Community-Engaged Research Centres
A Scan for Social Innovation

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Rachel Loewen Walker* and Andrew Hartman

Objective
Define social innovation and its potential for community-engaged research. Provide a scan of community-engaged research in Canada.

Findings
There are a wide range of centres, labs, and initiatives aimed at supporting community-engaged research, each with a unique focus and scope. Through this scan, we recognize that the proposed Social Innovation Lab (SIL) will provide needed focus on gender and sexuality, as well as a focus on knowledge mobilization. Through this, SIL has potential to mobilize a vision of social innovation with community partners.

What is Social Innovation?

The concept of social innovation relies on inter- and transdisciplinary methods of challenging systemic barriers and disparities in an effort toward social change. This can include inviting geologists and gender theorists to work together on a climate change project, or requiring that urban planners and architects have their new designs approved by residents of a residential care home. Both of these models provide opportunities to develop novel approaches to longstanding problems by relying on collaboration across groups, sectors, and disciplines. Social innovation has great potential for community-engaged research as it can provide a framework for developing co-designed solutions, and even more importantly, to co-create outcomes and outputs in ways that have meaningful impact on the communities being served.

Through co-opting the model of the scientific "lab" the Social Innovation Lab (SIL) seeks to employ "social innovation" as a testing and training ground, a place to explore ideas and test theories, to build partnerships and relationships, and to create material "outputs" that can be shared with engaged audiences. As this applies to the humanities and social sciences, we see a direct benefit of this created environment in enabling us to address complex social issues that require community input and shaping. As well, the interdisciplinarity of the lab foregrounds the synergies that result from bringing students from varied disciplines together. For example, a partner organization that works with 2SLGBTQ+ people may request assistance in developing a legal campaign geared at challenging the heteronormativity of definitions of gender-based

violence. The organization will share stories of 2SLGBTQ+ people's lived experiences of gender-based violence, while a student in Women's and Gender Studies will bring a critical background in feminist and queer theories, and a law student might bring knowledge of case law and discrepancies around gender-based violence. Together, these partners will be able to develop a campaign that educates the public around gender-based violence as experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ people, including the ways that the legal community can better employ widened understandings of gender-based-violence in legal settings.

Making a Case for the Social Innovation Lab on Gender and Sexuality

The Social Innovation Lab (SIL) is original in its scope and generative in its model. The significance of this framing is not only its method, but also the fact that it builds upon an uncharacteristic pathway to development. Rather than being borne out of an academic vision that brings a researcher's efforts to bear on community, this project is borne out of Loewen Walker's work as a seasoned community leader within Saskatoon and in capacities that reached throughout the province and across the country. SIL also relies on the expertise of various local, provincial, and national organizations working in the field of gender and sexuality, including OUTSaskatoon, Trans Sask Support Services, and the Enchanté Network. Bringing academic and community knowledge together, we recognize that as much as there are gaps, community agencies have decades of data, demographics, and surveys that they are eager to turn into strategies, programs, and policies. Likewise, we have decades of research and theorization about gender, sexuality, culture, and intersectionality. The social innovation lab has the primary aim of putting this theory to work; putting theory (and data) into practice and increasing the impact and reach of community-University collaborations.

SIL builds upon successful community-driven initiatives at McMaster University (Research Shop: www.community.mcmaster.ca/research/research-shop/), Guelph University (Community Engaged Scholarship Institute: www.cesinstitute.ca/about-research-shop), Columbia University's Justice Lab (https://justicelab.columbia.edu/), Harvard's Access to Justice Lab (https://a2jlab.org/) and even the UofS's CUISR (https://cuisr.usask.ca/index.php). In particular, it extends the success of community-based participatory action research to a sphere of knowledge mobilization, community outputs, public policy, and legal engagement, as well as to the specific field of gender, sexuality, and culture, areas which are well-poised for concerted attention and focus at the UofS. The table below outlines sibling initiatives across Canada, identifying areas of focus and expertise. The Social Innovation Lab will be able to deepen and expand the successes of these centres, offering all areas of focus and ensuring that the prairies are not left behind in terms of engaging with cutting-edge research and action around gender and sexuality.

Table: Community-Engaged Research Centres

Program Name	Institution	Website	RES	CBPR	KT	SA	I/M	GS	FEM	SD
Re:searching for LGBTQ2S+ Health	University of Toronto (UofT)	https://lgbtqhealth.ca/	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cruise Lab	UofT	https://cruiselab.org/	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Knowledge Equity Lab	UofT	https://knowledgeequitylab.ca/	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Indigenous Health Promotion and Cultural Safety Lab	University of British Columbia	https://nursing.ok.ubc.ca/research/indigenous-health-promotion-and-cultural-safety-lab/	✓	✓	✓	✓				
The Community Engaged Scholarship Institute	University of Guelph	https://www.cesinstitute.ca/	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Feminist Anti-Violence Research Collective	University of Ottawa	https://www.femanvi.org/	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
The Human Environments Analysis Laboratory	Western University	https://theheal.ca/	✓	✓	✓					✓
Health, Environments, and Communities Research Lab	Queens University	https://heclab.com/page/20/?ac=2&slt=8&slr=1&lpt=1	✓	✓	✓					✓
Vividhatà Research Lab!	University of Calgary	https://anushakassan.com/research/	✓	✓		✓				
Social Innovation Lab on Gender and Sexuality	University of Saskatchewan	https://law.usask.ca/socialinnovationlab/	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Legend: RES=Research, CBPR = Community Based Participatory Research, KT = Knowledge Translation, SA = Social Action, GS = Gender & Sexuality, I/M = Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary, FEM=Feminist, SD = Social Development									