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The Making Research Accessible Initiative: A Case Study in Community Engagement and Collaboration

L'initiative « Making Research Accessible » : une étude de cas d'engagement et de collaboration communautaire

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Article abstract

Recently community engagement has emerged as a priority among universities, offering new opportunities for their libraries. A literature scan of community-centred work in libraries reveals diverse examples but a lack of conceptual definitions or frameworks to help practitioners advance their work for social impact. We present a case study using the Carnegie Foundation definition of community engagement and apply two conceptual frameworks: living lab constructs and boundary spanning theory. The living lab constructs provide a framework to describe an innovation process that addresses a social challenge, experiments with specific actions for change, and defines specific returns or social impact. Boundary spanning theory provides a framework to help university leaders conceptualize linkages to community in ways that account for institutional complexity and foster reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships with community partners. We use these two frameworks to describe the Making Research Accessible initiative which has three goals: i) increase the accessibility and impact of research done in the community; ii) increase the availability to researchers of community-generated research; iii) create opportunities for community and university members to share information and learn from each other. From the case study, we summarize what we have learned about community engagement to be of general relevance to library practitioners.

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The Making Research Accessible Initiative: A Case Study in Community Engagement and Collaboration

L'initiative « Making Research Accessible » : une étude de cas d'engagement et de collaboration Communautaire

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Abstract / Résumé

Recently community engagement has emerged as a priority among universities, offering new opportunities for their libraries. A literature scan of community-centred work in libraries reveals diverse examples but a lack of conceptual definitions or frameworks to

help practitioners advance their work for social impact. We present a case study using the Carnegie Foundation definition of community engagement and apply two conceptual frameworks: living lab constructs and boundary spanning theory. The living lab constructs provide a framework to describe an innovation process that addresses a social challenge, experiments with specific actions for change, and defines specific returns or social impact. Boundary spanning theory provides a framework to help university leaders conceptualize linkages to community in ways that account for institutional complexity and foster reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships with community partners. We use these two frameworks to describe the Making Research Accessible initiative which has three goals: i) increase the accessibility and impact of research done in the community; ii) increase the availability to researchers of community-generated research; iii) create opportunities for community and university members to share information and learn from each other. From the case study, we summarize what we have learned about community engagement to be of general relevance to library practitioners.

Récemment, la participation communautaire est devenue une priorité importante au sein de plusieurs universités offrant de nouvelles possibilités pour les bibliothèques. Un aperçu de la littérature sur le travail axé sur la communauté dans les bibliothèques révèle plusieurs exemples diversifiés mais aussi un manque de définitions et de cadres conceptuels pour aider les praticiens dans leur travail visant un impact social. Nous présentons une étude de cas en se servant de la définition de la participation communautaire de la Carnegie Foundation et en appliquant deux cadres conceptuels : l'approche du laboratoire vivant et la théorie du passage de frontière (« boundary spanning »). Le concept du laboratoire vivant fournit un cadre pour décrire le processus d'innovation qui aborde un défi social, qui expérimente avec des actions spécifiques pour le changement et qui définit des retours spécifiques ou un impact social. La théorie du passage de frontière (« boundary spanning ») fournit un cadre pour aider les dirigeants d'universités à conceptualiser les liens avec la communauté de manière à tenir compte de la complexité institutionnelle et à favoriser des relations réciproques et mutuellement bénéfiques avec les partenaires communautaires. Nous utilisons ces deux cadres pour décrire l'initiative « Making Research Accessible » et ses trois buts : i) accroître la disponibilité et l'impact de la recherche menée dans la communauté; ii) accroître la disponibilité des chercheurs menant la recherche dans la communauté; et iii) créer des occasions pour que les gens de la communauté et de l'université puissent partager de l'information et apprendre les uns des autres. À partir de l'étude de cas, nous rassemblons ce que nous avons appris au sujet de l'engagement communautaire qui peut être d'une pertinence générale pour les praticiens des bibliothèques.

Keywords / Mots-clés

Community engagement, living labs, open access, boundary spanning, academic libraries, technical innovations, marginalized communities, scholarly communication; engagement communautaire, laboratoire vivant, libre accès, délimitation des frontières, bibliothèques universitaires, innovations techniques, communautés marginalisées, communication savante

Introduction

Community engagement has emerged as a priority for many North American universities and colleges (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010) but in what ways are academic libraries and practitioners contributing to this institutional mandate? Westney (2006) asserted that academic librarians are notably absent in relation to the “engaged university”; meanwhile, public libraries are known for their role in community building. Welburn et al. (2010) argued in *Advocacy, Outreach and the Nation’s Academic Libraries: A Call to Action* that libraries have indeed been involved in community engagement activities but that they could benefit from being more strategic in allocating their resources in ways that are central to the library mission. In this paper, we aim to advance understanding of the roles that academic libraries and practitioners play in community engagement by describing a case study of the Making Research Accessible initiative (MRAi).

In January 2019 sixteen Canadian institutions embarked on a collaborative process to test the applicability of the American-based Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (CEC) system to the Canadian context (University of British Columbia [UBC], 2019). The purpose of the CEC pilot was to conduct a comprehensive review of activities to assess how Canadian universities pursue and promote community engagement to better understand the myriad of ways these institutions engage with their communities. According to Adriaan de Jager, “the [Carnegie CEC] situates community engagement as integral to academic excellence, and encourages cultural change in universities by improving how they collaborate with their larger communities in a spirit of partnership and reciprocity” (UBC, 2019, “What is the CEC?”). At the time of writing, similar pilots are underway, or have recently concluded, in Ireland, Malaysia, and Australia. As such, it is an opportune time for academic libraries to investigate the ways in which they pursue community engagement and, more importantly, aid reciprocal collaborations with communities to promote positive social change.

Literature Review

We searched the Library and Information Sciences (LIS) literature, and to a lesser extent the Education literature, for articles whose titles or content referenced terms such as *community engagement* or *community outreach* that were published in the past fifteen years. We looked for expressions of novelty or difference. We also did more ad hoc online searches for websites and blog posts. We were interested in how authors defined concepts such as outreach and engagement with off-campus or non-academic communities and if any theories or frameworks were described. We were hoping to learn more about how practitioners systematically plan and evaluate community engagement. For those interested in an overview of academic libraries and outreach, we recommend starting with Nancy Courtney’s *Academic Library Outreach: Beyond the Campus Walls* (2009). In our exploration of the more recent literature, the following themes emerged: 1) definitions and key concepts of community engagement; 2) public libraries and the community-led model; 3) roles and activities for academic libraries and practitioners; 4) extractive research and paywalled articles; and 5) planning and evaluating community engagement programs.

Defining Key Concepts

Community engagement has a rich history in higher education that is attributed to many different yet overlapping scholarly traditions, including participatory action research, feminist research, service learning, community development, and scholarship of engagement (Fitzgerald & Primavera, 2013). Those new to the scholarship can find themselves mired in the “definitional anarchy” of this multifaceted and interdisciplinary field of academic research (Sandmann, 2008). However, concepts such as collaboration, mutually beneficial exchange, and reciprocity have formed the foundation of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s definition of community engagement, which has helped to advance the field (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010).

The American Library Association (ALA, 2018) offers the information field this definition: “[c]ommunity engagement is the process of working collaboratively with community members—be they library customers, residents, faculty, students, or partner organizations—to address issues for the betterment of the community” (para. 1). Relationship building and positive social change are key concepts in this definition, and ‘community’ is left intentionally broad. Furthermore, the ALA provides library practitioners the Libraries Transforming Communities program, which was created to support libraries in helping to align public perceptions and library practices through a ‘turning outward’ approach. The ALA’s Libraries Transforming Communities program includes funding opportunities and other resources to advance community engagement work, predominantly for public libraries.

In reviewing the recent LIS literature, it is apparent that there is no agreed-upon definition for community engagement. For example, terms such as *community outreach*, *community service*, *user experience*, *civic engagement*, or *service-learning* are used interchangeably or have conceptual definitions that overlap, which results in a wide array of activities described in the literature. This fits with Sandman’s assertion back in 2008 that community engagement, as an interdisciplinary field for academic research, was still emerging from its “definitional anarchy” (p. 91). Meanwhile, within the information field, there has been a call for clarity in how we describe our discipline’s foundational concepts, given that this can directly affect the advancement of scholars’ and practitioners’ work. Fleming-May (2014) noted that defining concepts such as outreach can “illuminate the theoretical foundations of a larger field of study” (p. 204).

Public Libraries Leading the Way with the Community-Led Service Model

It can be said that public libraries have led community engagement professional practice for the information field. In Canada, the community-led service model dates back to 2008. This conceptual model was created to help libraries rethink how the general public, with a particular focus on marginalized or vulnerable communities, could participate more fully in service design, including the planning, execution, and evaluation of library programs and services (Williment, 2009). In the last decade, this model has matured with many examples of how public libraries demonstrate their ability to look outward and co-create services with local communities in inspiring ways. More recently, public libraries have turned their priorities towards a subset of community

engagement designed to improve quality of life in local communities, which is referred to as civic engagement (Coward et al., 2018). Nicholson (2019) identified five trends that are moving public libraries “towards a model in which their focus is on active engagement with their communities: participation, making and creating, learning, new outreach, and partnerships” (p. 332).

Academic Libraries’ Roles, Activities and Services

There are many facets of community engagement described in the LIS literature, especially when it comes to academic library services and the roles and activities of practitioners. Some center on the ways in which academic libraries encourage interactions between academics and communities through programming, spaces, collections and research. For example, academic libraries offer exhibits, lectures, and webcasts that are open to the public (Cho, 2011; Goodwin Thiel, 2017; Gruber, 2017). Academic libraries offer physical and digital environments for planning and sharing research and for advancing the open education and open access mandates of their home institutions (Goodwin Thiel, 2017; Gruber, 2017). Moreover, many academic libraries enable access to their diverse collections by allowing in-person access, specific borrower privileges, or interlibrary loan (Dole & Hill, 2013), and by making their reference services available to the public.

Sanders and Balius (2015) offered an annotated bibliography that describes the many different ways that academic libraries contribute to service-learning. For example, they teach information literacy workshops to students doing community field work, or they work in partnership with public libraries and student services to teach students how to do job research as part of their career exploration, job-seeking, and resume creation. On the theme of teaching and learning, Bickel and Dupont (2018) described a collaborative initiative whereby practitioners offer training and tools, and they match funding to facilitate capacity-building in Indigenous information management.

Other authors focused on technology and co-creation in which community members or groups work with libraries to make use of digital tools to publish and preserve community-held knowledge (Cho, 2011; Goodwin Thiel, 2017; Kostecky, 2018). By offering technology as a tool to foster knowledge exchange, academic librarianship has the potential to challenge the norms that position academics as knowledge producers and community members as knowledge consumers. As Islam et al. (2015) stated, “[c]o-creation helps tap into the creative and intellectual potential of library users and increases the innovation capacity of the library” (p. 47).

Lastly, scholars have written about the many different aspects of collaboration and partnership inherent in community engagement. Their articles touch on the different ways in which academic library outreach and engagement happens in partnership with community, including organizations such as non-profits, museums, and public libraries (Liebst & Feinmark, 2013; Miller, 2018; Sutherland, 2013), and/or other academic bodies (Westney, 2006).

Extractive Research and Paywalled Articles

Métis scholar Adam Gaudry (2011) wrote that academic research too often follows a familiar methodology: researchers enter a marginalized community and extract valuable information for an academic audience to benefit from. The researcher's main responsibility lies with the institution, rather than the community (Ubels et al., 2020). As Gaudry writes, "[l]ost in this extractive process are the context, values, and on-the-ground struggles of the people and communities that provide information and insight to the researcher" (p.113). Moreover, similar studies are often repeated and, in many cases, the results are inaccessible, either hidden behind a paywall or otherwise difficult to find (Ubels et al., 2020), or research findings are seldom expressed in ways that meet community needs. Academic librarians play a role in providing access to research, and this information may have the potential to support local community efforts, fuel advocacy work, shape public services, and inform government policy. Perhaps even more important is the question of what role academic librarians may play in ensuring that community-engaged research accurately represents the research priorities and lived experiences of marginalized groups, which Pratt (2019) identifies as being essential when including marginalized communities in research.

Planning and Evaluating Community Engagement

There are many examples in the literature that illustrate ways that academic librarians are involved in community engagement and are working to transform their institutions and make positive change within communities (Courtney, 2009; LeMire et al., 2018; Welburn et al., 2010). However, it is difficult to find practical guidance on planning or evaluating community-centred work. In their investigation of how academic research libraries plan, conduct, and evaluate engagement programs, Lemire et al. (2018) concluded:

Library outreach is still an emerging practice, as librarians struggle with a professional definition of outreach that transcends local context. Libraries seem dedicated to the concept of outreach, but are still struggling in the application of what an intentional and systematic outreach program might look like. Furthermore, developing methods to assess the impact of outreach activities is still an evolving practice that deserves continued conversations among outreach librarians. Constraints including timing, lack of a defined budget, resources, and staffing often make strategically planning for an intentional outreach program problematic. (p. 11)

In this case study, we aim to contribute to the conceptual development of community engagement in librarianship and offer guidance for practitioners involved in planning collaborative initiatives that bridge academic and community audiences for mutual benefit.

Our Case Study: Applying a Conceptual Definition and Useful Frameworks

In the following case study, we make use of the definition of community engagement provided by the Carnegie Foundation, which is widely used in higher education in North America and is applicable to academic librarianship:

Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. (Commission on Public Purpose in Higher Education & The Carnegie Foundation, n.d., *Defining Community Engagement*, paras. 1-2)

The key concepts in this definition are collaboration, mutually beneficial exchange, partnership and reciprocity. We will illustrate how these ideas inform our work.

For our case study we understood collaboration to mean co-creation with various audiences and stakeholders. The MRAi has two co-leads from UBC—the Learning Exchange (LE) and UBC Library’s Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (IKBLC or ‘the Library’) —and involved local organizations and community members at various stages to shape the initiative. Community was largely understood to be non-academic audiences, specifically residents and organizations, within Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES).

We sought to apply definitions and frameworks that meet the characteristics of a multi-year, intra-institutional, iterative, community-centred initiative that can be applied to advance conceptual understanding of community-engaged academic librarianship. The living lab concept, an innovation platform popular in Europe over the past decade, builds on the concept of co-creation and provides such a framework. Hossain et al. (2019) define a living lab as: “a physical or virtual space in which to solve societal challenges, especially for urban areas, by bringing together various stakeholders for collaboration and collective ideation” (p. 976). Building on co-creation, living labs provide physical and organizational infrastructures (Ponce de Leon et al., 2006), as well as the methodology and tools to coordinate the experimentation process within a variety of real-life environments.

The living lab conceptual framework lends itself to our work in that it is community-centred and offers a way to outline an innovation process that addresses a social challenge, it experiments with specific actions for change (e.g. by prototyping), and it defines specific returns or social impact of the innovation (Hernández-Pérez et al.,

2020). Despite the growing popularity of, and increasing scholarly attention to, living labs as innovation platforms, it was only recently that their central characteristics have been defined (Westerlund, et al., 2018). It is these key constructs that provide a useful framework for our work and which may be relevant for librarianship more generally. Westerlund et al. (2018) identify nine key constructs that are characteristic to living labs: objective, stakeholders, governance, methods, funding, communication, value, infrastructure, and openness (see Table 1 for definitions). We will use these key constructs to organize and reflect upon the different phases of our project.

Table 1

Definition of Living Lab Constructs

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Objective	Benefits of the innovation.
Stakeholders	Parties involved in the innovation process.
Governance	Manner in which decisions are made.
Methods	Steps used to develop the innovation.
Funding	Financial support for innovation activities.
Communication	Ways stakeholders participate in information exchange.
Value	Benefits that stakeholders gain from their participation.
Infrastructure	Resources and specialized equipment required for innovation activities.
Openness	Sharing and collaboration between stakeholders.

(Westerlund et al., 2018)

A second useful theoretical framework is that of boundary spanning, often used to describe community engagement activities in higher education. Community engagement takes place at the nexus of two interacting and very different communities: the university and the communities that partner with it for purposes such as service-learning, community-based research, or policy research (McMillan et al., 2016). It is commonly acknowledged that the multiple and complex interactions that take place between universities and their community partners are often contested, contradictory, and changing (McMillan et al., 2016). Cultures cannot be bridged or silos broken down without some mechanism. Community-based learning, for example, requires boundary spanners or brokers who assist participants to make new connections between the university and community, enable coordination and open new possibilities for meaning and learning (McMillan, 2011). Weerts and Sandmann (2010) identify that new frameworks are needed to help leaders at research universities conceptualize linkages

to community in ways that account for institutional complexity, recognize traditional forms of scholarship and foster reciprocal relationships with community partners for mutual benefit. Critical elements that institutional leaders must consider when building bridges with communities include the historical relationship with community partners, power relationships between campus and community, institutional culture, and background of the higher educational representatives and partners (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Boundary spanners can play this role: they are either community- or campus-based brokers that hold important relationships, have social capital and can translate across different cultures. Adams (2014) identified that boundary spanners come to the partnership with developed boundary spanning capacities; participation is not a boundary-spanning development effort. In our case study, we needed partners who were able to play boundary-spanning roles across silos within different parts of the institution, as well as between the campus and community.

The MRAi: A Case Study

The DTES is the historic heart of Vancouver and has a diverse and predominantly low-income population. The DTES has attracted more than its share of research attention due to high concentrations of poverty, substance use, precarious housing, compromised health, and other expressions of historical trauma. It qualifies as a heavily researched community (Neufeld et al., 2019). The majority of this research is published in scholarly journals by researchers and students at local academic institutions (Linden et al., 2013). Many of the academic articles are not available to people who live and work in the DTES because they are behind publisher paywalls. This is the issue we are addressing in the MRAi. Our stated goals are to:

1. increase the accessibility and impact of research by providing easier online access to research about the DTES;
2. identify community-generated materials (such as program reports, research and evaluation documents, and organizational histories) and increase their availability in and beyond the DTES; and
3. create opportunities for community organizations, community members, researchers, students, and others to share information and learn from one another.

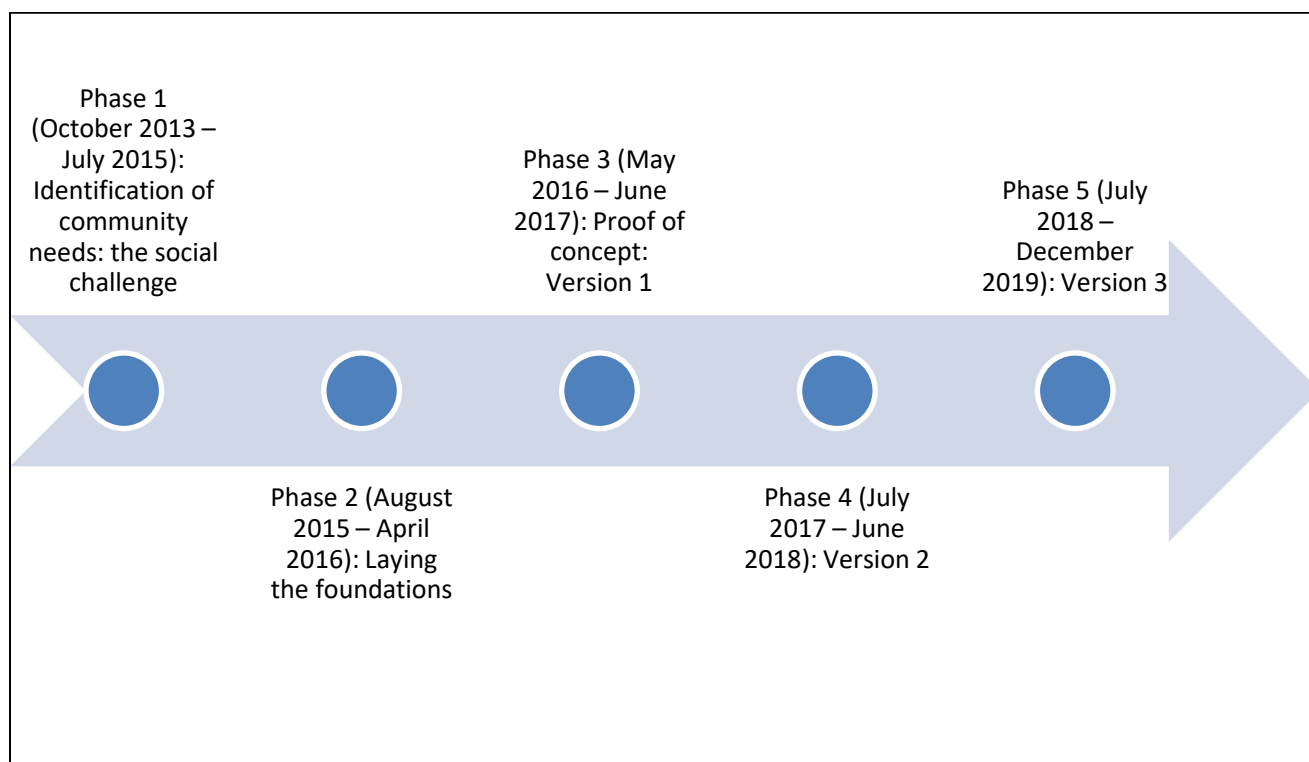
Our case study describes the origins of the MRAi, the multiple stakeholders involved, and the critical steps that have resulted in the Downtown Eastside Research Access Portal (<https://dtesresearchaccess.ubc.ca/>), an easy-to-use resource that improves access to academic and community-generated research and related information. The MRAi was initiated by the LE. The LE is an off-campus space in the DTES established in 1999 that integrates community programming, student learning, and support for community-based research and knowledge exchange (Towle & Leahy, 2016). The partnership at the heart of this case study is between the LE and IKBLC. The IKBLC is a facility dedicated to the intellectual, social, cultural, and economic development of the people of British Columbia that provides publicly accessible educational resources. It

positions academic librarians as information providers and facilitators on initiatives to promote lifelong learning through community-university exchanges across the province (Singh, 2010). Other collaborators include UBC’s School of Information (iSchool), UBC’s Community Engagement Office, UBC’s Knowledge Exchange Unit, Simon Fraser University Library and the Vancouver Public Library.

In retrospect, we identified five distinct phases of the MRAi between October 2013 and December 2019 that shaped its evolution (Figure 1). In this case study, we describe the main activities in each phase and relate them to living lab constructs in order to describe our community engagement process in developing a research portal (Tables 2 to 6).

Figure 1

Initiative Timeline: 2013-2019



Phase 1 (October 2013 – July 2015): Identification of Community Needs: the Social Challenge

In October 2013 the LE began to investigate the role it might play in supporting community-based research in the heavily-researched community of the DTES. A graduate research assistant (GRA) was hired to conduct a needs assessment. With the help of existing library contacts, the GRA set up an initial search strategy and Mendeley account. The purpose was to identify the breadth and depth of research published in academic peer-reviewed journals and that was focused on the DTES. She also interviewed service providers from organizations in the DTES to learn about their research use and access needs. They expressed concern that research is behind

publisher paywalls and not accessible to people in the community. A second GRA began collecting information on current UBC research projects in the DTES in order to create a researcher directory. She discovered firsthand the difficulty of finding that information even within a single university.

These activities led the LE to explore approaches to help the public obtain information about DTES research projects and published articles. Community representatives were invited to join an advisory committee, but no one was interested when the project was at an ill-defined conceptual stage. In November 2014, the LE determined that it needed to make more formal connections with UBC Library to advance knowledge exchange in the DTES.

The needs assessment phase ended when the LE was approached by a staff member about to leave her position in a local organization, enquiring whether the LE could help archive and provide public access to community-held research materials generated by organizations such as hers. This validated the MRAi concept and provided a foundation for a more nuanced understanding of accessibility and research. It also raised the possibility of two-way sharing of information between campus and community researchers. Table 2 summarizes Phase 1 in relation to the living lab framework.

Table 2

Summary of Living Lab Constructs Relevant to Phase 1

<u>Living Lab Construct</u>	<u>Key activities</u>
Objective	Derived from community need for academic and community-generated research to be publicly available.
Stakeholders	Identified students, librarians, community organization representatives as initial stakeholders, and the LE as the lead.
Governance	Created an initial project team to bring together stakeholders informally to make an initial commitment to the project.
Methods	Determined the scope and amount of published and current research in the DTES.
Funding	The LE budget funded GRAs.
Communication	External: interviews with DTES community members were held.
Value	GRA positions benefited student learning; learned there was no value to community members in joining the conceptual stage of the initiative.
Infrastructure	N/A
Openness	From its conception the MRAi aspired to foster cross-institutional and community-university collaborations and open dialogue between various stakeholders.

Phase 2 (August 2015 – April 2016): Laying the Foundations

Phase 2 began with the establishment of a committee from Phase 1 project members and articulation of an initial vision of a digital interface for public access to research. The committee identified additional stakeholders to be included. However, before recruiting new members it drafted a Vision and Key Concepts document along with a set of foundational guiding principles based on concepts inherent in the Carnegie definition of community engagement (Figure 2).

Figure 2

MRAi Guiding Principles: 2015

1. We believe in open access to information.
2. We promote interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration.
3. We recognize that this work is messy and encourage transparent and respectful communication practices that address issues as they arise.
4. We acknowledge that the MRAi is an emerging and consultative project where we are continually piloting initiatives and gaining clarity about what is/is not achievable or in-scope.
5. We encourage researchers to consider using existing materials before collecting new information.
6. We aim to promote a culture shift in how research is organized and conducted in the DTES.

Committee members held meetings with several UBC Library members to explore opportunities for collaboration, including learning about what would be involved in housing DTES materials in UBC's digital institutional repository (IR), cIRcle. Feedback from community organizations indicated a strong interest in sharing community knowledge and research materials with the academic community. Furthermore, several expressed their willingness to work with the library to archive materials in the IR.

The committee concluded that leveraging the established IR with the assistance of library practitioners would be a sustainable way to ensure that the documents were freely available and preserved for future generations with persistent links. The committee identified the need to hire someone who could process the potential volume of research. UBC Library's IKBLC, with its community engagement mandate and library expertise, was an obvious partner to support this work. In January 2016 the Associate University Librarian and Director of the Learning Centre approved a proposal to jointly fund a UBC iSchool student role with the LE. The student would be hired through UBC's Co-operative Education Program which allows students from MAS, MLIS or Dual MAS/MLIS programs to obtain practical experience. The student would use Sherpa Romeo and publisher websites and other strategies to research permissions and then contact authors to collect appropriate versions of materials to deposit in cIRcle. The IKBLC's Community Engagement Librarian and the LE's Academic Director agreed to co-supervise the student librarian, thus strengthening the partnership. The LE and

IKBLC began to explore the possibility of a written Letter of Understanding (LOU) to ensure continuing support for the project.

Now that the project was more clearly defined, the LE GRA met with four representatives from DTES community organizations. She asked about interest in an open access collection of academic and community-generated materials. All said they would use it to write grants and reports to funders, provide evidence for service needs, explore what is happening in the neighbourhood, and refer people who want to learn about the DTES. By November 2015 the committee had a list of 40 principal investigators on UBC projects being conducted in or around Vancouver's DTES. Table 3 summarizes Phase 2 in relation to the living lab framework.

Table 3

Summary of Living Lab Constructs Relevant to Phase 2

<u>Living Lab Construct</u>	<u>Key activities</u>
Objective	No change.
Stakeholders	Engaged additional library stakeholders and built intra-institutional commitment. Rethought approach to researcher engagement.
Governance	Created steering committee; agreed on vision, key concepts and guiding principles. Explored LOU between the LE and the Library.
Methods	Collected open access articles about the DTES.
Funding	Commitment from the Library and the LE for jointly-funded library student.
Communication	Internal: met with librarians; External: interviewed community members to confirm usefulness.
Value	Library student position created learning benefits for aspiring librarians and archivists. Investigated value to researchers.
Infrastructure	Decided to use UBC's IR for the collection.
Openness	Articulated the MRAi vision and guiding principles based on open access and sharing of information.

Phase 3 (May 2016 – June 2017): Proof of Concept - Version 1, the LibGuide

Early in this phase, many of the foundational activities started in Phases 1 and 2 were formalized. This marked the transition from an organic and evolving concept to a clearly defined initiative. The hiring of the first student librarian in May 2016 allowed the systematic development of a collection of articles within cIRcle. (As of June 2016, we had identified over six hundred articles that mentioned DTES that were published since 2010.) Librarians outlined processes for determining appropriate licensing and copyright permissions for each item, and the Digital Repository Librarian helped mentor the new student role. The MRAi committee became a formal steering committee with defined membership and a regular meeting schedule. In September 2016 a formal LOU between the LE and the Library was signed, confirming mutual commitment to the MRAi. It included a requirement that all communication about the initiative must be approved by both partners in recognition of the sensitivities about research in the DTES.

Previous consultations had identified that the community wanted a browsable list of topics, as well as curated links to related materials available elsewhere online. There was also a strong interest in sharing community-generated research. The steering committee soon realized that a new user interface might be necessary, as the project exposed tensions between what the community was requesting and the main purpose of the IR. cIRcle's goals are to showcase and preserve the intellectual output of UBC and its partners and to support the teaching, learning and research activities on campus (UBC Library, n.d.). Thus, in the early stages of the project, we were able to archive materials only from authors who had a partnership with UBC, and we had no means of including links to materials held in the community. As another example of the incompatibility, cIRcle's metadata policies were not conducive to the flexible and iterative approach that the project needed in order to be responsive to community input. Also, the breadth of materials archived in digital repositories requires complex user interfaces with advanced search features, which can make it challenging for non-academic audiences to search or browse. These considerations prompted us to experiment with Springshare's LibGuides as an easy-to-use content management system licensed by many libraries. We were able to quickly create a prototype that could be featured on the LE website. Creating a LibGuide enabled an early proof of concept. It allowed us to test our browsable topic list as a means for users to find materials, while relying on the full search functions of cIRcle for archived items. It also included a more general section for curated links to resources and tools about community-based research.

Development of the LibGuide was informed by feedback from community interviews done in 2014. Feedback on this prototype (known as Infohub v1) from four community members was positive but showed the need to continue to populate information and add more topics (at the time there were seven topics). They expressed interest in seeing clear language research summaries and more interactive research outputs such as videos. The LibGuide needed to be redesigned when UBC Library did a Springshare upgrade, and this created an opportunity for the steering committee to create a new interface to respond to growing community feedback.

The third major activity in this phase was the development of a community engagement strategy with a grant from the Community Engagement Office. A major component was to collaborate with DTES community organizations on how they would like to organize, curate, digitize, and share their information. A second focus was to pilot the role of paid peer digitizers (i.e., fellow residents from the DTES community) to carry out the digitization work. An early collaborator was the Carnegie Branch of the Vancouver Public Library in the heart of the DTES, with whom the LE had existing connections. They recruited people interested in being trained as peer digitizers and identified items to digitize. The community digitization pilot was based at the LE, with linkage to library expertise on campus provided through the student librarian, who was supported by the UBC Library Digital Initiatives unit.

As a result of these activities the MRAi generated many offshoots and the potential for more collaborators. People were inspired by the MRAi as a multi-faceted but practical, place-based, open access knowledge exchange activity situated in the “real world.” Connections were made at UBC with the iSchool, Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation (VPRI), and the Public Scholars Initiative (reimagining doctoral education to facilitate purposeful social contribution and production of new and creative forms of scholarship). We also connected with the Simon Fraser University’s Community Scholars Program (which offers non-profit organization staff access to scholarly publications). The result was increased membership on the steering committee and many opportunities for side projects. We began to refer to the MRAi as “the octopus” with many tentacles. For example, the student librarian observed a lack of understanding among researchers about open access publishing and copyright, leading to confusion about giving permission to deposit their articles in cIRcle. In turn, this led to the MRAi organizing open access workshops with colleagues from the UBC Library’s Scholarly Communications team, which were targeted at graduate students. Another example was a collaboration with the iSchool to run a focus group with community members at the LE to get feedback on student-produced clear language summaries, resulting in a set of guidelines and further presentations. In 2017 we held a forum to bring together the various people connected to the MRAi, including librarians, faculty, and graduate student researchers, to explore how we might collaborate. This led to a successful application for a Social Sciences Humanities Research Council Partnership Development Grant, which was titled Supporting Transparent and Open Research Engagement and Exchange (STOREE). Phase 3 was a period of experimentation and growth and built the foundations for further stakeholders to become involved. Table 4 summarizes Phase 3 in relation to the living lab framework.

Table 4*Summary of Living Lab Constructs Relevant to Phase 3*

<u>Living Lab Construct</u>	<u>Key activities</u>
Objective	No change.
Stakeholders	Acquired numerous collaborators interested in knowledge exchange and open access. Faculty researchers, librarians, graduate student researchers, and community digitizers included as stakeholders.
Governance	Formalization of MRAi steering committee. LOU established partnership between LE and library to make decisions.
Methods	Collection development in cIRcle. Development of Infohub webpage v1. Adapted processes of library's digitization unit for community digitization project.
Funding	Internal grant for community engagement strategy and digitization pilot.
Communication	Internal: approvals set out in LOU; External: community engagement strategy.
Value	MRAi initiative tied into different units' strategic goals. Individuals saw opportunity for collaborations. Value to the UBC co-leads stated in LOU. Paid positions and new skills for community digitizers. Student librarian gained real world experiences.
Infrastructure	The LE purchased scanner to enable community digitization on site.
Openness	Responded to new opportunities and collaborations.

Phase 4 (July 2017 – June 2018): Version 2, the InfoHub

Following expansion of the MRAi in Phase 3 (more stakeholders and opportunities) the steering committee needed to reconfirm the objectives, focus and scope of the initiative and collection. We also defined the core target audiences: DTES community organization staff, residents, and local researchers, and students. Towards the end of 2017, the committee confirmed the 'Information Hub' as the centerpiece of the MRAi and that its further development should be the focus of work in 2018. As the committee grew, it became necessary to set up smaller working groups to address specific tasks or projects, such as collections development or communications. Coordination of project activities and document management became more important. A secure central location

for document storage and sharing was set up for all MRAi information relevant to the initiative, and shared practices for information management were developed. These were important steps to facilitate communication and coordination between students and staff physically based at the library (working on the collection in cIRcle and web interface), the LE (working on the community digitization pilot), or moving between both locations.

The Infohub v1 (Libguide) was migrated over to a WordPress platform to create version 2. This incorporated feedback from community members gathered during Phase 3. It had a new topic-based landing page featuring articles and curated clear language research summaries as starting places to search the cIRcle DTES collection. The Infohub v2 was made available through the LE website. Initial feedback was provided by the steering committee, which now included a community member upon recommendations received from the community digitization project. Feedback was also obtained from a focus group with individual community members from the LE drop-in facilitated by staff. A second focus group was held with leaders of community organizations involved in research in various capacities and known to the LE staff. Community feedback led to the development of a collections plan that responded to the need for new topics, other genres of materials (such as government reports and creative works), and new format types such as audio and images. This confirmed the benefit of having a custom, flexible, iterative descriptive metadata schema that could evolve with the project. Community members also wanted the interface to include information on services and resources that were available in the DTES community and to be able to share their organization's information with other DTES residents and researchers. They also questioned the name, Infohub, indicating that it did not represent the specific place-based context or research content. Some of the recommended changes from these consultations could be made to the existing Infohub, such as replacing icons and clip art with real, place-based photographs. Other recommendations were not possible with the existing WordPress configuration, such as adding a researcher directory or listing active projects in the DTES. Other suggestions, like making it a hub for local community news and events, were out of scope.

The community digitization pilot ended in August 2018 following an evaluation that identified lessons learned and recommendations. The pilot had notable successes, including one hundred new community-generated items archived in UBC's IR, and the employment and skill development of several community members as digitizers. However, digitization was a complex and resource-intensive process that was not sustainable given the supervisory and technical expertise required on-site. The pilot highlighted the need for clearer goals and policies, leading to collection development criteria that matched community materials with the aims of the MRAi. The committee reaffirmed the criteria as research (e.g., reports, community research statements) with a focus on born digital or digitized items and curation rather than helping to digitize from print to digital and archiving in cIRcle. We made connections with the local Carnegie Branch of the Vancouver Public Library as a possible alternative location with digitization expertise. Table 5 summarizes Phase 4 in relation to the living lab framework.

Table 5*Summary of Living Lab Constructs Relevant to Phase 4*

<u>Living Lab Construct</u>	<u>Key activities</u>
Objective	Objectives revisited after new stakeholders added (to manage scope creep).
Stakeholders	Focused additions to steering committee. Target audiences defined.
Governance	Steering committee reconfirmed objectives, focus and scope of project, and target audiences.
Methods	Development of Infohub v2; community digitization pilot.
Funding	Allocated ongoing funding for students and community engagement grant.
Communication	Internal: communications coordinated through shared drive; tools and records management to collaborate across sites and departments; External: held focus groups with community.
Value	Value to community confirmed through digitization pilot and focus groups. Value to committee members enhanced through expanded membership.
Infrastructure	No change.
Openness	Responded to feedback in the pilot project evaluation. Strategic collaborations made on campus and in the community (e.g., VPRI and Vancouver Public Library).

Phase 5 (July 2018 – December 2019): Version 3, the Downtown Eastside Research Access Portal

The major focus of activity in this phase was the development of version 3 of the Infohub to respond to feedback from the community gathered in earlier phases and to address the limitations of the existing WordPress platform. A proposal for increased library information technology (Library IT) staff and resources to redesign the Infohub was approved by UBC Library's Executive team in August 2018. Redesign began with a discovery phase. It included further development of audience profiles, identification of requirements that correlated all stakeholder feedback previously gathered, a review of comparison websites, and co-developed user stories. The discovery phase resulted in creation of the information architecture map content approved by a core team from the Library and the LE, with input from the broader MRAi committee. Library IT led the

subsequent design and final development phases. Basecamp, a licensed software with features such as chat, file hosting, and to-do lists, was used to facilitate intense collaborative working across the different work sites.

The steering committee was strategically augmented. We invited a representative from the Vancouver Public Library to formalize connection with a nearby library branch. We included the director of the new Knowledge Exchange Unit in the VPRI, since the MRAi had been identified by the VPRI as an important example of a knowledge exchange initiative at UBC. We also identified a member of UBC's Communications and Marketing team to lead development of a communications plan. The steering committee played a central role in approvals of the Infohub v3 design. It provided feedback on the design and content, and it reviewed an updated collections management plan designed to balance the collection and expand it to include grey literature and multiple formats and genres. The committee also brainstormed ideas for a new name to replace Infohub and developed a short list of options. The LE led a consultation with DTES community organization staff members and neighbourhood residents. The name Downtown Eastside Research Access Portal was the resounding favourite, being clear, functional, and simple. Testing of the website occurred in three phases: quality assurance (functional testing within the Library IT team), user assurance testing (with members of the MRAi core team), and usability testing with representatives from DTES community organizations.

The need for a public-facing statement about the MRAi to be included in the Downtown Eastside Research Access Portal prompted the steering committee to review the guiding principles developed for its internal use in Phase 2 (Figure 2). This exercise showed how our understanding of community engagement and knowledge exchange had developed and resulted in an updated set of Guiding Principles (Figure 3). For example, our thinking about open access had become more nuanced over time. We had begun by thinking of open access as an unqualified good but came to realize that it is not necessarily appropriate for all kinds of knowledge, especially Indigenous knowledge and other sensitive community-held information. As we prepared to launch the Downtown Eastside Research Access Portal, the committee worked on a communications plan that would set out the dissemination activities scheduled to begin in 2020, especially the need to engage more systematically with target audiences.

Figure 3

MRAi Guiding Principles: 2019

1. We support making research accessible to everyone, to increase their knowledge of the DTES and its community.
2. We promote collaboration among groups and members of the DTES, regional universities, and local libraries, recognizing diverse ways of knowing and forms of knowledge.
3. We encourage continuous, respectful communication between researchers and community members.
4. We promote co-created, open access, and mutually beneficial research practices.
5. We continually consult with the DTES community to ensure that the work responds to community identified needs.
6. We recognize that not all knowledge should be available to everyone and that some knowledge is sacred or private.
7. We value lived experience, not prioritizing or privileging academic over experiential knowledge.
8. We believe that valuable research has been done in the DTES and that it is important to build on that past work.
9. We believe that it is important to respect the time and energy of community members and reduce the burden of research on the DTES.
10. We recognize communities and research needs are dynamic, leading us to continually question existing practices, and develop and support improved practices.

Two collaborations with the STOREE project brought additional capacity to this phase. We jointly organized what we called a metadata-thon, an event modelled on research sprints and Wikipedia-edit-a-thons. It brought together people from the local library community, including iSchool students and faculty, and librarians from UBC, Simon Fraser University, and Vancouver Public Library. The event resulted in the suggestion of two hundred items for the collection and partial descriptions of one hundred and fifty existing items, demonstrating the power of a collective approach. The STOREE project also contributed expertise to the planning and delivery of the Infohub v3 usability testing and honoraria for community members to participate. This event previewed the beta version of the portal. It involved community leaders and residents in the portal's development through feedback for immediate and future improvements. Table 6 summarizes Phase 5 in relation to the living lab framework.

Table 6*Summary of Living Lab Constructs Relevant to Phase 5*

<u>Living Lab Construct</u>	<u>Key activities</u>
Objective	No change.
Stakeholders	Focused additions to steering committee. Metadata-thon with LIS students, faculty and local practitioners. STOREE and community organizations included in Infohub v3 usability testing.
Governance	Steering committee played central role in discovery phase of the Infohub v3. LE and the Library made final decisions.
Methods	Discovery, design, and development of Infohub v3 including user testing.
Funding	Library funds Infohub v3 development. STOREE co-investigators and LE fund honoraria for community participants and metadata-thon.
Communication	Internal: communications coordinated through Basecamp; External: communications strategy developed for Infohub v3 launch.
Value	Value to community continues to be confirmed through focus groups; value to committee members further enhanced through expanded membership.
Infrastructure	No change.
Openness	Committee reconfirmed guiding principles and articulated more nuanced approach to open access [Figure 3].

Discussion

From our case study, we draw together what we have learned about community engagement in the context of a multi-year, collaborative, and co-created innovation responding to expressed community needs. These lessons may be of general relevance to community-engaged academic librarianship. We highlight three themes in this discussion: articulating a conceptual definition for community engagement, applying conceptual frameworks (in our case, living lab and boundary spanning), and identifying special considerations when engaging with marginalized communities.

Articulating a clear community engagement definition, as well as applying or developing new conceptual frameworks, will help advance the field and enable practitioners to be more strategic in their work. In turn, this could lead to more recognition for the role academic libraries play in advancing their institutions' community engagement missions and goals. We have emphasized that the definition we use from the Carnegie Foundation is widely accepted by community-engaged institutions of higher education in North America. It is of particular relevance for working in communities such as the DTES that have been traditionally seen as beneficiaries of the university's expertise and resources (outreach) but not necessarily as contributors of knowledge (reciprocity). It locates the purpose of engagement as arising from community need. The underpinning principles of mutually beneficial exchange, reciprocity, collaboration, and openness guide how to do the work.

We found the living lab framework and its nine constructs to be a useful way to describe and analyze the evolution of a complex community engagement initiative and demonstrate how we put principles and values into practice, with iterations emerging over time. This framework helped us identify from the many activities that occurred over six years those that were of most significance in our process of collaborative co-creation and innovation in ways that may be generalizable to other community engagement projects. We showed in Tables 2 to 6 how the constructs evolved during the different phases of the case study. In Table 7, we summarize how each construct applies to the MRAi overall. We have selected a few of the constructs for further discussion below to highlight their application to community engagement principles and establish some of the lessons learned.

Table 7

Application of Living lab Constructs to the MRAi

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Application to MRAi</u>
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives derived from community need and revisited after many new stakeholders added to manage scope creep in a generative project.
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LE and IKBLC are core partners. Steering committee members included students, librarians, and other collaborators interested in different aspects of open access and knowledge exchange. Target audience: DTES community organizations, and individuals, researchersstudents. Tension between adding stakeholders and managing scope of project.

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Application to MRAi</u>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance was important throughout to maintain vision, manage scope, and add value to members • Steering committee responsible for vision, objectives, scope, guiding principles, and project-level decisions • Steering committee becomes increasingly formalized with more frequent meetings and working groups for specific tasks • LOU between partners formalizes relationships, funding, student supervision, and decision-making
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data gathering for collection in institutional repository • Iterative prototyping (v1, 2, 3) and user testing with feedback • Community digitization pilot
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project started with in-kind donations of time (all committee members) and infrastructure (LE and the Library) • Funding obtained for dedicated people to do the work (graduate students), community participation (honoraria, refreshments), and new technical development (Infohub v3)
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms needed for internal communication with stakeholders (secure document management, sharing, and storage) in order to manage increasing project complexity • External communication strategies needed for needs assessment, community consultations, and Infohub v3 launch • Approvals for communication specified in LOU
Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LE and Library partner and formalize mutual value in LOU (meets commitments in strategic plans and priorities) • Graduate students value real life and relevant interdisciplinary learning • Steering committee members gain new collaborations and networks of social and educational value

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Application to MRAi</u>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value to DTES community confirmed by community digitization pilot and focus groups • Decision to use existing institutional repository as a means to provide access and long-term digital preservation for items in the collection • Purchase of scanner to enable community digitization on site • Use of existing stakeholder facilities (space, facilities, equipment, IT infrastructure)
Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative based on concept of open access and sharing of information articulated in guiding principles at beginning, and revisited later with more nuanced approach to open access • Open and transparent communication among stakeholders

We added many different stakeholders throughout the project, starting with the initial enthusiasts and evolving into formal relationships. Stakeholders included founding partners at UBC (LE and IKBLC), collaborators (largely brought together by the steering committee) and DTES organizations, residents, researchers, and students as users of the Infohub. The core partnership was formalized in the LOU between the LE and UBC Library. The LOU included practical commitments to funding, supervision, and communication, and it also articulated how the initiative met the strategic goals of both parties. Many stakeholders were involved because of the range of expertise and relationships required for the MRAi. Collaborators contributed expertise in institutional library practices, digital preservation, research, and training, knowledge exchange, communications and marketing, knowledge of the DTES, and connections to other institutions. Audience stakeholders, especially community members and organizations, provided feedback as we iteratively developed the Infohub to ensure that it met users' needs. Organizations also identified materials to digitize, while the GRAs and student librarians were important connectors between stakeholders.

The living lab constructs of Value (benefits that stakeholders gain) and Openness (open access, and transparency between stakeholders) were inherent in our definition of community engagement (reciprocity and mutual benefit) and ensured that we held firm to our guiding principles. Stakeholders perceived different benefits. Partners had a deeper, multifaceted level of benefit since the MRAi enabled both parties to meet their mandates for community engagement. Collaborators on the steering committee reported benefits from the new connections they made that enriched their teaching, research, and service activities. Student librarians gained valuable practical experience in non-traditional academic library work and were able to refine, and in some cases achieve, career goals that included community-centred work.

In relation to Openness, the MRAi was not only based on the concept of open access but also open and transparent communication between stakeholders. However, we found a tension between adding stakeholders and being open to their ideas and managing the scope of the project, since each new stakeholder had the potential to move the project in different directions. For example, we found that consultations with community members inevitably led to suggestions for increasing the scope of the collection beyond 'research' to being a source of more general information about the community. One way we managed scope creep was to have clear objectives and guiding principles that were shared with key collaborators who joined the project. These were revisited and reconfirmed as the project evolved. The steering committee also developed collection policies and annual workplans for the MRAi in order to set clear priorities.

Establishing clear boundary-spanning roles was critical to the success of our project, and partners fit into different and complementary roles as boundary spanners. The LE was the community-based boundary spanner. It contributed roles of community-based problem solver and engagement champion, identified by Weerts and Sandmann (2010) as two key boundary-spanning roles. The LE also holds long-standing, trusting relationships in the DTES, and it has a finger on the pulse of community activities and concerns, including a deep understanding of the local "politics." IKBLC was the campus-based boundary spanner. It contributed technical and scholarly communications expertise and acted as what Weerts and Sandmann termed an internal engagement advocate. It holds relationships that cross silos within the Library, and, because of its community engagement mandate, it faces outward to other campus units and libraries.

There are special considerations for community engagement in the context of a heavily researched and marginalized community such as DTES, where many people have had traumatic, or at very least negative, experiences of education. Trust of powerful institutions is low and has to be earned. The need for a trusted broker who is present in the community all the time, while other stakeholders may come and go, is even more important. As the community boundary spanner, the LE reminded us that a university's project, even if meeting a community need, is not likely to be a priority for overstretched and under-resourced community organizations or marginalized community members. We were mindful of what we could offer (reciprocity) to recognize their contributions through benefits such as honoraria, food, training opportunities, and partnership on other community initiatives (facilitated through the LE). We received practical advice on appropriate timing for engagement activities and how to frame these, so they were respectful of people's time. We walked a fine line between balancing the need for community input that would genuinely influence our decision-making while not wasting the time of practically-minded community members with vague ideas that would be of little interest to them. We were sensitized to the importance of attending to communication and messaging. We paid close attention to language and terminology (including descriptive metadata) that could potentially reinforce stigmatizing stereotypes in words and images, and we chose terminology and images that avoid eliciting negative associations, punitive attitudes, and individual blame. For example, we use *substance use* instead of *drug use* or *substance abuse* in our topic terms even though commonly used Library of Congress subject headings are *drug addicts*, *drug abuse*, etc.

We deliberately kept our messaging about the initiative low key, resisting the natural tendency of the university to promote its “good news stories” of community engagement. By adhering to communication principles of humility and two-way learning, we made an effort to not overly centre the university’s role in addressing societal community problems.

Conclusion and Reflections for Future Practice

To recap, the three MRAi goals are to i) increase the accessibility and impact of the large amount of research done in the community; ii) increase the availability of community-generated research, and iii) create opportunities for those in the community and the university to share information and learn from each other. Each of our case study’s goals speak to the core work of academic libraries (e.g., collection development, relationships with researchers, scholarly communications, and technological expertise). They position libraries as partners and complement the place-based expertise so often needed for community engagement. Although the goals were a specific response to the needs of our community, they are broadly applicable, align with emerging institutional priorities, and may be generalized to other library community engagement initiatives. The first goal is about increasing accessibility and impact through open access and knowledge mobilization. Our case study also demonstrates the importance of identifying and creating knowledge exchange products (e.g., curation of clear-language research summaries, and inclusion of new genres such as infographics) that make academic articles more understandable and interesting for community audiences. The second goal is about balancing the collection by including community-generated materials in order to democratize knowledge and broaden the voices represented in institutional repositories. Our case study showed that community organizations do care about digital preservation and are willing to work with academic libraries. The third goal is about reciprocity, creating two-way learning opportunities between community members and researchers. Our case study emphasized the importance of student roles as connectors between researchers and community, and demonstrated how events such as the metadata-thon can bring people together for shared learning. We hope that clarity around our interpretation and approach to community engagement in this case study will advance academic librarianship practice. We offer five key take-aways that may be relevant for other community-engaged library initiatives.

1. Use of Frameworks

The application of the living lab and boundary spanning as frameworks provides practical guidance on how to work collaboratively to meet community needs and build sustainable innovations for social change. These frameworks also provide a basis for further research in community engagement in academic libraries, allowing educators, practitioners, and researchers to form a more comprehensive understanding of the actual or potential contributions of libraries as strategic partners in community engagement.

2. Dedication

Long-term commitment is integral to establish trusting relationships. Such connections take time to form, especially in a marginalized community that is under-resourced and suspicious of academic institutions. A community has its own history and rhythms, so balancing university and community timelines is important. A boundary spanner with an ongoing presence in the community and who understands the norms and politics and holds trusting relationships will facilitate the process. The long-term commitment of the university to community engagement can be formalized through partnership agreements such as a LOU. This is integral to creating value and reciprocity, which will promote the long-term commitment of stakeholders to the enterprise.

3. Flexibility

Project leads, collaborators, and contributors must be prepared to shift goals and review project scope at key milestones. For example, it is important to revisit goals and principles when new collaborators are added or when community consultations raise additional expectations. Flexibility is crucial, and ways of working cannot be fixed at the beginning. Core principles and shared language can hold everyone together and build strong foundations for effective collaboration. A steering committee can drive the big picture goals, but as the project evolves, specific working groups or an operations subcommittee may be required to drive the work. It behooves team members to allow time for the governance model to develop.

4. Deliberate Engagement

Successful consultation requires making the best use of community time and expertise. Community membership on a steering committee that mostly discusses university business may not be helpful and, at best, provides limited opportunities for input. Leveraging stakeholder connections and networks to engage a broader set of community representatives through consultations about prototypes may be a better way to validate community need and the appropriateness of response.

5. Push Boundaries

Community engagement work challenges many of our institutional norms and practices. When viewed through a community lens, our information systems, collection policies, and our classification schemes involve professional practices that can be seen as outdated and stigmatizing or as reinforcing stereotypes. Working within institutional constraints can be frustrating, but change is possible through collaboration and persistence.

The MRAi is ongoing, and many social impacts are yet to be seen. The usual methods of evaluation (e.g., short-term, metrics-driven) do not work well for long-term community engagement initiatives. A retrospective evaluation of the MRAi, still underway, is showing three categories of benefits: 1) facilitated access to information and research about the DTES; 2) synergies and capacities due to new collaborations and connections; and 3) greater awareness of opportunities and challenges to information-

sharing within and outside the university. With the launch of the portal, we entered a new phase of stakeholder engagement. The LE and the Library have taken the next step in their partnership through the joint hiring of a Community Engagement Librarian based at the LE whose role is to support community members to make best use of the tool, as well as to promote its use with librarians and future librarians. Soon we will be positioned to answer the all-important questions: did our community engagement make a meaningful difference to our stakeholders, and have we brought about positive social change?

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