

2018



CLARI CHANGE LAB ACTION RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Progress report on the research projects underway with our community and post-secondary partners in Nova Scotia.



CLARI

Post-secondary institutions around the world are being challenged to examine the ways, and the extent to which, they are engaged with the communities that they encompass. In Nova Scotia, community engagement has significant support across the post-secondary system.

The recent creation of CLARI, the Change Lab Action Research Initiative, has given a broader meaning to those efforts. While institutions in other jurisdictions have chosen to be introspective about their community engagement, post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia have taken a unique approach by joining together under the CLARI banner to engage our resources collectively at the community level.

These collective resources are significant, and we hope that CLARI will continue to grow and be a champion for engagement that is focused on, and driven by, community need.

This brief report reflects the results of our work over the past twelve months, and we are confident that it will give readers a sense of the potential for post-secondary/community partnerships in our province. We will continue to promote and support the engagement of faculty and graduate students across the province in local research efforts, particularly in rural Nova Scotia, to make our province an even better place for our citizens.

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Promoting Cultural Food Security for Newcomer Immigrant and Refugees

Halifax has recently experienced an increase in immigration. While many newcomers bring with them knowledge and the aspiration to start a new food business, the challenges they face can be prohibitive. This project seeks to engage migrant and refugee newcomers living in HRM in business skills training and hands-on food product development sessions, with the aim of supporting the creation of new businesses. Researchers will gather participants' experiences to shed light on newcomers' cultural food insecurity.

Community Partner: African Community Cooperative Investment Canada (ACCIC)

Academic Partner: Dr. Jennifer Brady, Mount Saint Vincent University

L-R: Manfred Egbe (MSVU), Dr. Jennifer Brady (MSVU).



Promoting cultural
food security for
newcomers



Felipe Bonilla, one of the first ARTpreneurs alumni, contributed to the art piece pictured above (Lead artist: Melissa Marr). Many ARTpreneurs alumni have gone on to participate in similar high profile art projects. The solidarity justice triptych on display here was designed as a community outreach art project following the 4th Wall exhibition at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Youth from Halifax-area schools, Phoenix Youth Program, and IWK Choices program participated in the art project. The partnership involved the Michaëlle Jean Foundation, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, and ArtsExpress of the Halifax Regional School Board with additional funding support from the Lighthouses Grant: Department of Justice Youth on the Radar Program.



Youth Experiences When Engaging in an Arts-Based Entrepreneur Program

Community Partner: Youth Art Connection

Academic Partner: Mount Saint Vincent University

L-R: Dr. Shane Theunissen (MSVU), Ryan Veltmeyer (ARTpreneur), Dr. Christine McLean (MSVU), Dr. Sarah Reddington (MSVU).

The ARTpreneur program allows youth to explore their values, skills, ideas, and resources through an entrepreneurial lens in relation to their local economy. The goal of the ten-week ARTpreneur program is for participants to create an arts-based business plan to execute in our global economy.

The hope is that this ARTpreneur program will offer Nova Scotia youth a mechanism to improve their community networking and global economic research skills, including a chance to build a future in their local community. This research partnership will record and report on the experiences and perspectives of youth, whose voices are often left out of the dominant discourse.



Innovative Job Design: Social Enterprises Building Employment Skills

Individuals living with disabilities face numerous employment barriers, including lack of training, verbal communication abilities, and technological support, which could enhance client communication. By studying in-depth the barriers our clients face in their daily work related tasks and training, this project can improve the effectiveness of our program by recommending evidence-based solutions, allowing these individuals to contribute and make a difference in their communities.

Community Partner: Horizon Achievement Centre, Sydney

Academic Partner: Cape Breton University

Clockwise from top left: Dr. Leslie J. Wardley (CBU), Dr. Heather Schmidt (CBU), Carol Pendergast (Horizons), and Amanda McNeil, (Horizon participant)

An Evaluation of 'Fair and Impartial Policing' Implicit Bias Training

In 2018, Halifax Regional Police (HRP) trained sworn and civilian members in the Fair and Impartial Policing training program, allowing them to better recognize situations where bias may play a role, recognize biases in themselves and others, and manage their own biases. HRP is interested in understanding whether this training impacts officer attitudes, knowledge, capabilities and behaviour. The university team has expertise in legal psychology, the psychology of police procedures, program evaluation, bias, and changing attitudes, making them well-equipped to conduct this research.

Community Partner: HRP

Academic Partner: Saint Mary's University

L-R: Dr. Meg Ternes (SMU), Dr. Chris Giacomantonio (HRP)



Understanding
bias in policing



Community Strategy and Engagement Plan for Tidal Energy Development

Community Partner: Scot's Bay Community Association

Academic Partner: Acadia University

L-R: Ann Huntley; Dr. John Colton (Acadia)

Several years ago, a tidal energy project was proposed for the community of Scot's Bay. In dealing with the company in question, the residents of Scot's Bay concluded that they were "ill prepared to address the community challenges that this proposal entailed." As a result, a community group was formed to support the development of a community strategic and engagement plan for Scot's Bay. The result will be a more proactive position by the community, which will allow them to better manage the impacts of tidal energy development in their community.

Working towards better justice



Voices of Women – Experiences of Justice

On Nova Scotia's South Shore, Be the Peace Institute pursues gender equity, healthy relationships and safe, peaceful communities. Their project asks: What does justice mean to those who have experienced gender-based violence? Working with university researchers and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Be the Peace Institute is inviting victims to talk about what happened when they sought justice after having experienced violence. What the researchers learn will help them work with the justice system to promote, restorative and trauma-informed responses.

Community Partner: Be The Peace,
Mahone Bay

Academic Partner: Saint Mary's
University, Mount Saint Vincent University

L-R: Sue Bookchin (Be the Peace), Dr. Diane Crocker (SMU)

Improving Outcomes for Incarcerated People Returning to the Community

In an effort to lower recidivism rates and help inmates lead healthier lives upon release, Cape Breton Correctional Institution is trying to better understand the needs of incarcerated people. There is little research from provincial or local institutions on this issue. Researchers will collect input from individuals who have been, or are currently incarcerated in the facility, and then work with focus groups to develop workable proposals for collaborative practice.

Community Partner: Cape Breton
Correctional Centre

Academic Partner: Cape Breton
University

L-R: Patricia Bates-MacDonald (CBCC),
Dr. Margaret Dechman (CBU)

Beyond the quick fix





Exploring the effects of keeping pets with their owners in long-term care facilities

(No) Dogs Allowed? Towards a Model of Canine Residency in Long-Term Care

Currently, nursing homes, including Northwood, have pet therapy programs, or resident cats, or invite friends and family to bring cherished pets in for visits (on leash). No facility in Nova Scotia co-admits elder seniors together with their beloved elder dogs to long-term care. This work will inform future research and development of a canine residency model for long-term care.

The purpose of this action research project is to define and describe the multiple meanings, possibilities, and challenges of a dog-in-residence program for people who live in long-term care, their caregivers, and participating dogs.

Community Partner: Northwood Group of Companies

Academic Partner: Mount Saint Vincent University

L-R: Margie Knickle, Bella, Dr. Ardra Cole (MSVU), Margaret Szabo (Northwood)

Lecture Series

In our efforts to fulfill our mandate to BUILD CAPACITY, we have brought interesting speakers from a range of subject matters to CLARI. This year we were pleased to inspire an eclectic mix of conversations at CLARI on topics ranging from complexity theory and human systems, indigenous reconciliation and cooperatives and alternative forms of organizing for work. Presentations typically take place in the CLARI lab at Saint Mary's University but are streamed to our partners and others through our Polycom system.

DAVE SNOWDEN

We were pleased to have Dave Snowden, Chief Technical Officer of Singapore-based Cognitive Edge, join us at CLARI for several days of mind-bending conversation about sensemaking, complexity, and human systems. We were also fortunate to have the Nova Scotia Workers' Compensation Board join us as a sponsor for one of the events focused on "Workplace Safety in Complex Environments." Faculty from across the CLARI network joined us for the event, and we were pleased with the turnout from the private, public and non-profit sectors as well.

GRAHAM DAY

Graham Day joined us at CLARI to share his work with the United Nations (UN) and explain how it may be related to First Nations reconciliation in Canada. Graham is a former Provincial Governor in East Timor and current consultant to the UN. He spoke about his "adaptive management" work with the UN.

The presentation sought to explore the relevance of this work to First Nations in Canada, where a "by First Nations for First Nations" approach using similar methods would seem to be appropriate for any meaningful change program/reconciliation.

CHRIS BOLTON

Chris Bolton, Manager of Good Practice Exchange, Welsh Audit Office, dropped in for a visit to CLARI while travelling on his Churchill Fellowship. This award has given him the opportunity to travel the world looking at various and alternative forms of organizing for work.

Wales finds itself with very similar social and economic issues as Nova Scotia on a similar scale, so it's always interesting to hear what officials from Wales are thinking about.

STUDY GROUPS

As part of our ENGAGE mandate, we travel the province and sometimes hear resonant messages and experiences from community partners and CLARI faculty. In those cases, we take the initiative to bring people together to discuss ways to amplify those experiences and support conversations that may lead to productive action. This year we have convened a number of those meetings, and they are ongoing.



Affordable Housing in Rural N.S.

CLARI partners from Saint Mary's, Mount Saint Vincent, St. Francis Xavier, and Cape Breton University participated in early discussions with non-profit agencies and government partners to discuss limitations to the available data on affordable housing in rural Nova Scotia.



Social Isolation

Faculty from NSCC and MSVU were part of a conversation with several public and non-profit participants. The purpose of the discussion was to explore the resources of the CLARI network and how they can be channeled in a unique way to understand and support issues of social isolation in Nova Scotia.



Advanced Analytics in Public Policy

As public servants struggle with integrating advanced analytics capacity in their organizations, the CLARI partnership has engaged with a public agency to support their efforts along with computer science faculty from Acadia and Saint Mary's whose expertise lies in machine learning, big data and advanced analytics.

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