

SSHRC  CRSH

**SSHRC'S KNOWLEDGE
MOBILIZATION STRATEGY**

2009-11



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada 

SSHRC'S KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY, 2009-11

A knowledge mobilization strategy for SSHRC to guide activities over the next two years was endorsed by management in June 2009. This is a summary of the strategic framework, key activities and action plan which will guide the agency's work in this area. The focus is particularly at the program level which is where SSHRC has its greatest comparative advantage and impact in terms of reach due to daily interaction of our staff—particularly program officers—with thousands of applicants, assessors and merit-review committee members every year as well as the reporting requirements associated with the SSHRC granting process.

A separate partnerships strategy was developed by SSHRC and endorsed by Council in June 2008. As some, but not all, knowledge mobilization activities are undertaken with a partnership approach, the agency committed in *Framing our Direction* in November 2007 to developing strategies for both partnerships and KMB before March 31st, 2010. KMB is related to all three key ambitions of quality, connections and impacts.

Strategic Objectives

The following strategic objectives for knowledge mobilization were presented to SSHRC's governing council in October 2007, based in part on earlier discussions, strategic frameworks and commitments to experimentation in approaches to programming beginning as early as 2003 (see Appendixes 1 and 2). By committing to these core objectives, SSHRC will:

- facilitate and enable the accessibility and impact of research by increasing and enhancing the flow of research knowledge among researchers, and between researchers and knowledge users;
- improve research connections by facilitating reciprocal relationships between researchers and knowledge users for the (co-)creation and use of research knowledge; and
- enhance the quality of knowledge mobilization by developing networks, tools and best practices.

These objectives find concrete expression in SSHRC's programming and associated policy and engagement initiatives on issues such as tenure and promotion, best practices in user engagement, etc. (see Appendix 3).

Deliverables for 2009-11

Mapping against these three objectives has resulted in three core deliverables identified for the next few years.

1. Improved guidelines, adjudication criteria, where appropriate, and program design. This is set in the context of the [program architecture renewal](#), response to [Blue-Ribbon Panel report](#) on peer review, and program as well as corporate performance and evaluation objectives.
2. Greater use of existing knowledge mobilization infrastructure and tools within the social sciences and humanities (e.g., Synergies, CRKN, on-line and open access, data access), and direct or indirect involvement in the development of new infrastructure and tools. Examples include improved reporting on individual awards both in terms of the quality of information gathered and of its accessibility and findability online, a focus on influencing applications that could benefit knowledge mobilization in the Canada Foundation for Innovation competition to be launched before the end of 2010, and support for the use of social media by our community and, where possible, by SSHRC itself.

3. Integration and expansion of a community of practice both internally and externally. Examples include continuing to experiment with, and learn from, knowledge mobilization programming, and establishing a web space with knowledge mobilization resources for the social sciences and humanities community.

Considerable progress has been made on all three of these deliverables with draft guidelines in circulation among SSHRC staff, draft program design regarding knowledge mobilization in the proposed new architecture, and several conferences and workshops with scholars and grant recipients to continue to build a community of practice (e.g. CURA start-up meeting in June 2009, KIS-Clusters workshop in October 2009, several events in 2008, etc). In addition, a useful corpus of policy knowledge as been developed over the past several years (see Appendix 2).

Summary of Next Steps

After several years of concerted program, policy and engagement work in the area of knowledge mobilization, there is now a fairly high level of consensus on the value of, and various approaches to, knowledge mobilization and on the need for prompt action to implement measures designed to strengthen the practice of knowledge mobilization leading to intellectual, social and economic impact. The focus is therefore on the implementation and communication of this strategy. Appropriate consultation and engagement will be essential in order to effectively develop and implement specific components of the action plan.

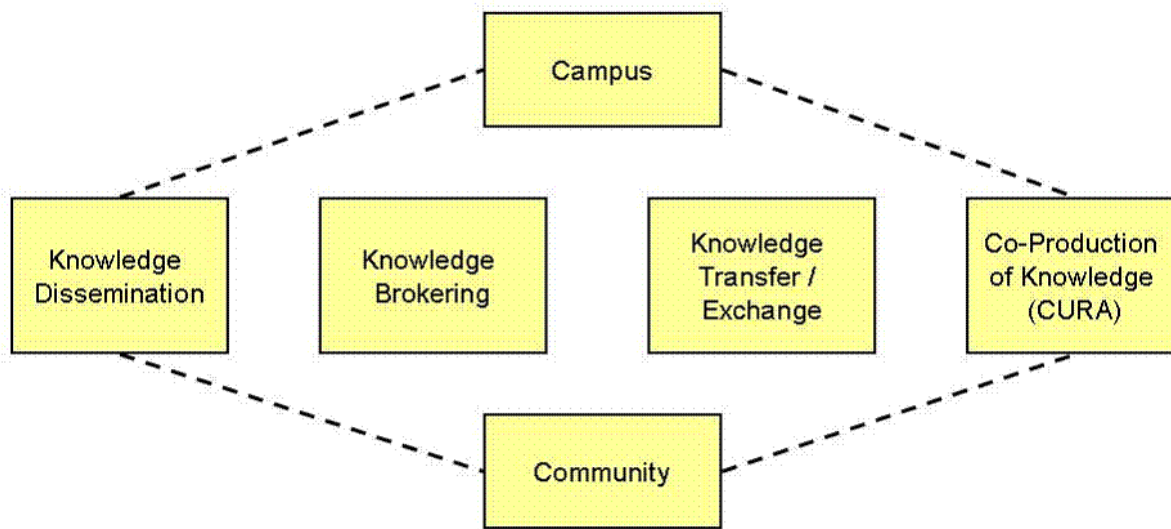
APPENDIX 1 - HISTORY OF KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION AT SSHRC

- 1998: Research Data Centres proposed as part of the Data Liberation Initiative.
- 1999: Community University Research Alliances (CURA) launched: roots of “knowledge co-production” primary objective of CURA is partnered research with effective knowledge mobilization as an outcome.
- 2001: INE Public Outreach mechanism launched.
- 2002: Introduction of “knowledge mobilization” to Council.
- 2003: Knowledge Products and Mobilization unit created; Research/Creation in Fine Arts program launched.
- 2004: First knowledge mobilization framework to Council; Strategic Knowledge Clusters launch; Open Access policy; Aboriginal Research pilot launched; Criteria for Standard Research Grants and Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (MCRI) revised to account for knowledge mobilization.
- 2005: Knowledge Project at Chateau Laurier (Strategic Knowledge Clusters, MCRI, CURA, Metropolis, and OMRN); First Knowledge Impacts in Society (KIS) competition launched.
- 2006: 2nd knowledge mobilization presentation to Council in June; 1st KIS workshop; open access journals pilot launched.
- 2007: Knowledge mobilization logic model developed; revised wording for future program descriptions endorsed by SSHRC management; draft action plan developed in collaboration with program officers; knowledge mobilization shared drive established; Management, Business and Finance (MBF), KIS, Strategic Knowledge Clusters & Public Outreach competitions; new vice-president, partnerships staffed with accountability for partnerships and knowledge mobilization.
- 2008: Participation in Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada-International Development Research Centre forum on tenure and promotion; Knowledge Mobilization and Program Integration Division created; Canadian Council on Learning-SSHRC symposium; knowledge mobilization workshop at Congress; MBF, Canadian Environmental Issues and Northern Communities Public Outreach competitions; draft paper on adjudication criteria and guidelines produced; SSHRC Leader and tri-agency engagement on knowledge mobilization.
- 2009: Panelist at Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences session on “Evaluating Multiple Forms of Scholarly Contribution” organized by Dr. Karen Grant in March 2009; participation at Congress in session on knowledge mobilization hosted by SSHRC Leader, Harley Dickenson, at the Canadian Sociology Association in May 2009; approval of Knowledge Mobilization Strategy by SSHRC management in June 2009; KIS-Clusters workshop in October 2009.

APPENDIX 2 - CONCEPTUALIZING KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

Until roughly the mid-1990s, SSHRC’s discourse and programming focused on well-established activities related to knowledge dissemination, such as support for scholarly conferences and print publications (see Appendix 1). This dates back to the Canada Council days before the creation of SSHRC, and endures today with the possibilities now having expanded to include a range of activities, methodologies and related activities that actively promote or result in effective knowledge mobilization (see Figure 1). Dissemination, for example, is now greatly enhanced through access to new information and communication technologies in general, and through the movement toward greater open and online access of journals, books and datasets.

Figure 1 - Types of Knowledge Mobilization-Related Activities



The thinking behind knowledge mobilization is certainly not new and is, in many ways, related to well-established concepts such as “extension” and concepts advanced in the natural sciences, engineering and health sciences such as “knowledge and technology transfer” and “knowledge translation.” Publications using the expressions “knowledge mobilization” and “mobilisation des connaissances” emerged in the late 1990s, primarily in the field of education. There are scholarly debates around nuances and meaning, but the essence is related to the flow of knowledge among multiple agents leading to intellectual, social and/or economic impact. This can be amongst scholars in various disciplines, including students, and between the campus and larger community. The

relationship between knowledge mobilization, and outcomes and impacts is far from a simple question of “cause and effect” and, rather, more recursive. Recently the concept of social innovation has been advanced as one that might be thought of as encompassing the types of outcomes and impacts associated with knowledge mobilization in the social sciences and humanities.

A social sciences and humanities voice on knowledge mobilization opens the door to non-linear, dialogical, discursive and multi-directional approaches with the general acknowledgement that all knowledge is “socially constructed” unlike the unidirectional “producer-consumer” implications of concepts such as knowledge and technology *transfer*.

APPENDIX 3 - RESOURCES OF INTEREST FOR KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The following is a partial list of policy and communications activities and resources in which SSHRC has been involved regarding knowledge mobilization and partnership building.

Rethinking Tenure and Promotion

- Jan 2007 Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada-International Development Research Centre Dialogue on “Recognition and reward of Canadian university faculty involved in international research collaboration for development” - conclusions apply broadly. Report available in English at: http://www.aucc.ca/_pdf/english/reports/2008/faculty_recognition_09_e.pdf and in French: http://www.aucc.ca/_pdf/francais/reports/2008/faculty_recognition_09_f.pdf.
- Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS) session organized by Karen Grant (University of Manitoba) and VP of Research Policy at the CFHSS on “Evaluating Multiple Forms of Scholarly Contribution” in March 2009 with co-panelists from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and Imagining America. Presentations available at: http://old.fedcan.ca/english/about/governance/meetings/speaker_presentations-March2009.cfm. SSHRC presentation at: <http://old.fedcan.ca/english/pdf/about/March2009Speaker-Yasmeen.pdf>. Note presentation by Bruce Burgett of University of Washington regarding the “Imagining America” project (www.imaginingamerica.org), which is focused on artists and scholars in public life: <http://old.fedcan.ca/english/pdf/about/March2009Speaker-Burgett.pdf>. CIHR’s presentation is downloadable at: http://old.fedcan.ca/english/pdf/KT_and_Peer_Review-CHSS_Mar_2009.pdf.

Open Access and Social Media

- Yaffle.ca 2.0 social media tool developed at Memorial University of Newfoundland. See: <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/newsletter/2009summer-ete/etman-eng.aspx>
- Participation in the development of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Data Access Principles available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/61/38500813.pdf>

Conferences

- Participation in Knowledge Mobilization Expo (<http://www.researchimpact.ca/localRI/YorkU/expo2010/index.html>) and Living Knowledge Conference (<http://www.scienceshops.org/>).

Knowledge Mobilization and User Engagement

- Discussion paper and report of joint SSHRC and Canadian Council on Learning workshop on knowledge mobilization: English at <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/Other+Reports/20090515-18Levin.htm> and French <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/Other+Reports/20090515-18Levin.htm?Language=FR>.
- International Workshop hosted by SSHRC: http://www.sshrc.ca/site/about-crsh/publications/norface_workshop_e.pdf and http://www.sshrc.ca/site/about-crsh/publications/norface_workshop_f.pdf.