



Research for Innovation and Equity

Summative Evaluation: ICURA

A Review of the International Community-University Research Alliance

Halla Thorsteinsdóttir
Director, Small Globe Inc.
halla@smallglobe.ca

Jennifer Mary Bell
Team Leader, Small Globe Inc.
jennifer@smallglobe.ca

October 22, 2015

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Executive Summary | 3 |
| 1. Introduction | |
| 1.1 Background | 6 |
| 1.2 Objectives and Assumptions | 7 |
| 1.3 Application Process | 8 |
| 1.4 Purpose of the Evaluation | 9 |
| 2. Methodology | |
| 2.1 Interviews with Principal Investigators | 11 |
| 2.2 Interviews with Community Stakeholders | 11 |
| 2.3 Survey of Trainees | 12 |
| 2.4 Interviews with Program Managers | 12 |
| 2.5 Background Document Analysis | 12 |
| 2.6 Limitations | 13 |
| 3. Evaluation Findings | |
| 3.1 Performance | 13 |
| 3.1.1 Research | 13 |
| 3.1.2 Knowledge Mobilization and Community Engagement | 19 |
| 3.1.3 Education | 23 |
| 3.2 Program Design and Implementation | 26 |
| 3.2.1 Program Design | 26 |
| 3.2.2 Program Implementation and Suggestions | 28 |
| 3.2.3 Comparison with Similar Programs | 29 |
| 4. Conclusions and Recommendations | |
| 4.1 Performance | 34 |
| 4.2 Relevance | 36 |
| 4.3 Recommendations for Future Programming | 37 |
| Appendices | |
| Appendix 1 Projects Supported by ICURA | 40 |
| Appendix 2 Interview Guide – Principal Investigators | 41 |
| Appendix 3 Interview Guide – Community Stakeholders | 44 |
| Appendix 4 Trainee Survey | 46 |

Executive Summary

The International Community-University Research Alliance (ICURA), established jointly by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), was built on a strong, shared interest in community development. It promoted alliances between community groups and postsecondary institutions in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs) and Canada. Through this cooperation, the ICURA program administered grants of C\$ 2 million to each of four research teams, funding them for five years. The key assumptions of the program were that communities in Canada and LMICs had shared challenges that confined their social, cultural or economic development; that joint inquiry could play a role in addressing these challenges; and that academic research could be enriched through non-academic partnerships.

The purpose of this summative evaluation was to assess the overall design of the ICURA program and evaluate its impacts, including the program's performance, relevance and future potential. We conducted a systematic data collection process involving:

- in-depth interviews with all ten principal investigators (PIs) from LMICs and Canada about the impacts of their collaboration and experience with the program;
- interviews with community stakeholders about the contributions of the program to their communities; and
- a survey sent to 125 students who had submitted theses or had post-doctoral fellowships that about their experiences and impacts of the ICURA program.

In addition, we triangulated our research results through analysis of background documents and scientometric data.

Performance

We evaluated the performance of the program with respect to research, knowledge mobilization, and education, respectively, which all reflect the core objectives of ICURA program.

Research. The ICURA program encouraged active and multidisciplinary research that focused on community issues, thereby expanding knowledge about several issues of relevance to communities in Canada and in participating LMICs. Even though the ICURA program supported only four projects, it was substantial in its reach, and brought about knowledge production and knowledge flow among hundreds of people. The program led to some new opportunities in building international research networks, broadened the scope of the researchers, enhanced global recognition of their research, and advanced their skills in working with communities.

While the intention of the program was to encourage comparative and collaborative research among Canadian and LMICs researchers, so far, such research is only reflected to a limited extent in published outputs. Only 5% of the journal articles included a comparative perspective on Canadian and LMICs issues, and 6% included co-authorship by Canadian and LMICs authors. There are, however, signs that the comparative work is on-going, and it is likely that this aspect of the program's output will be stronger with the passage of time.

Knowledge mobilization and Community Engagement. The ICURA program was designed to emphasize knowledge mobilization and the involvement of communities in the projects. Some projects have forged novel ways for academics and communities to work together, where communities are not only a source of information for the research, or vehicle for disseminating the results, but instead actively involved in the different phases of the research. In that sense, the ICURA program seems to have been successful in developing users (i.e. communities) – producers (i.e. researchers) relationships, which are key to encouraging innovation grounded in community realities.

Education. The ICURA program was perceived as having been highly important to students and post-doctoral fellows supported by the program. Judging from the overwhelmingly positive evaluation by the ICURA trainees expressed in the survey we conducted, we believe that the ICURA program met its teaching-related objectives and led to considerable capacity-building in participating countries. The enhanced capacity was both in conducting high quality research and in building trainees' relationships with communities to strengthen their potential for future innovation.

Relevance

We evaluated the ICURA program in terms of its relevance in informing policy and practice, its importance in achieving the outputs and outcomes of their research teams, and its key strengths and weaknesses in comparison with other similar programs.

Community relevance. While systematic evidence is lacking on how well the knowledge production in the ICURA program fit community priorities, the adoption of a number of specific policies and practices indicates its usefulness. We confirmed this in interviews with community stakeholders and in examining background materials.

Role. The ICURA program played a key role in allowing researchers to engage proactively with their communities. Without the funding, it is unlikely they would have been able to achieve the impacts their research had. The funding also opened the door to further financial support from various sources, reflecting the sustainability of the program.

Key strengths and weaknesses: Compared to other programs involving research councils and development organizations, the main strengths of the ICURA program were its community focus and ability to encourage relatively equal collaboration among the PIs. Some of its

weaknesses include its small size, with a budget that is only a fraction of other programs. As a result, the impacts of the program are more modest. Another weakness is the projects' uneven output, which may reflect a need to strengthen the selection process. However, evaluations of most of the other programs are not available, so it is uncertain how well they performed in this respect.

Recommendations for Future Programming

Based on our summative evaluation, we identified some lessons for future programming. We recommend that IDRC should:

1. Continue to encourage internationally comparable community-based research cooperation.
2. Look further into its past projects and examine whether research groups should have demonstrated prior research cooperation before undertaking large-scale projects jointly.
3. Continue to pursue collaboration with SSHRC, but reporting procedures should be better aligned.
4. Promote trilateral research cooperation involving North-South-South cooperation.
5. Continue to include a strong training component as a part of its international research cooperation programming.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of IDRC staff, particularly David O'Brien and Amy Etherington, for providing us with extensive background material and clarifications whenever needed. We further thank our tireless Survey Director, Fjóla Evans; our translators, Patricia Boushel, Rong Li and Anabela Pereira; the many students and post-doctoral fellows who took the time to fill out our survey; and our interviewees from around the world, including all the principal investigators, representatives from SSHRC and IDRC, and community stakeholders who, despite time differences and hectic schedules, were more than forthcoming with their time and insights. The opinions and any possible errors in this report are solely those of the authors, and do not reflect the positions of IDRC or SSHRC.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The International Community-University Research Alliance (ICURA) represents the first formal research program in Canada offered jointly by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). It builds on a strong, shared interest in community development by both organizations, and promotes alliances between community groups and postsecondary institutions in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs) and Canada. The purpose of the program is to support the creation of such alliances, by encouraging collaboration, comparative research and mutual learning. The program places an emphasis on training and the creation of new knowledge in areas of mutual importance for the social, cultural, or economic development of communities both in Canada and in LMICs.

IDRC and SSHRC have differing mandates. With a focus on LMICs, IDRC's mandate is "to initiate, encourage, support and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions."¹ On the other hand, SSHRC's mandate focuses on Canada, and is "to make Canada a world leader in social science and humanities research and research training."² Thus the thematic scope of IDRC's mandate is wider than SSHRC's, and the two organizations differ in their geographic foci.

The roots of the ICURA program can be traced to the so-called 5% challenge, a statement in 2004 by Prime Minister Paul Martin that 5% of Canada's science and technology investment should be dedicated to developing countries' needs.³ This statement spurred organizations in Canada to find ways to connect international development and the domestic research agenda more closely. IDRC initiated discussion with SSHRC to identify possible ways to collaborate, resulting in the development of ICURA, an applied research program involving academic and community partners. The fit was a natural one, as SSHRC had programming focusing on community engagement in Canada, and IDRC also emphasized community involvement and multiple stakeholders in its programs.

There were other motivations for the development of the ICURA program. Federal funding organizations in Canada had started to perceive that an entirely domestic research focus was limiting participation by Canadian researchers in the international research arena. Programs aimed at cooperation with LMICs would therefore expand the scope of Canadian

¹ Government of Canada. *International Development Research Centre Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. I-19. Section 4.1.

² Government of Canada. *Strengthening Canada's Cultures of Innovation. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Strategic Plan 2013-2016*. Accessed at http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/about-au_sujet/publications/strategic_plan_2013-16-plan_strategique_2013-2016_e.pdf

³ Government of Canada, Privy Council Office. *Address by Prime Minister Paul Martin in reply to the Speech from the Throne*. February 2, 2004. Accessed at http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=information&sub=publications&doc=aarchives/sft-ddt/2004_1-eng.htm

research, and increase international research cooperation by SSHRC grantees. A further driver was that both organizations wanted to support larger research endeavours that extended for a relatively long time, than they could easily support by themselves. Many global challenges need considerable resources and a relatively long time frame, and by working together, it was felt that IDRC and SSHRC would be able to support research on these larger-scale challenges.

1.2 Objectives and Assumptions

The ICURA program was announced in 2007 by IDRC and SSHRC. Its specific objectives were to:

1. Enable research teams from Canada and LMICs to undertake comparative and collaborative research;
2. Promote sharing of knowledge, resources and expertise between postsecondary institutions and organizations in the community;
3. Enrich research, teaching methods and curricula in postsecondary institutions;
4. Reinforce community decision-making and problem-solving capacity; and
5. Enhance students' education and employability by means of diverse opportunities to build their knowledge, expertise and work skills through hands-on research and related experience.⁴

The key assumptions of the program were that communities in Canada and LMICs had shared challenges that confined their social, cultural or economic development; that joint inquiry could play a role in addressing shared challenges; and that academic research could be enriched through non-academic partnerships. Knowledge gained from postsecondary organizations and communities could thus contribute to solutions to shared problems. It was therefore important to engage postsecondary institutions in addressing the community challenges of communities and by working closely in cooperation with them.

Figure 1 presents a logic model for the ICURA program. It depicts the emphasis the program places on comparative research between Canada and LMICs, and strong involvement with communities, as well as depicting the wide range of activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts promoted by the program.

⁴ International Development Research Centre. *International Community-University Research Alliance program*. http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Programs/Science_and_Innovation/IDRC_Challenge_Fund/Pages/ICURA.aspx#bookmark1

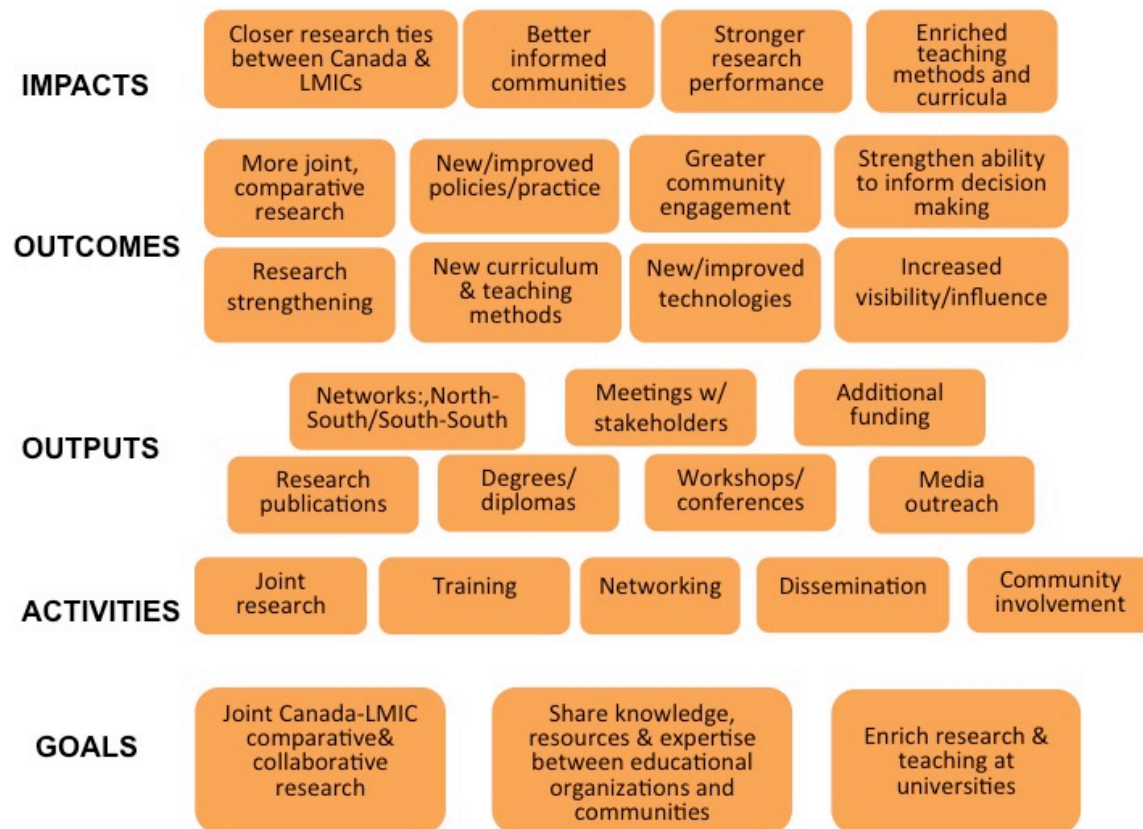


Figure 1. Logic Model for the ICURA Program
 Source: Small Globe, Inc., based on program documentation.

1.3 Application Process

The ICURA program involved a two-stage application process. The first stage consisted of requests for letters of intent to be submitted jointly by Principal Investigators (PIs) in Canada and in LMICs. These letters were peer-reviewed by an international panel, and a select number of teams were invited to submit full applications. The program received a total of 103 letters of intent and, although the committee judged 20 of them to have been strong, only nine teams were invited to submit full applications⁵. These nine teams were given seven months to prepare a full application and C\$30,000 to support the process. Of the nine full applications, four were selected, again by an international peer review panel. The choice of projects receiving support was announced in February 2009 and the projects started later that year.

The high number of letters of intent submitted to the ICURA program demonstrates the demand for a program of this sort. While the success rate for the letter of intent stage was low, at approximately 9%, the success rate for full applications was much higher, or about

⁵ Source: IDRC. *Adjudication of Letters of Intent for the International Community-University Research Alliance Competition*. (Internal document; March, 2008).

33%. This two-stage application process made it possible to moderate the work required by research teams to prepare applications.

1.4 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the overall design of the ICURA program and evaluate its impacts, including the program's performance, relevance and future potential. IDRC is the primary intended user of this evaluation, with other users including SSHRC and the researchers involved. Specifically, the objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Evaluate to what extent the ICURA program achieved its objectives, and what factors/conditions made it possible to meet these objectives, or prevented them from doing so.
- Assess the extent to which the collaboration between Canada and LMICs supported by this program added value and contributed to the program meeting its objectives.
- Provide detailed recommendations on IDRC's future programming, including specific guidance on how best to structure programs supporting collaboration between Canada and LMICs.
- Account to the IDRC Board of Directors for program expenditures, inform reporting to government and the public, and inform future programming directions.

We had many guiding questions that focused on the performance of the ICURA program, its relevance, the value added from the international collaboration, and lessons for future IDRC programs. They are the following:

Performance

1. Did the ICURA program achieve its objectives, and if so how did they do it?
2. Was the design of the program adequate?
3. Were the initiatives properly implemented?
4. Was the ICURA program an effective vehicle for developing contacts, networks and new opportunities of value to members of the research teams?
5. Are the quality of the training and the number of students trained commensurate with the original objectives?
6. Did the training environment enhance graduate students' learning experience?
7. Did the research teams access or leverage new funding or partnerships to deepen their research and/or strengthen their ability to inform decision-making?

Relevance

1. What are the strengths, weaknesses and unique features of the design of the ICURA program compared to existing programs in Canada and in other countries?
2. What outputs and outcomes did the Canadian and international partners achieve that might not have been achieved without funding support?

3. For non-academic partners and audiences, how relevant are the project outcomes for informing policy, practice and technology development? Are their views consistent with the views held by lead researchers?

Lessons for Future Programs

1. Which program characteristics, if any, would the lead researchers and those managing projects redesign if the funding opportunity were renewed? What similar programs are informants aware of that might assist IDRC in designing and evaluating future programs?
2. What important lessons were learned in developing international scientific collaboration? What was the experience of lead researchers and those managing networking activities? Do Canadian and international research collaborators hold similar perspectives?

As this is a summative evaluation, we have focused in particular on evaluating the impacts of the ICURA program. Promoting change and innovation in science-based fields involves operating within complex systems, with many different factors contributing to outcomes and impacts. As a result of this complexity, it can be challenging to identify the impacts of a single project or a program. What is important to emphasize is that a project's success takes place within such a system, with non-linear processes, and there is a need to align the different components of innovation systems in the participating countries for the research cooperation to have impact.

Innovation systems are complex structures that include relationships and flows of knowledge within and between organizations, institutions and the socio-economic structures in which they are embedded⁶. These relationships determine the rate and direction of innovation resulting from both science-based and experience-based learning. The conceptual framework we will follow for this evaluation, therefore, entails analyzing the impacts of the program from an innovation systems perspective. This approach understands configurations of different factors and conditions as creating impact, rather than a more linear cause-and-effect model.

For interventions, such as research collaborations, to have impact, attention needs to be paid to how they fit into wider innovation systems in participating countries, and how systemic alignments can be calibrated in order for knowledge and other resources to flow

⁶ See e.g. Freeman, C. (1987). *Technology Policy and Economic Performance-Lessons from Japan*. London: Pinter Publishers; Lundvall, B. Å. (1992). *National Systems of Innovation: Towards a Theory of Innovation and Interactive Learning*: Pinter London.; Lundvall, B. Å, Vang, J., Joseph, K.J. and Chaminade, C. (2009). Innovation system research and developing countries. In B. Å. Lundvall, K. J. Joseph, C. Chaminade & J. Vang (Eds.), *Handbook of Innovation Systems and Developing Countries*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton MA, USA: Edward Elgar.

smoothly between countries. By looking at the international collaboration supported by the ICURA program from an innovation systems perspective, we gain a better understanding of how cooperation can have impact and contribute to new development solutions.

2. Methodology

2.1 Interviews with Principal Investigators

A primary source of information for our evaluation was in-depth interviews with all ten (10) of the projects' PIs, in order to learn first-hand their experiences of the ICURA. Summative evaluations on research program focus on their impacts. These impacts can take a long time to be realized, but the perspectives of those directly involved can provide insights into approaches that worked and what needs to be improved. Interviews with PIs were therefore judged to be of particular importance for the evaluation. Using a semi-structured interview instrument (see Appendix 2) we conducted telephone interviews in which we discussed the motivations for PIs' involvement, their assessment of the projects' outcomes, the effects on their own research, applied impacts of the projects, effects on training, and their views on the overall structure and implementation of the ICURA program. The interviewees could choose whether the interviews were conducted in English or French, and almost all chose English.

We also asked each PI to evaluate, on a Likert scale for comparative purposes, the significance of the outcome of the research, the effects of the collaboration on strengthening their research, and how important the funding was to achieve the projects' impacts. The interviews lasted approximately 30-90 minutes each, and provided a rich source of data with which to evaluate the program.

2.2 Interviews with Community Stakeholders

In order to gain further insight on the applied impacts of the projects and confirm their relevance to communities, we conducted interviews with external stakeholders recommended by each project's PIs. Unfortunately these interviewees were considerably more difficult to contact, and we were able to speak to fewer interviewees than we had hoped, or only with three (3) interviewees. We sent other stakeholders with more limited spoken English or French a few questions to answer by e-mail, but they did not respond. Like the interviews with PIs, the interviews we did conduct involved a semi-structured instrument (see Appendix 3) in which we discussed their perceptions of the relevance of the research, the significance of the project's applied impacts, and the scalability of these impacts.

To further assess these questions in cases when we were unable to reach a community stakeholder, we reviewed materials, such as letters of support provided by community

partners related to community engagement, and watched videos on projects' websites to confirm stakeholder participation.

2.3 Survey of Trainees

Concurrently with scheduling and conducting in-depth interviews with the ten PIs, we assembled a list of trainees, whom we invited to participate in an on-line survey. With many trainees involved with the ICURA, we considered that the training component was a significant element of the program and it would be important to gain insights on its operation and impacts. We chose to use a survey with trainees as their numbers were high and we wanted to reach as many as possible in a short timeframe. The trainee population we selected was all students who had had substantial involvement with the program and completed a thesis as a part of the ICURA program. We also surveyed all post-doctoral fellows supported by the program. This subset of trainees had enough experience of the program to be able to provide useful information to the evaluation. We relied on PIs to provide us with e-mail addresses for most trainees, and conducted internet searches to obtain email addresses for the remainder. Ultimately we assembled a list of 125 names.

In addition to being offered in English and French, the survey was translated into Portuguese, to reach trainees in Brazil, and Chinese, for students and post-doctoral fellows in China. The survey (see Appendix 4) asked students questions concerning such topics as their perceptions of the impact of the ICURA program on their education and training, on their network of contacts, and on their employment prospects. A total of 64 trainees responded to the survey, providing a response rate of 51%.

2.4 Interviews with Program Managers

For a deeper understanding of the development and overall goals of the ICURA program, we conducted interviews with program managers in the two agencies involved, IDRC and SSHRC. Using a prepared interview guide with questions targeted to the interviewee, we asked questions concerning, for example, what they hoped ICURA would achieve, whether the overall design of ICURA was successful, and what their views were on increasing private-sector involvement in programs like ICURA.

2.5 Background and Document Analysis

During the early phases of the evaluation, we conducted a review of background materials, including documents related to the development and launch of ICURA, requests for application, progress reports, final technical reports, and other related material. We also conducted an environmental scan for similar programs for funding international research cooperation, organized jointly by domestic research councils and organizations promoting international development, to identify lessons relevant to our evaluation.

During the analysis phase of the evaluation, we revisited this literature to deepen our understanding of the four projects' outcomes and the goals and aims of the ICURA program overall. We also conducted a scientometric analysis of publication data listed in the final technical reports. We examined the extent that published and submitted journal articles involved joint authorship by Canadian and LMICs authors. We further evaluated the extent to which these papers discussed and compared issues in LMICs and Canada, by examining the titles and abstracts of the papers, to gauge whether the program led to comparative research.

2.6 Limitations

While we are confident in the results of this summative evaluation, it is important to state that we did not have the ability to conduct any face-to-face interviews or field visits. Such meetings could have deepened our understanding of the program, including stakeholder perspectives.

Further, the program has ended relatively recently, and it can take time for impacts to be realized. We had, therefore, to rely heavily on interviews with PIs to assess the ICURA program. Given that they received substantial funding from ICURA, PIs may have been reluctant to point out the shortcomings of the program, and may have portrayed it in an overly positive light. Where possible, we compared and confirmed the interview evidence with other sources of data.

In addition, the ICURA program funded a total of only four projects, and our ability to draw conclusions about the overall approach was limited by this very small sample size.

Lastly, a limitation of this evaluation is that the two funding agencies, IDRC and SSHRC, required separate reporting requirements. The final technical reports of the Canadian PIs were not available at the time of this evaluation, in summer 2015. This limited our ability to analyze with confidence the program's total research output, training, and community engagement impacts.

3. Evaluation Findings

3.1 Performance

3.1.1 Research

The ICURA program encouraged active knowledge production, with a focus on community issues. Altogether, over 120 articles were accepted or published in peer-reviewed journals, according to the final technical reports of the four ICURA teams (Table 1). In addition, close to 30 papers are still in the review process. Knowledge production was also evident in books and book chapters, and in a large number of conference presentations. These

numbers are likely to underestimate the contributions of the Canadian authors, because as discussed above, PIs from Canada and from LMICs had different reporting requirements, with Canadian PIs reporting to SSHRC and PIs from LMICs reporting to IDRC. The table is based only on information in the technical reports from those reporting to IDRC.

Table 1: ICURA Research Output

| Project | Journal articles (published /accepted) | Journal articles (submitted) | Conference papers | Presentations (non-academic) | Books | Book chapters | News-papers /Other | Theses |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Managing Adaptation to Coastal Change | 7 | 8 | 34 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| Pathways to Resilience | 61 | 10 | 55 | 220 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 40 |
| Protected Areas and Poverty Reduction | 1 | 2 | 31 | 21 | 0 | 2 | 15 | 7 |
| Sante Mentale-Citoyennete | 54 | 7 | 96 | 11 | 2 | 8 | 28 | 27 |
| Total | 123 | 27 | 216 | 253 | 13 | 27 | 65 | 81 |

Source: Small Globe, Inc., adapted from IDRC internal document (M. Robertson and D. O'Brien [2015]. IRCI and ICURA: Project Profiles and Synthesis of Emerging Results) and projects' final technical reports.

The research conducted in the ICURA program is interdisciplinary in nature, and spanned fields such as psychology, social work, psychiatry, geography, geo-informatics, urban and regional planning, management, and economics. Focal themes included an examination of youth resilience in high-crime areas, environmental change in coastal communities, mental health service models, psychiatric drug use in children and teenagers, and efforts to reduce rural poverty by ensuring environmental sustainability. The ICURA program had reach in Canada and in a number of LMICs, including, Belize, Brazil, China, Columbia, Ghana, Guyana, Kenya, South Africa, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tanzania, and Trinidad and Tobago.

In these countries, the ICURA program included large research groups with involvement from faculty members, other professionals, students and community members. For instance, the collaborative project between Canada and Brazil involved 18 faculty members in Brazil who came from eight universities across Brazil, as co-investigators. Based on the numbers reported by LMICs PIs, at least 227 students took part in the ICURA program. This number

is likely too low since technical reports from the Canadian PIs were not included in this analysis. Some of them took part as thesis students or post-doctoral fellows, but others took part in workshops, classes, or other educational activities supported by the program.

These statistics demonstrate that although the ICURA program supported only four projects, it was substantial in its reach, and brought about knowledge production and knowledge flow among hundreds of people.

From Table 1, one can see that there are large discrepancies in output among the teams supported by the program. Most notably, two teams contributed 93% of all the journal articles published under the program. While the objective of this evaluation was not to assess the performance of the different research projects, one would have expected more homogenous performance, as all the teams were judged to be of high quality, and passed a highly-competitive application process. There are limitations to comparing the research outputs by teams, as they came from different disciplines with different publication patterns. Still, it is possible that this discrepancy in outputs among the teams reflects a need to strengthen the selection process of the program.

One of the objectives of the ICURA program was to enable research teams from Canada and LMICs to undertake comparative and collaborative research. Understanding complex issues of relevance to communities increasingly requires cross-country comparisons. From examining the program's research outputs one can, however, see that most of the articles did not include a comparison of issues in the participating LMICs and Canada, and only a minority of articles were co-authored by team members in Canada and in LMICs.

We examined the titles and abstracts of all journal articles that had been published or submitted, and found that only 5% of the articles appear to involve comparisons between LMICs and Canada. However, all the teams did engage in some comparative work between Canada and LMICs, and comments were made both in the final reports, and in the interviews with PIs, that this comparative work is still ongoing. It is quite plausible that the lack of publications on comparative work results from the need to start by examining local conditions. Local conditions may be examined from a common framework that can involve cross-fertilization of ideas among the research regions. Thus it is more towards the end of projects that teams would engage in comparative work among geographical regions, and therefore, measuring the comparative aspects of the ICURA program through co-publications may be premature at this point.

We also looked at authorship of the articles listed in the final reports of the ICURA-supported projects, and found that only 6% of them were co-authored by ICURA team members from LMICs and Canada. Publication patterns do differ among fields, and in some social sciences, internationally co-authored articles are still not the norm; thus using co-authorship as a measure may underestimate the level of collaboration between the team members. Indeed, many of the interviewees emphasized the collaborative aspects of their

projects. One said, for instance: “We thought of ourselves as one group, and we had a common methodology adjusted to suit the different research sites.” (PI 2)

From the available evidence we, therefore, came to the conclusion that the ICURA program has encouraged some comparative and collaborative research between Canada and LMICs. While the comparative aspect is still quite limited, it is likely to be stronger with the passage of time.

The publications resulting from ICURA projects were published in various languages. Many were published in journals in the collaborating countries, but others were published in international journals. It is too early to evaluate the quality of the publications in terms of citation impacts, as it usually takes several years for articles to be cited in subsequent papers. Some of the interviewees, however, stated that the ICURA-supported research was already gaining influence in their fields. For instance, one researcher described the work as having shifted the discourse on this topic and made it more culturally and contextually nuanced. The researcher said that: “The opportunity to do multi-country comparisons ... made it possible for the research team to refute western-biased thoughts on this topic.” This PI added: “We are growing a lot more voices.” (PI 9)

When we asked the PIs to rate the significance of the outcomes of their research, all ten evaluated it highly (Figure 2). A majority of the respondents rated the significance to be ‘very important,’ and only one respondent rated it as moderately important. Their comments made it clear that their criteria for what was meant by ‘significant outcomes’ varied, from contributions to the academic literature, to contributions to capacity-building, to contributions to their communities. Conducting good-quality research was viewed as crucial to accomplishing all these impacts. Some interviewees stated that they did not say that the significance of their research outcomes was ‘very important’ because they were still working on the research. In the future, this implies, they would be likely to evaluate the outcomes of their research as even more significant.

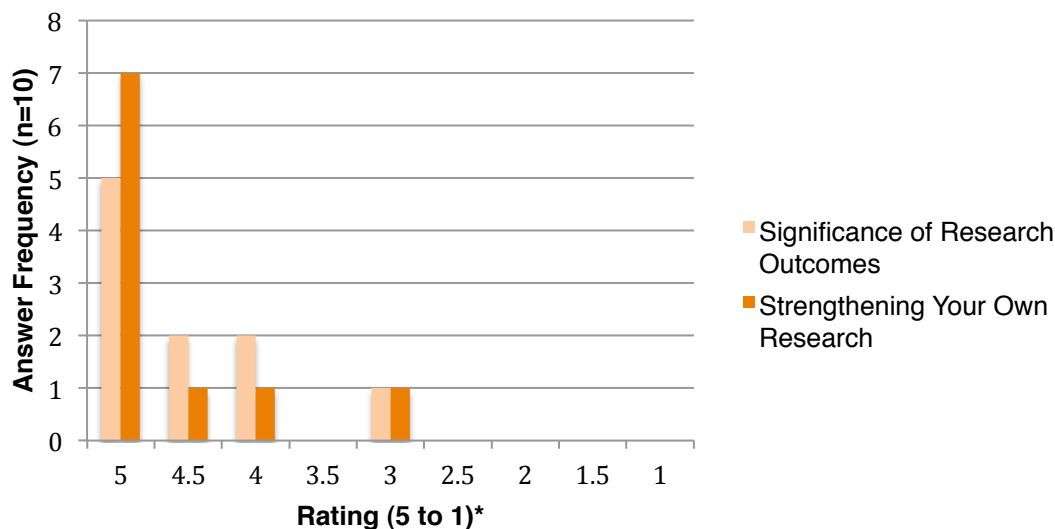


Figure 2: Principal Investigators' Evaluation of Their Research

*Rating scale: Participants were asked to rate the importance from 5 to 1, where 5 is very important, 4 is somewhat important, 3 is moderately important, 2 is of little importance, and 1 is not important. They were given an opportunity to choose a half number between any of these categories if they felt that this number better reflected their perception.

Source: Small Globe, Inc. based on interview data.

It is also evident from Figure 2 that almost all the respondents felt that the ICURA-supported collaboration was very important in strengthening their own research. What is also clear is that there is no significant difference in the evaluation of the ICURA-supported research between Canadian and LMICs researchers. In the next section, we will further examine the importance of the ICURA program to the researchers by examining how effective the program was at helping grantees develop new contacts and opportunities.

Networks and opportunities

To evaluate the extent to which participation in ICURA led to participants broadening their networks and engaging in new activities, we used evidence from interviews as our key source. In the interviews, PIs were asked about whether the project had led to new opportunities and expanded networks. This was a question that nearly every PI responded to with enthusiasm, with replies such as “Oh, where can I begin?!?” (PI 9)

In analyzing the responses in interviews to questions about new opportunities and networks, five key themes emerged among the points made by the ten PIs interviewed. In what follows, we discuss these themes and how they were expressed.

- i. **Broadened Scope.** Several researchers (in particular PIs 6, 1) described how the program allowed them to do work that was qualitatively and substantially different from their previous research. By supporting work that specifically involved

communities, ICURA allowed these researchers to broaden the scope of their endeavor beyond the usual boundaries of their academic discipline, and to move into new areas. One interviewee commented that after thirty years of work in the discipline, “never mind about the academic stuff: this other part was so important.” (PI 6)

- ii. *Global Recognition.* Some interviewees mentioned that the ICURA-supported work had raised their profile to a global level. Their increased visibility in itself led to new opportunities. This applied in the academic realm, such as for one PI who remarked that “(our university) has become a site where people stop when they want to know about (this topic).” (PI 8) Examples were given of being invited to speak, serve on panels, and contribute to journals and books as a result of participation in the project. (PIs 10, 3, 2). In addition, interviewees described their enhanced visibility as allowing them to influence policy. As one PI remarked, “now, when (UN agency) thinks about (this topic), they include (our ideas) in the conversation.” (PI 9).
- iii. *Broader Network.* It was clear that the ICURA projects allowed researchers to widen their field of contacts, both in number, and geographically. In some cases, this was a matter of being able to deepen existing contacts, as for the PI who remarked that “we built up strong institutional linkages that were embryonic before.” (PI 4) For others, it was a chance to work with new types of colleagues, either in the community, at other academic institutions, or in the policy realm. Working with these new colleagues was described as strengthening the researchers’ knowledge of the topic, such as for the PI who described understanding much better what kinds of issues communities are facing as a result of the work on the project (PI 1).
- iv. *Enhancing Students’ Experiences.* A number of PIs mentioned that the ICURA program allowed them to provide an enriched experience for their students. The opportunity for students to travel and, in some cases, study at institutions outside their own countries or regions was invaluable, and often described by PIs as ‘making’ their careers. These opportunities gave students “a sense of ownership of the work,” and some PIs described students who had gone on to launch successful careers in research related to the ICURA projects, and who had developed from being students to being peers in the field.
- v. *Working Differently.* A strong theme from several interviewees (PIs 5, 10, 9, 7, 2) was that the length of the ICURA program (five years or more), as well as the funding, allowed them to be creative in their approach to the work and to ‘think outside the box’. This ranged from being able to take a cross-disciplinary approach to their work, to pioneering a new way of working or developing new methodologies, to introducing a multi-cultural element to an existing line of enquiry. As one PI remarked, the project was a turning point and “now I can’t *not* do research this way any more.” (PI 10)

In addition to these new opportunities, the researchers managed to obtain additional funding that, they argued, occurred as a result of their participation in the ICURA program. The ICURA program did not systematically collect information on additional funding raised by the research teams, so total information on those funds is not available. Six interviewees did emphasize that participation in the program opened the door for further funding. Some of the teams also listed successes in raising additional funds in their final technical reports.

Many of these funds are from national sources, including universities, government departments and funding agencies. For instance, one Canadian PI received support to create a Network of Centres of Excellence for Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts, and the Brazilian PI obtained support from the Sao Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). Other funding has been international, such as the Colombian PI's support from the Rockefeller Resilient Cities initiative. SSHRC also allocated additional funds to some of the teams, for example, to one of the Canadian PIs that works on rural poverty.

The ICURA program therefore contributed towards the sustainability of this research. The potential for sustainability was, however, uneven amongst the four research teams. This reflected differences between the innovation systems in the participating countries, with some of the countries lacking national funding sources.

3.1.2 Knowledge Mobilization and Community Engagement

The ICURA program was designed to emphasize knowledge mobilization and encourage community involvement in the projects. Community focus in each project was required to be both in Canada and the collaborating LMICs, and at the application phase, projects were rejected if they lacked a Canadian community focus.

Most of the projects emphasized that they engaged in genuine cooperation with communities. There were projects that established, for instance, formal citizen committees or community advisory panels representing various groups, including patient groups, non-governmental organizations, and religious groups, as well as municipalities and governmental agencies working in the particular communities.

The role of the communities in these projects was not only to be a source of information for the research projects, or to be a vehicle for disseminating the results, but also to be actively involved in the different phases of the projects. One team, for example, stated in its final technical report that “some members of the Citizen Committee, who had already taken part in other ‘participative’ research, affirmed that they had never gone so far in the participative degree. In other studies, the participative aspect is often a façade. This wasn’t the case in our research.”⁷ A number of their publications describe extensive community involvement. This close involvement of communities was often a novelty for the research teams and their

⁷ Onocko-Campos, Rosana. *Mental Health and Citizenship*. Final Technical Report to IDRC, April 2015.

countries. Some commented that this perspective was “game-changing,” and said they would not want to pursue research in the future without strong community involvement. (PI 10)

In Table 2 is a list of select knowledge mobilization initiatives involving policy and practice supported by the ICURA program. The table shows what types of intended outcome the knowledge mobilization efforts involved, a brief description of the initiatives, and what is called a ‘scale of innovation’. The scale of innovation is a measure of novelty and refers to whether the knowledge mobilization efforts were new to the organizations involved, new to the sub-national region/municipality, or new to the country. The table illustrates initiatives involving knowledge mobilization in a wide range of areas. Many of these involve grassroots organizations. The examples also show that the teams were able to inform policy and government decision-making.

Some teams argued that it was still too early to say to what extent they contributed to policy and practice. Their research identified important strategies for different governmental bodies, but they still had not implemented the strategies. As one interviewee stated, referring to the uptake of the research at the policy level, “in the end, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.” (PI 8).

Community stakeholders with whom we spoke confirmed that while the ICURA project had involved important knowledge mobilization and close community engagement, the impacts of the projects are still to be realized. (Stakeholders 2, 3) They also confirmed, however, that the research was highly relevant to the needs of their communities, echoing the PIs’ views. As we were only able to interview three external stakeholders for this evaluation, this source of evidence did not provide strong external support from the community on the relevance and impacts of the research projects.

Still, many of the examples in Table 2 show concrete uptake by communities and/or government, which supports the relevance of the ICURA research. For instance, Rio Grande do Sul has adopted new guidelines for prescribing prescription drugs for mental illness that are based directly on ICURA-supported research; and the City of Medellin has adopted a Youth Resilience Strategy informed by research by the Colombian team. The available evidence, therefore, shows that the research conducted has strong policy relevance.

Table 2: Select Policy and Practice Results from ICURA projects

| Project Title | Intended outcome | Reported achievement | Scale of innovation |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|--|----------------------|
| Managing Adaptation to Coastal Change | Practice | (1) Municipal authorities and community leaders in Georgetown (Guyana), Bequia (St. Vincent and the Grenadines), San Pedro (Belize) and Grand Riviere (Trinidad and Tobago) act on knowledge of vulnerability analysis of specific threats to economic | (1) New to 4 regions |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|--|--|
| | | <p>and social infrastructure.</p> <p>(2) Primary and secondary school at the four sites have adopted school curriculum focusing on climate impacts and adaptation measures.</p> <p>(3) GIS technology and mapping of Georgetown was adopted by the Central Housing and Planning Authority of Guyana to inform land-use planning in a city that is below sea-level and reliant on vulnerable dyke infrastructure.</p> | <p>(2) New to 4 regions</p> <p>(3) New to country</p> |
| Pathways to Resilience | Policy | (1) City of Medellin adopts a Youth Resilience Strategy based on interactions with project team | (1) New to region |
| | Practice | <p>(1) The project's work in Beijing informs professional competency criteria for social workers and school counsellors. Participating high schools with student population over 20,000 train staff and introduce life skill courses for students designed by Tian.</p> <p>(2) Free State (South Africa) departments of social welfare adopted a resilience screening tool (Khazimula) developed by the project.</p> <p>(3) Several Chinese jurisdictions (Beijing, Guangdong, Shenzhen, Chongqing and other Provinces) make use of youth resilience assessment methods for pre-trial evidence and sentencing.</p> | <p>(1) New to region & participating schools</p> <p>(2) New to region</p> <p>(3) New to judicial system in several jurisdictions</p> |
| Protected Areas and Poverty Reduction | Practice | Establishment of local community committees as a forum to come up with approaches to govern protected areas, reduce rural poverty and come up with alternative development options. Involved in beekeeping in River Asuopiri, Ghana and cultural tourism in Sadaani, Tanzania | (1) New to rural areas |
| Santé Mentale-Citoyenneté | Policy | <p>(1) State of Rio Grande do Sul adopts new guidelines for prescribing prescription drugs for mental illness and alters the doctor/patient relationship in the process</p> <p>(2) Two cities in different states introduce free transportation on municipal buses for mental health patients to reduce barriers to accessing services.</p> | <p>(1) New to country</p> <p>(2) New to municipalities</p> |
| | Practice | (1) State ministries of health utilize an evaluation framework to assess the performance of 'care in the community' transition centers for people with mental illness | (1) New to country |

Source: Small Globe, Inc., adapted from IDRC internal document (M. Robertson and D. O'Brien (2015). IRCI and ICURA: Project Profiles and Synthesis of Emerging Results) and final technical reports.

All of the projects relied on training students as a strategy for knowledge mobilization efforts, and placed significant emphasis on capacity-building. Some aimed their training efforts at more mature students who were already actively working on community issues as a knowledge mobilization strategy. When these students undertook studies in Canada, the Canadian PIs emphasized the benefits of their presence in the classroom, saying that Canadian students appreciated the expertise and real-world experience they were able to share. Two of the projects described knowledge mobilization efforts aimed at younger students, in primary or secondary schools (PIs 6, 7). The effects of these efforts are likely to be felt quite far into the future.

Some interviewees commented that emphasizing governmental policy relevance was not necessarily a promising way to benefit communities (PIs 2, 3). With government changes there are often personnel turnovers that impose challenges. Instead of a top-down approach involving policy-makers, these interviewees suggested it is better to work directly with grassroots organizations. This view, that working with policymakers is not always the best strategy, was echoed by an external stakeholder, who recommended working directly with organizations on the ground (Stakeholder 2). This interviewee also expressed scepticism towards NGOs, warning that many of them had a preconceived notion of what the community needs; a better approach would be to work directly with the community.

Working directly with communities can, however, pose challenges. Many of the communities participating in the ICURA project lacked resources. It can be difficult for relatively well-funded researchers to manage expectations in resource-poor communities in which community members may perceive different priorities. These are worthwhile issues for IDRC's future community-focused programming; it is important to pay attention to which community actors are most promising to work with, and to prepare researchers with strategies for working with communities.

We asked the PIs to evaluate how important the funding from the ICURA program was to achieve the applied impacts supported by the program (Figure 4).

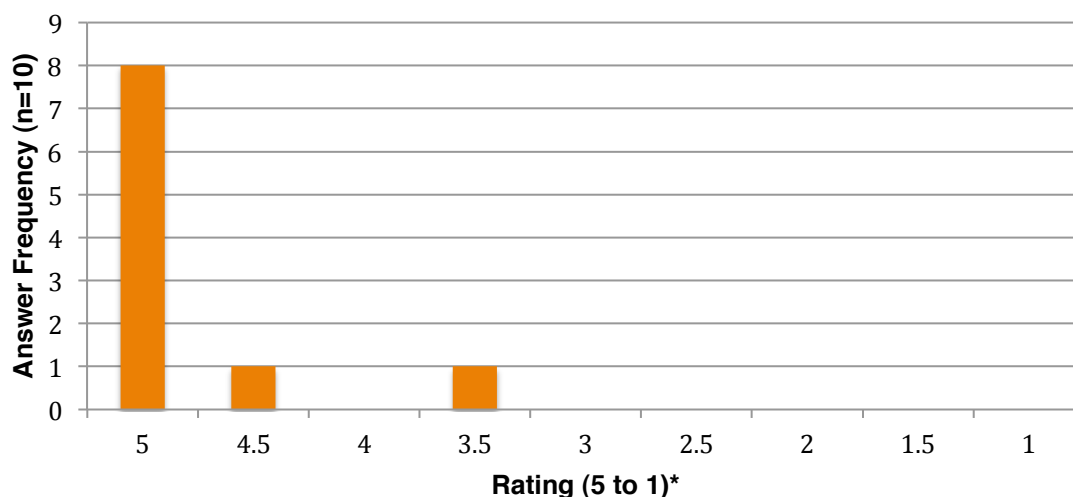


Figure 4: Principal Investigators’ Evaluation of the Importance of the Program to Achieve Impacts

*Rating scale: Participants were asked to rate the importance from 5 to 1, where 5 is very important, 4 is somewhat important, 3 is moderately important, 2 is of little importance, and 1 is not important. They were given an opportunity to choose a half number between any of these categories if they felt that this number better reflected their perception.

Source: Small Globe, Inc. from interview data.

Almost all the PIs felt that the funding support from the program had played a key role in achieving these impacts, and that without the program they would not been able to accomplish what they did. Many remarked that the ICURA program was unique in terms of offering the opportunity to do this kind of research internationally.

Clearly, then, the knowledge mobilization record of the ICURA program reflects a strong innovation systems focus. The projects stimulated knowledge flow and direct engagement by the users of the research results, which make the research efforts more relevant and better grounded in the realities of the communities. The scale of innovation shows a high degree of novelty, with most of the new policies/practices new to their region, area, or municipality. In addition, some initiatives were new to the country as well.

3.1.3 Education

The ICURA program placed a substantial emphasis on training. Table 3 presents the numbers of students at different educational levels supported by the program. Altogether, the program supported at least 227 students. The numbers in Table 3 are based on the final technical reports submitted by PIs in the LMICs, but, as discussed above, complete information on training funded by the SSHRC grant was not available due to different reporting requirements, and as a result, the total number of trainees supported is unknown.

What is noteworthy in the table is the relatively high number of graduate students supported by the program, with 44% of the total number of students being Masters students and 17% of the trainees being PhD students. Only 11 post-doctoral fellows were, according to the information we have, supported by the program.

Table 3: ICURA Training Data

| Project Title | Under-graduate | Master’s | Doctoral | Post-doctoral | Total |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Managing Adaptation to Coastal Change | 4 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 16 |
| Pathways to Resilience | 24 | 45 | 4 | 2 | 75 |
| Protected Areas and Poverty Reduction | 28 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 41 |
| Sante Mentale-Citoyennete | 23 | 39 | 26 | 7 | 95 |
| Total | 79 | 99 | 38 | 11 | 227 |

Source: Small Globe, Inc., adapted from IDRC internal document (M. Robertson and D. O’Brien (2015). IRCI and ICURA: Project Profiles and Synthesis of Emerging Results) and final technical reports.

As mentioned in the methodology section, we submitted a survey to all trainees who had completed theses as a part of the ICURA project. The survey was sent to graduate and undergraduate students and post-doctoral fellows in both LMICs and Canada. When we asked the trainees to rate how important a role the ICURA program played in their education, about 75% of the students said it played a ‘very important’ role and 17% said it played a ‘somewhat important’ role. Thus, ICURA was important for 92% of the students surveyed. A large proportion of the students (85%) said the ICURA supported their fieldwork, and almost half of the trainees stated that the program had supported their participation in international conferences.

In interviews with PIs, we were told that typically, only a few students in LMICs have the opportunity to attend international conferences in their fields. Participation in the ICURA program, therefore opened an opportunity to follow leading developments in their field, and to build their network. Over 86% of the trainees surveyed said the ICURA program had expanded their network. Some of the students further commented that the expansion of their networks had been both in Canada and in their own countries as well as in other LMICs.

When we asked the trainees whether the ICURA program enhanced the quality of their education, we received an overwhelmingly positive response. A total of 45% of the students agreed that it enhanced their education ‘a great deal’, 48% ‘to a considerable degree,’ and only 3% of the students ‘not at all’. Thus the ICURA program enhanced the education for

97% of the students, a finding that supports statements in the projects' final technical reports.

Further, 91% of the students indicated that the program provided them with new and valuable opportunities. When we asked them to specify what kind of opportunities, the answers varied from more academic types, such as "It allowed me to dive in an interesting field of research that was the basis of my dissertation and is still the basis of my doctoral dissertation," to a stronger community role such as "this has transformed my vision of the issues surrounding the full citizenship of people with mental health issues. It allowed me to discover the crucial role of community mental health organizations. To participate in focus groups, seminars with researchers and students from diverse backgrounds, countries and disseminate my first research results." Other comments emphasized the influence of the ICURA program on their careers, such as "The collaboration enhanced my career positively and expanded my network with opportunity for future collaboration, joint research, joint publications and service to community."

For Canadian students, the success of the program at providing new and important opportunities was slightly less, but still 88%, suggesting that the ICURA program played an important role in providing them with such opportunities. One Canadian respondent, for instance, said: "It was very rich to deepen the fields of research (problematization, methodology, dissemination of results, etc.) and intervention (intervention models, new implementation practices, etc.) in Quebec, Canada and Brazil."

When we asked the students whether the ICURA program had increased their prospects for employment, their answers were a bit more tempered, with 33% saying 'a great deal,' 36% saying 'to a considerable degree' and 7% saying 'not at all'. Not all the trainees in the ICURA program are seeking employment, however, and 25% are still either full-time or part-time students. Further, some of the students in the ICURA program were mature students who already had careers, often with governmental agencies in their local countries. They are likely to have returned to their positions after the completion of their studies. When we only included those who already have full-time employment, then 70% of the respondents said that the program had increased their prospects for employment 'a great deal' or 'to a considerable degree'.

In Figure 3 we present the trainees' evaluations of the impacts the ICURA program had on their education and employment. It is clear that the effects were quite varied, but substantial. The highest-rated impacts were on learning new important skills,

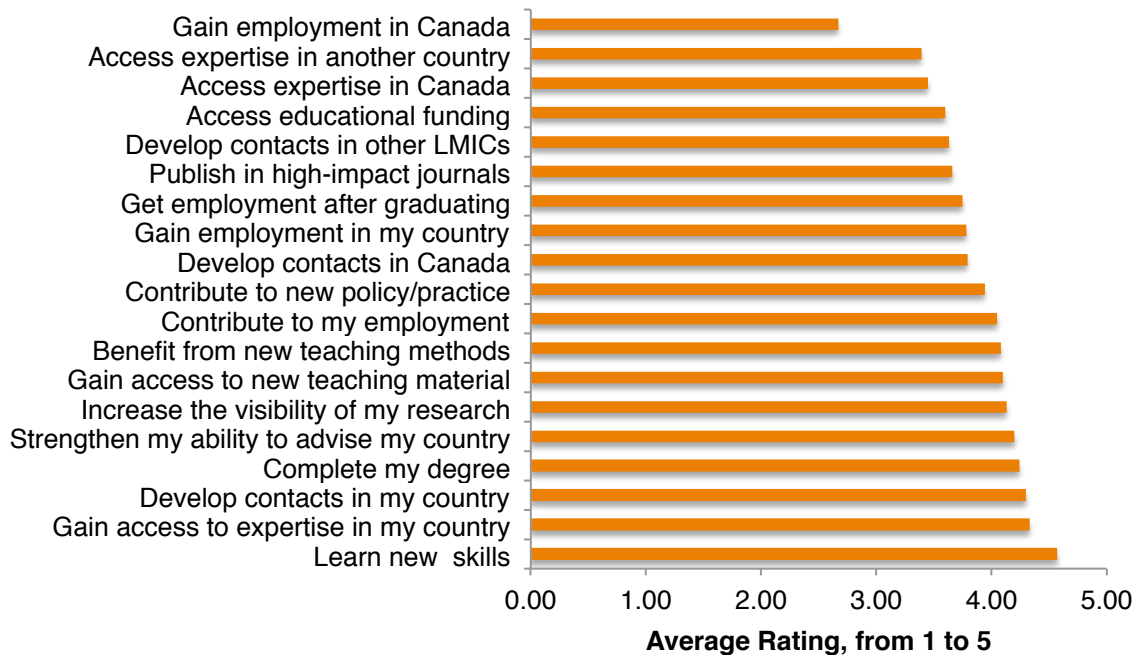


Figure 3. Trainees’ Evaluation of the Impacts of the ICURA Program

*Rating scale: Participants were asked to rate their agreement from 5 to 1, where 5 is ‘Strongly agree’ 4 is ‘Agree’, 3 is ‘Undecided’, 2 is ‘Disagree’, and 1 is ‘Strongly disagree’

Source: Small Globe, Inc. from survey data. N=58; six respondents skipped this question.

gaining access to expertise in their country, developing contacts in their country, completing their degrees, and strengthening their ability to advise their country. The program’s key impacts were, therefore, in enhancing trainees’ expertise and network as well as increasing their ability to provide advice in their countries. Looking at these results from an innovation systems lens, a key impact of the ICURA program was to strengthen students’ ability to work with communities, i.e. the users of their research, strengthening what is sometimes called the user-producer interactions. These relationships are essential for innovation to take place⁸.

3.2 Program Design and Implementation

3.2.1 Program Design

The design of the ICURA program reflected the experience and culture of both of the organizations involved, SSHRC and IDRC. As discussed above, SSHRC had previously run a domestic program that focused on university-community alliances, the CURA program, and many aspects of the ICURA program were informed by the experience of the CURA program. IDRC had emphasized community involvement in its programming as well, but had been

⁸ Lundvall, B. Å. (1992). *National Systems of Innovation: Towards a Theory of Innovation and Interactive Learning*: Pinter London.

primarily focused on researchers and communities in LMICs. IDRC brought international experience in planning and implementing the ICURA program. Both organizations brought a focus on the importance of involving communities in the research process. An emphasis on communities thus fit the culture of both organizations.

There were, however, concerns that introducing such a strong Canadian focus into the program would result in an unequal North-South relationship, in which the Northern partners, in this case Canadians, would act as the dominant partners. With the ICURA program, an attempt was made to foster an equal and mutually-beneficial relationship between Canadian and LMICs collaborators. The Canadian and LMICs applicants would co-lead their project and would both be PIs. They would develop a shared work-plan. To ensure that both PIs would have an equal say in the project, each had a separate budget under their control, with IDRC funding the LMICs collaborators, and SSHRC the Canadians. As discussed above, they would prepare separate financial reports and final technical reports, with the LMICs collaborators reporting to IDRC and the Canadian collaborators to SSHRC.

Apart from community engagement, ICURA emphasized projects involving comparative research. Increasingly, countries in the North and the South share important challenges, and addressing them often requires complementary expertise. Successful Canadian and LMICs partners chose such issues and planned research in both countries. The comparative aspect of the planned research was meant to encourage cross-fertilization and to increase the success of the research projects.

One feature of the program is that it was announced through a competitive call. Any university researcher in Canada and LMICs involved broadly in the social sciences could submit a letter of intent. IDRC has, in the past, typically carried out responsive programming on particular priority themes. Open calls were, however, always used by SSHRC. While IDRC has used external review in some of its program, it often relies on in-house peer review, whereas SSHRC uses Canadian peer review committees. For the ICURA program, a committee was established with both international and domestic experts, and both academic and community-related experience.

Lastly, the project was relatively large in scale, with C\$1 million allocated to each side of the research teams. Thus there were few, but large-scale projects, instead of many smaller efforts. The time scale was also relatively long: five years. The cultures of IDRC and SSHRC are very different in terms of monitoring projects, where SSHRC tends to be more 'hands-off' while IDRC requires regular reporting. The organizations agreed on a midterm review, fulfilling some of the reporting requirements usually required by IDRC. In addition, IDRC monitored the projects it supported in LMICs throughout the program.

There were several special design features of the ICURA program. The marriage of overseas development assistance (ODA) represented by IDRC and domestic research funding

organizations represented by SSHRC was relatively new, but had been conducted in other programs, such as the Teasdale-Corti Global Health Research Partnership program⁹ organized with CIHR. What was novel was the strong community focus being pursued on an international scale by the ICURA program. Researchers could therefore learn from each other how to work with communities, but this cross-learning was also possible across communities.

3.2.2. Program implementation and Suggestions

Without exception, the ten Principal Investigators spoke in very positive terms about the implementation of the ICURA program. Canadian and LMIC researchers found IDRC staff to be both rigorous and flexible. The experiment of having two PIs seems generally to have worked well. There appeared to be a relative equity between PIs in Canada and the LMICs, and neither group felt dominated by their partners. Some interviewees (e.g. PI 8) remarked on the appropriateness of these arrangements, in terms of equity, in contrast to some of their previous experiences with high-income country collaborators.

Having two very separate financial models was, however, a contentious issue. This arrangement added to the administrative and reporting burden for the researchers, and several interviewees mentioned having to struggle to understand the diverse guidelines and requirements imposed by the structure. (PIs 4, 5, 10) Others commented that such concerns may simply reflect the fact that “scholars have a horror of bureaucracy” (PI 8) no matter what.

The interviewees appreciated the relatively large scale and long term funding that the ICURA program provided. Truly comparative work requires participation of two or more countries, and thus operates on a larger scale. As one interviewee stated, “I wanted to include a South-North and South-South dialogue as a part of this project, but the usual funding does not allow this”. The interviewee further argued that supporting cross-cultural comparison fits the strengths and characteristics of Canada: “this is a nice niche, which is congruent with our multicultural society – very few places are doing this – the grant was very Canadian” (PI 9)

Comparative work of this sort may also require some flexibility that only longer research projects can provide. As one interviewee stated, “Long-term funding really allows for learning, making corrections to the program as needed; it allows for creativity” (PI 10). There was therefore a consensus among the PIs that the ICURA provided the resources to make multi-country comparative work possible.

⁹ International Development Research Corporation. *Teasdale-Corti Global Health Research Partnership Program*. http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Programs/Global_Health_Policy/Global_Health_Research_Initiative/Pages/Teasdale-Corti.aspx

One PI suggested that for such large-scale cooperative projects, there needed to be some prior cooperation among the team members. This was summarized by the interviewee, who said “I learned to start small and get larger after you’ve worked together.” (PI 9) Large-scale, multi-country comparison projects require a lot of administration, and it facilitates the process if at least some of the team members have worked together or know each other well beforehand. Prior collaboration within a smaller-scale project may also make it easier for the institutions involved to learn how to handle international grants. It is hard to draw conclusions from only four projects, but it appears that the ICURA projects with more established groups fared better in terms of performance and had fewer management challenges.

The researchers spoke positively about the program’s inception meeting, and suggested that more such opportunities for knowledge exchange among ICURA teams would have been welcomed. Even though the researchers supported by the ICURA program were working in unrelated fields, there was much for them to learn from each other. Learning how to engage communities directly in their research can be challenging, and PIs valued the opportunity to learn from other teams which strategies, and under what conditions, worked well. Some interviewees suggested that it would be helpful to spend time at such a meeting learning or refining relevant skills, such as communication and outreach skills (“researchers are so focused on publishing that we need to learn again how to talk,” PI 10) and information about such topics as data ownership (PI 9).

Some PIs made suggestions for improvements in the logistics of working in LMICs. One suggested that it would have been helpful to dedicate more resources at the outset to setting up contracts and establishing financial and legal arrangements with the relevant academic institutions outside Canada. Another interviewee (PI 2) suggested providing a template for the final report at the time the mid-term report was being prepared, in order to streamline the process. It was clear that institutional readiness varies widely, and capacity-building in management of international grants can be necessary.

Finally, one PI expressed the view that the application process placed an undue burden on community partners by asking for letters of support at the letter of intent stage of the applications. Some of these community organizations have very few resources, and this interviewee (PI 9) felt that a brief e-mail, rather than a formal letter, would have been less onerous at the early stage of the process, when the chances of success are relatively low.

3.2.3 Comparisons with Similar Programs

In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on promoting international cooperation involving LMICs through joint efforts of domestic research councils and ODA organizations. They include, for example: The Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREP) organized by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); the Swedish Research Links, organized by the Swedish Research Council and

the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA); the Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development (r4d programme) organized by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); and the Scheme, funded jointly by the United Kingdom's (UK's) Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and its Department for International Development (DFID).

Another version of joint programming involving research councils is, for example, the South Africa – Norway Research Co-operation on Climate Change, the Environment and Clean Energy (SANCOOP) funded jointly by South Africa's Department of Science and Technology and Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed both by the National Research Foundation in South Africa and the Research Council of Norway; and the Newton Fund, which is part of the UK's ODA, administered by its Department for Business, Innovation and Skills together with a number of organizations such as the Research Councils UK (RCUK), a strategic partnership of the UK's seven Research Councils, and the British Council. The Newton Fund also emphasizes setting up joint programs with research councils and other relevant organizations in LMICs and has, for example, a joint program with the National Commission for Scientific Research and Technology (CONICYT) in Chile.

Most of these initiatives have been established in the last 10 years. The Scheme was established in 2005¹⁰, the SATREP was established in 2008,¹¹ and the Newton Fund in 2014.¹² These efforts represent a drive for domestic research councils to expand their horizons internationally and work with LMICs on shared global challenges, as well as recognition by ODA that science, technology and innovation have roles in international development. In general, these programs all share a focus on global challenges and an acknowledgement that international cooperation is required to address them. A further theme shared by these programs is an emphasis on mutual benefits to all participating countries.

The programs differ, however, in their thematic scopes and their geographical reach. Some programs cover wide areas, such as the Swedish Research Links,¹³ which is open to researchers from all academic disciplines, and includes theoretical, empirical, basic and

¹⁰ Arnold, E, Javorka, Z. *Independent Review of the 2005-2008 ESRC / DFID Joint Research Scheme*. Department for International Development, 2009. Available at: <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/180480/Default.aspx>

¹¹ Japan Science and Technology Agency. *About SATREPS*. Available at: <http://www.jst.go.jp/global/english/about.html>

¹² Department for Business Innovation and Skills (UK). Newton Fund: building science and innovation capacity in developing countries. Policy Paper. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/newton-fund-building-science-and-innovation-capacity-in-developing-countries/newton-fund-building-science-and-innovation-capacity-in-developing-countries>

¹³ Vetenskapradet. *Swedish Research Links*. Available at: <http://www.vr.se/inenglish/researchfunding/ourgrants2015/swedishresearchlinks.4.7e727b6e141e9ed702b8de1.html>

applied fields of research; or the Swiss program¹⁴ that is focused on reducing poverty, global risks and the provision of public goods, and has both an open stream and thematic areas. Others are more confined to certain areas such as the Scheme, which funds research in social science for development,¹⁵ or SATREP, that funds particular areas, i.e. environment and energy, bio-resources, and disaster prevention and mitigation.¹⁶ The geographical spread of the programs differ also, with some focused on all LMICs and others, such as the Swedish Research Links,¹⁷ only aimed at low- and lower-middle income countries, or the Newton Fund, which partners with 15 countries, including all the emerging economies, Brazil, China, India and South Africa.

The ICURA program has a wide focus on LMICs, and includes projects involving lower-middle-income countries such as Ghana and upper-middle-income countries, such as China, Colombia and South Africa. What is special about the ICURA program is its strong focus on communities, which none of the other programs shares. This is not to say that the other programs do not have community involvement in their research, but it is not a defining feature of these programs.

Another special feature of the ICURA program, which is not shared by the other programs, is the co-PI arrangement, with PIs coming from Canada and LMICs for each project. As discussed above, this promoted equality among the PIs. In the Scheme program, PIs can be from either Britain or LMICc. Researchers from LMICs can therefore be in leading roles in the program. Still, according to an evaluation carried out by Technopolis, PIs under the Scheme rarely come from Southern countries, and the UK researchers tend to be in charge while the Southern participants' role is to collect data.¹⁸

The Swedish Research Links requires applications to be jointly submitted by a Swedish researcher and researchers in LMICs but the grant is administered by a Swedish University or by another public sector organisation that fulfils the requirements of the Swedish Research Council for an administering organization.¹⁹ While it is possible that the Swedish Research Council approves organizations in LMICs to be administering organizations, it is likely that most in this initiative come from Sweden. It is, however, likely that programs that partner with organizations in LMICs, such as the Norwegian-South African program

¹⁴ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Swiss National Science Foundation. Factsheet: Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development. Available at: http://www.r4d.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/r4d_factsheet.pdf

¹⁵ Arnold, E, Javorka, Z. *Independent Review of the 2005-2008 ESRC / DFID Joint Research Scheme*. Department for International Development, 2009. Available at: <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/180480/Default.aspx>

¹⁶ Japan Science and Technology Agency. *Research Fields and Areas*. Available at: http://www.jst.go.jp/global/english/area_of_research.html

¹⁷ Vetenskapradet. *Swedish Research Links*. Available at: <http://www.vr.se/inenglish/researchfunding/ourgrants2015/swedishresearchlinks.4.7e727b6e141e9ed702b8de1.html>

¹⁸ Arnold, E, Javorka, Z. *Independent Review of the 2005-2008 ESRC / DFID Joint Research Scheme*. Department for International Development, 2009. Available at: <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/180480/Default.aspx>

¹⁹ The Swedish Research Links Program. International Collaborative Research Grant. Available at: <http://www.vr.se/inenglish/researchfunding/applyforgrants/callforproposals/closedgrants/theswedishresearchlinksprograminternationalcollaborativeresearchgrant.5.4b1cd22413cb479b8055727.html>

mentioned above will have PIs from LMICs who are in charge of the grant. While the co-PI arrangement is a special feature of the ICURA program, PIs from LMICs may be in leading positions in some programs under other types of arrangements.

Another feature of the ICURA program is its strong training component, and the way the training is incorporated into the research cooperation in the different countries. Capacity-building can often be part of international cooperation programs, but there is limited information available on the extent of such efforts. The evaluation of the Scheme program called for increasing participation of Southern PhD students. Other programs, such as the Newton Fund, have dedicated resources for capacity building. The Newton Fund has a specific funding category, called 'People,' aimed at improving science and innovation expertise in participating countries, but this category is not integrated with research cooperation activities. Within the ICURA program, the integration of training and research helped the students advance their networks and learn specific skills, such as working with communities, where tacit learning, or learning-by-doing, plays a considerable role.

In many of the programs discussed here there appears to be a cultural gap between the research council and ODA arms of the programs. Often, the ODA organizations have focused on transferring already-developed expertise or technologies to LMICs, or promoting highly applied research efforts, using established methods. New knowledge production involving ambitious research projects on shared challenges is a novel approach for them, but is typical conduct for the domestic research council. It may be challenging for the two different types of organizations to reconcile their different approaches. The evaluation of the Scheme, for instance, emphasizes that most development work is more applied and operational in character.²⁰ In a similar vein, the SATREP program emphasizes that it will not support technology transfer or research involving surveys or simple operations that is not going to advance science and technology.²¹

IDRC has, from the outset, had a strong focus on supporting research and new knowledge production.²² Working with SSHRC in the ICURA program and promoting novel, community-based research may not be stretching IDRC to the same extent as some of the other ODA-based organizations.

ICURA is also different from many of the programs listed above in terms of its size. It allocated C\$8 million to four research teams and ran one round. By comparison, the budget of Scheme was £12.5 million (about C\$26 million), supporting 46 projects through three calls;²³ the Newton fund is £75 million (about C\$154 million) a year for five years;²⁴ the r4d

²⁰ Arnold, E, Javorka, Z. *Independent Review of the 2005-2008 ESRC / DFID Joint Research Scheme*. Department for International Development, 2009. Available at: <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/180480/Default.aspx>

²¹ Japan Science and Technology Agency. *Research Fields and Areas*. Available at: http://www.jst.go.jp/global/english/area_of_research.html

²² Government of Canada. *International Development Research Centre Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. I-19. Section 4.1.

²³ Arnold, E, Javorka, Z. *Independent Review of the 2005-2008 ESRC / DFID Joint Research Scheme*. Department for International Development, 2009. Available at: <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/180480/Default.aspx>

program from Switzerland has CHF 97.6 million (about C\$133 million), allocated from 2012 to 2022 or over C\$13 million a year;²⁵ and the SATREP program supported 99 projects in 43 countries from 2008-2015, in which each received about 100 million yen a year,²⁶ or C\$1 million. With such high funding levels, there is clearly more capacity for these programs to have impact compared to a small program such as the ICURA. However, the ICURA program is not the only Canadian program involving cooperation between domestic research councils and ODA organisations. IDRC has, for instance, launched joint programs with other Tri-Council organisations, such as the program with the CIHR mentioned above. Still, even when the funding for all those programs is added together, Canada's contributions to such programming is not on par, in relative terms, with the other countries listed above.

Some of the programs have particular design features that IDRC may want to consider. For instance, the Newton fund offers what are called Mobility Grants. These are smaller grants in which researchers can fund reciprocal visits for up to a year to explore a potential cooperation.²⁷ This allows researchers to test the waters and strengthen their ties to prepare for larger-scale collaboration.

Another specific design feature that IDRC could consider is to establish specific support for researchers with knowledge mobilization efforts. The Scheme, for instance, established what they called an *International Research Broker* to increase the impact of the research on policy and practice. This was, however, applied late in the operation of the program, and as a result, had limited impacts.²⁸ In order to make a difference, such support would need to be integrated from the beginning in the project.

It is clear, then, that there is substantial variety in the range of joint programs supporting research cooperation with LMICs, and there is scope for learning and cross-fertilization from the program designs of these diverse programs.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The ICURA program, with its relatively large research grants and long timelines, allowed research teams in multiple countries to:

²⁴ Department for Business Innovation and Skills (UK). Newton Fund: building science and innovation capacity in developing countries. Policy Paper. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/newton-fund-building-science-and-innovation-capacity-in-developing-countries/newton-fund-building-science-and-innovation-capacity-in-developing-countries>

²⁵ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Swiss National Science Foundation. Factsheet: Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development. Available at: http://www.r4d.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/r4d_factsheet.pdf

²⁶ Japan Science and Technology Agency. *About SATREPS*. Available at: <http://www.jst.go.jp/global/english/about.html>

²⁷ The Royal Society. Newton Mobility Grants. Available at: <https://royalsociety.org/grants/schemes/newton-mobility-grants/>

²⁸ Arnold, E, Javorka, Z. *Independent Review of the 2005-2008 ESRC / DFID Joint Research Scheme*. Department for International Development, 2009. Available at: <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/180480/Default.aspx>

- Conduct multidisciplinary research that has expanded community-related knowledge generation both in LMICs and in Canada.
- Forge novel ways for academic and communities to work together.
- Begin to develop a body of comparative research.
- Develop a strong training program with far-reaching impacts that will contribute to the sustainability of the work.
- Engage proactively with communities and create relationships between users and producers of research.
- Work collaboratively and on a basis of equality between high-income and low-and-middle income countries.

The program would have benefited from a number of improvements.

- Given the strong response at the application phase, it is clear that there is scope for increasing the size of the program or similar programs in the future. Further, similar programs internationally have had greater impacts by devoting more resources to this type of work.
- There is a scope for increasing the comparison dimension of the program, as only 5% of the published and submitted articles appear to include the intended comparison between Canada and LMICs. This may be a premature concern as, according to interview evidence, comparison is ongoing.
- There was a notable disparity in research outcomes among the four projects, with two projects contributing 93% of the research output, measured in published journal articles. With only four projects in the program it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions; however, it may be worth examining the original selection process to understand how this disparity came about.
- A program encouraging collaboration requires joint technical reporting which would give a better overview of the whole program.
- More opportunities to share strategies and knowledge between the projects gained during the course of the grant could have strengthened the teams' abilities to involve and research communities.

As a result, we believe that the ICURA program achieved its objectives, while raising some important issues to address in future programming.

4.1 Performance

We evaluated the performance of the program with respect to research, knowledge mobilization and education, respectively, which all reflect the core objectives of ICURA program.

- a) *Research that was relevant to communities.* It was clear from our evaluation that the ICURA program produced research that not only contributed to the academic literature, but also increased knowledge on issues relevant to communities and

enhanced communication and knowledge-sharing between universities and communities. This two-way sharing of knowledge gave both universities and communities the chance to strengthen their essential operations. It thereby encouraged knowledge flow within the innovation systems of the participating countries that can, over time, result in innovation grounded in community realities

- b) *Comparative research: still to come?* In addition, the ICURA program led to some bi-directional knowledge flow between Canada and LMICs, and cross-fertilization of ideas between researchers and communities. The extent of comparative research between Canada and LMICs did not appear to be as strong as we would have expected, with relatively few publications focusing on comparison. It is possible that the comparative element will not be realized until at the end of the projects, so it may be premature to evaluate it at this time. Also, our ability to assess the direct benefits to Canada from the ICURA program is limited, as the Canadian PIs were not expected to report to IDRC, and most had not submitted their final technical reports to SSHRC at the time this evaluation was performed in summer, 2015. More input from the Canadian experience would have allowed us to conduct a fuller evaluation and examine the potential for interactions between communities and innovation systems in Canada and in LMICs.
- c) *Active engagement with communities.* Many of the projects engaged their communities closely in cooperation throughout the research process, to the extent that the cooperation resulted in novel ways of working with communities. In these cases, communities were not passive recipients of the knowledge produced by the research, but actively engaged. The program thereby reinforced community decision-making and problem-solving capacities. Most of the projects are now at an early stage in putting the research results into practice, so the ultimate impacts are still not fully realized. The ICURA program shaped a wide range of policies and practices in LMICs, and it will be of interest in a few years' time to examine the impact of these new policies and practices.
- d) *A strong training program.* In addition to its research and community outcomes, a strength of the ICURA program is its significant impacts on training. It was perceived as having been highly important to students and post-doctoral fellows supported by the program. Judging from the overwhelmingly positive evaluation by the ICURA trainees expressed in the survey we conducted, we believe that the ICURA program met its teaching-related objectives and led to considerable capacity-building in participating countries. The trainees had opportunities to gain access to new skills and knowledge in their fields, build networks, and become more adept in working with communities. The ICURA program has therefore strengthened the potential for further relationships between the users (*i.e.* communities) and producers (*i.e.* university-educated experts) in the participating countries. This can contribute to novel and relevant community outcomes in innovation systems.

Through these potentially transformational effects on trainees, the future impact of the ICURA program may be considerable, despite being hard to measure directly.

4.2 Relevance

We evaluated the ICURA program in terms of how relevant the program was in informing policy and practice, the importance the program played in achieving the output and outcomes of the research teams, and its key strengths and weaknesses in comparison with other similar programs.

- a) *Relevant research supported by the program.* The research conducted in the ICURA projects appears to be of relevance to communities in LMICs, judging by the reported contributions to policy and practice in participating countries. The projects selected for funding focused on areas of shared concern, and the research and training conducted advanced knowledge on globally relevant topics spanning fields such as psychology, geography, social work, psychiatry, geo-informatics, urban and regional planning, management, and economics.
- b) *Key role of ICURA.* Our evaluation found that the ICURA funding played a key role in allowing the researchers to engage proactively with their communities. Without the funding, they believed they would not have been able to have the impacts their research had. Several of the interviewees stressed that the program had had transformational effects on their work and opened the door for community-relevant work. This was also echoed by some of the trainees.
- c) *Strengths and Weaknesses*
 - i. *Community involvement.* The ICURA has some notable strengths compared to other joint programs involving domestic research councils and development organizations. Its strong community focus is a particular strength; none of the other programs we analyzed emphasized communities to the same extent as the ICURA program. This degree of community involvement created relationships between users and producers of research that are crucial for fostering innovation that is grounded in community needs, and it is a strong aspect of the program.
 - ii. *Equality in the collaboration.* Another important feature of the ICURA program is having co-PIs both from Canada and LMICs with independent budgets. This promoted equality within the cooperation, both symbolically, and because each co-PI was responsible for their own budget. In similar programs working in this sphere, researchers in LMICs appear frequently to be dependent on budget allocations from their collaborators in high-income countries, which can lessen their standing in the collaboration. Our interviews suggest that this perception of equality was very important to the investigators, and contributed to the strength of the collaborative relationships and the project outcomes.

- iii. *Small scope and untapped potential.* A weakness of the ICURA program, compared to other joint programs, is its relatively small size. The budget of the ICURA program was only a small fraction of the other programs we analyzed. These larger programs can afford to have multiple calls and ongoing activities supporting sizable project portfolios. As a result, similar programs are to have much greater impact than the ICURA program. There appears to have been a large demand for the ICURA program in Canada and in LMICs. Out of over 100 letters of intent, only four projects were funded, suggesting that there may be significant untapped potential in Canada and LMICs for programs of this type.
- iv. *Uneven output.* Another weakness in the ICURA program is the unevenness of the research output among the four projects. This may be the result of uneven selection processes at the program's outset. With only four projects supported, in different fields of endeavor, it is difficult to generalize. However, our impression, based on analysis of projects' final technical reports and our interviews with PIs and stakeholders, suggest that research groups that did not have significant prior collaboration experience found it challenging to start collaborating within such a large and long-term project. Their respective institutions may also have benefitted from starting with smaller-scale initiatives in order to develop expertise in managing international grants. Published evaluations of similar joint programs involving domestic research councils and development organizations have yet to emerge, so it is difficult to know if this has been a challenge for them as well.
- v. *Knowledge-sharing among teams.* A further challenge for the ICURA program was the limited opportunities it offered for cross-fertilization among the projects. The four teams met together only once, at the outset of their projects. The researchers engaging their communities used different strategies in focusing on government organizations or grassroots organizations, and may have benefitted from more opportunities to share and discuss these different approaches with their other colleagues funded by ICURA.

4.3 Recommendations for Future Programming

The ICURA program had some notable successes in developing and promoting relevant, community-focused research. Based on our summative evaluation we identified some lessons for future programming and recommend:

1. **IDRC should continue to encourage internationally comparable community-based research cooperation.** Canada's diverse and multicultural population creates connections and opportunities that can be leveraged by IDRC. IDRC has extensive experience in promoting research in a culturally sensitive manner, and it

is a fitting niche for IDRC to promote programming of this sort. With IDRC's experience in promoting community-based research in developing countries, the agency should prepare researchers for community engagement at the outset of their projects. IDRC should organize inception meetings that include past ICURA recipients to share their experiences and challenges. It should also encourage more ongoing knowledge flow among new grant recipients, as there is substantial scope for cross-fertilization on shared challenges. New grantees should also examine the pros and cons of focusing on policy-makers versus grassroots organizations and learn from the experience of others in order to come up with the right balance.

2. **IDRC should look further into its past projects and examine whether research groups should have demonstrated prior research cooperation before undertaking large-scale projects jointly.** While large-scale projects can be powerful in terms of supporting ambitious international research cooperation, they may not be a good fit for every research team. The ICURA program is too small to make any conclusive argument on this topic but our research suggests that it may be more challenging to manage large research teams productively when the collaborators have no previous experience of working together.
3. **IDRC should continue to pursue collaboration with SSHRC, but procedures should be better aligned.** Based on this experience with the ICURA program, IDRC should continue to pursue cooperation with SSHRC. This will contribute to keeping IDRC's social science mandate strong and make it easier for both organizations to support larger, longer-term research projects. The two organizations should, however, align their procedures better in future programming. It can work well to have two PIs with separate budgets, but it would be more coherent for the new program to agree on a shared set of rules and regulations and reporting demands. Furthermore, it would be better for any collaborative project to only submit one technical report, with combined reporting on activities in both Canada and LMICs.
4. **IDRC should promote trilateral research cooperation.** The ICURA projects promoted cooperation between Canada and LMICs, and some also promoted cooperation between two or more Southern partners. They therefore encouraged both North-South and South-South learning. This provides powerful research possibilities and the chance to share strategies that have worked in countries of diverse economic means. We recommend that IDRC continue to pursue such cooperation strategies and become one of the leading organizations in promoting trilateral research cooperation involving LMICs. Having multiple PIs in each project who are responsible for their own budgets enhances the equity of the cooperation.
5. **IDRC should continue to include a strong training component as a part of its international research cooperation programming.** The ICURA program was highly beneficial to students both in Canada and in LMICs. These students built

networks not only with different PIs but also amongst each other. Such linkages ensure that the cooperation is sustainable and can have strong academic and community relevance into the future. Such future benefits for Canada and for the LMICs participating in the program are immeasurable.

The ICURA program represents an innovative programming format for IDRC that has resulted in considerable successes. We have indicated a few weaknesses of the program in our evaluation above, but most can be relatively easily addressed. The success of IDRC working jointly with a research council in promoting community-relevant research supports the view that IDRC has been effective in employing novel approaches. It should, therefore, continue to further develop and evolve its contribution in these realms to the mutual benefits of communities in Canada and in LMICs.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Projects Supported by ICURA

| Title | Project leaders | Project summary |
|---|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Managing Adaptation to Coastal Environmental Change: Canada and the Caribbean</p> | <p><i>Dan Lane</i> Telfer School of Management University of Ottawa Canada</p> <p><i>Patrick Watson</i> Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies University of the West Indies Trinidad and Tobago</p> | <p>The research team developed adaptation strategies to help coastal communities cope with rising sea levels and storm surges.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Protected Areas and Poverty Reduction: A Canada-Africa Research and Learning Alliance</p> | <p><i>Grant Murray</i> Department of Recreation and Tourism Management Vancouver Island University Canada</p> <p><i>Thomas Djang-Fordjour</i> Sunyani Polytechnic Ghana</p> | <p>The research team studied how protected areas can be designed to equitably yield the greatest benefits and reduce human-wildlife conflicts in Canada, Ghana, and Tanzania.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Pathways to Resilience: Formal Services and Informal Support Use Patterns among Youth in Challenging Social Ecologies</p> | <p><i>Michael Ungar</i> School of Social Work Dalhousie University Canada</p> <p><i>Guoxiu Tian</i> College of Politics and Law Capital Normal University China</p> <p><i>Linda Theron</i> Faculty of Education Sciences North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus South Africa</p> <p><i>Alexandra Restrepo</i> Facultad Nacional de Salud Pública Universidad de Antioquia Colombia</p> | <p>The research team evaluated how young people living in difficult environments are able to thrive. The goal was to design formal and informal support programs that work for at-risk youth.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Santé Mentale– Citoyenneté</p> | <p><i>Lourdes Rodriguez</i> École de service social Université de Montréal Canada</p> <p><i>Rosana Onocko Campos</i> Faculdade de Ciências Médicas Universidade Estadual de Campinas Brazil</p> | <p>The research team examined how patients can be better involved in governing mental health services.</p> |

Appendix 2: Interview Guide: Principal Investigators

General description

1. What were the main **reasons** you chose to take part in this collaboration?
2. How did you **divide** the work between the two groups?
 - Overall contribution?*
 - To the proposal development phase?*
 - To the data collection phase?*
 - To data analysis?*
 - To writing publications?*
 - To training activities?*

Evaluation

3. How **significant** do you think the outcomes of this project were?
4. If you were to **rate** the significance of **the outcomes of this research** on a scale from one to five, where
 - five is *very important*,
 - four is *somewhat important*,
 - three is *moderately important*,
 - two is *of little importance*, and
 - one is *not important*,which would you choose?
5. What **impacts** did the collaboration have on your own research?
 - In terms of quality, visibility, and networking?*
6. In terms of **strengthening your own research**, if you were to rate the effects of the collaboration on a scale from one to five where:
 - five is *very important*,
 - four is *somewhat important*,
 - three is *moderately important*,
 - two is *of little importance*, and
 - one is *not important*,which would you choose?
7. Did the collaboration lead to new **opportunities** you otherwise would not have had?
8. Did this project lead to you obtaining any **additional funding**? Did it lead to your obtaining any **in-kind contributions**?

If so, from where? would you have been able to receive the funding without support from IDRC?

9. How effective was the collaboration was in enhancing **students' learning experiences**?
If so, how?
10. Has the cooperation had, or is it likely to have, **applied impacts**, besides furthering research and training?
If so, how? (on policy, practice, technology)?
What (factors/conditions/policies/programs) made those impacts possible?
11. On a scale from one to five, how **important** was the **funding for this project** to achieve those impacts, where
- five is *very important*,
 - four is *somewhat important*,
 - three is *moderately important*,
 - two is *of little importance*, and
 - one is *not important*,
12. What were the **key challenges** in this project?
13. Was there anything the **funder** could have done differently that would have increased the outcomes/impacts of your work?
14. Are there local or national **factors** that would have **strengthened the impact** of this project?
Any policy, regulation, program, practice?
15. Do you plan to **continue** this collaboration?
How sustainable is it?
What, if any, are the barriers to sustaining the collaboration?

Design/Management of the Program

16. Was the ICURA program properly **designed and implemented**?
- *Call for proposal?*
 - *The selection process?*
 - *The inception meeting?*
 - *Program and financial monitoring?*
 - *[Dissemination support?]*

17. What do you see as the main **strengths and weaknesses** of the program?
18. What **changes/adjustments** would you recommend to strengthen the program?
19. Do you know of any **similar programs** that IDRC could use for inspiration for future program development?
20. IDRC likes to emphasize applied research and partnerships with user groups, such as communities, industry and government. How do you think IDRC can **best promote these partnerships**, without forcing them?
21. What **important lessons** about international collaboration, and programs to support it, did you learn from this collaboration?
22. Is there anything else you would like to discuss that you feel is relevant to this topic?

Appendix 3: Interview Guide: Community Stakeholders

This is a generic interview guide that was adjusted according to who the community stakeholder was.

Motivation

1. How did you get involved, or come in contact, with the project?
2. Had you worked with the researchers before?
3. Why were you interested in the project?

Relevance

4. How relevant to you think the research of this project is to the needs of the [region/country]? Please expand on why this is or isn't relevant.

*Is [theme of research] prioritized in any planning efforts by [region/country]?
If so, which ones?*

*How relevant to you see [theme of research] to the training needs of your country?
If so, why?*

5. How relevant was this research on a scale from 1 to 5 where:
 - i. 5 Very relevant
 - ii. 4 Somewhat relevant
 - iii. 3 Moderately relevant
 - iv. 2 Of little relevance
 - v. 1 Of not relevance

Impacts

6. What impacts has the project had in [region/country]?
 - a. *On policy, practice, technology?*
7. How significant were those impacts on a scale from 1 to 5 where:
 - i. 5 Very important
 - ii. 4 Somewhat important
 - iii. 3 Moderately important
 - iv. 2 Of little importance
 - v. 1 Of not importance

8. Can these impacts be scaled up?
9. What could be done to strengthen the impacts of the project?
 - a. *Funders strategies?*
 - b. *Local strategies?*
 - c. *National strategies?*
10. Is there anything else you would like to discuss that you feel is relevant to this topic?

Appendix 4 – Trainee Survey

Please be assured that all answers will be kept confidential

1. Current location : _____

Please indicate city and country

2. Please indicate all the degrees you have completed and name the educational institutions where you completed them:

| | | Name of Educational Institution |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bachelor | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| Masters | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| Doctoral | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| Post doctoral | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| Diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |

Other degrees and where completed: _____

3. What is your employment status?

Please select all that apply

- I am in a full time position
- I am in a part time position
- I am self employed
- I am a part time student
- I am a full time student

4. Please indicate which degree the ICURA program supported:

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bachelor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Masters | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Doctoral | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Post-doctoral | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other degrees, which ones: | _____ |

5. How did the ICURA program support your education?

Please select all that apply

- Fully funded my degree
- Partially funded my degree
- Supported my participation in local conferences/workshops
- Supported my participation in international conferences/workshops

6. Did the ICURA program support your fieldwork?

- Yes
No

Please specify the location of your fieldwork: _____

7. Did the ICURA program support your exchange visit?

Please specify the location of your exchange visit: _____

8. What was your supervisory arrangement?

Please select a single option

- I was supervised only by a faculty member at a Canadian university
I was supervised only by a faculty member in my home country
I was co-supervised by faculty members in Canada and in my home country

9. How important a role did the ICURA program play in your education?

Please select a single option

- Very important
Somewhat important
Moderately important
Of little importance
Unimportant

10. How important was it to your education to study, or do research, in a foreign country?

Please select a single option

- Very important
Somewhat important
Moderately important
Of little importance
Unimportant
Not applicable

Please explain the reason for the option you chose.

11. Did the ICURA supported collaboration enhance the quality of your education?

Please select a single option

- A great deal
To a considerable degree

- Somewhat
- Little
- Not at all

12. Did the collaboration supported by the ICURA program expand your network of contacts?

Please select a single option

- Yes No

If yes, where did the collaboration mostly expand your network?

Please name the country/countries:

13. Did the ICURA supported collaboration enhance your learning experience?

Please select a single option

- A great deal
- To a considerable degree
- Somewhat
- Little
- Not at all

14. Did the collaboration supported by the ICURA program provide you with a new and valuable opportunity?

Please select a single option

- Yes No

If your answer was yes please describe the opportunity:

15. Did the collaboration supported by the ICURA program increase your potential for employment?

Please select a single option

- A great deal
- To a considerable degree
- Somewhat
- Little
- Not at all

16. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements.

The ICURA supported cooperation made it possible for me to:

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Not applicable |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Complete my degree | | | | | | |
| Learn new important skills | | | | | | |
| Gain access to important expertise in Canada | | | | | | |
| Gain access to important expertise in my home country | | | | | | |
| Gain access to important expertise in another country/countries | | | | | | |
| Publish in high impact journals | | | | | | |
| Gain access to additional educational funding | | | | | | |
| Contribute to new/improved policy/practice | | | | | | |
| Benefit from new and improved teaching methods | | | | | | |
| Gain access to new and improved teaching material | | | | | | |
| Strengthen my ability to advise my community | | | | | | |
| Develop | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| important contacts in Canada | | | | | | |
| Develop important contacts in my home country | | | | | | |
| Develop important contacts in other low-or-middle income countries | | | | | | |
| Increase the visibility of my research | | | | | | |
| Get employment in my field after graduating | | | | | | |
| Contribute productively to my employment | | | | | | |
| Gain employment in Canada | | | | | | |
| Gain employment in my home country | | | | | | |

Please feel free to provide comments or clarifications on any aspects of the survey

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey please contact:

Fjóla Evans
 Small Globe Inc.
 Email: fjola@smallglobe.org