Knowledge Mobilization in Participatory Action Research

A Synthesis of the Literature

prepared by

the Knowledge Mobilization Working Group of the
Community-University Research Alliance (CURA):
Activating Change Together for Community Food Security (ACT for CFS)

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Your feedback on ideas presented in this report and your input for furthering an understanding of KM within the context of PAR are welcomed and can be sent to foodsecurity@msvu.ca.

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Summary

What does Knowledge Mobilization Mean in the Context of Participatory Action Research?

To shed light on the concept and practice of knowledge mobilization (KM) in the context of participatory action research (PAR), a scan and synthesis of the literature was completed by the Knowledge Mobilization Working Group of the Activating Change Together or Community Food Security (ACT for CFS) Project. ACT for CFS is a five year Community-University Research Alliance project (2010-2015), funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. This Project aims to advance action on community food security through PAR by involving non-profit and academic institutions, and their community and government partners.

Although the literature on KM is rapidly growing, there is little that specifically addresses KM within a PAR context. The following working definition of KM integrates key ideas from the literature that are consistent with the goals of the ACT for CFS Project.

Knowledge mobilization is the process of getting knowledge into active service in the broader society. It is political in nature, working to influence decision making and policy by getting the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time. If done in a participatory manner, KM reflects the understanding that knowledge is socially constructed, and stakeholders can help shape knowledge through iterative processes.

Seven key principles, listed in the side bar, were identified as relevant to conceptualizing and applying KM within a PAR context.

Key challenges and opportunities for KM within PAR were identified. Most notable were those that related to involving community members in the process of moving knowledge into action. A dearth of evidence on best practices was attributed to the lack of comprehensive evaluations of the KM process, especially within the context of PAR. Evaluation findings from ACT for CFS Project will make an important contribution to addressing this knowledge gap and to the development of “best or promising practice” guidelines. One promising KM strategy is the series of ACT for CFS community-based deliberative dialogues currently being planned.

Prepared by the Knowledge Mobilization Working Group of the Activating Change Together for Community Food Security (ACT for CFS) Project.

Full report can be accessed at: http://foodarc.ca/actforcfs/

Seven Key Principles

1. Understand that knowledge is socially constructed
   Value for different ways of knowing supports a holistic approach to social change.

2. Design research relevant to end-users
   Research activities, deliverables and timeframes must align with stakeholder needs.

3. Build strong relationships
   Fostering interaction between researchers, community members and policymakers contributes to effective policy interventions.

4. Engage in ongoing and iterative mutual learning processes
   Overcoming fragmented hierarchical ways of working can support active input from all stakeholders.

5. Facilitate capacity building for knowledge use
   Not only the creation of knowledge but also the desire and capacity for its use requires investment in effort and time.

6. Design KM strategies that are adaptive and multidisciplinary
   The aim is to reach knowledge users from multiple disciplines and sectors.

7. Be holistic, long-term and far-reaching with KM efforts
   Broader systematic collaborations over time lead to more effective KM and sustained action.
Glossary

Collaborative Research: “a deliberative set of interactions and processes designed specifically to bring together those who study societal problems and issues (researchers) with those who act on or within those societal problems and issues (decision-makers, practitioners, citizens)” (Denis & Lomas, 2003, p. S2-1).

Participatory Action Research (PAR): “a process of creating new knowledge that incorporates multiple perspectives by systematic inquiry with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for the purposes of education and taking action on effecting policy change” (Green et al., 1994, as cited in MacAulay et al., 1999, p. 775).

Community-Based Participatory Research: “a collaborative research approach that is designed to ensure and establish structures for participation by communities affected by the issue being studied, representatives of organizations, and researchers in all aspects of the research process to improve health and well-being through taking action, including social change” (Viswanathan et al., 2004, p. 3).

Community Food Security: “a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance, and social justice” (Hamm & Bellows, 2003, p. 37).

Knowledge Mobilization: process of getting knowledge from research into action for improved practice and policy. In the case of the ACT for CFS Project, it is about getting the results of our research into action to shape practices and policies related to community food security.

For further definitions and information on key terms please see pages 8 – 13 and Appendix II of the Knowledge Mobilization in Participatory Action Research: A Synthesis of the Literature paper.
Introduction

Purpose
Increasingly, ways are being sought to improve the effective sharing and use of knowledge generated through research. The aim of this report is to provide a synthesis of current literature to answer the question:

What does knowledge mobilization mean within the context of participatory action research?

ACT for CFS Overview
Through interdisciplinary and intersectoral partnerships, the ACT for CFS Project involves:

- assessing food systems and their impact on food access in selected Nova Scotia communities to increase understanding of CFS;
- examining the policy environments which impact CFS in Nova Scotia;
- increasing the knowledge and skills of partners in participatory approaches and the development of strategies for policy change;
- examining our practices to determine the impact on those involved in PAR; and
- using the knowledge and findings from case communities and beyond to support policy change for CFS.

This project works at multiple levels:

- Individual,
- Organization/Institution,
- Community, and
- System, with an emphasis on community level action.

See Appendix I: ACT for CFS Project Overview and http://foodarc.ca/actforcfs for more information.

To shed light on the concept and practice of knowledge mobilization (KM) within the context of participatory action research (PAR), a scan and synthesis of the literature was completed by the Knowledge Mobilization Working Group (KMWG) of the Activating Change Together for Community Food Security (ACT for CFS) Project. ACT for CFS is a five year Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) (2010-2015), funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. It aims to advance action on community food security (CFS) through PAR by involving non-profit and academic institutions, and their community and government partners in amplifying and broadening conversation, research and action to strengthen capacity for policy change on CFS at multiple levels. For more on ACT for CFS, see the sidebar.

The ACT for CFS Project research team chose PAR as a research approach because it places priority on the engagement and empowerment of individuals, organizations and communities. Central to applying PAR is the ideal that community members, including those affected by the issue being researched, government, policy makers and other end users of the knowledge stemming from research should be involved throughout the entire research process from development of the proposal through to its execution. These participants are instrumental in both co-creating knowledge and putting it into action. Understandings about how knowledge created from
research can best be shared and used to effect social and policy change relevant to the specific aims of research are emerging and fields of practice related to knowledge transfer, knowledge translation, and most recently KM are evolving.

This report summarizes findings from a scan of the relevant academic and grey literature and provides a synthesis of key ideas pertinent to the mobilization of knowledge within the context of PAR. It is hoped that findings from this synthesis can be directly applied by those involved in ACT for CFS, as well as have relevance to others grappling with how to support effective knowledge mobilization in a truly participatory manner.

The Literature Search Strategy
A search of academic and grey literature was conducted using the databases: CINAHL, ERIC, Google Scholar, Jester, PubMed, Project MUSE, Proust, Sage Journals Online, ScienceDirect, using the key words: “knowledge mobilization” AND “knowledge transfer” AND “knowledge transfer, synthesis and exchange” AND “knowledge translation” AND “participatory action research” AND “community university.” Further sources were found using the bibliography and reference sections of initial documents. Sources include but are not limited to: peer-reviewed articles, published conference presentations, and reports and strategic plans by non-governmental and governmental organizations. The search was repeated over the last 3 years to access new resources (from 2010).

Ways of Knowing and Key Concepts
An appropriate starting point in seeking an understanding of KM is to ask: What do we mean by knowledge? In this regard, ACT for CFS has adopted a “ways of knowing” typology that values and incorporates three different types of knowledge—instrumental, interactive and critical knowledge (Bryant, 2009), see sidebar on the following page for more information. These categories of knowledge reflect different ways of understanding the nature of knowledge and how it is created, and all three forms of knowledge are valuable for influencing policy (Bryant, 2002; Park, 1993).

ACT for CFS is committed to drawing upon, and co-creating scientific, experiential and critical ways of knowing to not only contribute to a deeper understanding of CFS but also to inform and support action to improve it. No one form of knowledge is privileged and all ways of knowing are respected. Therefore, applying strategies to mobilize these various forms of knowledge is central to the work of ACT for CFS. These three types of knowledge are referred to throughout this report.
There are a number of key concepts related to the collaborative nature of the research undertaken by ACT for CFS and central to the goal of putting research findings into action. Although there are multiple definitions in the literature, the following descriptions present some key ideas on these relevant concepts.

**Collaborative research** is “a deliberative set of interactions and processes designed specifically to bring together those who study societal problems and issues (researchers) with those who act on or within those societal problems and issues (decision-makers, practitioners, citizens). Collaborative research implies the involvement of non-researchers in the conduct of research... often it is multidisciplinary” (Denis & Lomas, 2003, p. S2-1). There are many motivations for engaging in collaborative research. For example, Denis and Lomas (2003) note the following incentives:

- to broaden the range of choices in defining problems and assembling methodologies;
- to better interpret research findings;
- to encourage greater use of research findings to solve problems and address issues; and
- to bring about changes in the way researchers think, practitioners take action or society uses knowledge.

**Participatory action research** (PAR) is “a process of creating new knowledge that incorporates multiple perspectives by systematic inquiry with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for the purposes of education and taking action on effecting policy change” (Green et al., 1994, as cited in MacAulay et al., 1999, p. 775). By its very nature, PAR values the experiential knowledge of those most affected by the issue being studied.

**Community-based participatory research** is defined as “a collaborative research approach that is designed to ensure and establish structures for participation by communities affected by the issue being studied, representatives of organizations, and researchers in all aspects of the research process to improve health and well-being through taking action, including social change” (Viswanathan et al., 2004, p. 3). As Downey et al. (2010) explains, community-based participatory research diminishes the traditionally heightened power of the researchers.
through a community-driven approach to change (Boser, 2006; DeLemos, 2006) with the goal of strengthening a community’s problem-solving capacity through collective engagement in the research process (Viswanathan et al., 2004).

**Community food security** (CFS) is “a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance, and social justice” (Hamm & Bellows, 2003, p. 37). For the purposes of ACT for CFS, the emerging concept of CFS is understood to be the complex interplay of environmental, health and social influences on policies which impact food access and supply, and it can be viewed simultaneously as a goal, an analytical framework, a movement, and a tool for policy change.
Insights from the Literature

Defining Knowledge Mobilization

There is an emerging terminology related to the transformation of knowledge from research findings into action to improve practice and policy. Definitions and applications of processes such as knowledge transfer, knowledge exchange, knowledge translation, and knowledge mobilization are wide-ranging and overlapping throughout the literature but with no overarching frameworks (Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR], 2009; Estabrooks, Thompson, Lovely & Hofmeyer, 2006). Exploring this conceptual evolution is necessary in order to establish a KM strategy and conceptual framework for ACT for CFS. Three most commonly used terms — knowledge transfer, knowledge translation and knowledge mobilization — are discussed here with a broader list of definitions presented in Appendix II: Terms and Definitions.

The terms knowledge transfer and knowledge translation are predominantly found in the health policy and health services domain, specifically in the literature which bridges health research and clinical practice. These two terms are commonly interchanged even though there are significant differences in their meanings.

The traditional notion of knowledge transfer is the unidirectional transferring of knowledge “from research or ‘expert’ to community practitioners” (Broner, Franczak, Dye & McAllister 2001, p. 82). As Broner et al. (2001, p.82) explains, the assumptions of such an exchange are that (a) only experts possess relevant knowledge, (b) only a single, empirical, basis of knowledge exists, and (c) knowledge is a top-down process. Any problems that arise in the uptake of knowledge into practice tend to be attributed to the end-user’s lack of understanding or lack of capacity to understand—a perspective focusing on deficits not assets of individuals. Knowledge transfer has been heavily criticized for being a static process, which is hierarchal (top-down), unidirectional and ineffective (Baumbusch et al., 2008, p.138). In response to the limitations of knowledge transfer, knowledge translation was developed.

A common definition used for knowledge translation was developed by CIHR (2004, 2008):

Knowledge Translation is a dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethically sound application of knowledge – within a complex system of interactions among researchers and users – to accelerate the capture of the benefits of research for Canadians through improved health, more effective services and products, and a strengthened health care system. (Timmons et al., 2007, p. 183)
A succinct definition of knowledge translation used in some Aboriginal contexts is: “sharing what we know about living a good life” (CIHR, 2009). A key premise for knowledge translation is Caplan’s (1979) “two communities” phenomenon, which asserts that researchers and policy makers or community members inhabit different worlds with separate language and culture (CIHR, 2004; Jacobson, Butterill, & Goering, 2005, p. 300). In order to overcome the gap between these communities, a dynamic process of collaboration and translation is necessary.

While more recent developments in knowledge transfer and translation remain somewhat unidirectional — aiming to guide the application of knowledge to action — there is recognition that the most promising “knowledge to action” models are those “with principles and values reflective of equity and social justice” (Davison & National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health [NCCDH], 2013, p. 13). In relation to public health, Davison & NCCDH (2013) propose that the most effective models are those which identify equity as a goal, involve stakeholders, prioritize multisectoral engagement, draw knowledge from multiple sources, recognize the importance of contextual factors and have a proactive or problem solving approach.

Knowledge mobilization is a term reflecting a further iteration of the research into action processes focusing on “increasing the likelihood that research-based knowledge is mobilized into active service in the broader society” (Felt, Rowe, & Curlew, 2004; Jacobson, Ochocka, Wise, Janzen & Taking Culture Seriously Partners, 2007, p. 99). The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) describes the essence of KM as “the flow of knowledge among multiple agents leading to intellectual, social and/or economic impact” (2009, p. 4). It incorporates the principles of knowledge translation while specifically working towards influencing decision-making and policy. As Levin explains, the term “‘mobilization’ is preferred because it emphasizes the multi-dimensional, longer-term, and often political nature of the work in comparison to earlier terms that… imply a one directional and linear move from research to practice” (2008, p. 11).

The following is a comprehensive perspective on KM that integrates key ideas from the
literature, which are consistent with the goals of ACT for CFS. Knowledge mobilization is,

- the process of getting knowledge into active service in the broader society.
- political in nature, working to influence decision making and policy.
- getting the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time.
- understanding that knowledge is socially constructed.
- participatory when stakeholders can help shape knowledge through iterative processes.

(Felt et al., 2004; Jacobson et al., 2007; Levin 2008; Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation [ONF], 2009)

Simply stated, knowledge mobilization can be thought of as the process of getting knowledge into action within the broader society.

**Understandings of Knowledge Mobilization within the Context of Participatory Action Research**

The search of the existing literature on KM revealed that besides the absence of a widely agreed upon definition, reported research employing KM in a PAR specific context is scarce. Nevertheless, common elements core to both the concepts of KM and PAR have been identified in the literature.

In this regard, PAR is described as an approach to research practice that “place[s] the researchers in a position of co-learner and put[s] a heavy accent on community participation and the translation of research findings into action for education and change” (Minkler, 2000, p. 192). Moreover, as noted by Campbell, “PAR is an approach to engage individuals to apply their emergent knowledge in generating an action toward social change” (2010, p. 65). These definitions of PAR echo ideas core to the concept of knowledge mobilization. As such, they are helpful in synthesizing ideas showing the compatibility of KM and PAR principles and processes.

The alignment of KM and PAR practices is central to achieving ACT for CFS’s aim to effect policy change for improved community food security. In order to achieve ACT for CFS’s goal to mobilize knowledge to effect social change related to this complex issue, appropriate knowledge-sharing tools and processes (i.e., documents, videos, facilitated discussions) are needed. To be effective, these communication and engagement tools must be created with the intended end-user audiences in mind. As key decisions are made on how to frame and share knowledge generated from the research, careful attention must be given to concerns such as the length, format, medium and readability of information provided. With a participatory approach at the forefront of all aspects of ACT for CFS, ideally intended end-users are involved in helping to create the knowledge-sharing tools and implement their use.
Seven Key Principles

From the literature search, seven key principles were identified as important to conceptualizing and applying KM within a PAR context. These principles are relevant throughout the various developmental phases of planning and implementing KM strategies and activities within a PAR initiative. They are summarized in the box below with more detailed descriptions of each principle following.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Seven Key Principles</th>
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<tr>
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<td>• Value for different ways of knowing supports a holistic approach to social change.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Design research relevant to end-users</strong></td>
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<td>• Research activities, deliverables and timeframes must align with stakeholder needs.</td>
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<td><strong>7. Be holistic, long-term and far-reaching with knowledge mobilization efforts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Broader systematic collaborations over time lead to more effective knowledge mobilization and sustained action.</td>
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</table>
1. Understand that knowledge is socially constructed
Individuals and groups participate in the construction of their social reality, including determining “what counts as knowledge” and how knowledge is turned into the beliefs, laws and traditions that shape reality. Literature on KM describes knowledge as dynamic, complex and socially constructed (Baumbusch et al. 2008, p. 133). The social construction of knowledge is an ongoing process which must constantly be maintained and re-affirmed in order for the current state and perception of reality to persist. This belief also introduces the possibility of change. For instance, what “justice” is and what it means can shift over time (Burr, 1995).

As noted earlier, ACT for CFS acknowledges the relevance and value of three different types of knowledge—*instrumental knowledge*, or scientific, expert-driven knowledge, *interactive or experiential knowledge*, gained from the experiences of individuals and communities, and *critical knowledge* that arises from reflective thinking and action for social change. Ideally in PAR, knowledge is co-created with these three types of knowledge combined in ways that can produce knowledge that will be shared strategically and put into action through practice or policy change. One indicator of the success of ACT for CFS will be the extent to which different “ways of knowing” are brought together to create relevant knowledge that can be effectively shared and put into use to improve CFS in Nova Scotia.

2. Design research that is relevant to end-users
For successful KM to occur, the research itself must be relevant to intended users and findings locally applicable (Bowen & Martens, 2005, p. 204; Lavis et al., 2006, p. 41). For example, KM strategies should include efforts to align research activities and deliverables with the needs of the community members who can shape and use generated knowledge to improve specific systems (Baumbusch et al., 2008, p. 133; Timmons et al., 2007, p. 184). The relevance of research questions as well as the timeliness and timing of activities are paramount if research findings are to be used, particularly in influencing policy (Lavis et al., 2006, p. 41). The combination of relevance of the issue researched and strong relationships built throughout the research process, elicits commitment from community members, a necessary function of KM. This premise also holds true for other end-users such as policy-makers.

3. Build strong relationships
Building meaningful relationships and networks is the cornerstone of KM. As Levin writes: “personal contact and interaction remains the most powerful vehicle for moving evidence into practice” (2008, p. 8). Bowen and Martens support this by stipulating that it is “essential to establish effective working relationships” (2005, p. 204). Researchers are called to build strong relationships with community members and other stakeholders outside the community setting considered potential end-users of knowledge for influencing policy change. Though the
“interactions between researchers and policymakers increase... the prospects for research use” (Lavis et al., 2008, p. 6), it is the quality of the relationships that determine success. Mutual respect and trust based on a non-hierarchal structure matters (Baumbusch et al., 2008, p. 133; Levin, 2008, p. 9) and can be achieved through dedicated and sustained collaboration (Timmons et al., 2007, p. 184). This emphasis on building strong relationships is central to both KM and PAR, given the importance of engaging involvement, especially among those who are most impacted by the issue.

4. Engage in ongoing and iterative mutual learning processes

Knowledge mobilization is an “active exchange of information between... [those] who create new knowledge and those who use it,” in a manner which is interactive at all stages of the research (CIHR, 2004, p. 4). It is said that the combination of KM and PAR within a research framework “inextricably intertwines organizational, team and individual effort in a never-ending cyclical process of refining evidence-based practice, overcoming fragmented, hierarchal bureaucratic functioning by evolving as a learning community” (McWilliam, Kothari, Kloseck, Ward-Griffin, & Forbes, 2008, p. 233). Therefore, active and conscious participation in learning is called for in all activities, including but not limited to: defining the research question; selecting research methods; conducting the research; interpreting, contextualizing, analyzing results; as well as applying findings to resolve practical issues and problems (Williams et al. 2008, p. 112).

5. Facilitate capacity building for knowledge use

There is a strong thread of consensus running throughout the literature that capacity building is a core element of both KM and PAR. As stated by Levin, “knowledge mobilization is not only a matter of producing more knowledge, but also of improving both the desire and capacity for its use as well as the mediating processes” (2008, p. 8). A “lack of skills and expertise decrease[s] the prospects for research use” and has traditionally contributed to “negative attitudes toward research evidence” (Lavis, 2006, p. 41). Importantly, however, the notion of “capacity” in KM and PAR includes more than skills and expertise; it also refers to having supports in place such as infrastructure, networks, and the strength of relationships that are required for transforming research findings into practice and policy. In situations where high quality relevant research is conducted yet the capacity for uptake of relevant findings by knowledge users is weak, the far-reaching benefits of the work are lost.

6. Design KM strategies that are adaptive and multidisciplinary

Another underlying principle of KM in PAR, as evident from the literature, is the need for concepts and models of KM to be meaningful to people with diverse backgrounds including the general public as well as those in multiple disciplines and sectors. Knowledge mobilization
approaches must be adaptive to diverse knowledge users in various settings. Knowledge mobilization “strategies and activities vary according to the type of research and the intended user audience” as well as the goals of stakeholders involved (CIHR, 2004, p. 4). Issues such as food insecurity are complex, and require multiple perspectives and actions by various knowledge users to bring about substantive change. Knowledge mobilization must be co-developed continuously throughout the research process with the knowledge generated more likely to be adaptable for application to a complex and changing world.

7. Be holistic, long-term and far-reaching with KM efforts

Knowledge mobilization efforts can take decades to have an effect on socially constructed knowledge and practices. The scale for KM in PAR must, therefore, be holistic, long-term and wide reaching. As Levin writes: “bodies of consistent evidence are more powerful and effective over time than single studies,” specifically when looking to influence policy (2008, p. 7). Broad, systematic collaborations over a longer period are considered more likely to be effective in mobilizing knowledge than more narrowly designed short term approaches.

Although these seven key principles will ideally build upon one another throughout any PAR project, application of each of the seven principles is context specific. Knowledge mobilization strategies thus must be appropriate to the context of the research issue and purpose. Described next are some examples of KM strategies reported in the literature which reflect efforts to mobilize knowledge generated from different ways of knowing. These include not only generating scientific knowledge, but importantly also, interactive and critical knowledge reflective of personal transformation and efforts to effect social change.
Examples of Knowledge Mobilization Strategies

Examples of strategies identified from the search of the academic and grey literature are intended to help ground the discussion of KM as a concept and are not meant to reflect limits to the scope of the principles noted above, nor the realm of possibilities for understanding and applying the concept of KM. Six specific strategies are briefly described. They include systematic reviews, authorship and acknowledgement, meaningful community involvement, the roles of the policy entrepreneur and knowledge broker in building bridges between researchers and policy makers, and deliberative dialogues as a KM tool. These KM strategies are categorized based on three ways of knowing and types of knowledge generated - instrumental, interactive and critical.

1. Strategies Aligning with an Instrumental Way of Knowing

ACT for CFS works from the premise that all three ways of knowing comprise the evidence needed to inform policy decisions. Traditionally it has been primarily instrumental knowledge that has been sought by decision-makers. Instrumental knowledge is typically thought of as scientific, expert-driven knowledge. While we realize that neglecting other forms of evidence and knowledge in favor of instrumental knowledge can limit comprehensive understanding of complex issues, it is also limiting to disregard the more scientific, academic methods of KM that often appeal to policy makers and other decision makers.

Systematic Reviews of the Literature

Lavis (2006) promotes systematic reviews as a fundamental mechanism for influencing policy. He argues that, “producing systematic reviews... address[ing] the full array of questions asked by public policymakers...” is an effective strategy in the KM process (2006, p. 40). The goal of a systematic review is to optimally package high-quality and highly relevant research evidence for delivery into the hands of public policymakers in a timely manner, which echoes the KM definition “getting the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time, so as to influence decision-making” (Levin, 2008, p. 12). By completing a coherent study, all aspects necessary for mobilizing policy change are covered, allowing for, and encouraging the transformation of research into policy uptake. An additional component for KM success of a systematic review is an active relationship between public policymakers and researchers, which can help move the research results into action (Lavis, 2006, p.43).

Systematic reviews in targeted content areas may be useful within ACT for CFS, given the complexity of CFS as an issue and the broad scope and policy orientation of this work. Ensuring systematic reviews occur is essential for improved understanding of an issue, but of equal, if not greater importance is fostering delivery, consideration, and integration of findings in
decision-making processes by public policymakers. Tirilis, Husson, DeCorby and Dobbins (2011) found a limited amount of review evidence evaluating the effectiveness of social determinants of health interventions by public health decision makers. These authors recommend further assessment be conducted to “determine whether primary study evidence exists to contribute to reviews, or whether… primary studies are needed so that reviews can be conducted at some point in the future” (2011, p. 13). Orton, Lloyd-Williams, Taylor-Robinson, O’Flaherty and Capewell (2011) acknowledge the pressing need for context specific evidence and identify a number of barriers to using research evidence in public health decisions including “poor local applicability,… a lack of complexity to address multi-component health systems,… a gulf between decision makers and researchers” (2011, p. 7). Potential ways to overcome these barriers found in the literature (Orton et al., 2011) include improved communication and dialogue, and the establishment of a trusting relationship between researchers and policy makers, as well as capacity building “to increase researchers’ abilities to produce and effectively disseminate evidence of use to decision makers” (p. 8).

Intentional Authorship and Acknowledgement

Creating space for non-academic stakeholders to contribute to and be credited for their contributions to publications increases the likelihood that community knowledge is incorporated into research findings, and may increase the likelihood that research results will be shared and implemented in non-academic settings. Jacobson et al. (2007) explains that collaborators come from many “different academic institutions and disciplines as well as from many community organizations” (p. 101). Another component of this strategy is that “all authors must approve the final version of the product and must be able to take public responsibility for its content” (Jacobson et al., 2007, p. 100-101, referencing Hoey, 2000).

In ACT for CFS, there was endorsement of the common definition of an author as one who has made a substantial contribution to two of the following three domains: (1) conceptualization (initial discussions about the product idea); (2) research (gathering, analyzing or interpreting data upon which the product is based); and (3) writing (drafting the product or critically reviewing and revising the draft)” (Jacobson et al., 2007, p. 100-101).

ACT for CFS Criteria for Authorship

Authors of a publication or work share responsibility for its content, and must have sufficient grasp of the work to describe and defend it effectively, and engage in thoughtful discussions about it. You may be considered an author if you have direct and substantial participation in all of the following:

- conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data;
- drafting the article or critical revision for intellectual content; and
- final approval of the version to be published.
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2. Strategies Aligning with an Interactive Way of Knowing

Interactive knowledge is derived from the reflection and sharing of experiences of individuals and communities. It is most commonly created through conversations among people (Bryant, 2009).

Facilitating Meaningful Community Participation

In PAR projects, meaningful community involvement at all stages of the research is likely to bring about more meaningful and community-relevant KM. Various strategies can support integration of community members and organizations into the research process. Developing community-driven research committees and hiring community members as co-researchers can be an effective way to overcome barriers to collaboration. For example, Jacobson et al. (2007) outlined “the hiring of co-researchers from each of the participating cultural-linguistic groups and geographic areas to act as community facilitators as well as data collectors and analysts” (p. 101). Timmons et al. (2007) utilized “an advocacy committee of six community members... to oversee the [project] implementation... [which] facilitated the selection of willing participants for three focus groups in the community which were formed via voluntary participation and represented three difference stakeholder groups in the project” (p. 184). Other examples include “implementing community policy forums to ensure continued community readiness and uptake” (Williams et al. 2008, p. 112), as well as promoting casual and informal, behind the scenes events, for team building (Bowen & Martens, 2005, p. 208).

In ACT for CFS, community members have volunteered and community research assistants have been hired to lead the participatory community food security assessments in four case communities. Community members sit on each of the five working groups – Participatory Community Food Security Assessment, Policy, Knowledge Mobilization, Education and Training, Evaluation and Participatory Methods – and the Program Coordination Committee has expanded to include additional community member positions. For more information on ACT for CFS see Appendix I: ACT for CFS Project Overview.

3. Strategies Aligning with the Critical Way of Knowing

Critical knowledge arises from reflective thinking about how social structures and policies impact quality of life and offers alternative ways to take action in addressing inequities. Critical ways of knowing challenge understandings about existing power dynamics, and help uncover and test assumptions underpinning maintenance of the status quo.
Policy Entrepreneurs/ Knowledge Brokers

Using a “policy entrepreneur” or “knowledge broker” can be an effective way to bring critical knowledge to decision makers. Lavis (2006) has identified a strategic framework for “building bridges” between researchers and policy makers so that, together, they may critically discuss and interpret research findings, and find ways to put this new knowledge to use in policy change.

Williams et al. (2008) proposed the use of a policy entrepreneur/knowledge broker as a possible solution to bridging the research-policy gap. Policy entrepreneurs are defined as:

specialists who are actively promoting changes or shifts in policy to decision makers... They exist to fill the gap between those who produce knowledge, and the information needs of decision makers. They also exist as a result of the absence of a relationship between decision makers and researchers. (Canadian Health Services Research Foundation [CHSRF] 1999, p. 3)

A similar term is a “knowledge broker”, whose role is to support an interactive process between researchers and decision-makers so that they can co-produce new knowledge to inform policy and/or practice decisions (Phipps, 2012; Cooper, 2010).

In a recent review of knowledge translation strategies, Davidson and the National Collaborating Centre for the Determinants of Health (2013) identified the Knowledge Brokering Framework, outlined by Oldham and McLean (1997), as the highest scoring strategy on the knowledge to action health equity assessment scale they developed. The knowledge broker strategy supports a broad conceptualization of knowledge. Although the Framework places emphasis on scientifically derived research evidence, it also addresses the broader context and drivers for social change. The Knowledge Brokering Framework,

prioritizes the engagement of a variety of stakeholders, and it has a strong emphasis on contextual factors. In addition, it discusses how the use of a social change framework in knowledge brokering could help address power differentials and encourage work that supports human rights. (Davidson and the National Collaborating Centre for the Determinants of Health, 2013, p. 9)

According to Oldham and McLean (1997) knowledge brokering through a “social change framework” is useful when the "users" who need knowledge are members of the general

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1 In the Davison report, 48 strategies were reviewed and scored using the knowledge to action health equity assessment.
population. Throughout history, evidence has shown that changes in access to knowledge on part of specific groups within a society can have important consequences for the political system, human rights, power relationships, social roles, employment patterns, etc. Knowledge-brokering in this context might relate to activities that enhance access to knowledge within a society (including, perhaps, through participatory research approaches). This framework is implicitly or explicitly linked to the expectation that enhanced access to knowledge may directly or indirectly lead to positive social outcomes. Oldham and McLean’s (1997) knowledge broker strategies may be seen as particularly relevant to ACT for CFS, given the implications for mobilizing knowledge for social and policy change.

Connecting Research to Public Policymaking

Lavis (2006) has proposed a framework for mobilizing knowledge for policy change comprised of four key features: push, user pull, friendly front ends, and exchange (Baumbusch et al. 2008, p. 133; Lavis, 2006, p. 40). The proposed framework for mobilizing knowledge is:

1. Push – efforts by researchers or intermediary groups brings research evidence about an issue to the attention of public policymakers or those who seek to influence them and inform policy development and implementation processes.

2. User pull – efforts directed toward making it easier for public policymakers to identify relevant research evidence when they are in the midst of an urgent (and sometimes confidential) decision making process; such efforts can also be led by researchers and intermediary groups.

3. Friendly front ends – for systematic reviews that use a graded-entry format (e.g., 1 page of take-home messages, a 3-page executive summary, and a 25-page report) offer promise as an element of both push efforts and efforts to facilitate user pull.

4. Exchange – efforts involve partnerships between researchers and public policymakers who are committed to asking and answering policy-relevant questions together.

(Lavis, 2006, p. 40-41)

A local example which exemplifies this framework is the Nova Scotia Participatory Food Costing Project based at

NS Participatory Food Costing Project

The project involves people who have experience of food insecurity, and those with the ability to impact the issue, in the process of collecting, analyzing and sharing knowledge about the affordability of a healthy diet in Nova Scotia.

Working closely with community, university, and government partners, the project aims to raise awareness about the personal, financial and public health burden of food insecurity and advocate for policy changes, such as raising the minimum wage, increasing income assistance rates, and creating special diets allowances, so that everyone in Nova Scotia can afford to eat a nutritious, personally and culturally acceptable diet.

(FoodARC, 2013)

For more information on this project and others based out of FoodARC, please visit http://foodarc.ca.
the Food Action Research Centre (FoodARC) at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, NS. For further information please see the side bar on the previous page.

Phipps (2012) describes KM not as a single event or process but a system, a suite of services working together to support the multidirectional connection of researchers with decision-makers, where KM is informed by four broad KM methods: producer push, user pull, knowledge exchange, and co-production. Further examples are found in Appendix III: Examples of Canadian efforts to build bridges between research and public policymaking processes.

The framework put forth by Lavis (2006) and echoed by Phipps (2012) may be of particular relevance to ACT for CFS due to the focus on policymaking. Employing such a framework could prove to be an appropriate method of categorizing roles and responsibilities, such as those of the ACT for CFS Knowledge Mobilization, Policy and the Training and Education Working Groups, thus supporting broader community learning and development in terms of capacity building among students and partners.

4. Integrating the Different Ways of Knowing: Deliberative Dialogue

Deliberative Dialogue (DD) is one of many civic engagement processes increasingly being used by government agencies and non-government organizations in the United States and Canada. They are seen as useful approaches for involving citizens in finding solutions for complex problems, such as food security. The idea of engaging people in deliberative dialogue centers on the integration of different ways of knowing in order capture multiple perspectives to address such issues. ACT for CFS has adopted the more user-friendly term “Community Dialogues”, as an example of Deliberative Dialogues. Please refer to Appendix IV: ACT for CFS Community Dialogues Handout for more information.

The various forms of knowledge that underpin the strategies described above reflect different world views. As noted by Bryant (2009), they all can play a role in the policy formation process. Instrumental knowledge that is usually systematically developed through “scientific” methods by experts provides evidence highly valued by policy makers. Interactive knowledge from experiential learning acquired through dialogue and information sharing among members of a community yields important insights on the cause and impact of the issue with shared understandings often fueling social action. Because critical ways of knowing focus on the socio-economic context which shape people’s lives, critical knowledge identifying power differences can help create entry points for actions to address social inequities and as such is intended to play an emancipatory role. Deliberative dialogue processes consciously try to bring these ways of knowing together through community and policy stakeholder discussions so that substantive and influential knowledge can be mobilized for action on policy and practice.
Applying a DD method reflects the intentional combination of deliberation (“critical thinking and reasoned argument”) and dialogue (“an orientation toward constructive communication, the dispelling of stereotypes, honesty in relaying ideas, and the intention to listen to and understand the other.”) “in order to create mutual understanding, build relationships, solve public problems, address policy issues, and to connect personal concerns with public concerns” (National Council for Dialogue and Deliberation [NCDD], 2011, “Deliberative Dialogue”).

Deliberative Dialogues can take many forms, some are open and less structured while some take the form of more structured dialogues that use a more specific formula for planning, inviting and hosting. McMaster University researchers have outlined five elements of deliberative methods:

(i) the formation of a small group of 12-20 citizens who represent their community on some criterion (statistical or otherwise);
(ii) a single or series of face-to-face meeting(s);
(iii) the preparation and dissemination of background information about the issue under discussion and relevant technical details;
(iv) the involvement of experts or key witnesses to inform the content of the discussion or to answer participant questions; culminating in
(v) the production of a set of recommendations or proposals based on the group’s deliberations. (Abelson et al., 2003, p. 96)

In the United States, the National Council for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) Quick Reference Guide (2011, “Deliberation”) defines deliberation as,

the kind of reasoning and talking we do when a difficult decision has to be made, a great deal is at stake, and there are competing options or approaches we might take. At the heart of deliberation are weighing possible actions and decisions carefully by examining their costs and consequences in light of what is most valuable to us. Deliberation can take place in any kind of conversation—including dialogue, debate and discussion.

Deliberative Dialogue processes in each of the ACT for CFS case communities and at provincial and national levels are key mechanisms for sharing, reflecting upon and interpreting research results and lessons learned. Although the process, such as those outlined by the McMaster University researchers, could be used in ACT for CFS, we have chosen to outline a more open process (Appendix IV). This process still strongly values careful and thoughtful planning, the specific structure may change depending on the need and purpose of the dialogue. Applications of DD will support different “ways of knowing” with a particular emphasis on integrating and translating instrumental and interactive knowledge generated, and moving to action on policy change through critical ways of knowing. Well planned and designed DD opportunities can
bring together local, national and international academics, policy makers at municipal, provincial and federal government levels, policy makers within non-governmental organizations, and community partners, many with firsthand experience of food security, to engage in learning and problem solving about CFS and its policy solutions.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

In summary, although not directly related to PAR, some helpful, peer-reviewed approaches to KM have been presented which may be useful in informing strategies for mobilizing knowledge generated through ACT for CFS. Not to be overlooked is the context specific nature of both KM and PAR. The limited number of KM examples identified in the literature makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about their capacity to act as effective strategies for ACT for CFS.

Synthesis of the literature reflects KM as a complex and variable process with many factors influencing its ultimate effectiveness in mobilizing research findings into relevant knowledge for action. Consistent with a PAR framework of ongoing reflective learning and adaptability, being aware of previously encountered barriers can help ACT for CFS mitigate such challenges and develop innovative solutions which may ultimately contribute to knowledge in this area. Two major challenges to advancing KM highlighted in the literature are *community involvement* and *evaluation*.

**Community Involvement**

Community involvement is fundamental to KM and PAR, yet it remains the greatest challenge to the effective implementation of both. This challenge of engaging community members in PAR as well as KM activities spans a wide spectrum of influence including lack of interest; mistrust in evidence and researchers; scarce resources and time; limited capacity and infrastructure (Jacobson et al., 2007, p. 103; Lavis, 2006, p. 41; Levin 2008, p. 9; Williams et al., 2012).

As an example, Altman explains that “resolving issues surrounding the ownership and control of programs is often what most threatens the relationship between researchers and communities and, subsequently, the sustainment of interventions” (Altman, 1995, p. 528, as cited in Broner et al., 2001, p. 85). Timmons et al. (2007) hypothesizes that lack of community involvement stems from the absence of “a perceived immediate crisis in the community that demands action” (p. 186). He emphasizes the need to center KM efforts on high-stake issues in order to ensure relevance for the community. Community food security is increasingly recognized as a high stake issue among those concerned with healthy, just and sustainable food and food systems.
Evaluation
Numerous mechanisms for knowledge translation and KM have been theorized and implemented but few have been evaluated. Even though these two closely related concepts are referred to widely in the literature, there is a glaring gap in reported evaluations of their application, and apparently for very valid reasons. As Levin points out, “it is often very hard to know what role a body of research or evidence has had on practice, since the sources of practices and decisions are usually multiple and hard to define with precision” (2008, p. 8). Lessons learned for both knowledge translation and KM are piecemeal and emerge as work-in-progress. Because different approaches to moving knowledge to action have been utilized, it is difficult to fully evaluate their success. Lavis explains that “none of... [the] promising knowledge translation processes has yet been rigorously evaluated” and recommends that they “be undertaken... with a sufficiently rigorous evaluation so that robust conclusions can be drawn about their effectiveness” (2006, p. 43).

In summary, fostering community involvement and gaining important insights about KM and PAR from evaluation are two closely related challenges with important relevance to the work of ACT for CFS. Creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration with community members and other stakeholders who are potential end-users of the knowledge generated by ACT for CFS is a research priority. In order to influence policy and facilitate other high-level change, strong networks of various organizations, groups and individuals are necessary. As multiple barriers impede community involvement, creating novel opportunities for meaningful collaboration presents itself as an important focus for achieving success. In addition, a major challenge for the KMWG is working with other members of the ACT for CFS team in undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the KM process. Evaluation is a potentially fruitful endeavor to embark upon, given the knowledge gap in this area. As such, the outcomes of this evaluation of KM have potential to be a major arena of scholarly contribution from ACT for CFS.
Summary and Conclusion

A search and synthesis of the literature was undertaken to answer the question: What does knowledge mobilization mean within the context of participatory action research? While much has been gleaned from the literature, there is no universally shared definition of KM and limited examination of its application, specifically within a PAR context. What is obvious is that knowledge mobilization is an evolving concept that is capturing the interest of researchers as well as end-users of knowledge. Central to the meaning of KM is its emphasis on putting research results into action. As such, the concept and emerging practice of KM holds much relevance for the work of ACT for CFS, a project which engages non-profit and academic institutions, and their community and government partners in PAR to advance action on CFS in Nova Scotia and beyond.

While KM is a complex and multifaceted concept, the following list captures key ideas from the literature that are consistent with the goals of ACT for CFS and its application of PAR.

- It is the process of getting knowledge into active service in the broader society.
- It is political in nature, working to influence decision making and policy.
- It entails getting the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time.
- It reflects the understanding that knowledge is socially constructed.
- If done in a participatory manner, it enables stakeholders to help shape knowledge through iterative processes.

(Felt et al., 2004; Jacobson et al., 2007; Levin 2008; Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation [ONF], 2009)

Simply stated, knowledge mobilization can be thought of as the process of getting knowledge into action within the broader society.

Seven key principles were identified as important to understanding and applying KM, and considered to have particular relevance to mobilizing knowledge within a PAR context. While there was a lack of reported literature directed to the application of KM within PAR, these principles should help shed light on important considerations related to mobilizing knowledge emerging from the ACT for CFS research findings and, indeed, may be useful to keep in mind throughout the life of any project that is applying PAR approaches. For example, it was found in the early stages of the ACT for CFS research, that it was important to acknowledge that knowledge and social reality are socially constructed and therefore can be altered by emergent knowledge. Also from the project’s onset, research questions and objectives as well as methods for data collection and analysis were planned with KM in mind so that knowledge shared from findings would more likely be relevant to end-users. Building and maintaining relationships, being open to learning and change, and building capacity to use emerging knowledge continue
to be important components of supporting the research process and ensuring that energy and capacity for KM remains high in ACT for CFS. The ongoing, adaptive and multidisciplinary attention to KM throughout the project includes an understanding that social and policy change often takes considerable time. With an eye to the future, KM efforts in ACT for CFS aim to build upon existing relationships and are continually expanded to reach new audiences to enable far-reaching scale and long-term impact.

A number of strategies for KM, reflecting different ways of knowing and creation of three types of knowledge—instrumental, interactive and critical—were also identified in the literature. While there is some alignment between various strategies and ACT for CFS, the most promising KM approach appears to lie in implementation of deliberative dialogues, a civic engagement process to involve citizens in finding solutions for complex problems.

Also of significance to the current work of ACT for CFS is the recognition of community involvement and evaluation of KM as particular challenges. Although multiple barriers to community involvement (e.g., lack of interest; mistrust in evidence and researchers; scarce resources and time; limited capacity and infrastructure) were reported, creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration was presented as an important focus for achieving success. The gap in the literature related to comprehensive evaluations of KM processes is striking. There is, however, an opportunity for ACT for CFS to make a significant contribution to the literature by capturing important lessons through the evaluation of the KM efforts within the context of the PAR approach used.

As ACT for CFS moves past the midway point of its five year span, it must be remembered that “knowledge mobilization is not an activity or set of discourses at the end of a research project, but [is rather an] integrated and deliberate process at the very outset of the development of a research activity” (ONF, 2009, p. 7). This report reflects the KMWG’s engagement with the relevant literature, reflections, and conversations since the onset of ACT for CFS and serves as a reference point for understanding KM within the context of PAR. Some of this thinking was captured in an early conceptualization of a framework, which can be found in Appendix V: Early ACT for CFS Knowledge Mobilization Working Group Conceptualization Framework. It is not intended to outline a template for all KM activities and strategies for ACT for CFS. Rather, it serves as a resource for further reflection, evaluation and development of ideas as we learn through our engagement in ACT for CFS within the current social and political environment how to mobilize co-created knowledge to advance CFS in NS. While strategies identified through this scan of the literature may be helpful, we need to be open to discovering promising new strategies that can be created, adopted and prototyped in keeping with the vision of ACT for CFS.
References


Appendix I: ACT for CFS Project Overview

Please note that ACT for CFS is ever evolving, therefore the overview provided below may not reflect the current structure organization of the project. We encourage you to visit http://foodarc.ca/actforcfs for the latest updates.

Activating Change Together for Community Food Security (ACT for CFS) is a participatory research project that enhances Community Food Security for all Nova Scotians. Rooted in lived experiences, real community needs and innovative solutions, it amplifies and broadens conversation, research, and action to strengthen capacity for policy change.

Our vision of Community Food Security (CFS) in Nova Scotia includes access to enough affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food, produced in socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable ways that promote self-reliance and social justice. CFS is not only a goal, but also a framework, a movement, and a pathway toward policy change.

Nova Scotia has a rich rural tradition of agriculture and fisheries based economies and communities. This work is timely and important because Nova Scotians report some of the highest rates of income-related food insecurity in Canada, and agriculture and fisheries sectors are currently in crisis. The project involves communities that directly feel the effects of food insecurity—and the organizations that represent them—at the very heart of its participatory action research process to strengthen community food systems.

As a result of previous work and ongoing input by partners, three broad research questions have been identified:

1) What are the components of, and factors contributing to, community food security in NS?
2) How can we build capacity for policy change at multiple levels to improve community food security? and;
3) What and how can a community-university research process contribute to the theory and practice of policy changes related to community food security?

The project will use a diversity of tools to explore CFS, including community food assessments, policy mapping and analysis, and exploration of citizen perspectives through a variety of dialogues, interactive learning, and multi-media technologies. The project is committed to the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR). At its core, PAR is a process of inquiry, learning, critical analysis, community building, and social change. This approach incorporates many, diverse perspectives through an ongoing cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The Nova Scotia Food Security Network, researchers from Mount Saint Vincent and Saint Francis Xavier Universities, the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, along with 50 key community, university, and government partners

Appendix I
from across Nova Scotia and Canada have come together to work in collaboration to enhance understandings of Community Food Security while strengthening capacity for policy change. Partners contribute unique and powerful experiences, strengths, perspectives, skills and lived experiences.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

This project is Co-led by Dr. Patty Williams (Tier 2 Canada Research Chair on Food Security and Policy Change, Participatory Action Research and Training Centre on Community Food Security, Mount Saint Vincent University) and Christine Johnson (Nova Scotia Food Security Network and St. Francis Xavier University). Together with two other team members from the Nova Scotia Food Security Network, they form the ACT for CFS Management Team, which provides project management and leadership to the Program Coordination Committee (PCC). The PCC is the governing body of the ACT for CFS project, with representatives from working groups, founding partners, and communities providing ongoing strategic oversight to the research and activities.

Five Working Groups (WGs) focus on key areas of work:

1 - Participatory Community Food Security Assessment: To assess community food systems and their impact on food access in selected Nova Scotia communities to enhance our understanding of the evolving concept of community food security.

2 - Policy: To examine the policy environments that impact Community Food Security in Nova Scotia.

3 - Knowledge Mobilization: To strengthen Community Food Security through policy change by mobilizing knowledge gained within communities and beyond.

4 - Education and Training: To increase knowledge and skills of students and ACT for CFS partners in Participatory Action Research, Community Food Security and development of strategies for policy change through innovative and diverse educational and training opportunities.

5 - Evaluation and Participatory Methods: To collect and report research outcomes of importance to Community Food Security and capacity building for policy change that will be of value in Canada and elsewhere.

Started in early 2010, this project is made possible through five-year funding provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for the purpose of facilitating cooperation and collaboration between the academic and grassroots sectors, which work together to identify relevant social issues and develop integrated, cooperative solutions.

For more information, please visit: http://foodarc.ca/actforcfs
# Appendix II: Terms and Definitions

## Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS</th>
<th>DEFINITIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge mobilization</td>
<td>“Knowledge Mobilization is … getting the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time, so as to influence decision-making. Knowledge Mobilization includes dissemination, knowledge transfer and knowledge translation.” (<a href="http://www.onf.org/knowledge/glossary.htm">http://www.onf.org/knowledge/glossary.htm</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge brokering</td>
<td>“Knowledge brokering links researchers and decision makers, facilitating their interaction so that they are able to better understand each other’s goals and professional culture, influence each other’s work, forge new partnerships, and use research-based evidence. Brokering is ultimately about supporting evidence-based decision-making in the organization, management, and delivery of health services.” Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (<a href="http://www.chsrf.ca/keys/glossary_e.php">http://www.chsrf.ca/keys/glossary_e.php</a> accessed Jan 18, 2008).</td>
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<td>Knowledge exchange</td>
<td>“Knowledge Exchange refers to activities that help to create and support the conditions and culture that lead to the most effective access, implementation, utilization, and evaluation of the most credible evidence for improved mental health outcomes for children and youth in Ontario” (Levesque et al, 2007).</td>
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<td>Knowledge management</td>
<td>“Knowledge management involves creating, securing, coordinating, combining, retrieving and distributing knowledge” (Lin et al., 2006).</td>
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<td>Knowledge transfer</td>
<td>“Knowledge transfer is about transferring good ideas, research results and skills between universities, other research organizations, business and the wider community to enable innovative new products and services to be developed.” UK Office of Science and Technology (<a href="http://www.ost.gov.uk">http://www.ost.gov.uk</a> accessed Jan 24, 2006).</td>
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<td>Knowledge translation (KT)</td>
<td>“The collaborative and systematic review, assessment, identification, aggregation and practical application of high-quality disability and rehabilitation research by key stakeholders (i.e., consumers, researchers, practitioners, policy makers) for the purpose of improving the lives of individuals with disabilities.” US National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge utilization</td>
<td>“The study of how individuals and teams acquire, construct, synthesize, share, and apply knowledge” (Greenhalgh et al., 2004, p. 588)</td>
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<td>Knowledge-to-action (KTA)</td>
<td>“We have divided the KTA process into two concepts: knowledge creation and action, with each concept comprised of ideal phases or categories. In reality, the process is complex and dynamic, and the boundaries between these two concepts and their ideal phases are fluid and permeable.” (Graham et al., 2006).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissemination</td>
<td>“Dissemination goes well beyond simply making research available through the traditional vehicles of journal publication and academic conference presentations. It involves a process of extracting the main messages or key implications derived from research results and communicating them to targeted groups of decision makers and other stakeholders in a way that encourages them to factor the research implications into their work. Face-to-face communication is encouraged whenever possible” Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (<a href="http://www.chsrf.ca/keys/glossary_e.php">http://www.chsrf.ca/keys/glossary_e.php</a> accessed Jan 18, 2008).</td>
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2 As found in Lavin, 2008, p. 12

*Appendix II*
### Appendix III: Examples of Canadian efforts to build bridges between research and public policymaking processes

**Table 3**

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<tr>
<th><strong>TYPE OF EFFORT</strong></th>
<th><strong>CANADIAN EXAMPLES</strong></th>
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| Production         | • Research funders periodically undertake priority-setting processes that engage public policymakers in identifying priority areas for research, including systematic reviews  
                    • Some research funders issue calls for scoping reviews, systematic reviews, and health technology assessments in priority areas  
                    • Cochrane’s Effective Practice and Organization of Care review group supports the production of systematic reviews that address many of the effectiveness-type questions asked by public policymakers  
                    • Some researchers are conducting research on how best to adapt systematic review methods to address the other types of questions asked by public policymakers |
| Push               | • Research funders make push efforts an allowable expense in research proposals  
                    • Some researchers are engaging in one-off push efforts targeted at public policymakers, and many of these efforts involve some type of interactive workshops |
| Facilitating user pull | • Canadian Cochrane Network and Centre offers affordable provincial licenses for the Cochrane Library, which provides one-stop shopping for high quality systematic reviews (as well as economic evaluations and health technology assessments)  
                         • Canadian Coordinating Office for Health Technology Assessment administers a rapid-response unit that can assist public policymakers in identifying high quality, high relevance health technology assessments |
| User pull          | • Some public policymakers employ a self-assessment tool developed by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) to assess their organization’s capacity to acquire, assess, adapt and apply research evidence  
                    • A small number of public policymakers enroll in the CHSRF-sponsored Executive Training for Research Application (EXTRA) program, although the continuing education program is geared primarily to health managers |
| Exchange           | • Some research funders offer a targeted funding program to support partnerships between researchers and public policymakers |

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3 As found in Lavis 2006:42

*Appendix III*
Appendix IV: ACT for CFS Community Dialogues Handout

Activating Change Together for Community Food Security Community Dialogues: Moving Research to Action

We’re learning a lot about community food security (CFS) and have the opportunity to use outcomes from Activating Change Together for Community Food Security (ACT for CFS) and other relevant research results to make change to build CFS. This change includes social and policy change to improve CFS in Nova Scotia. One key way to do this is through community dialogues.¹

Why community dialogues?

Lasting solutions to complex issues like CFS start with PEOPLE. We need to talk with one another, and listen to understand all perspectives. We need to value and draw upon different ways of knowing, and raise questions and work together to find solutions.

Community dialogues are not an end in themselves. They are an important step in larger policy change processes and action plans to build CFS. For ACT for CFS, the community dialogues will contribute to building CFS in many ways and throughout the entire five year project. They will:

- Help us to share, reflect upon, and interpret research findings and experience.
- Create opportunities to build relationships, understand different points of view, dispel stereotypes, honestly relay ideas, connect personal and public concerns to find solutions and build shared priorities, and ultimately plan for action that build CFS.²
- Help us understand the ideas, organizations and economic factors that influence policy³ and create opportunities for policy change. Different policy tools can be used to:
  - Inform the planning of the community dialogues⁴ (e.g. who to invite and how to invite them, stakeholder analysis⁵), so we are strategic in our conversations.
  - Gain diverse perspectives (e.g. through policy mapping⁶).
  - Share information, build understanding and develop action plans (e.g. using the tool Thought about Food? A Workbook on Food Security and Influencing Policy⁷)
  - Identify next steps and opportunities for change from the learning gained from the conversations.

What does a community dialogue look like?

The format and atmosphere of the community dialogues can vary. They can be strategic conversations with a few key people or big gatherings that involve many different people in the community. Typically they involve sustained conversations and learning to affect change. They can take place at a kitchen table or in a meeting hall. However, for all community dialogues, the key is to plan them well, starting with understanding the need and purpose.

How do we plan a community dialogue?

The process below outlines a way to plan these conversations that supports the participatory nature of this work. In the appendix, you will see two real-life examples of community dialogues, using these steps.

- What is the need for this dialogue? What opportunities exist? Answering these questions can involve looking at our research findings; thinking about what can influence policy, examining community priorities, and considering new opportunities and allies.
• **What is the purpose of this dialogue?** Starting from the need identified, outline a clear purpose for the conversation(s). Is your purpose to: Tell someone about research findings and get their input on how to move forward? Bring citizens and government decision-makers together to explore the issue and inform stakeholder analysis and policy mapping? Develop a strategy or policy? Equip citizens with knowledge and skills for taking action? Something else? Any one dialogue can serve one or more purposes.
  - Establish a shared definition of success. You may want to identify what success means to you/your group in a clear and compelling way. This does not mean predetermining the outcomes.

• **What are the basic principles that will guide the conversation?** Basic principles allow organizers to understand how they will work together. The principles should be simple and make sense to everyone. Example: “We will respect the skills and experience that everyone brings.”

• **Who are the people that should be involved in the process?** Who are the key allies? Who are the decision-makers? Who can sabotage the work if they are not involved? Who will help plan and who will participate? Some key points to remember are:
  - **Build meaningful relationships.** Good relationships are a key to meaningful action. Be inclusive.
    - Invite partners to participate early in the process; clearly identify roles, provide partners with a clear purpose and an honest explanation of why their participation is important and ask partners for their expectations and how they hope to benefit.

  - **Share ownership of the dialogue process and build on what is already in place.** Connect and involve leaders who are already mobilizing people and developing relationships.

  - **Give careful consideration to who will be invited to the dialogue.** While the purpose of the dialogue will influence who is invited and how, engaging diverse opinions and experiences are important to build CFS.

• **What is limiting your view? What might get in the way of success?** The results of an activity are often a reflection of our assumptions; if we assume it to be X, then it will be X. It’s important to be critical in our thinking and identify things that may stop our ability to see new solutions or viewpoints – break mental habits!

• **What is the format of the dialogue? What activities and questions will best serve the purpose and people?** After the need, purpose, principles and people are identified; decide how you will hold the conversation (the content of the meeting). What questions will you ask? What processes suit the situation (e.g., small group discussions, one-on-one conversations, large group conversations)?
  - Consider how the results of your dialogue will be used. This helps both in planning your next steps, but also engages dialogue participants in seeing how their contributions can be used to affect the issue. How will you capture what happens? How will you share it?
    - One common way to set up a dialogue is to frame it around answering the questions
      - What? (story is the results telling us)?
      - Why? (should we care or why is this ‘story’ happening)?
      - So what? (does this mean in our community/provincial context) and
      - Now what? (are the areas we need to focus on/ are we going to do about it?)
This is just one approach to planning community dialogues, but draws on the experiences of other similar processes. The intention is to identify some important elements to consider, while offering a lot of flexibility for unique community approaches, engaging diverse viewpoints, building relationships, and generating ideas required for effective public action and policy change.

Community dialogues are not always a onetime event. Rather various dialogues can be held over time taking you from sharing research findings and giving them meaning all the way to priority setting, policy change and other actions.

In ACT for CFS we are working towards social and policy change to build community food security. Dialogues can be very different depending on the community or the timing of when it is held. The change that the dialogues may aim to achieve could be acted on immediately at the community level (e.g. changing schedules of a program to better serve the community or creating more inclusive processes at the local food bank). The changes may take more time such as changing zoning laws on where community gardens can be or creating a new program to teach food skills to youth. Some may be longer term in nature such as achieving an adequate liveable income for all Nova Scotians to compensate for high energy costs or gaining support from the Dairy Board of NS to produce organic dairy products.

In ACT for CFS project we are supporting community level dialogues and will also be hosting a provincial and national level dialogue. The community level dialogues will be informing the provincial and national dialogues. There is also potential for the provincial and national dialogues to inform additional community level dialogues. The ACT for CFS team will be creating processes [e.g. recording/note templates] to help capture information so it can be better shared and acted upon at each of these levels of dialogue.


The community learning and development checklist can be used to help in planning and delivery community events within the ACT for CFS project. Community learning and development describes a way of working with and supporting communities to increase the skills, confidence, networks and resources needed to tackle real issues in the community though community action and community based learning.

Stakeholder analysis essentially means understanding the interests and perspectives of different stakeholders in an issue area such as community food security, as well as understanding the power and resources that those actors have to shape the policy environment. A stakeholder analysis can be completed prior to a community dialogue or as part of the community dialogue.

Policy mapping seeks to create a visual diagram of the policy environment, including the main institutional processes and key stakeholders involved in or seeking to influence those processes, as well as their resources, so that the mappers can then develop strategies for moving their policy proposal forward. This process can be done as the second part of the stakeholder analysis and again can happen during a community dialogue with some of the stakeholders in the room. Policy Working Group, Act for CFS, 2011 and 2013

Thought About Food? is intended to provide tools and information to inspire communities to come together and act to make food security a reality for everyone. The workbook contains sections that support the user in talking about food security, what it means and why we should care about it. It also contains tools and resources that explain policy and actions to achieve policy change (www.foodthoughtful.ca)

Ibid.

Tools to help guide inclusion are being developed by the ACT for CFS Education and Training Working Group. Stay tuned!

Appendix V: Early ACT for CFS Knowledge Mobilization Working Group Conceptualization Framework

Seven Principles of Knowledge Mobilization within Participatory Action Research

1. Understand that knowledge is socially constructed
2. Design research that is relevant to end users
3. Building strong relationships
4. Engage in ongoing mutual learning processes
5. Facilitate capacity building for knowledge use
6. Be adaptive and multidisciplinary with KM strategies
7. Be holistic, long-term and far-reaching with KM efforts