COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION
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TBM Strategies

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Community Food Systems Steering Committee (CFSSC) is the community-based organizing body implementing Regina’s Community Food Assessment (CFA). Regina’s Community Food Assessment (CFA) is a participatory, community-led process that is examining a broad range of food-related issues and resources in the City of Regina. The CFSSC’s primary goal is to improve the security, sustainability and resiliency of the community’s food system through the development, implementation and evaluation of a Community Food Assessment.

In addition to examining and reflecting upon the community partnership of the CFSSC as a whole, this evaluation was specifically interested in evaluating the community-university aspect of the partnership to date for the purpose of sharing experiences with others and providing insight into potential best practices for future models. The University-Community evaluation of the CFSSC was led by a project team (Core Partners) comprised of the University of Regina’s Community Research Unit (CRA), the Health Promotion Department of Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region, and REACH (Regina Education and Action on Child Hunger). We are grateful to Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) for their funding support.

B. METHODOLOGY

This evaluation was designed to measure the relative success and functioning of the partnerships within the CFSSC through a largely reflective approach rooted in the principles of action research. Our key objective was not only to gain further insight into the nature of this relationship and its level of functioning within the larger CFSSC process/structure, but also to share key lessons with the broader community.
A review of the literature on community-based partnerships suggested that there were five primary components of those that were effective. These five components were:

- Communication
- Vision/mission congruence
- Resources
- Power sharing, and
- Synergy

In addition to these, we wanted to engage partners in discussions around their definition of partnership so that we could better understand and evaluate its terms within the specific context of the CFSSC.

While these elements were all important points of reflection, the Core Partners of this project were also interested in how the partnership could be maintained and expanded beyond the Community Food Assessment process. Thus, we also included analyses about structure, succession planning and partnership termination in our work.

Research findings were quad angulated: we conducted two reflexive focus groups with CFSSC members, we administered baseline questionnaires, we conducted one-on-one telephone interviews with individuals not able/willing to attend the focus group and we conducted a literature review on community based partnerships. Throughout this process, findings were shared with Core Partners at each successive stage and next steps were recommended and discussed.

C. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

1. Timeline& Structure

Our research was limited firstly by a relatively short timeline. The Core Partners signed onto the project with TBM Strategies on November 6th, 2013. The first focus group was held in early December and the second in mid-March. By this time, the group had already gone through the process of developing the terms of reference for the CFSSC, had already done an extensive environmental scan in which the University academics were most heavily involved, and were in the process of completing the community consultations process. Thus, the evaluation of this
University-Community partnership represents only a snapshot in time. Likewise, the structure of the research was established prior to the engagement of TBM Strategies.

2. Limited Engagement

The timeline limitation is significant because, as was noted throughout the focus group and one-on-one interviews, participation among the partners varied throughout the work of the CFA. This evaluation of the CFSSC partnership was undertaken at a time when the University academics viewed their work within the CFA on the environmental scan to be complete. This may have been the case for other members of the CFSSC as well.

Nine participants attended Focus group #1 held in early December 2013. This included the three Core Partners to this research and the CFA Coordinator. Only six participants attended Focus group #2 held in mid-March 2014. This likewise included the three Core Partners to this research and the CFA Coordinator. No academic members of the University Community attended either focus group.

Given the extensive network of community partners involved in the CFSSC, the fact that very few members outside of the Core Partners and paid staff member attended the Focus Groups to provide input is a substantial limitation of this research. And, as we will see elsewhere, there are currently no measures in place to capture nonparticipation and so we were not able to capture any defensible reasons for their lack of engagement with this process.

3. Variance in stakeholder engagement

Focus groups are, by their very nature, both reflective exercises and group building exercises. The process of discussing elements of the community partnership in a facilitated conversation among partners encourages transparency, engagement and often, a renewed appreciation for the equitable contributions of members. Participants’ views are often shaped – for better and for worse – by the dynamics of participating in an open group environment. To this end, it must be noted that the relatively small numbers of participants in the focus groups outside of Core Project members and the paid coordinator may have been due to a lack of opportunity to provide input in other, more private ways. Invitations to speak with the researcher were extended to those who did not participate in the focus groups, but this was a reactive, rather than proactive, approach in the research design. It was subsequently an approach that also had limited success.
To further this, the University academic members did not participate in the focus groups or, by extension, the in-person baseline questionnaires. Thus, their relationship with other members of the CFSSC did not have the same transformative experience as it did for other members of the community. It was decided by the Core Partners that it was nonetheless important to reach out to those academic members of the CFSSC to ensure that they were given an opportunity to provide their insights.

This was done through one-on-one telephone interviews. While these proved to be very insightful in terms of shedding light on some of the variations in perceptions about roles and responsibilities within the CFA, they did little to transform the relationship between academic members and community members. Rather, they served only as a research tool. This is unfortunate given that miscommunication appears to have been at the root of varying levels of satisfaction.

4. Defining the University Partnership

We found that defining the University members of the partnership proved to be somewhat challenging. This is because University-based organizations like RPIRG (Regina Public Interest Research Group) and the CRU (Community Research Unit) were often viewed as members of the “community” while individual academics were viewed as part of the “University”. It was often unclear if the CRU was being “lumped in” with comments about the “University” or not.

It may be that the recognition of RPIRG and the CRU as members of the “community” is an accolade in the sense that their work is so entrenched within community initiatives and collaborative activities.

However, it also must be recognized that both the RPIRG and the CRU are significantly at risk should their ability to broker positive community partnerships and initiatives fail. Perhaps community partners who participated in our research were sensitive to this and tempered their responses accordingly. Individual academic members, nonetheless, were defined as “outside” of the community partnership both by the academics themselves and by community members.

D. EVALUATION RESULTS

“Hard to tell who “the University” is at this point. Almost no involvement from academics (are they still interested? What can they now offer?) CR & RPIRG though are working alright – contributing but maybe not as representative of the University community.”

(Questionnaire respondent)
1. Baseline Questionnaire

Discussion
As a first exercise in both Focus Group #1 and in Focus Group #2, we distributed a questionnaire to members that asked them to evaluate the quality of the partnership on an odd numbered scale across six different quality perceptions. These were:

1. This partnership is important
2. Partners contribute equitably
3. Challenges are surmountable
4. I feel like a valued member.
5. There are tangible results
6. Our partnership can serve as a model of an effective community partnership.

These value statements were repeated in questionnaires distributed at the beginning of both Focus Group #1 and Focus Group #2 and then compared for variance.

In addition, an open-ended question was added to each of the questionnaires as a way of trying to capture participant thoughts & insights that participants may have felt uncomfortable sharing with the group. In the questionnaire distributed in Focus Group #1, we asked:

Is this community partnership successful? Yes/No and Why?

In the questionnaire distributed in Focus Group #2, we asked:

Is the community partnership with the University working? Why or why not?

Results
We found marginal variations in the baseline assessment of the quality of the partnership in results from two questionnaires. This suggests that there were relatively consistent perceptions about the partnership among those members who participated and that their perceptions were generally positive.

For example, participants provided an average rating of 4.78/5 regarding the importance of the partnership in the first questionnaire, and an average of 4.8/5 in the second questionnaire. This relatively high rating and marginal difference suggests that there was a relatively consistent degree of consensus about the importance of the CFA partnership.
There was some variance over time, however, between the assessments of equitable contributions to the partnership among members, as illustrated below.

2. Equitable contribution of partners

The average rating for equitable contributions by partners was 3.67/5 in the first questionnaire and an average of 4/5 in the second. But note the larger distribution of responses across categories in the questionnaire responses in December. It was evidently a question where some members had mixed views about how equitable people/organizations were contributing to the CFA. When we repeated this assessment in March, most of the results tipped on the ok to strong side.

One likely explanation for this relative shift in favorable consensus about the contributions of partners as equitable was that we engaged participants in a discussion around resource contributions in Focus Group #1 as depicted below.
Feedback from this exercise indicated that participants were surprised to see the range and diversity of contributions from the members present and our attendant discussion around the definitions of “equity” versus “equality”. If true, then the reflective process of the focus group itself played a significant role in transforming some perceptions of the value of the CFSCC partnership in a positive way.

However, the focus group experience may have had a converse effect on perceptions of the challenges facing the CFSSC. When asked about whether or not members viewed challenges were surmountable, about 22% of respondents felt “Strongly” that they were. On the second questionnaire circulated during Focus Group #2, the responses were concentrated in the Satisfactory & more than satisfactory column with no responses indicating that members felt strongly that challenges were surmountable.

Those challenges were not due to the perception of lack of sense of value or the ability of the CFA to produce tangible results, however. According to our research, an average of 4.56/5 was attributed to the member’s sense of feeling like valued members of the collaboration over both questionnaires. They also relatively strongly
agreed on the ability of the CFA to produce tangible results – increasingly so in the second questionnaire as the partnership moved towards the creation of an Action Plan.

100% of respondents indicated that the community partnership was successful and cited open lines of communication, the passion and commitment of members and the availability of resources among partners as key elements of that success. Of note, only 1/3 of respondents to the open ended question on the first questionnaire talked about the University and/or the CRU specifically. Where they did, respondents noted concerns about the role of University representatives, their commitment level, the lack of structure and the lack of clarity. These concerns were noted and used to guide the facilitated conversations in Focus group #2 and the semi-structured interviews with individual academics.

Similarly, when asked about whether the community partnership with the University of Regina was working in the second questionnaire, there was a lack of consensus. Here it became clear that the definition of “partner” and “University member” had divergent meanings. For example, one respondent wrote that:

“Some of the University partners contribute more than others”.

Another wrote that:

“It’s working with the CRU and with RPIRG, however we no longer have the academic partnerships that would be helpful to advance our research interests in the project.”

Thus, it was clear that there was some discord about “who” was a member of the “University” and who was a member of the “community” and that this perception had an impact on the assessment of how well the CFA was working.

2. Focus Group #1

Discussion
The first focus group was held in early December 2013 and was attended by a total of nine CFSSC members, including all three of the Core Partners and the paid Coordinator.
This focus group was guided by the need to gain baseline knowledge that could be dealt with more deeply in the second focus group and to establish a trusting and respectful environment through which to share experiences and insights.

The Core Partners were presented with a range of questions that could be used to evaluate the 5 key components of community partnerships discussed in the Methodology section. From this list, the Core Partners chose the questions they preferred. The Facilitated Conversation guide for Focus Group #1 is located the Appendices.

The focus group began with the circulation and completion of the first questionnaire by members and then proceeded by outlining the goals for the session and the establishments of safe ground rules for the discussion. These ground rules included the commitment to openness, respect and collegiality in a confidential environment.

Focus group #1 ended with a debrief and reflection on the experience with members.

Results
We began by discussing the elements of a partnership and then comparing those to the qualities of a community partnership that make it unique. These are outlined in the table below.
While obviously there were some shared characteristics between “partnerships” and those specific to community partnerships (i.e., shared leadership), of note was the inclusion of a “culture”, a set of processes, the need for structure and equitable contributions within the community context.

Additionally, most people would agree that good communication is key to any healthy partnership. However, the unique characteristics of community partnerships, which call for a set of processes, a structure and a range of contributions make communication among partners essential for viable functioning.

It was identified that email communications were the primary method of circulating information and participation opportunities among members and that in person meetings were the primary means through which decisions were made among CFA partners.

Email communications were identified as a challenge due to the number of partners involved in the project and the uncertainty surrounding nonresponse. In person communications were perceived more highly due to their importance in establishing
trust among members, providing nuanced input into decision making and contributing to a stronger partnership.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the consensus around the importance of the partnership among members, 100% of participants in Focus Group #1 agreed that the CFA was doing the right activities and proceeding in the right direction overall. There was the perception of alignment between the vision/mission of the CFA and its activities. Given the diversity of CFSSC members, this is an achievement and speaks to both the investment of time that the group devoted to its terms of reference and the passion for food security that many members indicated drove their participation in the initiative.

Discussions around power sharing and dominance or leadership were much more contentious. Consistent concerns were raised about the role of individual academics within the CFA. Members suggested that individual academics that had been involved with the project seemed to operate outside the “community partnership” model and instead characterized their involvement as more of a “revolving door”. The “University” role was characterized as disconnected, difficult, time consuming and internally serving but also strategic, bigger-pictured and knowledge based.

3. Focus Group #2 & One-on-One Telephone Interviews

Discussion
The results of both Focus Group #1 and the baseline questionnaire illustrated the need to revisit a number of areas in order to better understand the nuances of the CFSSC Community-University partnership. Specifically, we identified the need to dig deeper into the following:

- Equitability concerns around contributions and shared leadership. This would include a discussion around the expectations of partners.
- The organizational structure of the CFSSC: did this have an impact on partner expectations and contributions?
- Communications: how could communications be improved to facilitate engagement and knowledge gathering?
- Sustainability: how could the partnership be maintained?

Only six members of the CFSSC participated in Focus Group #2. This included the three Core Partners and the paid coordinator. All members of Focus Group #2 had participated previously with the exception of one person who participated for the first time.
In the period between Focus Group #1 & Focus Group #2, there were a few important developments. Just prior to Focus Group #1, a paid Coordinator was hired. The Coordinator attended Focus Group #1, but served as note taker and participated very little. By the time Focus Group #2 occurred, the paid Coordinator had been in her position for a period of time and this time, participated in discussions. This proved to be very insightful.

A second development was that the CFA had completed a very successful event just prior to Focus Group #1 and had since been preparing for the next phase of the project that was the Action Plan. This interim period, however, saw a loss of momentum that may have contributed to the relatively low turnout for Focus Group #2. Finally, it was noted with concern that there were three impending maternity leaves for members of the CFSSC – two of these among the Core Partners. Members were feeling very anxious about the impact of their departure from the project.

During this period, we also reached out to the individual Academic members of the CFA to gather their insights through a one-on-one telephone interview using a semi-structured interview based on questions that arose from the focus group and questionnaire data. Specifically, academic members were asked to speak to questions around:

- Their motivation for working with the CFA
- Their perception and characterization of their role within the partnership
- How their experience compared with other experiences working with community groups and
- What lessons about community-academic partnerships they would offer to others

Both of the individual academics were eventually interviewed, however it must be noted that it took several attempts to contact them to achieve this. In one case, the academic had moved to another city and had not provided the CFSSC with new contact information.

**Results**

**Roles**

One of the reasons that CFSSC members who participated in this research had reservations about the University-community partnership was the disparity in
perceptions about their respective roles. The following table is illustrative of this point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Academics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CFA perception</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Made it clear didn’t want to sit on steering committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of understanding/sensitivity to timelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not involved right now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• options for participation start with meeting attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not full partners, choose their level of involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic perception</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• described their role as “supervisory”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was surprised not invited to engage with community consultations - this is an area of expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• felt very good research was produced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Acknowledged time line delays, but don’t understand impatience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants in the CFA focus groups generally characterized the individual academic members as operating outside of the partnership and largely disconnected from the group. While members expressed positive sentiments about the environmental scan that was largely produced by the academics, they expressed frustration about the length of time that it took to produce and felt that there was insensitivity about project timelines. This insensitivity, coupled with a lack of effort to engage more intimately with the work of the CFA and other partners had the effect of isolating the academic members from the functioning of the partnership. Indeed, as was illustrated later in discussions on structure, the academic members were characterized as “the brick wall”.

However, conversations with individual academics over the telephone revealed a different perception of their relationship.

“I would describe our role as supervisory. We were there to supervise the research and the community process to ensure best practices. There was no professional incentive for my involvement; it was just my area of interest...I am surprised to learn that concerns have been raised. We thought everything was just fine. We did good work & haven't heard anything otherwise.”
In addition to perhaps some interpersonal issues between specific members of the CFA partnership, three specific elements contributed to this disconnect between the perception of roles and experiences among University academics and community members. These elements were:

1. **Structure**
2. **Decision making processes**
3. **Communication tools**

**Structure**

In Focus Group #2, participants were asked to illustrate the structure of the CFA partnership. While each illustration was unique, they shared in common a relatively equal (horizontal) and fluid relationship between members of the community. Academic members were consistently depicted outside of the illustration, with one particular depiction identifying them as a “brick wall”.

This characterization of academic members as operating outside of the structure of the partnership was not specific to them, however. The paid Coordinator of the CFA was not considered in depictions of the structure of the partnership at all! As a role whose focus is coordinating and centering the work of the partnership, the absence of consideration of the Coordinator was an alarming revelation for members of Focus Group #2.

The below illustration, for example, illustrated the structure of the CFA partnership in the likeness of a tree. Various key areas of activity form the exterior leaves and branches surrounding the CFSSC, which forms the core and CFA partnership funders form the trunk.
What will CFSSC look like?

Key:
- One way
- Communications
- Social media
- Event
- Consultation
- Fuzzy

Funders
When asked to describe where the Coordinator role fit into this depiction, the Coordinator suggested that she was “like a bird that flew in and out” without a real “nest” in the tree itself.

As one can also observe above, “environmental scan” is illustrated as a key activity here but is outlined by barriers unlike those of the other activities of the partnership. The environmental scan, of course, was the primary service provided by the individual University academics. This illustration was consistent with other depictions that suggested that the relationship was somehow unique and separated from the rest of the community members of the partnership.

In both cases – the lack of situation of the CFA Coordinator and the sense of disconnection of academics from community members – has, at its root, an understanding of partnership that evaluates community members on community terms and does not adjust expectations to meet the needs of members operating in different contextual environments. In other words, all members of the partnership are expected to behave as members of community organizations and are evaluated in terms of their contributions accordingly. This is problematic because it undermines real opportunities for collaborative processes, which was one of the key features of community partnerships identified in the Elements of Partnership graphic on p. 12.

There is also no structure or process for ending the partnership, such as an exit interview. Thus, nonparticipation is perceived as partnership termination that may or may not be the case, as the discussions with the academic members illustrated. This deprives members of a formal mechanism by which to terminate their membership and it also deprives the CFSSC of an important research tool for continuous improvement.

**Decision-Making**
A related structural barrier was identified in discussions around how decisions were made within the CFSS. The primary decision-making process required in-person meetings. Thus, if members were unable or uninterested in attending an in-person meeting, they were excluded from decision-making. No alternative processes for decision-making were utilized by the CFSSC to ensure member inclusion.

The academic members noted that they were not able or interested in attending regular meetings of the CFSSC and community members interpreted this as being uninterested in participating further in the partnership itself. This was not the case. Academic members, for example, noted that they were disappointed that they had
not been engaged to help with the community consultation processes because this was an area of both passion and expertise for them.

**Communication**

A related problem occurred in the CFSSC’s use of communication tools. As noted in Focus Group #1, email was the primary tool for communication among the members of the partnership. However, academic members noted that they were bombarded with email that related little to the work they were doing and that they eventually began to ignore it. Even community members of the partnership noted that often emails went unanswered and it was unclear whether nonresponse meant noninterest, complacency or rejection. Because no other communication tools were utilized to try to engage and inform members, email may have served to isolate, rather than include member participation.

**Partnership sustainability**

A final discussion in Focus Group #2 revolved around the issue of partnership sustainability. 4/6 community members expressed that if they personally left their organization, they didn’t feel confident that the organization would continue their involvement with the CFSSC. Only 3/6 members indicated that their executive was committed to the partnership and only 1 of these was a Core Partner in this research. Conversations with University academics similarly noted that their respective academic units did not formally support their engagement with the CFA. Rather, their engagement with CFA was only supported by the CRU, which has no authority over academic work.

These findings were alarming for members of Focus Group #2, particularly, as has been noted earlier, since 3 members (2 of whom are Core Partners) are going to be on maternity leave in the near future.

While one of the highlights of the CFSSC outlined by members in Focus Group #1 was the passion and commitment of members about food security issues, there is a substantial risk that the partnership relies on people and not on organizations.

**F. SUMMARY: KEY LESSONS**

Despite some need for improvement in accommodating different types of membership and participation within the CFSSC and some work still to be done around sustainability, it must be emphasized that the overwhelming sense among
participants in this research has been that the CFSSC is a worthwhile and well functioning community partnership able to surpass challenges and produce tangible results for the community around food security in Regina. There is consensus among all partners that the work of the CFA is important work and that the potential for meaningful community impact is greater working collectively as a group than would be the case individually.

Nonetheless, some key lessons were identified that could be used to both strengthen the CFSSC going forward and also to be shared with other similar initiatives. These lessons have been discussed throughout this report, but are summarized below for ease of reference.
Partnership evaluation is longitudinal

Rather than a snapshot in time, community partnership evaluation is a process that begins with the development of Terms of Reference and ends with a process for partnership termination (i.e., exit interviews). It ought to cover the length of the project itself.

Focus groups as team building

The use of facilitated, reflective opportunities serve not only a research function, but they also serve to build stronger teams. They should be an ongoing part of partnership processes as part of an effort to develop a culture of continuous improvement.

Flexibility/variation in structure/expectation of partners

Partnership and participation needs to honor the diversity & the distinct organizational cultures of members. This means the structure, processes & communication tools need to be varied and aimed at maximizing inclusiveness.

Measure nonparticipation & exit

It cannot be assumed that nonparticipation is equivalent to disinterest or even termination of the partnership. Formal mechanisms & varied efforts to engage are key in terms of both knowledge building and partnership sustainability.

Passion is good but organizational commitment is key

Members who are passionate about the issue are always important. However, formal organizational support is also necessary to ensure that changes in personnel do not result in the absence of participation (i.e., succession planning). It is also important to have organizational lines of accountability for partnership contributions.

Communication & decision making processes & tools must aim for inclusion

The singular use of a specific communications tool or decision making process serves as a barrier to the full participation of a diverse range of members. A standard best practice is to offer a range of participation opportunities to members whenever possible.
G. CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, community collaboration is often rewarding, but challenging work as organizations with specific internal cultures and varying mandates try to work together for a common good. But community based organizations are united by their shared membership within the sector. This enables them to be able to quickly identify, define and realize their collective vision and to monitor their progress. Community based organizations and their staff are also held accountable for their ability to respond to community needs.

Community collaboration becomes more complex when they engage organizations and individuals from outside community-based organizations. This is not to say they should be discouraged or that they are undesirable. It is to say, however, that it is much more important to establish a structure, processes and communication tools that attends to key differences in operational environments in the private sector or, in this case, the University. It is not enough to take community based measures of partnership participation and apply them to other contexts. At the same time, key partners outside of the community need to be attentive to the particular demands of the community and how a lack of attention to them impacts outcomes for people. Failing to meet deadlines imposed by members of the community, for example, has significant repercussions for project funding and demands on staff members of community based organizations, who often are already overburdened.

Our evaluation of the CFSSC-University partnership leaves some important and unanswered questions about University based organizations like RPIRG and the CRU. Of all of the stakeholders in the CFA, it might be argued that these two organizations are most at risk if partnerships like this do not demonstrate value for their members or the community at large as this brokerage role is central to their mandate. It would seem from our limited research here that community-based members appear to “lump” RPIRG and the CRU in as community partners. This is very positive in the sense that this may be indicative of the adoption of cultures and practices that resemble community work. There was an observable level of trust between the members of these organizations and other members of the CFSSC throughout this research. However, if the role of the CRU & RPIRG is to provide a bridging point between University academics and community based organizations, this limited evaluation revealed that both organizations were only able to provide introductions and connections. Neither RPIRG, nor the CRU (who is a Core Partner), had any real authority to ensure that academic partners were fulfilling their obligations. Given the unfortunate reality that University academics receive little professional and institutional incentive for community based work, this is perhaps as
it should be since their contributions are largely voluntary. However, it does mean that there is a lack of accountability structure for academic members of collaborative community engagements. This leaves bridging organizations within the University, such as RPIRG and the CRU in a very difficult position: they can connect the community with academics but cannot do anything to hold them accountable. As a result, some partners may hold RPIRG and the CRU responsible for a lack of engagement and this has the potential to undermine the trusting relationships that are the foundation of their work. In a climate where Universities are increasingly expected to demonstrate value for the public at large, discussions about how to address these issues going forward within the University itself are very important.

REFERENCES


H. APPENDICES

CFA Partnership evaluation questionnaire

For each item identified below, circle the number to the right that best fits your judgment of its quality. Use the rating scale to select the quality number. “3” can be used for “ok/ambivalent”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. This partnership is important</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Partners contribute equitably.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Challenges are surmountable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel like a valued member</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. There are tangible results.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Our partnership can serve as a model of an effective community partnership</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is this community partnership successful? Yes/No

Why?
CFA Partnership Evaluation: Facilitated Conversation Guide

For Focus Group #1

Questionnaire

Opening
Introductory remarks: project overview, elements of partnership
Goals for today
Ground rules

Defining Partnership
Today’s session is to help us get a sense of how the CFA partnership is working. Before we do that, we need to get a better sense of how you define this partnership.

1. What is a partnership?
2. How is a community partnership different from other kinds of partnerships?

Communication

1. How do you know your input is heard and responded to?
2. How are decisions made? Are you comfortable with that?
3. How would you describe this project to someone who doesn’t know anything about it?
Vision/Mission

1. Are we doing the right activities to achieve the goals of the CFA?
2. Do you know how you/your organization fits in and can contribute?

Resources

1. What resources (people, time, money, energy) do you/your organization contribute to this partnership?

Power Sharing

1. Do you feel that some organizations dominate the partnership? What impact does that have on the partnership?
2. How have community partners and the University of Regina worked together in the Regina Food Assessment?
3. Do you feel that this is a safe place?

Synergy

1. Do you feel that you are better off working in this partnership on food security than you would be on your own? How?
2. How necessary is the University’s contribution?

Close & Debrief

1. What challenges did you have in this morning’s session?
2. What felt good?
Thank you & close.
Invitation for further input.
Focus Group #2 Facilitated Conversation Guide

Intro
Brief recapture of findings to date
Discussion of objective of Focus Group #2: dig deeper, may be more difficult
Reminders about agreement on confidentiality, group safe space, etc.

Revisiting Partnership
What are the expectations of partners?
Where do these expectations come from?

Structure
Small group work: illustrate the structure of the CFA
Discussion: what are the common elements? How does this structure work/not work to engage all members?

Communications
Brainstorming: what other communications tools could be considered to increase engagement?
What principles should govern the use of communications tools?

Sustainability
How do we know when the partnership has “ended”?
How do we know when members are no longer “members”?
Are organizations or individuals committed to the partnership?

Debrief
Semi-structured Interview Guide: Academic Members

Intro & Brief Outline of Findings so Far

1. Motivation for working with CFA
2. Perception & characterization of role within the partnership
3. How the experience here compared with other experiences working with community groups
4. What lessons about community-academic partnerships could be offered