



From research to impact

Knowledge Mobilization at York University
ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

Knowledge Mobilization at York University

York University's Knowledge Mobilization Unit is a national leader in connecting research and people. We are proud of the successes we have had since 2006 in supporting researchers at York and local leaders in public policy and professional practice. Since 2006, we have helped support over 400 requests for collaboration, which has resulted in over 150 projects and close to 100 collaborative activities. We have worked with over 300 faculty members, over 160 graduate students and our work has engaged over 250 community organizations.

Knowledge Mobilization helps to enable Social Innovation.

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Services

Brokering Services

A central service for York's Knowledge Mobilization (KMb) Unit is brokering collaborative projects. York employs two full-time brokers who provide training, support and events to facilitate knowledge brokering. Our office brokers projects between researchers (faculty and graduate students) and research partners. The objective for this is to help inform decision making in research, public policy and professional practice. Requests can come from within the university or outside, from community, industry or government organizations.

The process is tailored to the request and seeks to match expertise and capacity to need. York brokers work closely with a collaborative team to ensure there is a clear and common understanding of the project and its critical parameters, such as deadlines, resources, scope and key responsibilities. Once work has begun, the brokers will provide regular check-ins to ensure the team is working well toward shared their objectives. Brokers will also provide longitudinal follow-up to seek the impact of the collaborative activity or project.

Grant Support

The knowledge mobilization unit provides service support for York researchers seeking federal research funding. With an increasing need for collaborative teams to present a knowledge mobilization plan as part of their grant applications, KMb staff provide a comprehensive suite of support ranging from consultation and training for the project team to develop a KMb strategy, to editing and review of drafted plans, and inclusion of in-kind KMb program support for project teams and letters of support as appropriate.

This past year, support was offered to 23 faculty members and their teams. Almost 100 collaborative teams have received such support since 2006, and this level of support has helped York become a leader in securing large-scale collaborative federal research grants. This past year, we were pleased to help support the successful SSHRC Partnership Grant for Professor Carla Lipsig-Mumme, 'Working in a Warming World'. We will work with Dr. Lipsig-Mumme and her team over the life of this grant to provide specific support, ensuring the research findings are effectively disseminated to diverse audiences.



Capacity Building

KMb staff have extended their capacity building efforts on campus for faculty, students and staff, leading a series of workshops aimed to provide skills and tools to effectively engage in KMb. Workshops are offered throughout the

year in areas of social media, communications, clear language, KMb strategy and understanding accountability and impact. Registration is always free and sessions can be tailored for project teams or departments.

KMb Activities

Brokering Services	2006-2014	2013-2014
Collaborative Opportunities	422	30
KMb Projects	160	5
KMb Activities	99	9
Partnership Organizations	260	14
Faculty Engaged in KMb	311	22
Grad Students Engaged in KMb	161	8

Grant Support	2006-2014	2013-2014
Faculty Grant Team Support	99	23
Community Funding	\$1.14M	\$57K
Contract Funding	\$1.21M	\$10K
Federal Research Funding	\$33.6M	\$2.54M
Total KMb Funding	\$36.2M	\$2.63M

Capacity Building	2006-2014	2013-2014
Internal Sessions	302	76
External Sessions	261	54
Research Summaries	338	69

Success Story

Gathering Under One Tree: Engaging Parents + Communities = Success for Children

At a glance

The issue of who is responsible for engaging families and schools is an open debate, and in the Canadian context, issues of linguistic, cultural and racial diversity further complicate this challenge. Evidence suggests marginalized populations are at a greater risk of underachieving and dropping out. In 2008, a pilot project aimed at expanding the dialogue between linguistic and cultural minority families and their children's public schooling was initiated by a partnership between the Faculty of Education at York University and the York Region District School Board. The project was based at Armadale Public School in Markham, ON and was supported by incentive grant funding from the Knowledge Mobilization Unit at York University.

The rest of the story

The project began as a series of after-school town-hall type community forums involving many stakeholders, including parents, their children, teachers, and researchers. The discussions addressed issues identified by the parents as significant in their families' experience of public schooling.

The project eventually expanded to include a parent-research component. Parent researchers take direction from the forum on specific issues the school community wants investigated and then report back to the forum once they have completed their research.



The impacts of this project have been positive. Many stakeholders suggest the project is generating positive discussion within the school

and community, and has led to a surge of interest in school council participation. Feedback from parents at the community forums indicate the culture of the school is evolving in relation to the project—parents and caregivers now feel entitled to engage around their children's education and raise priority issues.

When looking to the impacts on student success, the results have been encouraging: the school has seen continuous improvement in standardized testing in recent years - an especially noteworthy achievement for a school designated for the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership.

For the researchers, this work has resulted in four publications and this research has been featured in a Ministry of Education "What Works? Research into Practice" series. These policy brief-style summaries introduce the learning from this research, linking it to a broader area of scholarship and presenting the information in a concise four page format with specific recommendations for educational practice, key references on the topic, and a lay summary of the research.

Fast forward

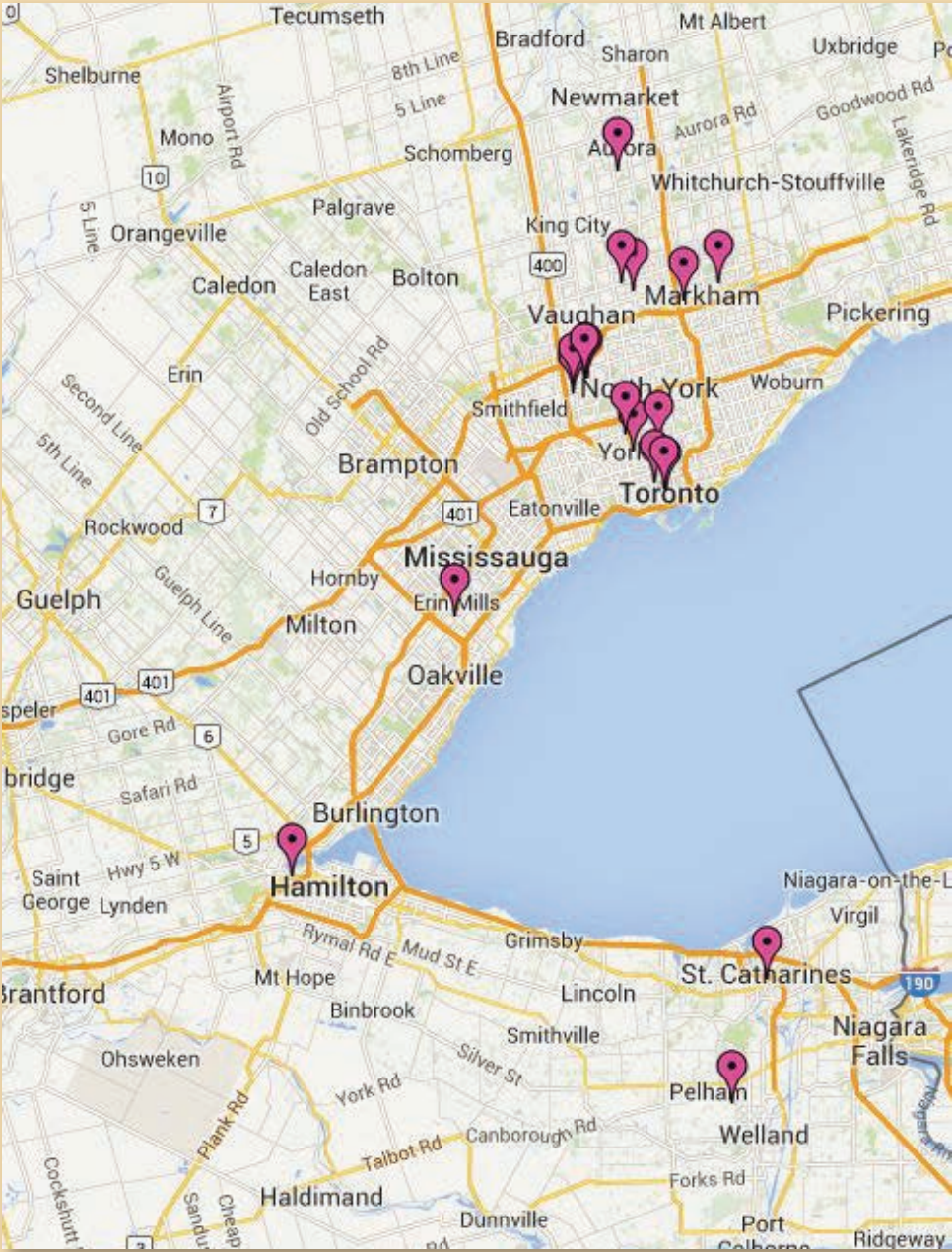
The project has expanded to include a local secondary school, allowing for an expanded exchange of good practices. Also, the project is piloting a multilingual online discussion forum to further engage parents and caregivers and their children's educators. These approaches will help the project team shed further light on the longer-term impacts of the project.

"This project became an opportunity for the school board to rethink meaningful parental engagement"

-Ken Thurston, Director of Education, YRDSB

KMb Unit Brokered Projects in 2013-2014

This map represents the 17 project requests from the GTA.



In 2013-2014, the KMb Unit received a total of 22 requests and successfully brokered 20.

Examples of the projects represented here include:

- » 360Kids Transitional Housing for Young Girls
- » Black Creek Community Health Centre Community Funding Analysis
- » Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy Internship
- » Nunavut Community KMb Capacity Building
- » Phantom Compass Humanities Research, Gaming and KMb
- » York Region Food Network OCE Internship
- » Varley Art Gallery Community Project Summary Development



KMb Scholarship and Dissemination

At York's KmB Unit we feel it is important not only to practice KmB but to engage in critical self reflection and publish in scholarly settings. We have been publishing since 2009, [Phipps, D.J., & Shapson, S. (2009) Knowledge mobilization builds local research collaborations for social innovation. *Evidence & Policy*, 5(3), 211-27] and continue to present our work in academic and practitioner contexts, including the Canadian Knowledge Mobilization Forum, Community University Expo, Living Knowledge Network, World Social Enterprise Forum, Canadian Evaluation Society, and a Co-production Seminar at the University of Sheffield.

We were lucky enough to collaborate on qualitative research looking at the relationships between community campus collaborations, knowledge mobilization and social innovation with Steven Gaetz and Naomi Nichols, Faculty of Education, York University. This resulted in a number of articles that are published or in press. We are also pleased to have published with community partners, including Jane Wedlock (United Way York Region), Walter Johnstone (Youth Emergency of Peterborough), Shelly Whitman (Child Soldiers Initiative) and Rossana Coriandoli (Centre for Addictions and Mental Health).

Scholarly publications

Phipps, D.J., & Morton, S. (2013). Skills and qualities of knowledge brokers: Reflections from practice. *Evidence & Policy*, 9(2), 255-65.

Nichols, N., Phipps, D., Provencal, J., & Hewitt, A. (2013). Knowledge mobilization, collaboration, and social innovation: Leveraging investments in higher education. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*, 4(1), 25-42.

Nichols, N., Phipps, D., Gaetz, S., Fisher, A., & Tanguay, N. (2014). Revealing the complexity of community-academic collaboration. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*. In press.

Nichols, N., Gaetz, S., & Phipps, D. (2014). Generating social change through community campus collaboration. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*. In press.

Nichols, N., Phipps, D., & Johnstone, W. (2014). A case study from York University's knowledge mobilization graduate student internship program: Planting the seeds for change. *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*. In press.

Ungar, M., Whitman, S., Hart, A., & Phipps, D. (2014). A simulation exercise to problem solve knowledge mobilization strategies for youth services. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*. In press.

Barwick, M., Phipps, D., Myers, G., Johnny, M., & Coriandoli, R. (2014). Knowledge translation and strategic communications: Unpacking differences and similarities for scholarly and research communications. Submitted to *Scholarly & Research Communications*.

Website and Social Media Analytics

The KMb Unit has been using various social media tools for partner engagement and dissemination since 2008. KMb York has also taken the lead in maintaining the ResearchImpact website and social media accounts, including the Mobilize This blog and @researchimpact twitter feed.

In recent years, the KMb Unit has also started to provide capacity building training to graduate students, research staff and faculty members in the use of web and social media tools for research partnership building and dissemination. KMb Officer, Krista Jensen, also offers one-on-one consultations to help externally funded research project team members create social media strategies.

2006-2014	
Blog Posts	450
Blog Views	129,725
Website Visits	50,000+
Tweets	13,800
Twitter Followers	5,231
YouTube Views	7,202
SlideShare Views	18,118



Faculty of Education KMb Certificate Pilot

Brokering Services

York KMb staff were active in supporting a pilot program offered by the Faculty of Education at York University in 2013, a Graduate Certificate program in Knowledge Mobilization. KMb staff led 5 of the 11 modules. Playing an active role in supporting the scholarship of knowledge mobilization is something our office is very proud to have been a part of. The following quote from program participant Stephanie Fisher captures her reflections and the value of this program:

“Participating in the knowledge mobilization certificate pilot program has certainly prepared me to take on a leadership role in my current community-engaged activist research projects. I feel more confident in my skills as both a PhD

student researcher and as a community member to participate in research that is responsible, ethical, and most importantly, will have a direct impact on the communities-of-interest that we are seeking to improve.

In particular, the information I shared with (my community partner) Dames Making Games from the session focusing on ‘strategy building in education’ (led by Michael Johnny) ...was incredibly helpful in planning out the organization’s education and outreach goals for the next two years.”

“I would like to congratulate York University for the great knowledge mobilization event that was held yesterday in connection with SSHRC’s Imagining Canada’s Future initiative. We greatly appreciate the collaborative approach to hosting these regional events, among participating universities in the Research Impact Network. It has resulted in a greater profile for the contribution of social sciences and humanities to the top challenges identified in ‘Imagining Canada’s Future’ and I look forward to exploring future opportunities for collaboration.”

**Ursula Gobel
Associate Vice-President, Future Challenge, SSHRC**

Clear Language Writing and Design

ResearchSnapshot Research Summaries

Our leadership in providing training and support for clear language writing and design has increased over the year. Sixty-nine new ResearchSnapshots - clear language research summaries based on academic research outputs - were completed by our team of student writers, Paula Elias and Hilda Smith, with support from Elle Seymour, now with NeuroDevNet.

As always, summaries are developed based on priorities identified by our non-academic partners or priorities of the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation. We offered four training sessions on campus over the year in clear language writing and design. In addition to our own development, we have entered into partnerships with other organizations who develop summaries using the ResearchSnapshot template based on their own research outputs.

We have partnerships with the following organizations/projects:

- » Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts (Networks of Centres of Excellence)
- » Evidence Exchange Network (affiliated with CAMH)

- » Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities (affiliated with CAMH)
- » Knowledge Network for Applied Educational Research
- » NeuroDevNet (Networks of Centres of Excellence)
- » Maternal Newborn and Child Health Network (affiliated with Hospital for Sick Kids)
- » University of Guelph
- » Wilfrid Laurier University

AODA Compliance

One large initiative in 2013 was the re-development of our summaries to comply with new Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act legislation. Our team has reformatted over 300 of our existing summaries to ensure they meet the provincial guidelines and can be accessed by a larger segment of the population.



ResearchImpact

2013 was an active year for the ResearchImpact network. York has maintained its secretariat role, leading the national network. Two initiatives highlighted an active 2013 year:

On February 24, 2014, ResearchImpact-RéseauImpactRecherche (RIR) and Senator Kelvin Ogilvie co-hosted an event demonstrating the impact of social sciences and humanities research on the lives of Canadian children and youth. We were pleased to be joined by the Canadian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada at this event.

In his opening remarks to this event Senator Ogilvie commented, "A new language of innovation is emerging, that of social innovation...Research is certainly an important input into social innovation but research alone isn't enough." The most successful products, the most effective policies, and the most beneficial community services are developed when researchers, community partners, policymakers and businesses work together to address challenges and find solutions.

"That is knowledge mobilization, making research useful to society. Knowledge mobilization seeks to support collaborations between researchers and those organizations able to turn research into action and thus maximize the economic and social impacts of research. Knowledge mobilization helps to enable social innovation," said Senator Ogilvie.

Seven projects that have demonstrated a positive impact on the lives of children and youth were profiled at the event. These seven projects featured partnerships between post-secondary institutions and municipal, provincial and federal agencies,

including the Nunatsiavut Government (and we were joined by that Government's president, Sarah Leo), RCMP, school boards, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Red Cross, Scouts Canada, Parachute Canada, a library and a public health agency.

There are three elements that combine to make effective knowledge mobilization:

- 1) the right research
- 2) the right researcher (and students)
- 3) the right partners

These seven projects were nominated by their institutions and selected by RIR because they fit these criteria.

In the words of Susan Clime, Director of Training for Big Brothers Big Sisters (partner of Debra Pepler from York University and PREVNet NCE, on the Healthy Relationships Training Module project), "It was wonderful to meet the Senators, MPs and Assistants - all of whom were so encouraging and supportive. It was helpful to hear what is important to each of them, as we all look toward enhancing opportunities for children and youth and families in Canada".

At the end of the day, that was the goal of this event: to make connections between research, policy and practice.

NeuroDevNet

Brokering Services

NeuroDevNet (www.neurodevnet.ca) is a Network of Centres of Excellence funding research, knowledge translation and training on childhood neurodevelopmental disorders (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, Cerebral Palsy and Autism Spectrum Disorder). In the summer of 2013, NeuroDevNet invited York University's Kmb Unit to be the host for the Knowledge Translation (KT) Core of NeuroDevNet. The KT Core provides services to support knowledge brokering, KT Events, KT Products (clear language research summaries, social media and videos), KT Training, KT Planning and KT Evaluation.

Research summaries have been posted on the NeuroDevNet website and videos posted on the NeuroDevNet YouTube channel. The KT Core supported the Brain Conference 2013, CP In Motion Day and Jacob's Story, a play about the experiences of families and children living with FASD that was informed by NeuroDevNet research. York's Kmb Unit is pleased to welcome Anneliese Poetz (Manager, KT Core) and Elle Seymour (KT Coordinator) who join David Phipps (Lead, KT Core) in providing these services to researchers, trainees and partners from across Canada.



communityBUILD

Brokering Services

A central service for York's Knowledge Mobilization (York University partnered with United Way York Region and ventureLAB (a Regional Innovation Centre) to launch communityBUILD, a system of supports for social enterprise in York Region. In March 2014, communityBUILD ran a Mash Up competition for community based social ventures focused on food security and youth employment.

An open call was made for innovators and their supporters to submit ideas that addressed one or both of these grand challenges. Twenty-nine ideas were submitted. Nine were selected to come to the Mash-Up. Within 45 minutes of the first day, these were down to 4: one addressing food security, one addressing youth employment and two of them addressing both. Three teams became ventureLAB clients.

Upstream New Gardens Initiative is a project of York Region Food Network that sought to build on its existing hydroponics facility and use sale of hydroponic lettuce to fund Jeremy O'Kafka, of **Mentor Network** food awareness programs.

Mentor Network seeks to match youth job seekers with experienced mentors who will use their own networks to help make a match between youth and the 80% of jobs that are never advertised through traditional recruitment methods such as job fairs. **Mentor Network** will pilot with Seneca College students.

Cultivating Opportunities builds on the established therapeutic connection between nature and young people living with mental illness and addictions to provide farmers with steady employees. Youth with lived experience of mental illness and addictions will work on the farm and be paid in vegetables that they can then sell as healthy food baskets in farmers' markets or to office workers.

communityBuild was covered by the Toronto Star on February 25, 2014. Seneca College has recently joined as a new communityBUILD partner.

"That is knowledge mobilization, making research useful to society. Knowledge mobilization seeks to support collaborations between researchers and those organizations able to turn research into action and thus maximize the economic and social impacts of research. Knowledge mobilization helps to enable social innovation."

Senator Kelvin K. Ogilvie

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Our work and our success is the result of strong leadership, integral partnerships, skilled and passionate researchers and a staff team who bring dedication and professionalism to their work.

We wish to acknowledge the support we received which provided us a start to support this important work. Funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the initial partnerships we had with the Regional Municipality of York and the York Region District School Board were critical in laying a foundation of capacity, service support and engagement.

This year, as has been the case since 2006, we have enjoyed unwavering commitment and support from the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation. Rob Haché, York's Vice-President Research and Innovation, has provided strong leadership for us both here at York and throughout the country as he has become a strong and vocal champion for this office.

In the past year we have partnered with United Way York Region, delivering knowledge brokering services rooted in community. Thanks to Daniele Zanotti for his leadership and to Janice Chu and Jane Wedlock for their hard work and commitment to our partnership. We have also partnered with ventureLAB, a Regional Innovation Centre based in Markham, ON, and catalytic in supporting the communityBUILD Mash-Up. Our community partners always push us in a very good way to deliver quality, innovative services in knowledge mobilization to meet demands for research to help inform important issues of policy and practice.

Our partners in ResearchImpact-RéseaulImpactRecherche have enjoyed a successful year and York is very proud of its leadership role in supporting the ongoing development of this national knowledge mobilization network.

Special thanks to the entire team within the knowledge mobilization unit - David Phipps (Executive Director, Research and Innovation Services); Michael Johnny (Manager, Knowledge Mobilization); Krista Jensen (Knowledge Mobilization Officer); Christina Ransom (Data and Communications Assistant); Paula Elias (Research Translation Assistant); Hilda Smith (Research Translation Assistant) and our partner Jane Wedlock (United Way York Region, Manager, Community Engagement and Research)

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