

# ***Fostering Positive Community Research Partnerships***

## **CCEDNet Reflections**

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The questions in this document are designed to help community organizations as they consider participating in a research partnership. We do not provide answers; rather our goal is to assist organizations to think through the issues. This document is based on what CCEDNet and its members have learned through reflecting on the successes and challenges of past projects, and is provided to CCEDNet members to support them in developing strong partnership relations in their future projects.

### **Alignment with the Organization's Strategic Priorities:**

- Does the focus of the project address current policy and practice areas that are strategically important to your organization at this time?
- What are the anticipated benefits of the partnerships? How will it strengthen the organization, its members and the broader community development movement?
- Will the organization gain a higher profile on the Canadian landscape as a result of this partnership?

### **Governance:**

- Will a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be in place prior to the beginning of the project?
- If this is a multi-stakeholder partnership and/or there are multiple funders, are all MOU agreements and arrangements acceptable to all partners and approved before the project begins?
- How will decisions be made during the course of the project?
- How will transparency and accountability be addressed throughout the project?
- Who will have final say over budgetary matters?
- If there is a project board, how involved will they be in the management of the project? How will the composition of the board be decided?
- Are regular evaluations of the partnership and project activities included in project structures?

### **Considerations specific to University Partners:**

- Is resource allocation controlled by university partners? If so, can agreements be put in place at the beginning of the project to address any imbalances in access and distribution of resources?
- What role will university research ethics review play in the project; how might this enable or constrain involvement of community partners?
- What project structures are in place to care for the specific needs and requirements of community partners?
- How will contributions of community partners be acknowledged?

### **Relationship Building:**

- What role will community partners play? Will they be involved in decision making guiding the project?
- Are there clear opportunities for relationship building at the local, regional, and/or national level?
- Are sufficient resources and supports available to facilitate partnership building and do they address geographic spread (travel, in person meetings, release time, honorariums, etc)?
- Are there sufficient supports in place that these relationships may continue beyond the life of the project – if desired?
- Are resources allocated or project activities planned that will contribute to capacity building for community organizations?
- Are there opportunities for building relationships among peers, with academics, with government partners? Others?
- Does the partnership account for regional diversity?
- How do the researchers/partners value and perceive partnerships with community organizations?
- How can potential power, resource, and role imbalances be addressed?

### **Other:**

- Will there be direct or indirect opportunities to influence policy makers?
- Will this project contribute to an increased likelihood of shared paradigms on the importance and role of the Social Economy and Community Economic Development? If not, how will this affect the partnership?
- What is the dominate approach around community-university research partnerships? Is it doing research “on” or “with” community partners? How might this affect such things as: selecting research priorities, sharing information, general communication, and resource allocation?
- What will the direct benefits be for your organization?
- What will the project legacy be for your organization and community members?
- What is the likelihood of long-term sustainability of project outcomes?