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**Defining & Assessing Outcomes
of Partnerships**

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Steven Lewis: We have been asked to address three questions: what outcomes are appropriate to community-university partnerships; how do we track, monitor and assess research partnership outcomes; and how do we use research to change policy. They are huge questions, and in a short presentation one is limited to a few observations on how to approach the topic. My approach here is analytical rather than experiential—it is an attempt to frame how we should think about assessing the ultimate value of the partnerships.

It makes a difference if one views partnerships as intrinsically worthwhile, or instrumental to some other end. My own view is that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between genuine methodological advances and ephemeral fads in contemporary social science, and we have made a bit of a fetish of collaboration, partnership, linkage, and interaction. This is not to disparage them or deny the potential inherent in a truly genuine and useful partnership—there are indeed win-win situations. But partnerships are hard work, fraught with potential confusions, prone to inequality, and consuming of time and energy. There is nothing inherently wrong in solitary achievement; indeed it is easier and less vulnerable to posturing and pretence. Thus partnership if necessary, but not necessarily partnership. In this context, a first desirable outcome—or so I would argue—is that the partnership is real, respectful, and mutually satisfying in some tangible way. The motivation, in other words, must be genuine and reflective, and one would hope goal-oriented.

A second desirable outcome is that the partnership is able to achieve some ends that could not be achieved otherwise. It creates added value, which can take various forms. The partnership could fruitfully shape the research agenda and methodology. It could create the possibility of acquiring certain types of knowledge and insight that would be impossible without it. Not all important results are outcomes *per se*; a partnership might create certain types of intellectual and social capital that would remain unachieved in isolation.

A third desirable outcome is a general raising of the intellectual level of community discourse. This is tricky territory: in an age of democracy and levelling, there is a tendency to expect the partners always to meet somewhere in the middle, if anything with a bias towards knocking the university and its “types” off their elitist pedestals. I am all for making the academy accessible in plain language, but the price of some partnerships is too high to pay. To put it bluntly, we should not dumb down universities in service of creating happier space for partnerships. One worrisome tendency, in which universities have been discouragingly complicit, is the unwarranted exaltation of every form of consultation and survey to the level of inspired truth. Not all useful insights and profound reflections originate in a focus group or telephone survey. Interaction alone is rarely sufficient for advancing human understanding; there is no easy path to truth by

walking around. A thousand opinions, systematically sampled and reported with statistical precision, may still be bunk. A good partnership will combine the intellectual capital and rootedness of the community with the rigour of the university and enhance both.

There is nothing especially unique about the challenge of tracking results of university-community partnerships. It is a form of evaluation, and as in any good evaluation, we need to ensure that we have clear goals and the capacity to measure them. In new or emerging partnerships it may be difficult to articulate the goals with clarity and precision, and on this terrain there are likely to be unintended consequences, both good and troublesome. Given that partnerships are in a sense overhead—they consume time and money—it is important that an evaluation plan and perspective be embedded in the enterprise from day one.

What kinds of things might we measure? Again, it depends on the goals, but I would offer that at least some of the following deserve serious consideration. Did the partnership create the conditions for original discovery and insight that would otherwise have been elusive or impossible? Did the partnership meaningfully change the

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perspective and capacities of the parties to it? If relevant, did the research products influence policy, practice, or resource allocation in the community in a more timely and direct fashion that would otherwise have been possible? Did members of the community adopt a research-oriented mindset and improve their critical appraisal skills? Did the partnership create a thirst for more interaction with the academy in the community, and a penchant for more grounded research in the academy? These questions—

and of course there are many others—suggest a dual focus: one on concrete and quite tangible results from the partnership, and the other, less immediately tangible but ultimately more important, a change in the cultures of the partners. I would spend a good deal of time and energy on tracking both. Program evaluation is a well-developed science and while there are always ambiguities, we should ensure that we evaluate partnerships in all the relevant dimensions. Not least of these is a careful accounting of costs and benefits: even successful partnerships can be very costly.

Translating research into practice is a growing preoccupation in a world that formally subscribes to the notion of evidence-based decision-making. Much of the research on this topic has concentrated on the individual and organizational attributes that create either hospitable or hostile environments for using research to inform decisions at various levels. This is valuable knowledge, and one of the insights—that research tends to be better used by those engaged in its production—underlies conferences such as this one.

But it has been a slow process and, regardless of the very real disputes about just what we mean by “using research” and applying it optimally, there can be little doubt

that in certain fields it has been very slow going. A tremendous amount of knowledge in my field—health care and health policy—is ignored or misused. This would be unthinkable at the level of the basic and physical sciences—those who ignore or leisurely adopt new knowledge and techniques will find themselves at a huge competitive disadvantage. But in the social and political world, action and the distribution of resources are not subject to universally adopted standards and codes of conduct. Values, preferences, and power all count, knowledge is often viewed as contingent and incomplete, and there are limits to the capacity to change.

If this is an unavoidable reality, how do we accelerate the uptake of what would generally be described as valid and reliable research evidence? Essentially this is a question of accountability and incentives. If there are no consequences to using research well or badly, and if the decision-making culture is indifferent to whether or not there is a sound research base to various options, Gresham's Law will apply: bad practice will drive out the good. Conversely, if decision-makers hold themselves, or are held by others to be accountable for using high quality research to inform decisions, things will change for the better.

For this to occur we have to develop methods for measuring the research literacy of organizations and the research sensitivity of decisions. There are some promising developments on the horizon. I hope we continue to work on the accountability and incentives dimension of the problem to complement the ongoing work on the cognitive side of the equation. Sometimes we overcomplicate the barriers and dilemmas that affect the use of research in decision-making. Much can be done through policy and incentives. If we reward, financially and otherwise, organizations that use research effectively, the world will change in that direction. Increasingly we have the capacity to measure and track and evaluate; all we need is the will to do so, and to walk the talk of evidence-based decision-making.

This is in the end a democratic issue. Creating university-community partnerships is ultimately about changing the cultures of both. There are many competing sources of public attention, including the internet-fuelled information and influence wars. The public has proved wondrously curious and at times, disturbingly omnivorous: sound and dubious research are consumed with equal vigour. If we want to tip the scales towards the good evidence, we will have to communicate better, and reward those who undertake the often thankless tasks of making complicated material accessible to a wide audience.

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Penelope Rowe: My remarks will be from a community-base research and policy advocacy perspective, a different perspective than those who work in the academic world. I work with the Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, an independent organization with the following corporate objectives: promoting social

development, supporting voluntary organizations, encouraging greater cooperation within the voluntary sector and between the sector and governments, conducting independent social research to influence public policy and providing a forum for citizen participation in policy dialogue.

One of the hallmarks of the Community Services Council has been its ability to give profile to issues that many others would rather ignore. We use research to identify policy concerns, to help clarify and enlighten our understanding of the issues, and most importantly, to mobilize public opinion and policy change. Most of my research, therefore, has been action-orientated.

There is a widely held view that there is a gulf between academics and the rest of us. Much of the discourse at this conference relates to how both universities as institutions and academics can reach out more to a community level. Over the years numerous academics have been involved in the research undertaken by my organization. But the fact is I have taken the initiative to engage academics. It's been a matter of me reaching **into** the university to create relationships with academics. A couple of presidents of my Board of directors have been academics. I have come to the conclusion that both academics and non-academics often share the same research interests if not the same motivations for conducting the research.

My relationships with academic researchers have taken many forms. I've hired them as consultants, brought them onboard as volunteer advisors, or to help with ethical practices and reviews. We've worked collaboratively, developing and designing many research projects and conducting policy conferences. In my experience, the interaction between academic research and community research takes place along a continuum from informal to formal arrangements. Sometimes our relationships are arranged or imposed. But many steps and missteps take place before we arrive at full-fledged partnership.

Let me come to the theme of this session "Defining and Assessing Outcomes of Partnerships." One summer as a little girl I was given pet ducks. We called them Toasty and Blacky, and at the end of the summer, when my family was leaving the village where we had our summer cottage, we gave the ducks to a local man called Pete. To use the lingo of today, we formed a partnership with Pete. We asked him to take care of the ducks. A few weeks later, I went back to the village to see Pete and to ask how the ducks were. "They were delicious," he said. Well, Pete certainly took care of the ducks. This was an early defining moment for me in my understanding of assessing outcomes of partnerships. While we both had the same objective—taking care of the ducks—the outcome of the partnership was not equally satisfying.

In considering partnerships there are a few questions that I ponder. Is the academic approach to research always better? Does working together necessarily constitute a partnership? Are partnerships always the best approach?

From a community-based perspective, partnerships with academics and universities may impose limitations and cause constraints for community action, or hinder the mobilization of knowledge. Working for successful change sometimes requires creating a public appetite for change, which, at the onset, entails mobilizing knowledge, but, more particularly, mobilizing public opinion, often before the political will to bring change occurs.

A number of years ago a group of social workers came to me concerned about the deplorable accommodations that people being released from psychiatric institutions were placed into. There were rumours of overcrowding, inadequate food, and unsanitary conditions. However, nobody had been able to record the situation because these homes were unlicensed and not open for inspection. We wondered how we could document this particular social problem. One of our researchers agreed to go undercover, claiming to be in need of accommodation. She got into a boarding home, which turned out to be a network of three boarding homes, and lived there for several days,

When she came out she had the most extraordinary story to tell. Instead of the allowable twelve boarders there were sixty people in violation of policies and regulations. We decided to mount a public campaign. It was extremely easy to make a public issue of this story. For about six weeks the public and politicians talked about little else. The facts could not be denied. While the Minister was accusing me of CIA tactics, significant efforts were afoot to bring about change. It was very clearly a successful piece of research.

The realization that systematic research with a sound methodology connected to a calculated well-planned communication strategy carried out in a timely, calculated, rigorous, unrelenting manner could bring about policy change. Through research and a combination of community communications, we could actually have a significant impact on policy. The Community Service Council has developed a reputation for being fearless, for being sure-footed, and for being able to conduct timely spontaneous research and work closely with the media.

But the most important part has been that our work has been deemed truthful and creditable backed up by reliable research supported by the involvement of academics. By the late 1980's, we realized that if we really wanted to influence what was happening, we would have to work at a much larger level, rather than individual research projects. So we started to press our provincial government to develop what we call a framework for social policy development. In those days, social policy was not based on evidence, planning, or research. It was very much fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants and meant working with people who were close to the politicians. The Community Services Council believed more evidence should be

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brought to policy formulation. Therefore we decided to make a direct change in the way in which we conducted our research and the way in which we tried to influence policy. In other words, we were looking for new tools and approaches. We decided to use an opportunity to meet annually with the Provincial Cabinet through its social policy committee. So we started to promote the need for social policy framework.

Eventually, the premier announced that, indeed, he was going to develop a strategic social plan. This was in 1992, and by this time we had been lobbying for this particular action for several years. So it was a slow painstaking process that required us to be patient. A group of deputy ministers was formed to work on building a framework for social policy. I was invited to work with that group.

After significant public consultation and dialogue (which I convened for government) we built a body of support, based on the views of the public around what the public considered to be priority policy issues. In 1998, the provincial government released a strategic social plan, a very deliberate government policy for the explicit purpose of trying to change the way in which government does business across departments, to change the way in which government does business with community organizations, and to find ways of engaging and bringing forward new knowledge and evidence into the development of policymaking. One of the primary features of this particular strategic social plan is the undertaking of a social audit, to see if, all of the objectives and goals of the plan are being met. This framework, this policy, this deliberate policy instrument created a wonderful opportunity, a unique opportunity for research. But I also knew that this was the kind of research that I could not possibly do without the full engagement of academic researchers who would bring a different kind of skill and strength to the work that I wanted to do.

It was around this time that SSHRC developed a pilot project to engage in community-university research alliances. I have subsequently become the lead of a community-university research alliance that is focusing explicitly on strategic social plan. This has changed the way I work with academics, and, conversely, how academics can work with community organizations. But this formal partnership produced a number of unintended side effects for my organization. There are some cautions for community-based organizations when we develop partnerships and relationships with academics. Let me just cite a few.

The requirement for informed consent. Think back to the boarding house story—the manner in which we did our research and how we had to act very quickly and spontaneously. Imagine if I had to ask the boarding house owner for her consent to do research.

Ethics review. Imagine if I had to take the research design through the tri-council policy at the university. The moment for conducting the research would be lost. I'm not promoting a careless approach to research; I'm merely pointing out that academic

structures inhibit certain forms of research and may hamper the potential for moving public opinion and political thinking in a timely manner. Again think back to the boarding house situation. Could my academic colleagues endorse this research approach? Yet, this research exposed no one to harm, was performed quickly and skillfully, and brought about the required policy change. It would have been prevented by the constraints that exist if one has a partnership with academic researcher, especially if public funds are being used.

Now to the three specific questions that were posed. First, “How do you extend research outcomes to create or change policy to develop a knowledge base or implement program change?” Researchers have to find more effective ways of influencing public opinion because without creating a climate for public opinion to be changed it’s very often difficult to mobilize opinion makers and decision makers. I tried a number of different ways to work with communities and to use research in a study with sexual offenders and victims of sexual offences. We had heard that in many small communities it was the victim who was victimized when the abuse was brought to light, and that the offender generally was still welcomed into the community even after he had been incarcerated. After we had done some very extensive research by getting into federal penitentiaries and federal institutions to interview offenders, we also interviewed the victims. And what we saw at the end of this research was that, indeed, the conventional view that the victim was victimized was corroborated.

We had a number of options as to what to do with this information. We could write some very long peer reviewed entries into journals, which would have had no immediate impact on the issue with which we were dealing. We decided to share that research information in a very different way. We developed a series of workbooks and facilitated discussions for the communities where these issues were important. And I can tell you, using our research in that way had a far greater impact and tangible outcomes than if I had felt obliged to take a long time to write an academic document. What I am saying is that there are many ways in which we could use research and we need to be creative in understanding how that research can best be used.

Let me move now to “effective strategies that might be used for tracking and monitoring and accessing research partnerships.” Our preoccupation with tracking and monitoring outcomes of research is clearly an important trend that will help us define the nature of our research and importance of working together. Nonetheless, we need to be cautious when establishing targets and desired outcomes. The proposed research outcomes may be overstated and overly ambitious and thus may distort the research and conclusions. We can become preoccupied with trying to attain those outcomes and, in effect, manipulate the research or the policies that we develop to ensure that we meet the original stated outcomes, rather than allow flexibility to be built into the research as it evolves.

So what are the main challenges that we face in finding common ground around outcome definition and assessment? Well, it seems to me that when we're working between the two worlds each team who wants to assess the outcome of their partnerships clearly have to understand the inherent differences and imbalances between the two partners. On the one hand, in the academic world, the researchers generally have job security and longevity. They have guaranteed pay and the luxury of time to think and write. They come to the table, generally, as individuals with intellectual freedom and without the encumbrance of an organization sitting on their shoulder. In a community-based organization, there is often job insecurity, a lot of changing faces, and a lot of short-term employees.

There is always an extreme need in such organizations, to generate revenue. Even though we have a desire to think and to write, we generally have to move along very quickly from one research initiative to the next. And most of us come to the table representing an organization without our own particular independence. So this, of course, affects the way in which we will define the outcomes of our research. We'll have to take those differences into account. Obviously there are all sorts of other ways that have been mentioned by others that we can track and monitor the outcomes of our research. But whatever method we use to track the outcomes, I think it is really important that we don't get lost in focusing on tracking the partnerships rather than doing the work.

The ultimate objective is about creating an environment, a synergy, for new approaches, new ways of doing business, gathering new learning, increasing our understanding and knowledge, and gaining new insights from all perspectives. We need to look at outcomes from many levels: governance and organizational policy development; the research conducted; the results found and shared and how they've been used. We need to look at the impact of the research on policy and societal change. And we also need to look at the ways in which we publish those results, whether it's in formal documents or through other means of community involvement.

None of this is a one-way street. There has been a lot of talk about how to get academics out into the community. But it might be helpful to find ways to get non-academic researchers into the university, to find ways in which they can be involved in a more meaningful manner within the institutions, as lecturers and advisors. Perhaps universities could even start encouraging more exchange programs between academics and community-based researchers.

Let me then just make a few concluding comments to respond to the question that was put to us about giving the different motivations and contexts in which we all work: How do we actually define the expected outcomes that are appropriate to community-university partnerships? Well, at the outset there is a need to understand the purpose for the partnership and people's reasons for coming together. What does each partner want to get out of this partnership? Individually, for example, benefits and outcomes could

range from academic promotion to building a profile at a community level, to a genuine desire to understand and make changes in the world in which we live. I think most people engage in research and policy development because they're fascinated by the issues and the questions that they explore. From a collective point of view, we probably come together to create partnerships to build a broader understanding of societal issues.

We need to understand, also, whether these partnerships are being engineered in some artificial way to meet external needs. For instance, are these partnerships genuine partnerships that we each want to form or are we doing it for financial purposes in some cases? Do universities and community groups enter partnerships with a genuine desire to better understand the issues at play, to frame the research questions and to develop sound methodology, or do we just come together for expediency? It seems to me, therefore, that the overriding question in assessing and defining the outcomes of partnership should be, does this partnership, around this particular set of issues and questions that we are working on as a team, enhance our understanding and knowledge, and is a partnership the best approach to attain these objectives? If the answer to these questions is yes, then it is probably the best means that we have for defining and assessing the outcome of the partnership.

Does this partnership around this particular set of issues and questions that we are working on as a team enhance our understanding and knowledge, and is a partnership the best approach to attain these objectives?

My desire is to make a contribution in understanding the interconnections amongst different sectors of society, to understand the effect of policy and research on community and individual well being, and, finally, to encourage new ways of working together. Working in partnership, in my view, usually, though not always, will improve my capacity to attain my goals and desired outcomes. The challenge for community-based researchers is how to be equal players, and working in partnership without being consumed by the academic model of research and academic measures of success. The current prominence given to research and development and the many increased opportunities for community groups, especially those presented by the granting councils, have improved my world and my research ability considerably. Yesterday, Marc Renaud mentioned the potential transformation process of SSHRC. This presents an opportunity that could transform the way in which we all work together and I am looking forward to it as a journey that we can pursue collectively. Thank you.

Jim Randall: I think that one of the marks of a good conference is that you find plenary speakers rewriting their their speaking notes after listening to talks earlier in the conference in order to fit the mood and the enthusiasm of the previous speakers and to

try to make more of an impact. The more that I thought about it, the more I realized that the housekeeping notes that I was going to make actually addressed some of the questions that are being posed to us this morning. So just think about these as housekeeping notes, think of them in terms of looking at addressing the questions of assessing outcomes, and so on.

There was an excellent meeting that was held on Thursday afternoon of about forty-five people among you who are interested in hearing more about the momentum created by this gathering. A number of things were discussed at this meeting, including objectives, the usefulness of some form of network, and the mechanisms that we might use to achieve these objectives when people volunteer to play host to the development of longer-term initiatives. We also recognized that we couldn't speak for the much larger group of people who have attended this conference. It also appeared that the meeting was dominated by academics, so there wasn't an equally strong community voice to be heard. We also felt that the evaluation form could be an excellent tool for providing us with ideas for so-called next steps. In other words, what you would like to see.

We also talked about the development of a core working group. Hopefully we will have regional representation from both campus and community. Notice that I said "campus" as opposed to "university" in order to reflect the gamut of potential secondary actors involved. We also want to more thoroughly take your input and come up with a more substantive set of proposals and actions. Therefore, I would ask for people to come forward and talk to us and ask for volunteers to assist this working group. Please come and see me about this.

As I said, I wrote this as a housekeeping chore, but when you think about it, it actually feeds into the questions that are being posed to this panel because we're actually talking about outcomes and assessing the outcomes and what do we do after this. Over the past three days we've been witness to a perfect example of outcomes that, first, perhaps were unanticipated and very difficult to predict, and, second, don't necessarily fit neatly into some more traditional evaluation criteria. And so that brings me to this issue of defining and assessing outcomes of partnerships. As with many so-called new forms of research evaluation and assessment, it seems to be an afterthought to Canadian university research partnerships.

The existing literature, if you want to go into the literature, is replete with case studies of partnerships emphasizing lessons learned, structures, or tips for effective partnerships, and aspects or elements to avoid. I actually believe that this is inevitable and, in fact, a healthy sign of a tremendous amount of enthusiasm. I also believe that a different type of intersection is beginning to occur, as evidenced at conferences such as this. In addition to these case studies, we're beginning to see more conceptual and methodological contributions. For example, I gave a paper last year on the concept of trust and its opposite, I guess, mistrust or distrust, as applied within the various disciplines.

I became convinced that the terms trust and mistrust or distrust that I kept hearing with respect to community research partnerships were being used too loosely and haphazardly.

So I examined the literature in organizational management, in behaviour psychology, and even in political science, to see how writers of their discipline dissected the concept, and then tried to apply their interpretations to the context or environment of community-university relationships. I actually believe that this is one of the values of this conference. We have a good mixture of empirical case studies and perhaps more abstract conceptual cases. I also believe that when we talk about defining or assessing the outcomes, we really have to qualify who the audience or the “client group” might be, you might say (I hate to use that term). And I can think of a number of these, including the funders of the research, as we’ve already heard about yesterday, those directly involved on the research team, both from the campus as well as from the core communities, the community-based organizations or other community-institutional partners, the university, and a group we sometimes forget—those members of society who are ultimately supposed to benefit from this research: the marginalized, impoverished, and so on.

This brings me to the first question that has been posed to us: How do we define expected outcomes that are appropriate to these types of partnerships? We have to define this, obviously, on the basis of each of those particular roots. If we look at it in terms of the so-called funders of the research, clearly it depends upon the individual funder. In Canada, as we’ve already heard, much of this is from the tri-council granting agency. In the United States, of course, a much more diverse set of funding sources exist, including the federal government through departments such as Housing and Urban Development, and even through foundations such as Kellogg and Ford. Funders in Canada appear to have a dilemma in terms of the outcomes and value to them. To convince other academic researchers of the value of the funding program itself, we need to see more publications and we need to train more graduate students. To convince the federal government to continue funding these initiatives or even to increase the institutional budget, it’s often useful to report on very large scale achievements or accomplishments. However, if one of the ultimate objectives is to increase the research capacity in communities, you might not be able to do that. It could be argued that a large number of small scale initiatives may be more productive than a few narrowly focused community achievements. But it’s also much more difficult to assess the outcome of these smaller scale fragmented projects.

Let’s look at those who are involved in the project directly. I am tempted to go back to Victor Rubin’s discussion of CBPR the other day. Clearly, they are quite different motivations depending upon your situation. We can’t ignore the fact that the members of the team who live in the communities and members of the research team, whether they are from the university, live in those communities as well, and they want their children to be raised in a healthier environment and often to make a difference that is

tangible in the short term.

In fact, I will get to a personal story of our own research institute. We've spent a lot of time in retreats talking about the development of our mission statement, our goals, and objectives. And, in fact, we came up with what we thought, at the time, was an elegant and very accurate mission statement. And the mission statement, I will paraphrase it here, was something to the effect that we wanted to bring together the technical expertise that exists at the university with the experiential knowledge that exists with the community. And afterwards, we needed to revise that because it suggests that the people in the university don't live in their community and don't have any wisdom associated with the change in that community. And it implies that those within the community have no research skills to offer to that initiative. Although it is simplistic, publications and merit, broadly defined, are also about motivation, obviously, to those involved in the project. However, we want to think of it also in terms of the power and credibility that's associated with being a principal investigator of a grant, as was mentioned in the funders panel yesterday, especially on medium to smaller size campuses.

Granting success for these projects opens up new opportunities and doors. For example, in our case, we received the very first media conference with the vice president of research, etcetera. The point was made that this effectively doubled the SSHRC funding that the university received. On the part of the CBO, people involved in some of the motivations are similar to the broader institute or company that they represent. You

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have to ask yourself why it is that organizations and individuals engage in a more systematic, longer term relationship with those in the university when they might still be able to have their questions answered by individual faculty with whom they might be associated. What is it about that systematic longer-term relationship that is important to them? We have found that, correctly or incorrectly, the products of the research are perceived to have more credibility if they have the so-called university stamp or pedigree associated with it. In other words, these organizations can then take the results and lobby for additional funds from government or their own decision makers. This boils down to speaking the same language as the decision makers. I believe that decision makers are most often influenced by data, so-called objective data, and by what you might call crisis anecdotes. With the former, it means that the quantitative data can be presented to decision makers in the same jargon and format with which these groups find comfort. The latter, in many respects, is to almost shame the decision makers to take action. We also have to look at this in terms of process, as we have heard last couple of days, a process being the outcome itself.

Lastly, I just want to mention that, in terms of those who are directly affected by the research, we sometimes think of the research, as being an outcome itself, or even the

policy being an outcome itself. And clearly that's not the case. The ultimate outcome is whether we can make a difference in the lives of those being affected, those marginalized or in pain, and we have to always come back to that point. Policy is not the ultimate policy, change is not the ultimate outcome. It's about change in the lives of those people who are outside the walls of this hotel.

Let me turn, briefly, to question number two. I'll just give a couple of strategies that we've used within the Community-University Institute for Social Research. There are a couple of things that we've done that we have found very effective in terms of trying to get our voice out. One is that we developed chronological time lines or scrolls that divided into the categories of research, knowledge, and shared training. And we update these scrolls when we, as members of the team, have accomplished project efforts. We've also asked for testimonials from those people who have benefited from the research itself. We've developed a very strong relationship with the local newspapers and we find their editorials on various successes and what this means for community development have been very effective in getting our message to a much larger group.

Some of you might be aware of one of the projects that have been developed by the Quality of Life team. It was reported in partnership with the local newspaper in a 26 page spread and was disseminated to seventy-six thousand households. Where else, as a researcher, can you disseminate your message to seventy-six thousand households within twenty-four hours? Most of you would be happy if you had five hundred people read you article over a period of two or three years.

I would just like to spend the last couple of moments talking about policy change. I am not actually going to spend too much time because I'm not the policy person on this panel and I would like to leave that to those who are more qualified. All I will say is that it's obviously very difficult and very slow to turn outcomes into policy, to turn research outcomes into policy. Sometimes it probably feels like you are going to move a mountain and I think that these are some of the things that you need to do. First of all, you have to make sure that your decision makers are present, and although I don't want to criticize them, you may recall that the opening of this conference had the Mayor of Saskatoon and the President of the University, and they left right after their opening comments. And that's unfortunate, because they're not here to hear the message. They're going to hear interpretations of that message from others and myself. But the interpretations of that message are not going to be the same, as you're seen from the mood that is expressed at this conference. And that is unfortunate. So you have to do whatever you can to try to convince those who are in those senior positions to stay and hear the message directly, rather than get manufactured versions of that message. Yet you have to have coherence to convince the gatekeepers and the decision makers. In other words, you have to develop very strong relationships with them and get that message to the decision makers.

You have to work with the media. I ask again, why aren't they represented here?

We actually tried—and I thought we did a very good job—sending releases to all of the local media and even targeting certain stations. And I believe that one of the reasons that they are not here is that the message that we’re sending is sometimes too diffuse, it’s too difficult. It’s really talking about a process as opposed to the outcomes themselves, and it’s a difficulty that we have to face, and I think it’s a difficulty that the funders are facing as well. You have to work directly with those who we are trying to assist. You have to incorporate the various paths for the message, the crisis stories, for example, the objectives, statistics, the quality of the research, the radicalization of elements of the discourse. For example, in our case, our community co-director, Kate Waygood, has always used a very effective message when she tries to convince others of the value of this initiative. She says, “What’s the cost of incarcerating a youth offender in one of the detention centers per year? Twenty thousand, twenty-five thousand dollars a year? How much would you achieve by investing that twenty or twenty-five thousand dollars into recreational programs in the inner city?” And those types of messages, those anecdotes, those metaphors, those stories are sometimes as effective as the so-called objective data.

I would just like to end here and to leave you with what I believe is actually an urban myth. I’ve heard it a number of times and suspect that it is an urban myth. This is about the engineers who were building tunnels underneath New York City to one of the islands. They built these tunnels in order to let the buses through. And they realized, unfortunately, that they miscalculated and that the buses actually couldn’t go through the tunnel. They were about two inches too high and, of course, everybody was quite upset that they would have to rebuild the tunnels. They would have had to spend hundreds of millions of dollars doing this. So a little boy came and said, “Why don’t you let the air out of the tires?” Of course, that solved the problem. I think that’s what we are facing here. We sometimes have to think a little bit more creatively about what we are doing in order to get the message across. Thank you.

Q: Good morning. I wanted to ask you, Steven, to elaborate on the remarks that you made at the end. It’s quite intriguing to think that maybe we could change incentives around policy development to, say, something more evidence-based. I have trouble imagining what that would be like. And I am wondering if you have any examples of jurisdictions where you think they’ve done that or just some hypothetical examples. How exactly would it work?

SL: I have no idea. But I think that it will never get done if we don’t have some sort of way to chart whether it is achieved or not. There has been discussion for years now about another way to measure the economy besides GDP. And people say that if you don’t do that, if you don’t have some other measure of well being or something like that, or factoring in inequality and so on, they’re going to miss some of the values and the

goals and the aspirations that people have. In this one, I think it is conceptually easy and practically hard. We have a ranking fetish in the world now.

MacLean's ranks all the health regions with a stupid methodology that no one should pay attention to, but it makes a difference. The World Health Organization rates Canada's health system—it's thirty—and there's panic in the legislatures. The point is, when you measure something and when you say something is better, then other people pay attention. So if we had something, for example, that said, "Here is the evidence-based or research-based sensitivity awareness or process in a government or municipal government or a community organization." We had some way of saying, "This is a good performance, but this is not such a good performance." I actually think that it would start to make a difference, because it would drive what people would consider them accountable for. I think it is doable. I think you can measure research and use sensitivity despite all of the difficulties of getting that entirely straight. But I think that is the essential step. And the other one is tuning up the media. I mean, if you can get the media editorial boards and so on to engage in saying, "That's an important dimension of public policy planning, practice, whatever," I think that would be helpful. There are some promising examples of that in health care with the international reports on measurement of error and so forth, and whether resources are being used effectively in such and such a domain. It's starting to have a difference and it is starting to guide those things. So I think that if you don't measure it, you're not going to get it, but I think you can.

Q: I'm a Master's student at the University of Saskatchewan and my question is for Jim Randall. You mentioned the aspects of trust and how it impacts working on community partnerships. Can you expand on that please?

JR: I would be happy to let you see a copy of the paper if you want. As I said, many of you in this room have probably read about community-university partnerships and it seemed to me that the more I read about the nature of the pieces, I could read between the lines and read the enthusiasm in there. You can read how people wanted to make a difference and they were using words like trust. They use trust as if we all understood and shared the exact same definition of the word. I think you could probably come up with another set of words or concepts. We tend to use the word loosely or haphazardly within the work that we do. You could examine that more thoroughly, as well. So that's why I said, "Well, we know that the concepts like trust might link to social cohesion and might link to other concepts. Let's look what others have said about that." And when you do start looking at that, you realize, let's not reinvent the wheel, let's use the best messages that have been conveyed by others to assist us in understanding what we are actually doing, rather than leave it at that term and assume that everybody actually understands what you mean.

Q: Okay, in that regard, how do we utilize acts of trust in community partnerships?

JR: Well, I guess it depends on what you mean by trust. I don't want to get into the

mechanics of different elements of trust and the phases that you go through as a group. The only thing I would say is that when you start examining the sort of trust many people have written about and talk about in relation to the ability to withstand crises in the future. So you develop a sense of understanding, a connection, a belonging, so that at some point, inevitably, when crises occur, you don't necessarily destroy the team. It's about your ability to withstand those difficulties.

PR: I would just like to say that in terms of partnership, the act of trust is a very important component. You need to consider that as part of your negotiations. You need to consider what you want to do in terms of continuing a long term relationship, in terms of developing a better partnership.

Q: Penelope, I enjoyed your talk. I was wondering if you could comment on the some of the criticism we get from academic circles that much of our research is activist research out to prove a point or to prove that what we do is effective.

PR: I'm not that sure if that's true or not true. I suspect that sometimes it is maybe true, other times it isn't. What's wrong with having a research question in mind that already has a hypothesis? It's what researchers do all the time, so what is the difference if it is a double desire? I mean, some of these debates between us, I think, are very often artificial. I think it's probably just the way in which people try to undermine the work that we are doing. So it's probably one of the reasons why it's valuable for groups like yours and groups like mine to have academic researchers involved because, perhaps, that will cause people to realize that the work that we're doing even though performed in, perhaps, a different manner, it's just as valuable. It's just done differently for different purposes. And the outcomes that we seek, in terms of why we are doing research, are quite different. There are often times when I wish that I had the luxury of being an academic, when I could actually look at the work that I've done, and play with it and work with it and use it and think about it and make my own arguments with it in the way which an academic might. That is a luxury that is denied somebody like me, generally, in a community organization. So I guess my final comment would be to not let it bother you. Just get on with it.

Q: I'm with the Centre for Urban Community Studies at the University of Toronto. Regarding the point about getting the community into the university, as well as a getting the academics out in the community, you offer a few suggestions about that. I would be interested hearing if you have some other ideas because I think there are some interesting ideas out there. I'm interested in knowing if you had thoughts on other ways that that can happen. As well, Jim, could you comment on whether the evaluation process and the on-going process can begin to document stories about how community organizations are coming to the university and some practices that might be useful to build on past experiences.

PR: Just a couple of suggestions. One way would be to involve community researchers

more often, using academic research teams as advisors in much the same way that I ask academics to sit on my board or to sit on advisory committees. I think that many universities do that. I sit on a number of research communities, but I think it could be done in a more orchestrated plan, a kind of scheduled approach. The other comment that I would like to make is that, wouldn't it just be great if some of the research chairs that are now being funded were set aside for community-based researchers? There are people who may not have PhD's, people who may not spend their whole life in research or perhaps even very little of their life in research, but I'm sure that their knowledge of issues and their skills could bring considerable value to the academic world.

JR: I will comment very briefly and, in fact, I'll be a little bit more proactive here. First, my comment, briefly, is that, yes, the evaluation forms, etcetera can be used as a very powerful voice, to potentially bottle some of the enthusiasm that is here and try to influence others with that message. Maybe being a little bit proactive, I was intending to ask you to agree with me to a type of declaration. The declaration that I was going to propose to you is another vehicle to further the interests of community-based research. And I would like to, perhaps, do this with a show of hands here. I was going to suggest that we have a declaration that the significance and value of community-based research and through the university partnerships and the need for governments and other funders to support these types of initiatives. How many in this room would agree with that type of declaration, could I have a show of hands? How many would disagree? Any abstentions? We just got a unanimous declaration. Thank you. Somebody record that, please.

PR: I just want to continue this discussion about bringing community people on to the campus because, for example, in my case after I stepped down as president of Value Added, I was invited by the University of Regina to be a visiting professor. That enabled me to reflect on twenty years of activism and resulted in a book called *Imagine Democracy*, which is about the considerable influence in the progressive community of organizing. I had never been able to do that, never had that year of reflection. Now, what I find is not so much that I come on to the campus for reflection, but maybe to bring some of that energy and result-focused energy from the community on to the campus. As a result, a lot of my colleagues are doing stuff that they had been thinking about doing for years, but no one pushed them to do that. So, I think that the chair, which comes out of a fact that it is union-funded, that's particularly unusual because it is not research-based per se, although we are working on research. It's more about bringing some community activism on to the campus. It's worth thinking about, as well, as bit of a model for a different kind of partnership, which in fact brings a little different kind of energy on to the campus. So I think that we need to start talking about broadening our notions of what these partnerships are and how we can continue the kind of creative energy that we have had in this conference. It would be very useful in terms of the

follow-up work that you are doing to broaden our horizons a bit, and for the funders to think about that as well. Because, you know, the kind of funding that is happening here is giving us a chance to create a different model for the university, which I find very exciting. If we could broaden it out a bit, social change, in general, I think would be more exciting.

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