**Partnership Planning Discussion**

**Dec. 14, 2018**

Valerie introduced the discussion by drawing people’s attention to three areas of partnership activities: research program, KM and training, and governance and partnership engagement. For each area, she suggested we discuss three questions:

* What goals remain?
* What goals do we want to achieve in the future?
* How can we achieve the unmet goals?

For each area of activity, people were asked to list unmet goals and then to indicate their relative importance. Discussion of each area of activity followed. Photos of the flip charts for three areas: research program, KM and training, and governance and partner engagement are available in the Dropbox (<https://bit.ly/2RUrwCZ>)

**Research Program**

Five research issues were identified for discussion:

* Scan of local resources for settlement
* Documenting the architecture of provincial and municipal settlement services in Quebec and comparing with Ontario
* How to link individual studies to enhance comparative research
* Longitudinal research
* What to do about calls for future research

*Scan of Local Resources*

In the original proposal, the partnership committed to doing scans of local resources for settlement. This research issue was discussed in June, 2017. At the time, it was agreed that:

* Most environmental scans are out of date by the time they are complete
* Several community partners have experience undertaking inventories of local resources for settlement
* The partnership funded a community consultation and subsequent research project lead by Laura McDonaugh and Michaela Hynie examining the information needs of recent newcomers. Laura reported on the progress of this project at the partnership meeting. A summary is available on line.

The partnership agreed that this research commitment could be addressed by assessing lessons learned from past scans of relevant local resources. The goal is to create a handbook or guide describing best practices for scanning local resources for settlement. The guide would translate existing research and be informed by the experience of non-governmental organizations and local governments that have undertaken scans. Ideally, it could help NGOs obtain funding to undertake and update their inventories.

***Action:***

* **The Secretariat** will initiate organizing a panel for the next partnership meeting in Kitchener-Waterloo to discuss NGOs and governments’ experiences with completing local environmental scans. Possible participants include representatives from Kitchener-Waterloo LIP, Vivons nos quartiers project in Montreal, and York Region as well as other LIPS.
* To encourage LIPs to attend the session, a preliminary zoom discussion could be organized with representatives. Invitations will be extended to the LIPs involved in the partnership as well as those represented at the June, 2018 partnership meeting. The LIPs will be asked to invite their colleagues. This session will replace the previously planned session about academic-community collaboration, hopefully by illustrating how collaboration occurs.

*Documenting and comparing provincial and municipal settlement services in Quebec and Ontario*

With a series of reports, John Shields has documented the architecture of settlement services in Ontario at the provincial and municipal scales. Partners have requested a similar analysis in Quebec. This a necessary step to comparing settlement services in the two provinces. The partnership has funded two related projects:

* The Sanctuary City project led by Mireille Paquet will allow some comparisons between Ontario and Quebec cities.
* A second project is also looking at resilience discourses in municipal settlement policies in selected Ontario and Quebec municipalities.

A third project is needed to document the architecture of services in the province.

There was also much discussion that we need to acknowledge how newcomers use on many types of services, not just services labelled as settlement services. It should also consider the breadth of formal and informal institutions that offer services to newcomers.

***Action:***

* **John Shields** will report after a meeting in May, 2019 in Montreal to identify the research priorities of service providers, government, and academics. **The partnership** will support translation so the report about research priorities in the settlement sector is also available in English.
* A proposal to look at working conditions in the settlement sector in Montreal, Gatineau, Ottawa and Toronto is still under discussion. It is an important project that examines the resilience of the sector but the proposal still needs clarification. The contribution of the proposed study needs to be clarified in light of the recent report about working conditions and remuneration in the settlement sector published by CISSA-OCASI. Valerie will hold a zoom meeting with the team to discuss the proposal.
* With **John Shields, the Secretariat** will consult the Montreal city network to see if there are one or more francophone researchers who might be interested in working on a comparative project about the settlement sector with John Shields.
* The **Secretariat** will ensure that the question of how to acknowledge the breadth of services used by newcomers will be on the agenda for the next partnership meeting discussion.

*How to link studies*

Discussion identified two approaches to linking research in different places and with different groups of newcomers:

1. We do identical studies in different places.

2. We do related studies and arrange a conversation between people doing related research to weave the research findings into a “quilt”.

It was agreed that the approach to achieving comparative research will vary depending upon the topic. Some research topics benefit from the first approach, e.g., transversal project, while others, e.g., studies of international students use the second approach.

In addition to making time at partnership meetings for people to report about the progress of their research, comparative research will be facilitated by opportunities for people to meet in small groups.

***Action:***

* To promote comparative research, **partnership members** agreed touse zoom, arrange research meetings in conjunction with conferences such as National Metropolis and to take more advantage of the provisions in the current travel policy to fund research meetings. It was also agreed that the meetings have to produce deliverables that will be shared with the entire partnership.
* **The KM Officer** will explore the possibility of setting up a folder on Dropbox or a webpage for research projects where information can be exchanged.
* Partnership members will be asked to consider how dissemination plans can help link studies. For example, could the teams doing research about international students develop a dissemination plan that will encourage comparative analysis? **The Knowledge Mobilization Officer** will organize a meeting on zoom of the researchers studying international students to discuss the merits of a coordinated dissemination plan and possibly plans for developing one. The plan must also allow researchers to publish in journals required by their departments and disciplines.

*Calls for templates (future projects)*

The Steering Committee decides on the scope and timing of calls for future templates. It also develops the criteria for evaluating templates.

There were several suggestions about future calls:

1. Template activities should be linked with ongoing studies and/or template activities should address the unfinished priorities identified in the Midterm Review
2. Everyone recognizes that meetings are helpful for research teams, however, they must be well-justified and result in some outputs. The travel policy concerning requests for funds for team meetings needs to be reviewed so people are aware of the circumstance under which the partnership will pay for team members to meet and it may need to be revised.

***Action:***

* **City network co-chairs** will consult their networks about research priorities. Information can be shared by sending suggestions to bmrcirmu@yorku.ca putting ‘Future Projects’ in the subject line. **The Secretariat** will compile the suggestions and convey to Steering Committee.
* **City network co-chairs** are also asked to discuss the current travel policy with network members to check that everyone is aware of provisions for funding travel for research teams and for suggestions about how it should be revised. These suggestions should be sent to bmrcirmu@yorku.ca for discussion by the Steering Committee.

*Longitudinal study*

The original proposal included a longitudinal study of permanent residents. Since response rates have plummeted in the past few years, it is crucial to review the merits of a longitudinal study and the methods for doing it.

***Action:***

These questions were not resolved and will be reviewed at the next partnership meeting.

**KM and Training**

The partnership has a well-developed KM plan but it is concerned that there needs to be more effective exchange with policymakers. Several people suggested that the partnership needs to be more proactive, meeting regularly with policymakers to keep them up to date. These interactions need to build institutional links and memories about what has been said and done since individual policymakers change positions regularly.

There was agreement that the partnership already has several tools, e.g., Research Digests and the newsletter, for informing diverse audiences about the partnership’s activities. We have also held very successful community fora as well as organized sessions at National Metropolis to inform policymakers, practitioners, and other researchers. Nevertheless, there is concern that more effective KM is needed. People made the following suggestions:

* Workshops and roundtables at National and International Metropolis meetings are effective for promoting interactions with policymakers.
* The partnership should promote alternative forms of dissemination such as the dramatic performances in Windsor and possibly, the development of podcasts.
* The partnership should explore opportunities for collaboration with other knowledge exchange activities such as *Research Matters*.
* Since knowledge exchange involves an evolving set of activities, a dissemination plan should be developed and reviewed regularly.

***Action:***

* Valerie reminded everyone that the partnership has also discussed writing a book about its activities. Funds are available to prepare an edited volume. There have been suggestions on how to structure that book such as having an academic and the community partner co-edit the book. **Valerie** will draft a book proposal for discussion at the next partnership meeting. The proposal will address the possible audience and make an initial stab at proposing a structure for the edited volume.
* The **Knowledge Mobilization Officer** will consult the city networks about their dissemination plans and compile these plans into a document for discussion at the next partnership meeting. City networks will be asked to consider alternative forms of dissemination such as theatrical performances and podcasts. The plan may also include proposals for special issues of journals and magazines such as *Canadian Diversity* that is read by policymakers and service providers as well as academic researchers, as well as presentations at National Metropolis and International Metropolis that attract diverse audiences. When the dissemination plan is discussed, we will also develop a schedule for reviewing and updating it.
* A strategy for engaging all levels of governments also needs to be developed. The **KM Committee** will be asked to consider this issue and make suggestions for discussion at the next partnership meeting.
* The International Metropolis meeting will send a call for proposals shortly, so the **Steering Committee** will be asked to decide how much funding will be available for attending this meeting in June in Ottawa. For the Halifax National Metropolis meeting, there will be one session reporting the findings from studies about international students and a second session focusing on Kitchener-Waterloo that was organized by Margaret Walton-Roberts. There is likely to be overlap between audiences, so people planning workshops should consider this possibility.

*Training*

A training community was suggested but it will be discussed at the next partnership meeting since there was not enough time to address it here.

***Action:***

* **The Secretariat** will ensure that the idea of a training community and our training activities are included on the next partnership meeting agenda.

**Governance and Partner Engagement**

Both topics were discussed together. The partnership is committed to collegial and collaborative decision-making that is transparent. To this end, it has developed decision-making processes and a Governance document that are reviewed and revised regularly. City network co-chairs are asked to discuss proposed governance changes with their local partners and bring these ideas to the Steering Committee that ultimately approves the document. The partnership also has a small Evaluation team that is undertaking a formative, midterm evaluation.

Several issues were raised. First and foremost, the partnership was asked to consider in more depth how to ensure the partner organizations, government or NGO, benefit from the partnership activities and to consider more seriously the benefits of BMRC-IRMU to the communities being studied.

Respondent burden is a serious issue, especially for studies of the settlement sector. How many times will the same people be contacted and how many of us are going to study the same issues?

We have not yet really grappled with the partnership’s commitment to enhancing community capacity. For example, are we going to do face-to-face training within partner organizations or just use diverse and hopefully effective KM strategies to disseminate findings in ways that are useful to government and NGO partners?

***Action:***

* As a first step to considering how to ensure partner organizations and the communities being studied benefit, **The Secretariat** will propose that the next partnership meeting includes a session for the **Evaluation Team** to report its initial evaluation findings will be reported. This is a crucial first step to setting aside more resources for someone to assess the partnership, especially relations with the partner organizations and the communities being studied. The evaluation could also provide insight into the resilience of the partner organizations.
* The question of respondent burden is very serious especially with regards to the partnership’s efforts to assess the resilience of the settlement sector. **The Secretariat** will ensure this topic is discussed at the next partnership meeting.
* There is not time to discuss enhancing community capacity, possibly through providing training for partners, so **The Secretariat** will add this issue to the list for discussion at the next partnership meeting.