of which can be found below amongst the other knowledge sharing methods.

Education

Education methods are those used by the project partners to educate themselves, each other, community groups at large and the general public. Education methods cover the spectrum from knowledge dissemination to co-production of knowledge purposes, though they are mostly focused on knowledge transfer and knowledge mobilization efforts. Education audiences tend to be community partners, community groups, schools and especially the general public of all ages.

Education methods were often outcomes themselves, such as museum or art exhibits, a play or other performance piece, educational materials or tools like curriculum lesson plans, guided tours, working or artistic models, or the creation of a post-secondary course. Exhibits were used by the *Design et Culture Matérielle* project, based in Montreal, as an interactive knowledge generation tool for all age ranges in the community (Case Study 1).

Both formal and informal guided tours were used by several CURAs as informative and interactive ways for the stakeholders, community groups and general public to learn more about the projects or to share research results. An example is the tours of old cemeteries done by the *Cultural Property Community Research Collaborative* as a way to share knowledge of the history of women in Victoria, B.C. from 1850-1920. Another example in B.C. is the *Mapping Small Cities* project's walking:lab research centre tours (Case Study 2).

Education methods included different types of models, varying from advanced computer models (e.g., coastal change computer models) to an artistic, sculptural memory map of a community. These tended to be made available via project websites, or through an exhibition.

Most CURA projects integrated their research results into existing university courses, but several projects created new undergraduate or graduate courses to share knowledge of particular research or themes emerging from the project.

Other education methods included brown-bag lunches, resource centres, research aids, storytelling and public lectures. The term brown-bag lunches was used in several different ways by the CURA projects: for working meetings of stakeholders; for public lectures or presentations; or to describe an informal learning workshop.

A few of the CURAs created resource centres, to be public meeting spaces for workshops, to aid in further research by the community, and as central repositories of resource materials and research reports created by the project. Case Studies 2 and 3 describe the resource centres established in the *Small Cities* projects in Kamloops, B.C. and the *Daghida* project in northern Alberta.

The *Newfoundland Archaeological Heritage Outreach Program* created several research aids, such as guide books for identifying artifacts and videos on archaeological techniques, which they continue to make available through their website.

Public lectures were used as standalone presentations to describe the various projects and specific research findings. These were usually hosted by libraries and community centres. Storytelling was used by many of the CURAs to share knowledge among the stakeholders and with the broader community through storytelling sessions, performances, books, etc. While it was especially favoured by those projects with First Nations partners, due to the Aboriginal oral history tradition, it was not confined to such projects. The *Cultural Future of Small Cities* project used storytelling to convey a cultural sense of place and in the *Life Stories of Montrealers* project the method was used to share and record individuals' histories.

Participatory

Participatory methods engage audiences to be active participants in the creation and sharing of knowledge. Common examples found in the CURA projects were workshops, seminars, forums and conferences. Such methods are highly suited for knowledge mobilization and co-production of knowledge purposes. Workshops have been especially fruitful, used as training sessions and as a means to facilitate new working groups, such as the formation of the French Shores Working Group from a *Newfoundland Archaeological Heritage Outreach Program* workshop.

Many projects have hosted their own mini-conferences, to reach out to their partners and the broader community. Some have gone beyond this, and have included a wider array of community groups and researchers. An example is the *Cultural Future of Small Cities* conference described in Case Study 2. Another is the “Costal Zone Canada 2010 Conference and Youth Forum” this summer in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, hosted by the *Coastal CURA*.

Another participatory method was design charettes, used in the *Cultural Future of Small Cities* project to bring together students, researchers, city planners, community groups, businesses, policy makers and citizens to create a future design plan for a portion of Kamloops. *Cultural Future of Small Cities* students also participated by sitting on city planning committees.

The *Design et Culture Matérielle* project conducted a participatory inventory study resulting in a community-based archive of cultural and historical artefacts (Case Study 1).

Several projects held community festival days to celebrate the community, share research results, host workshops, and get citizens' input on the projects. The *Dagihda Project* was especially successful in hosting community events to share information and facilitate community involvement (Case Study 3). Finally, citizen forums were held by a handful of the projects to both inform the general public of the project and to obtain community input.

Traditional media

Traditional media methods, such as books, newsletters, news reports, television, videos, and maps, were widely used by most of the CURA projects. These methods are highly suited for knowledge dissemination and knowledge transfer purposes, but examples were also found where they were used for knowledge mobilization and co-production of knowledge.

The *Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management*, a joint project between the Tl'azt'en Nation and the University of Northern British Columbia, created two different newsletters – one for the stakeholders and one for the broader community (Case Study 4). Other projects produced their newsletters in more than one language. For example, the *Design et Culture Matérielle* project produced both French and English copies (Case Study 3).

News reports were published on many of the projects in local and community newspapers or televised on local stations. The project in the City of Saint John, NB, *The Industrial City in Transition*, gives excellent examples of knowledge dissemination and knowledge transfer to reach community groups and the general public through news reports, radio and TV appearances. The partners in this project were active in sharing

knowledge via the CBC news, a morning show, a radio talk show, and television programs such as Canadian Geographic.

Videos were made both for knowledge dissemination and occasionally co-production of knowledge purposes. In the latter case, they were often used as a research tool to help conduct workshops. A good example is the *Cultural Future of Small Cities* video created through stakeholder collaboration to help facilitate workshops involving opposing community groups (Case Study 2). Other videos included short documentaries, and recordings of interviews, workshops, and conference proceedings. The *Life Stories of Montrealers* project created a whole library of video interviews. Videos are often available in new media, digital formats as well.

Brochures and booklets were sometimes used, to reach both a more general audience as well as a specific community or group. Two projects became more fully engaged in the realm of publishing. *Mapping Small Cities* published its own journal for the research coming out of its project, while the *Newfoundland Archaeological Heritage Outreach Program* supported the publication of *Avalon Chronicles*, vol. 6 (2001), the journal of record for historical archaeology in Newfoundland.

New media

New media refers to the use of digital technology such as websites, DVDs, CD-ROMs, podcasts, online videos, and social networking sites. As most new media methods are online, they are inherently interactive, and such methods are often associated with knowledge mobilization and co-production.

The CURA project websites used a wide range of formats, published diverse types of information, and often had several intended purposes. Regarding this last point, some sites were used solely for knowledge dissemination and transfer, but many were also used for knowledge mobilization, such as the creation of a language learning site for the *Daighida* project (Case Study 1). Some of the best sites were also geared to the co-production of knowledge through the use of blogs with commentary abilities, searchable

databases, online videos, podcasts, webcasts (live streaming video), photo galleries or online forum areas.

A small number of the more recent projects used blogs, which were often informational in nature, describing the projects and research or just covering general themes. The *Language Revitalization in Vancouver Island Salish Communities: A Multimedia Approach* project website is the blog itself and includes photos and an online video as well as the ability to leave comments on each post.

A handful of projects had databases available on their website, encompassing information such as research results and reports, resource materials and events, language dictionaries, and digital videos of interviews.

Posting online videos of presentations, workshops, or storytelling was surprisingly underutilized. Only four projects posted videos online, and these did not feature prominently on the websites. The first of these projects is *Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management*, which has an introductory video available for viewing, although it is hidden amongst the resources rather than on the main page (Case Study 4). The second, the *Language Revitalization in Vancouver Island Salish Communities: A Multimedia Approach* project, posted a presentation on YouTube, but the project failed to follow YouTube's rules and its video was removed for being too long. The third, the *Design et Culture Matérielle* project, had several very professional videos that introduce the project and its different research areas (Case Study 3). The *Mapping Small Cities* project was the only one to use video, podcasts, webcasts and virtual meeting rooms as a means of transferring, mobilizing and co-producing knowledge (Case Study 2).

There were two kinds of online forums used, which incorporated many of the previously mentioned new media. One was a public forum accessible to the stakeholders, community groups, policy makers, and the general public, and this type of forum usually included message boards for open commentary. The second was a private, password protected type of forum, made for sharing information, results, reports and project support amongst the stakeholders. Two examples of private forums are *The*

Community-University Institute for Social Research researcher portal and the *Mapping Small Cities* public research portal, which includes a password protected researcher discussion board (Case Study 2).

Beyond the private online forums, social networking was not widely used, especially recent forms like Facebook and Twitter. Exceptions are the *Understanding the Past to Build the Future Project* in Labrador, the newest of the CURA projects reviewed, which has a Facebook page and the YouTube example previously noted. And in the YouTube example, the posting was done more for knowledge dissemination purposes rather than as a vehicle for networking and knowledge mobilization.

A few of the CURAs used CD-ROMs to package reports, guides, catalogues, databases, and research aids for the purposes of knowledge dissemination and transfer.

A few words on audiences

As intimated in the foregoing section, for any given knowledge sharing purpose, certain methods are better suited for reaching certain audiences than are other methods. Academics are easily reached for dissemination purposes with promulgation methods. The general public is easily reached for knowledge transfer purposes with selected education and media methods. Community partners and stakeholders are often best reached for knowledge mobilization and co-production purposes with education and participatory techniques.

A special group in several of the CURAs examined were the Elders of the Aboriginal communities that were project partners. To recognize the special status of Elders, the *Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management* project held an Elder retreat, for their Tl'azt'en First Nations partner, during one of its research programs (Case Study 4). Further, the *Memory and History of Nunavut* project significantly changed its knowledge mobilization approach based on Inuit Elders' feedback.

Policy makers are often reached for knowledge mobilization purposes through reports and presentations, but two CURA projects specifically mentioning policy makers as an audience for their research took a more collaborative, co-production of knowledge approach. The *Creating a Community-University Institute for Social Research* project had policy makers both as stakeholders and one of its audiences as part of community-led forums that resulted in policy changes affecting the quality of life, economy and health in Saskatoon. Similarly, the *Coastal Communities* project in B.C. has been sought out by government agencies and First Nations to advise and assist in policy development processes in several areas, most notably with respect to natural resources and land use.

The question of how the projects engaged their stakeholders in knowledge sharing yielded few answers. There were many examples of the stakeholders being researchers themselves within the projects or sometimes as participants in the research, however there was no mention of how these stakeholders were approached and cultivated.

The main knowledge sharing methods between stakeholders by all the projects was through newsletters, meetings and forums.

Innovations

The most innovative methods of dissemination were often, but not always, those aimed at knowledge mobilization or co-production. As noted in Case Studies 1-4, interesting examples of innovative methods were found in the two *Small Cities* projects, the *Design et Culture Matérielle* project, the *Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management Project* and the *Daghida* project.

The *Life Stories of Montrealers* (the full title of which is *Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide, and other Human Rights Violations*) project created a searchable digital video library of interviews with people telling their life stories. Videos were used to record all of the knowledge being shared; not just knowledge conveyed by words, but also that imparted through tone of voice, body language, and personal and cultural habits. Although the digital library is not available online, it is kept in

community archive centres, and is available for knowledge transfer and other purposes. Notably, entering the realm of knowledge mobilization, the videos were also integrated into curricula in the participating communities.

The *Newfoundland Archaeological Heritage Outreach Program*, one of the first CURA projects in 1999, was the only project reviewed from which a person could easily order through the project web site research aids, such as guide books for identifying artefacts, CD-ROM compilations of articles, and videos on archaeological techniques

Using a traditional media method for knowledge transfer purposes, the *Social Research for Sustainable Fisheries* project, in Nova Scotia, created thematic fact sheets to help inform their community partners, fisheries organisations and the general public (via the media) of research outcomes and background information. The fact sheets covered topics such as “Highlights of the Marshall Decision,” “Who benefits from Research?,” and “Kat (American eel): Life History.”

Again, using a traditional media method for knowledge transfer, the *Community-University Institute for Social Research* project had a unique way of sharing the results of a community wide survey with over 76,000 homes in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The project created, in partnership with the Star Phoenix newspaper, a 26 page insert entitled “Taking the Pulse”, which described and interpreted a wide-ranging survey of quality-of-life issues.

Spanning multiple points on the knowledge sharing continuum, an intriguing example of the various maps available through project websites was created by the *Wemindji Protected Area* project. Using an online geographic information system, the project created a map of the Eastern James Bay area in Northern Quebec showing roads, basic geographical features, Cree names, trap lines, vegetation, community areas, watersheds and much more.

Involving both knowledge transfer and co-production, the *Coastal CURA* project produced a film, “Sharing the Waters: Saint John, NB” (which was created by a summer

student), that was not only screened for the public, but also used during a panel discussion at a reflections workshop.

Finally, in a good example of knowledge mobilization, the *Memory and History of Nunavut* project, through the actions of its board members and through hosting seminars, assisted in the creation in 2002 of the International Ph.D. School for Studies of Arctic Societies (which is part of the University of the Arctic Network).

Measuring success

Only five of the CURA projects that we reviewed published their dissemination or overall project performance indicators. Some indicators were directly and easily accessible on the project websites, others were found in project applications or milestone and final reports. Most of the indicators pertained to the success of the project as a whole, not specifically to measuring dissemination success. Additional information was obtained from the two SSHRC reports referred to in the Methods section.

We separated the method of measuring dissemination success into one of three categories: quantitative methods, qualitative methods, and mixed methods. Quantitative methods were not used to inquire into substantive indicators of success. The quantitative approach was limited to counting publications, reports, and presentations or workshops, along with the number of participants, researchers and students involved in the project.

Those using a qualitative approach had a more difficult task of setting not only what the benchmarks were but how they would be “measured”. Some of the qualitative benchmarks were ongoing demand for outputs, relationships built in the community, and impact on policy and decision making in the community.

One of the projects that used a qualitative approach was the *Newfoundland Archaeological Heritage Outreach Program*. This project required the researchers to submit progress reports from the field, to see the measure of work being completed and

to aid in the project coordination. The project also noted the continued demand for the research aids that had been created as an indicator of the quality of work that came out of the project. The *Social Research For Sustainable Fisheries* project had an independent external evaluation conducted at the end of year three. With regards to dissemination, the report highlighted the “applied and action potentials of SRSF’s research results and SRSF’s commitment to realising tangible outcomes and deliverables”.⁵

Projects using a mixed approach relied on both qualitative and quantitative indicators. One of the projects that used such an approach is the *Community-University Institute for Social Research*. This project counted its publications, workshops and the like, but also assessed the quality of its efforts to include community groups in its work and build relationships in the community.

The *Coastal Communities Project* also took a mixed approach. The qualitative indicators included impact on community resilience, the use of knowledge from the project in decision and policy making, the degree to which the community-level knowledge crossed boundaries between research themes in the project, and between community groups and policy makers. They also considered the quality and number of knowledge dissemination efforts like reports and journal publications.

Conclusions

The results of this review did not reveal any major surprises, and they show that the CGRF is on the right track with its start-up dissemination/communication plan. Promulgating methods, such as publishing books and journal articles and presenting posters and papers at conferences, are basic techniques for knowledge dissemination and transfer, are keys for reaching academic audiences, and are important parts of the CGRF plan. Participatory methods, e.g., meetings, workshops, forums, conferences and community events, span the knowledge sharing continuum, are essential for co-

⁵ Davis, A. (2001) SRSF Social Research for Sustainable Fisheries Renewal Application, St. Francis Xavier University, <http://www.mystfx.ca/research/srsf/DescriptionAndPartners/RenewalApplication.html#Performance>

production of knowledge, and are keys for reaching community partners and stakeholders. Again, these methods are central to the CGRF plan. The same can be said of educational methods, e.g., exhibits, performances, lectures, brown bag luncheons, and curriculum materials, which cover the knowledge sharing continuum and are fundamental for knowledge transfer and mobilization involving the general public, community partners and stakeholders. Of note is that those CURAs that excelled at using participatory and educational methods (between which there is a fine line) were particularly innovative in their knowledge sharing activities, as described in the four case studies. Media methods – both traditional (e.g., newspapers and television) and new (e.g., web site and podcasts) – are essential for knowledge transfer to community partners and the broader public. They also have potential for use for knowledge mobilization and even co-production of knowledge. Similar to the conclusion above, media methods have been well integrated into the CGRF plan, especially new media techniques.

Innovative knowledge sharing methods took various forms, but were most often seen in original uses of traditional and new media techniques, such as videos, computer models, podcasts, and websites. These tools were especially effective when used with participatory activities, such as educational projects, community events, web-conferencing and exhibits. All of the innovators appeared to have two things in common: thinking outside the box of conventional knowledge sharing methods and carefully looking at the communities they were interacting with and what needed to be done to share knowledge with those communities.

Of the three approaches to measuring knowledge sharing success, the mixed methods model delivers the widest range of evaluation criteria and benchmarks. The challenge for any project is to establish what qualifies as success and to create appropriate community-grounded benchmarks for not only quantitative but qualitative criteria. The *Coastal Communities Project* provides a notable example of including not only numbers of publications and presentations, etc., but also qualitative indicators, such as the impact the knowledge sharing had in the community and on community decision making.

The CGRF start-up dissemination/communication plan is in itself innovative and forward thinking, with its emphasis on collaborative efforts and using new media. As stated earlier, the plan is on track and often goes beyond the plans of past CURA projects. Yet there are still things the CGRF can learn from those projects.

One of the lessons to take away from the other projects is to use new media technology correctly and to its fullest extent. The YouTube example cited in the report shows how new media tools can not only be used incorrectly but can be underutilized for social networking purposes. It is important not only to be aware of new technologies and how they can aid in knowledge sharing, but to use those technologies that make best sense for the project and to use them to their fullest capacities. Creating a website or a social networking or other media page that is not well suited for the community partners, stakeholders and research participants, or is not properly maintained does little to aid the project and can potentially be harmful to the community's perception of the project.

CGRF currently has a Facebook page, which is being used to provide an introduction to the project, a link to the project website, a blog and a message board. Further things that could be done include using the Facebook events tab to publicise project activities, either to the general public or just to invited guests. The events can then be sent to Facebook members, who can then forward the information to their contacts.

If online videos are used, CGRF should look into creating a YouTube channel specifically for the project, where users can subscribe to the videos and share their own insights. This could be a collaborative way of engaging stakeholders and members of the public, especially younger generations who are active users of social networking media. In fact, such a video project could become a CGRF project in itself with a webcam station at community events for people to record their memories, thoughts and ideas on CGRF project, the land, or the Common Ground partnership.

One of the most important things about new media tools within a website or portal is that they be organized, easily accessible for users, and have links that are working

properly, which are all features of the CGRF website. Key lessons to learn from other websites is to be sure that introductory and descriptive videos are on the front page or an introduction page rather than hidden amongst a list of outputs. Additionally, as the CGRF website continues to allow comments on the blogs or expands to create a message board, moderators or anti-spam software may be needed. Finally, ensuring the web site is kept up to date is essential; several of the CURAs did not finish posting information in the final year(s) of the projects, with several page links saying coming soon.

Another thing to consider is, while new media methods are innovative, interesting, and interactive, such methods have their limits for knowledge transfer and mobilization purposes when it comes to reaching older generations (whose on-line presence is still relatively low) and rural and remote communities (some of which have limited broadband internet access). On the question of internet access, some First Nations in Northwestern Ontario have dial up or high speed access, however those communities may only have limited access points, such as at a community centre or in a handful of households. As of 2004, high speed access in First Nations in the Kenora area was approximately 66%,⁶ compared with the Canadian average of 85% and nearly 100% in urban areas (Appendix C).

Following from the above, a broader lesson is to ensure that knowledge sharing methods and strategies are tailored to the needs and preferences of the intended audiences. The *Daghida, Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management* and *Community-University Institute for Social Research* projects each illustrate excellent examples through their use of community events, an Elder retreat, an interpretive centre and an insert for the local newspaper. The CGRF dissemination/communication plan contains these and similar methods, and appears to be sensitive to the needs and interests of our stakeholders, community partners, and the general public. As we move forward with the project, it is advisable to maintain a conversation with these groups to ensure we continue to be sensitive to their knowledge sharing needs.

⁶[http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/vDownload/connectivity2004report/\\$file/2004ROAC.pdf](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/vDownload/connectivity2004report/$file/2004ROAC.pdf)
<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/ao34157.html>

Finally, areas that could be expanded in the CGRF dissemination/communication plan are: 1) producing selected outputs in Ojibwe, such as brochures, newsletters, and radio announcements, for knowledge transfer, mobilization and co-production; 2) participating actively in local / regional radio and television broadcasts, such as breakfast television talk shows and radio call-in shows, for knowledge transfer and mobilization; and, 3) emphasizing participatory and educational methods, such as community forums, guided tours, and workshops, to aid in knowledge transfer and co-production.

The CGRF start-up dissemination/communication is comprehensive and detailed, and includes several cutting-edge techniques. Moving forward, the project would be well served to follow the blueprint laid out in the plan. Additionally, the project may be able to enhance its knowledge sharing efforts by considering the suggestions made above, learning from the mistakes of past CURA projects, and adapting for its own purposes some of the innovative methods presented in the case studies.

Case studies

Case Study 1: Engagement through Co-Production of Knowledge – Design et Culture Matérielle (Design & Material Cultural: Community Development and Native Cultures)

Partners: Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Musée amérindien de Mashteuiatsh, Musée des Abénakis, Musée Shaputuan, First Nations Garden, UBC Museum of Anthropology, Centre d'études amérindiennes, Uashat mak Mani-utenam First Nations

This project was designed to “focus on Native peoples, sustained development, culture and identity and intercultural exchanges” in Quebec. One of the most interesting research and knowledge sharing projects they undertook was a three-year participatory, community-based cultural inventory. As inventory exhibits were held at community events and local museums, more community members learned about the project and were encouraged to participate. As part of the inventory, a new indigenous museology was developed.

These and other exhibits were used by the project as an interactive knowledge generation tool for all age ranges in the community. The exhibits helped Elders share their knowledge with younger generations, including through the development of new curricula for both native and non-native youth. Additionally, the project helped further cultural educational aims through the creation of a certification course for woodworking skills.

The project also engaged indigenous artists who produced several cultural exhibits, created bilingual French-English newsletters and introductory online videos. These videos were not only for the main project itself but also for each of the research theme areas and several were in both French and the Aboriginal language of the area.

Case Study 2: The Future of Research – Small Cities Projects

Cultural Future Partners: Kamloops Art Gallery, Thompson Rivers University (UCC), City of Kamloops, Forest Research Extension Partnership, Kamloops Museum and Archives, John Howard Society, Secwepemc Cultural Education, Stuart Wood School, Western Canada Theatre

Mapping Partners: Thompson Rivers University, University of Northern British Columbia, University of Waterloo, Cities of Kamloops, Nanaimo and Port Moody, Skeetchestn First Nation, and 31 other community partners

The *Small Cities Projects* comprised two related but distinct CURA projects. The first, the *Cultural Future of Small Cities*, looked at how the cultural and arts communities worked together in Kamloops. True to its research topic, the project made extensive use of artistic and creative methods for knowledge transfer, mobilization and co-production purposes. These methods included theatrical productions, museum and art exhibits (both by and for children), photo galleries, a sculptural memory map of the area, and a research project consisting of artists-as-researchers.

Memory maps were done by all ages to create visual representations of Kamloops. Various artistic mediums were used, along with workshops and elementary school visits. Through the memory maps, other research, and participatory events, artistic inquiry was brought right into project planning. Other knowledge sharing events included two design charettes, a conference, and the Bridges Festival of Art and Culture to celebrate and bring together the various cultural and arts communities. (This festival has since become a yearly event.) A final noteworthy collaborative effort by two of the partners (Thompson Rivers University and the Forest Research Extension Partnership) was the creation of a 22 minute educational video, “Understanding Conflict in the Forest: The Words Behind the Message”, to help facilitate conflict resolution workshops for community groups.

Following these successes, the first project led to a new CURA project called *Mapping Quality of Life and the Culture of Small Cities (Mapping Small Cities)*. This second project was an innovator in the use of new media, and was the only project we examined to use podcasts and webcasts as a means of transferring, mobilizing and co-producing

knowledge. Podcasts included on the website were workshops and conference presentations. They also contained recordings of live webcast sessions of the CSIN online workshops through the Elluminate Live! platform.

Another innovative method of conferencing and art exhibits they used was the Second Life platform, an online virtual reality world. A culture and city all of its own, more and more main stream universities, business and non-profits are using the space to teach in, give presentations and advertise. It is here where several researchers held a meeting which was simultaneously shown live at an art exhibition.

And example of innovative “real life” research, the Walking Lab research centre grew out of the project and is currently applying for Thompson Rivers University research centre status. The Walking Lab conducts many guided tours about urban and rural areas. The *Mapping Small Cities* project also published its own academic journal for all of the research coming out of the project; however only one issue is available online so perhaps it was not a successful endeavour.

Both CURAs use and are part of a Strategic Alliance Research Portal with other CURA projects also working on small cities themes. The research portal houses databases of events, research outcomes and podcasts, as well as newsletters, discussion boards, polls, online meeting rooms, and numerous other links. Introductory videos for both CURAs are available, though they are well hidden in the research portal databases. Finally, both projects have hosted several conferences on various topics, which involved not only the immediate community and stakeholders but reached out to other small cities across North America.

Case Study 3: Community as the Centre – The Daghida Project

Partners: University of Alberta, Cold Lake First Nation

The aim of this project was the linguistic and cultural rehabilitation of the Dene language to help save it from extinction.

Research outcomes and results have been integrated into multiple education levels with the establishment of a Head Start daycare program, curriculum creation for elementary grades K-8, adult language classes, a new native studies/elementary education degree offering specialization at the MA and PhD levels in linguistics, and an off-campus program for Aboriginal teacher education.

To aid their education goals within the community a language café evening was established for people to practice Dene. An interactive online language website was created to access lessons, dictionaries and audio-video archives of Elder interviews and storytelling. Also, the CURA project assisted in the development of a language center at Cold Lake First Nation and an interpretive centre at Willow Point. Together these facilities will house the digital archives and records pertaining to language and cultural knowledge, as well as multimedia displays for public use. To ensure long-term management of the archives a museum management certification program was established within the community.

Other community events include the creation of cultural immersion day camps, the naming of the streets in the First Nation in Dene. A community festival celebrating Dene culture and language was held with many games and activities, such as a scavenger hunt, bannock making and a community pledge board where community members pledged to speak more Dene in their daily lives.

To help oversee the project, the CURA established an Elders advisor group to preserve the culture and language by advising on project activities and setting guidelines for cultural renewal.

Case Study 4: Co-management Model – Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management Project

Partners: University of Northern British Columbia and Tl'azt'en First Nation

The aim of the project was to enhance the partnership between the Tl'azt'en Nation and the University of Northern British Columbia, focusing on the co-management of a research forest.

Graduate student research looked at co-management and environmental monitoring of the forest. Activities in this research included a forestry focus group, an Elders team retreat, development of over 250 environmental measures, multiple collaboration meetings and workshops, photographic information and recorded interviews. From all these activities they created a DVD and a book on key flora and fauna in the area and environmental measures developed for co-management success.

The Elders retreat brought together many Elders in community to share their knowledge on traditional hunting, gathering and food preparation and the sustainability of these methods.

A compelling method used for knowledge transfer was the high quality video produced, which succinctly encompassed the vision and purpose of the project. This project was highly community focused. One of the key events they held was a community day to inform and seek input from the stakeholders and public on the project's research outcomes and directions. Other activities that day included opening and closing ceremonies, a lunch, children's activities and door prizes.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Projects similar to the CGRF in topic, theme or types of stakeholders

	Project Name	Start Year
1	Savoirs Autochtones et Développement Durable: Une Nouvelle Approche pour la Prise de Decision / Learning from Each Other	1999
2	Newfoundland Archeological Heritage Outreach Program (NAHOP)	1999
3	Social Research for Sustainable Fisheries (SRSF)	1999
4	Memoire et Historie au Nunavut (Memory and History in Nunavut)	1999
5	The Daghida Project: Language Research and Revitalization in a First Nations Community (Dagihda)	1999
6	Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUSIR)	1999
7	Cultural Property Community Research Collaborative	1999
8	The Cultural Future of Small Cities	2000
9	Mapping Quality of Life and the Culture of Small Cities (Mapping Small Cities)	2005
10	Learning for Understanding through Culturally Inclusive Imaginative Development (LUCID)	2003
11	Coastal Communities Project	2003
12	Past, Present, Future: Life and Times of the Piikani and Pikuni People	2003
13	L'Alliance Design et Culture Matérielle: Développement Communautaire et Cultures Autochtones (Design et Culture Matérielle)	2003
14	Otipimsuak – The Free People: Metis Land and Society in Northwest Saskatchewan	2003
15	The Industrial City in Transition: A Cultural and Environmental Inventory of Great Saint John (Industrial City in Transition)	2003
16	Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management (PSRM)	2003
17	Hul'q'umi'num: Language Revitalization in Vancouver Island Salish Communities	2003
18	Community-based Aboriginal Curriculum Initiative: Implementation and Evaluation	2004
19	Wemindji Protected Area Project	2004
20	Coastal CURA: Communities Managing Coasts Together (Coastal CURA)	2005
21	Healing Through Culture and Language: Research with Aboriginal People in Northwestern Canada	2005
22	Manitoba Research Alliance: Transforming Inner City and Aboriginal Communities	2007
23	Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide and Other Human Rights Violations (Life Stories of Montrealers)	2007
24	Les Autochtone et la Ville: Identite, Mobilite, Qualite de Vie et Gouvernance	2008
25	Understanding the Past to Build the Future	2008