

Transcript: Build your Research Impact
Webinar by the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences
November 10, 2021

Sponsored by *University Affairs*

Webinar hosts: Camille Ferrier, Hannah Paveck

Panellists: Connie Tang, Dr. Liz Jackson, Vinita Srivastava

Camille Ferrier:

Hello. everyone. Bonjour. Je m'appelle Camille Ferrier. The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences is the national voice for over 90,000 researchers in Canada, with a membership comprising over 160 universities and scholarly associations. I'm delighted to welcome you to today's webinar, Build Your Research Impact. To begin, I would like to acknowledge that the Federation office and most of the staff are located on unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation. Federation staff, speakers, and audience members for today's webinar are participating from across the country, and so we also extend our respect to all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples for their valuable past and present contribution to this land.

Just a few housekeeping notes before we start: Today's webinar will take place in English and simultaneous interpretation in French is available. Click on the little globe by the bottom of your screen to enable it. Closed captioning is available in English and French. To turn the English captions off, click Live Transcript and select Hide. For French closed captioning, please click on the link provided in the Zoom chatbox. Merci.

The Federation is committed to promoting the valuable and diverse contributions of humanities and social sciences scholars across Canada. We advance the national dialogue on the societal impact of humanities and social sciences research, and we support humanities and social sciences scholars in assessing, communicating, and growing their research impact. Today's webinar, Building Research Impact, directly comes out of this work. What knowledge mobilization tools are right for your project? How can you expand the reach of your research through critical community engagement? How do you better communicate your research to non-specialist audiences? Those are some of the questions that we will cover today. We are honored to have three outstanding panelists joining us to this conversation: Connie Tang, from Research Impact Canada; Dr. Liz Jackson, from the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute at the University of Guelph, and Vinita Srivastava, from The Conversation Canada and the "Don't Call Me Resilient" podcast. Each panelist will give a short presentation followed by a period of questions and answers, and discussion. You can submit your questions at any time by typing them into the question and answer box.

This webinar is part of our ongoing Career Corner series, which brings professional development workshops to our humanities and social sciences community. I would like to thank our series partner and sponsor, "University Affairs/Affaires universitaires" for their continued support. I will now give the floor to our moderator Hannah Paveck, who will introduce our first panelist.

Hannah Paveck:

Thank you, Camille, and hi, everyone. I'm Hannah Paveck, the policy lead here at the Federation. And I'm delighted to be introducing our first panelist, Connie Tang, who will be giving us an introduction to research impact and her work with Research Impact Canada.

Connie Tang is the manager of Research Impact Canada. She leads the knowledge mobilization portfolio for Canada's skills, education, and training sector with the Future Skills Centre and supports RIC's national and bilingual network of 18+ universities. She comes from a strong research, education, and facilitation background and worked provincially and federally in capacity building, stakeholder engagement, relationship management, and knowledge translation activities to identify and test solutions for workforce and skills development. So thank you so much, Connie, for being here with us today. Over to you.

Connie Tang:

Fabulous! Thank you so much. And it is such a pleasure to be here. Merci beaucoup. And I'm so excited to be speaking to you today. I'm going to start sharing my screen. Here, I will be using something today called Menti, which is basically if you happen to be looking at this presentation on your laptop, and you have a smartphone or an iPad, or a tablet handy beside you, you're welcome to open the browser on your smartphone and go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com), and enter the code 8984 8612. Totally optional, even if you don't do this or don't have a smartphone handy. All good. You'll be able to participate anyway. But Menti will allow you to ... I have some questions, and you can interact with the presentation a little bit.

So with that, like Hannah said, thank you so much again for inviting me. My name is Connie. I'm Manager of Research Impact Canada. I come from York University, so I'll just start off with a quick land acknowledgment from York. We recognize that many Indigenous nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations, the area known as Tkaronto has been caretaken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peacefully share and care for the Great Lakes region.

So we're all here today to talk about impact, and so this is where the first Menti question comes along. Which I want to ask you, and hear from you, hear from the folks here on this call, which is "What does making an impact mean to you?" So if you happen to have your smartphone handy, again, your tablet handy, it's at the top of the screen there. You can go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com), and use the code 8984 8612 and type in a couple words as to what does impact mean to you? If you don't want to use Menti but you still want to participate, but Menti is not available to you, and you don't have a smartphone handy, feel free to type it into the Zoom chat. All good.

Wonderful! Thank you so much for the people here that are contributing, What does making an impact mean to you? I think what we're seeing, we see meaningful change, co-creation, research into action, demonstratable change for society, you see so much change, impact. And I think really what we're hearing and what we're seeing is that impact is creating a difference beyond the research. And I think that's our role here and why we're all interested in this webinar here today. So that's fabulous. I think we all want to achieve impact, but how do you get there? What is ... How do we achieve this? And knowledge mobilization is one of the pathways we can use to achieve impact.

So I show this diagram here. This is a diagram that my boss, David Phipps, assistant vice president of research, strategy and impact at York University, uses this diagram to make the connection between what we want to achieve, which is research impact and the how, which is knowledge mobilization. So I'll stay on this diagram a little bit so bear with me here. But you'll see two circles on the left hand side, You have campus, and you have community. And in a diagram like this, I think community tends to refer to likely a lot of the folks on this call here today. We're talking about social sciences and humanities students, researchers, faculty. And in my ...in an academic research environment these people tend to be situated on campus. Now there's another circle here up top called Community, in quotation marks. And I put it in the quotation marks because community encompasses the stakeholders of your project or the stakeholders of your research. So this could be anything from maybe government bodies, let's say municipal, provincial, or federal entities, nonprofits, local community partners or industry. They tend not to necessarily sit on our academic campuses as we know it, and so we put ... so they're kind of in that separate circle. I think that there's often a misconception, that knowledge mobilization is only an exclusively about making research more accessible and useful and relevant to community. Now that's definitely part of it, but it's not all of it because that implies that there's just this one-way relationship between your knowledge producers, or the folks that sit on your campus, your researchers or your students, and your knowledge users. You're making that research more relevant, more actionable, to that community piece and those knowledge users. And the reason why I say it's a misconception is because I think knowledge mobilization encompasses more than that.

Knowledge mobilization is really ...It's not this one-way relationship between campus to community, but it's actually an opportunity to create a shared space between the two circles ... these two circles, these entities. And so that kind of brings us to the middle of this diagram here, where, in the shared space between campus and community or between your knowledge users and your knowledge producers, or between your researchers and your community stakeholders whoever those entities may be, it's the shared space to create an opportunity for maybe knowledge transfer or ideally, knowledge exchange where you're finding complementary expertise where campus can learn from community and community can learn from campus. When this happens, and hopefully you have some co-production, which is where you're working together on a mutual goal to serve mutual interests for benefit to everyone, and sometimes when this happens impact is then created. So while I think there's often a metaphor of knowledge mobilization being just a thing that bridges the gap, I think that bridges the gap implies that you still have community and campus as these two separate entities, and I think closing the loop

might be a better metaphor for it because it really again emphasizes that knowledge mobilization is about connecting research to community for mutual benefit.

So with that, I think that there's more questions about, "Great. Sounds good. Knowledge mobilization. Tell us more. What do we do?" And so here this is again something that we talk a lot about at York University but it now extends well beyond York University, and many organizations use this pathway, which is called the Co-produced Pathway to Impact. I've linked the link to the paper down below that you're welcome to check out. And what I really kind of want to highlight is that there's these two circles here. You have your researcher space and this co-production partner, and in the shared space are where the stages of the pathway to knowledge will ... sorry, the knowledge mobilization pathway can happen. And so you have research, dissemination, uptake, implementation. Research might be where a lot of you sit. Maybe not. I'm not sure but it tends to be people who are generating new knowledge and new evidence or maybe they're creating a new program. Dissemination is I think maybe something that I for one was the most familiar with before entering this space because I really related to publishing my research and presenting at panels and workshops and writing a blog post about it or having social media strategies. But what I've learned is that dissemination and communication is incredibly important, but it is, and it is incredibly necessary, but it's not sufficient in order to actually create impact, to create change, to change behavior, to generate action, all those things that folks had said in that first slide there. So in order to do that, there needs to be an uptake and implementation piece. And these are kind of the two buckets that the facilitation of the context of your research is incredibly important because context allows for both the people that you're trying to reach to be able to see themselves in it, more actionable, more relevant to them. But also see themselves as participants within it and to co-produce hopefully an implementation program or research question with the academic partner.

The thing that I will highlight here specifically is the stakeholder engagement line at the very bottom where you see it in green and you see that stakeholder engagement runs at every single stage of this pathway. And the reason for that is because stakeholder engagement is incredibly important. It doesn't just occur at uptake and implementation stages or dissemination stages. It starts at research. It starts when you're generating your research project, when you're generating those questions and as you embark on the research project it continues with dissemination and communications, making sure that you're targeting your audiences appropriately, that you're giving them a message that they care about and they want to hear. Uptake, that it's something that they can use, and it's something that it really gives context in how they could use this information and apply this and then implementation hopefully then where this could be put into practice and put into action.

So with this, I'd love to hear from you guys, and again through menti.com, using that same code at the top of the slide there for you to rank which stage of the pathway interests you most? Maybe it's a stage of the pathway that you're most familiar with. Maybe it's a stage of the pathway that you happen to be working in, but I'd love for you to start ranking where you see yourselves or what interests you. Wonderful. Thank you.

So we're seeing, I think, a lot of folks, research and impact planning, comes at the top pretty consistently, and we're seeing quite a few changes for the other buckets here. I will move on for the sake of time to now show you a couple of tools that Research Impact Canada has both ... have both curated, as well as created around each of the stage of the pathway.

We'll start off with research and planning. And so here, we saw that, that was the one that generated the most interest which is fabulous. So if you happen to identify yourself most as working in the research and planning space right now, in regards to your project or your research, and you want to know more about how do I incorporate knowledge mobilization practices in my project so that it's something I'm thinking all throughout the process, then we have some fabulous planning templates here to show you. I don't know if you see my cursor but it's the third bullet point here. And if you want to have just more information on how do I guide my research questions, how do I ensure that the things that I'm doing always loop back and think back to that impact piece, then these first two links here in impact literacy workbook and this questions checklist called Guiding Principles for Broader Impact will be fabulous resources for you, and there's a bunch of other links here as well.

If what you're really interested is in dissemination and communications, because we're all about the tools here today, I wanted to highlight a couple specifically in this area. So we have a disseminating findings checklist and guide from Cochrane that is truly, truly fabulous. It has a one page checklist. Are you targeting your audiences? How is your content structured, are you using plain language? Are you incorporating the end users? And there's a one page checklist of this guide, and then there's kind of a 100 page PDF that accompanies it that breaks down each line of that checklist into some tangible steps or things you can consider in order to be able to achieve that check on that list. There is a checklist on plain language writing from SickKids. That is a fabulous tool, again, ensuring that the language that you're using is language that is easy to understand and applicable. And the one that's closest and nearest to my heart is an e-learning module that Research Impact Canada designed on infographic design. You will not be a graphic designer after taking this module. Okay? That's not a promise I can make. However, if you're totally new to graphic design or infographics this will give you a little bit of the basics, give you some design principles as well as some kind of data visualization principles, and you will have an opportunity to make your own infographic at the end of this e-learning module. Again, some other resources there.

I will move on quickly with our time running low here. So uptake, we have some really great guides, again, e-learning modules around event planning and knowledge brokering as well as implementation which is really focused on fostering those research collaborations, building those successful partnerships and enabling community based research in that kind of shared space co-produced way.

Last but not least I will mention also evaluation because it's important to know if we're doing it, how effective is it, how can we measure this? So we have a toolkit that is around knowledge engagement that was developed by the University of Calgary. They ... I think engagement and stakeholder engagement is really hard to put tangible metrics and ways to measure that, and so

this toolkit gives you some guidance as to how to do that as well as kind of a weighted Excel to kind of get you started and as well as a webinar by the really fabulous

Sarah Morton, who is a really fantastic evaluator in this knowledge mobilization space, talking about how do we know if research and knowledge mobilization make a difference? Now, if you were like, "All these tools sound great. I want to know all of them." Here's the one link you need to know: resources.researchimpact.ca. On this page, all these tools I mentioned and more and many others can be found on this one site. We're actually going to be revamping this site for January, but the link here will stay the same. You're welcome to access it.

And with that I wanted to say thank you from Research Impact Canada. I'll tell you kind of a 1-minute brief on who we are. We are a network of now 23 universities and one non-university member, which is Ontario Shores, a mental health hospital, and after 15 years, we have built now a really robust network that has presence across nine out of 10 provinces in Canada, and we are really focused on building that institutional capacity in knowledge mobilization. But really it's a national community of practice for knowledge mobilization, so we mutually share tools, learnings and best practices. Me and my team, we sometimes create tools. We sometimes generate webinars and stuff, but also we invite our membership to also be actively involved, actively engaged and also share their learnings with us. We have some really fantastic specialties in knowledge mobilization, including but not limited to institutional strategy, engagement in rural communities, creating certifications and micro credentialing and local and community partnerships. So with that, I will end it there. Thank you very much for listening and inviting me to this panel. My e-mail is on the slide, tangc@yorku.ca. You're welcome to e-mail me if you want to continue this conversation. I love talking about this stuff, and thank you very much.

Hannah Paveck:

Thank you, Connie. That was fantastic. Really great to see all those resources. I loved the way that you talked through the visualization of pathways to impact. That was really helpful and really great to see a lot of conversation in the chat as well. I'd also encourage you if you do have any questions for Connie and for other panelists to put it in the QA box because that's where we're going to be looking for questions at the end of the presentations. But now it's a real pleasure to introduce our next speaker, Dr. Liz Jackson, who will dive into this question of community engagement.

Dr. Liz Jackson is Director of the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute (CESI) at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. CESI is a research and teaching support unit that brokers and sustains community-university partnerships, and supports collaborative research that addresses community-identified research priorities.

Building on her expertise in critical community engaged scholarship, critical pedagogy, practice-based research, and art-based community making, Liz provides leadership and strategic direction to CESI and supports staff members in the development and implementation of all programs. With community, faculty, and student collaborators, the CESI team works to facilitate mutually beneficial community-university partnerships that create research impact toward

positive social change. Currently, Liz is working to more deeply integrate anti-oppressive commitments into the unit's programs and practices, and I'm really looking forward to hearing more about that. Thank you, Liz. The floor is yours.

Dr. Liz Jackson:

Thank you so much, Hannah. It's really fun to be here. Like Connie, I love talking about my work. So I will look forward to sharing with you all. Before we start, just a quick note that I am in Hamilton at the end of Lake Ontario, and I work at the University of Guelph. So both places that are on Dish with One Spoon territory and part of the Two Row Wampum Agreement. And it's a pleasure and an honor to be working here. So I'm Liz, and as Hannah said, I direct the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute. You may hear me calling it CESI. So we are a research and teaching support unit that is mandated to support, implement and develop others' capacity for community-university partnered research. This happens across a range of programs, including course-based community-engaged research, paid graduate research assistantships and across a range of other programs that you're welcome to snoop at our website on this slide. I'm here today to talk about how community-engaged research is one of many methods that can help to support and ensure and deepen research impact and also to talk, as Hannah mentioned, about how we are seeking to use our work to support broader anti-oppressive work and struggles for social justice.

So, at CESI, our work is informed by principles first, and then the methods flow from those. So our work is built on the knowledge that our research will be most impactful when it's designed, implemented, and thus already wanted by, and created indeed, by knowledge users who are our collaborators. We recognize that all members of a collaboration are knowledge holders, as Connie was saying really beautifully just now. And so we're exchanging and building with our shared expertise, skills and knowledge rather than the kind of conventional, charitable model of solving a problem for a needy community. That's been very well put to rest by Connie, so I won't belabor that point. So we don't have that kind of struggle to disseminate our research findings because the whole process is a process of exchange and building and knowledge within the nation. We do, however, work very hard to increase the reach of our research findings beyond our own collaborations, and so for that reason we work similarly to make sure that there are clear language reports of all our projects as well as potentially journal manuscripts, presentations to boards of directors, educational materials and so on, and everything is freely available in our library's atrium and through our website. So I've already talked a little bit about our mandate. I will move along.

So here are some key terms that will help you to understand the shifts we're trying to make at CESI. So community-engaged scholarship, many of you will be familiar with this sort of conventional, I guess, the main ... the most popular definition. So CES or Community-Engaged Scholarship involves a mutually beneficial partnership between researchers and community members. Again, we don't really believe those two are discrete groups, but this is how we explain our work to ourselves. So crucially mutual doesn't have to mean the same. So, for a

research staff members, one of the benefits might be that it helps you to move towards your goal of tenure, as I saw someone talking about in the chat. And that's fine if the project's collaboration is also of benefit to your collaborators in ways that meet their needs and as long as there's no kind of exploitation or harm in the mix. So we don't need to all want the same things, but we do need to orient ourselves around the same questions. It results in scholarship, and I already talked about a range of potential outputs that come from the process of teaching, discovery, knowledge exchange and cocreation. And largely speaking, research and knowledge mobilization are taken up with the goal of impacting the public good, and I will pin that and return to that in a minute.

So, since I took on the director role in 2017, we have worked as a team at CESI to be more explicitly committed to what we are calling, after Cynthia Gordon de Cruz, who's cited down below, critical community-engaged scholarship, which is a form of engaged scholarship that is committed to addressing systemic forces behind social inequities and challenges. It's informed by anti-racist and other anti-oppressive theories. It is firmly asset-based in terms of its understanding of community and communities, and we seek to mobilize knowledge in ways that serve justice-deserving communities and initiatives. So just as a quick example of what a project might look like under each of these frames. For example, if I were a researcher interested in helping a food pantry to understand its service provision and impacts, we would try to understand ... maybe we could craft a research questionnaire seeking to understand who are the community members they are reaching, and thus to kind of understand where they are not yet having reached an impact. So the public good is served because we help a service organization to reach more people who are in need of access to it.

In a CCES partnership, we would seek also to understand, for example, the ways in which intersecting identities and social factors are creating food inequities in the first place. Or we might try to look at the experiences of people when they arrive at the food pantry. Are signs and labels appropriate to their levels of literacy and their linguistic use? For example, are people experiencing barriers to participation based on their immigration status, their disability, their gender and sexual identities? So the difference is, really, that we take a systemic approach, so we're still answering the question about, "Who are we reaching and how can we reach them better?" We're also gathering knowledge and learning that help us to also mobilize our learning to eradicate food insecurity. Does that make sense? Okay, I'll move on.

So this is the CCES wheel as we practice it at CESI, and it's going to look quite familiar to many of you who have been collaborative researchers, so I won't belabor it. I do want to say briefly, before I go on, that everything we're doing at CESI is informed and led by activism and community organizing, so those are the practices. Those are the critical practices. Those are the practices of care. Those are the practices of education and capacity development that inspire the work that we do from our location at the edge of the campus, so we're kind of a bridging organization. I do think that it's important, though, to not let ourselves think that community engagement is some brilliant academic invention. It's, in fact, an academic methodology that arose as academics sought to align their work in one place with the priorities, work, and organizing happening already in other movements, and it's an honor to be able to try to play some small part in that work.

So Connie already did away with the conventional model where we only connect with stakeholders or knowledge users at the end when we've brilliantly discovered something, and we need to share it out. I also agree that that's not a super productive or impactful model. So through the wheel that we've got here, this is kind of a typical research cycle. We'll meet or be referred to a community partner or organization, or grassroots network that's seeking to understand better something. We'll do info gathering, and this doesn't just mean what are your stats, but you learn deeply each other's cultures and organizations. So what's your funding structure? How are you governed? What are conventional expectations of your role? What's your actual social change goal? What are the challenges and barriers? What language do you use? How do I talk to your director when I go pitch with you for funding? Then we'll scope and broker a project, agreeing on in terms of our capacities and time and so on what we're going to ask and how we're going to implement.

So the implementation really means a flexible but very clear work plan that sketches out peoples' roles and responsibilities, the phases of the project. This is, of course, a living document, so as step five is happening, and a CESI staff member or a faculty member or a graduate student or whoever it is is leading their part of the research, and the community collaborator is leading their part of the research, there's a constant making sure that priorities are honored, keeping in touch, booking check-in meetings, and thus the implementation planning sometimes is a living document that has to flex a little bit because reality is never as smooth as we hope it will be.

And then, really crucially, especially in the commitment to anti-oppressive practice and critical practice, there's always a really important wrap-up and debrief. So the project might be over, but the process is not, and this is when we need to constantly and throughout, and particularly at the end, we have to look very frankly at ourselves, our project. How did power operate in this space? What were challenges that we didn't anticipate? What were successes we didn't anticipate?

So here's an example of a project that I'm going to try to briefly show you how it shifted between phase one and phase two from a CES project to a project that is more explicitly critically community engaged. So in 2017, right, when I was brand-new in my job, a friend of a friend, basically, a contact of a contact, reached out to me on behalf of a group of five social service organizations that support youth living with multiple disabilities. And so these youth are users of social services often under the name community living, but they do have other organizational names. So this powerhouse group of managers of services of these five groups across Ontario had come together in years previously to identify a crucial research priority which was in the face of policy changes that cut youth off from youth services right when they turned age of majority. They really needed to understand, "What were the needs and experiences of youth who were just dropped completely from youth care with no transition planning?" So they had created already their research questions, carried out their interviews, and they were coming to us because the researcher they were working with was no longer able to continue to work. So we kind of stepped in as their academic partner, and what we did was support their integrated knowledge mobilization planning from that point onward. We led the data analysis with feedback loops with the organizing team, the collaborating team, and then we created, in the end, two outputs of policy brief for policymakers, ministry representatives and so on and an education brief that was

intended to target both transitional-age youth themselves, service providers and caregivers and friends of TAYs, they called them. So that was pretty good. We presented together. We met our goals. We learned a lot, and the participants felt quite seen and affirmed, and we know because we're still in the relationship that people have made changes to their practices at the very ground level in trying to set youth up for better transitions. But we stayed friends, and we hung out more, and we had a chance, luckily, to come back together, my colleague and I, my colleague from Community Living, and we pitched to a board of directors, so directors of all the southwestern Ontario social service orgs. We wanted project funding to do phase two. So we went together, and we made our case that we now need to do phase two, and we need to understand the needs of adults who have transitioned out of youth services and are now living in community accessing only adult supports. It went really well. They were really supportive. So we have now gone back through the cycle and in the time between the first cycle, which was quite hurried and just jumping in, and then CESI have been doing a lot of work. We've been doing a lot of work to understand how to more deeply and intentionally integrate principles of CCF around this wheel. So we started as though we hadn't met before. We came together warmly. There were new staff members at both sides. There were new student team members. We got to know each other again. What's changed? What are your priorities? This pandemic thing happened during the middle. What did that do for your funding structures? And we went through the whole scoping, brokering, planning, project management support process, so that's where we're sitting now, and crucially I want to just quickly share with you. I can share links after the presentation as well.

So this again comes from Gordon da Cruz who's really been quite an influential theorist and activist for us at CESI. So she offers in her article about critical community-engaged scholarship four questions that she says might help to keep people on track as we're trying to work in anti-oppressive ways. So one, are we collaboratively developing critically conscious knowledge? Are we authentically locating expertise? Are we conducting race-conscious versus supposedly race value research and scholarship, which means, are we taking seriously the ways in which racialized identity does affect people's experiences rather than pretending of understanding all food pantry users is the same as understanding food pantry users by various markers of identity?

And then four, is our work grounded in asset-based understandings of community? So with all those questions and many more in our heads, we've planned a phase two that looks quite a bit different than phase one. So we have kept the collaborative model. We have a steering committee still led by managers and directors of service-providing organizations, but we have added peer researchers to the mix. And so peer researchers are people with lived expertise who have themselves experienced the transition from youth to adult services. These are crucial voices in the mix because, the first phase, we really only engaged with service providers. This time, we're engaging with service providers and people who are users of those services. It's changing the way we ask questions. It's changing the way we're going to structure our interviews and focus groups, and it's going to make the research so much more robust. We've also added a much slower process. So instead of trying to get it done, we have built a deliberately very long timeline. And again, we have the luxury and privilege in this case of good funding both from my unit and from the groups of communities living. We've also added sections to the interviews and

surveys that were not present in phase one that both collect demographic data so that if there are differences to be found across racialized gender, sexualities, disability status and so on, we will at least be able to see if they're there, and we've also added questions and prompts in the interviews and focus groups to ask people to reflect and share if they want to on how they think that their identities have affected their access to services and their journeys through the system. So this, I hope, gives about it of a grounded example of what I mean when I say CCES. I'm going to cut myself off there because I think I'm pretty much through my 10 minutes, if not more so. Looks like it.

Hannah Paveck:

Thank you so much, Liz. That was fascinating, really appreciate you inviting us to kind of critically reflect on how to approach community engagement. Those guiding questions as well is something that I think would be great to share more widely too – very interesting.

And I'm thrilled to introduce our final panelist for today, Vinita Srivastava. Vinita will take us through how to communicate your research to nonspecialist audiences and engage media, so we're moving from the community engagement to a more media perspective, but I think some of the threads will definitely be taken up there.

Vinita Srivastava is the producer and host of "Don't Call Me Resilient," a podcast that takes on the ways racism permeates our everyday lives. She's also the senior editor of the Culture and Society desk at The Conversation Canada. Vinita is an accomplished journalist, educator and media innovator with experience in South Asia, South Africa, Rwanda, the US and Canada. She has reported and edited for the New York Times Magazine, VIBE, the Village Voice and Savoy. She cohosted the Asia-Pacific Forum at WBIA Radio and Masala Mixx at CKLN for over a decade, and she's taught media for NGOs internationally and at the Ryerson School of Journalism as a professor of journalism. So thank you, Vinita, for joining us. I will pass it over to you.

Vinita Srivastava:

Thanks, Hannah. It's great to be here. I'm going to ... Just give me a moment while I figure out how to share my screen, and I go to my full. There we go. So, thanks, both of you, Connie and Liz. I've learned so much already, and it's one of the things I love about my job at The Conversation is that I'm constantly learning from people like you and from the academic community. We are the place to go for fact-based journalism. It's an honor and a privilege to be doing this work every single day. As Hannah said, I'm the senior editor for Culture and Society, so I'm mostly going to be speaking about that section, and I could talk a little bit about the podcast, "Don't Call Me Resilient," which we just finished season two today, so it's very exciting for me to talk about that as well.

So we are ... What's our mission? We are a team in Canada. Well, we are actually one of a large global network, so we, The Conversation, is across the globe. The Conversation US and The Conversation UK are our English partners, Australia as well, and our mission is to share knowledge. It is fact-based knowledge. It's science-based knowledge.

So what we do is we take scholars, academics, and we are ... plus journalists. We are a group of mission-driven journalists, I would say, across the country. It's really an honor to be working with everybody. We have basically 500 republishers across the globe, and everything that we publish is Creative Commons, so what that means is that any article that we publish can be picked up and republished in places like, coming from the City of Toronto, I'm just going to mention the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, McClean's, Canadian Press. Those are the kinds of places that will take up our articles and recirculate them, CBC, Global News. As you can imagine, our model of journalism was really in high demand during the height of the pandemic. Our audience has grown so much, and that's partly, as you can imagine, because I'm sure yourselves, just like me, we're out there hunting for news that we can trust, and one of the issues that has happened in Canada but across North America is, tragically, that our specialists, our specialist journalists, the funding has really decreased, so we don't have those specialist desks anymore. And so when we pick up a media, pick up a news story, we really ... I think audiences feel really differently when they pick up a Conversation article. They know that that article is written by an expert, often somebody who's been researching that issue for more than a decade. So this is just a quick overview of who our audience is.

So in Canada, one of the great things for a Canadian researcher is to know that 40 percent of our audience is from the US, so it is a good opportunity to get your research out, not just to a Canadian audience. We do want to do that, but to get it out to a US audience and across the globe as well, and we have these. I'm going to show you a little bit later in this presentation a beautiful back end of our website, so if you do write for us, and you want to see exactly where your article is going, who's reading it, who's picking it up, you can take a look, and it'll tell you, "Actually, 6 percent of this article is being picked up in India or in Australia."

So as you know, I'm the Culture and Society desk, but I work with a team of really amazing editors who are coming from all kinds of places, so science editor, health editor. We all have a politics editor who's been doing politics reporting and editing for decades, so we all come from our own areas of expertise, and I would say the special thing about us is that as journalists, we really work hand-in-hand. It's really a collaborative process, so we work hand-in-hand with scholars to try and get that article out to the most amount of readers possible, and to do that, we're doing some of the things that Connie had mentioned, and I think Liz also talked about is common language. Make sure that the language is accessible, but we're also ...It's a little bit a step beyond that because what we're trying to do is make sure that that's a journalistic article so that that article that we're producing can get recirculated and picked up by all these other news organizations, and that comes with a very specific style.

So, as you know, our model is based on authors who really know what they're talking about. All of our scholars, all of our writers must be currently a researcher, a PhD student, a university professor, adjunct, et cetera, but you must be attached to a research institution in Canada ...

What happens after some authors publish with us? So one of the things ... This is a little survey that we did with the authors, and the authors will tell us, "Well, I actually, I wrote with you. I wrote, and I published my article in *The Conversation*, and after I did that, I immediately got invited to go to a global conference." So there was a question earlier about the pre-tenure, those folks who are pre-tenure who may be worried about taking some time away. I don't know if this is true, but you may be worried about taking time away from working on those peer-reviewed publications, those all-important peer-reviewed publications thinking that perhaps taking the day or the 10 hours or the 8 hours or the 4 hours to write a news article or a popular article may not be as important for the tenure review committee, but these are some examples of why some of the information or some of that work that you do is actually important pre-tenure as well is, it does get your name out there, and it does get your work out there. You get noticed on panels or invited to panels that you may not be invited to. This is Nadia Naffi, who talks a little bit about her impact and how she, same kind of thing. She started writing with us when she was a PhD student, and now she's assistant professor, you can see, and she talks about the impact of her research and how she sort of compares, "Well, I did this peer-reviewed published article, and it got me, I don't know, 500 views, and I did this article for *The Conversation*, and it's been really circulated and shared," and that's a pleasure for some people, and it's also a real comment on the impact of your work.

So *Culture and Society*, which is where I'm at, I work with Haley Lewis, who specializes in looking at Indigenous research. She connects with Indigenous academics and researchers, sharing our work with a larger audience. One of the things that was a real pleasure for me when I started working at *The Conversation* was that I got to contact people that I considered to be rock stars. They're like the rock star academics, so for me, that might be somebody like Daniel Justice at UBC or Yasmin Jiwani at Concordia or Christina Sharpe. These are the voices that I was really seeking out. I really wanted to extend the coverage of ... I really wanted to fill in the gaps that I knew existed in mainstream media, and I really turned to a lot of scholars and academics to help me do that.

And here is a couple of examples of stories that we've published recently. You can immediately go if you want to see some more of our stories, theconversation.com. If you're watching from somewhere else outside of Canada, you would go to conversation.com and just look at the drop-down menu for Canada. So again, the idea of why write, I talked about the analytics that you get. You get to really see not only where are people reading your article, but who's tweeting it? Where are they sharing it? Are they sharing it on Facebook? And often, I hear, I've heard from many people, many scholars who told me that they've used those analytics to then apply for grants, for knowledge-mobilization grants.

Okay, here is an example of what it looks like when you sign on. So one of the things that you can immediately do if you're interested in writing for *The Conversation* is you go to theconversation.com. On the right-hand side, it says, "Sign up to be an author," and on the right-hand side, once you sign up to be an author, you'll be taken to the back end of our website. You immediately become basically a member of our staff. You have access to this analytical board. So Thomas Merritt, who's professor of chemistry and biochemistry at Laurentian University, has

written many, has written a lot for us. You can see his readership is over 1 million. He's got over 1 million views. This is not necessarily typical, but his articles have done really, really well. And you can see, on the right-hand side, it says where his readers are coming from. There's a little chart here. I don't know if you can see my ... There's the United States. Canada is here, New Zealand, and it tells you other. There will be a more detailed breakdown if you scroll down, but this a screenshot, so I can't show you that.

So this is the question that I always get asked is, "How do I know what to pitch? What makes a good story?" So these are some of the things about what makes a good story. Are you kind of the person who ... You're sitting there. You're watching the news, or you're reading the news, and you think, "Well, actually, I have something to say about this particular event. This thing happened. My research is connected to it. My area of expertise is connected to it." That's always a great moment to pitch your idea and pitch your story. Does it draw on new research that's about to be published? An example here is not to say that we really want to dredge up this story again, but Trudeau and the old photos of him in blackface, so that was an opportunity for any researcher in Canada, one example is Cheryl Thompson, to pick up that story. It's got it linked to her decades of research on blackface in Canada. It's the perfect time for her to think about, "How can I connect my research to this story that's ongoing or that's just come out? Does it draw on new research that's about to be published? Does it offer a unique or unexpected perspective?" And the other one is, "Does it offer a practical solution to everyday life challenges?" So the last example of the last one is, for example, should I get my child vaccinated once the vaccines come out? So, in that case, if you're a researcher who's doing that work, well, that's a perfect opportunity for us to publish something on that topic. All of our articles, we ask all of our researchers to come with evidence-based work, so if, for example, you're somebody who wants to publish with us, we would ask that you bring your sources with us to your article so that the editors can work with you, and we're not subject areas. We're journalists. We're experts in what we do, which is making a story accessible.

So these are the writing tips. These are the things that guys already know. You'll be writing for a general audience, so we ask that the prose is conversational. It's free of jargon. That does not mean that we simplify to the point that we are dumbing down your research. We really want to make sure that all of the complicated parts of your research are there, that we're actually truly translating your research to a general audience, and the way that we often talk about that is, are you writing for somebody who's a first-year student? Are you presenting a lecture to a first-year student? But not a first-year student in your field. Perhaps you are in sociology, and your first-year student is, I don't know, a mathematics student. I've talked about how all of your information needs to be cited. We don't use footnotes or bibliographies. We use hyperlinks for that, but we do embed the sources within each article.

So two questions that we ask you to think about when you're sending a pitch to us, okay, can you talk about your story in one sentence? "My story is about this. I'm going to draw on this research to talk about this. I study the business of sports, and so I want to talk about the importance of women's hockey." Why is it interesting and significant for nonacademic readers?

Guys, this is my new podcast. I have to make my pitch. Today is episode 12. We just put it out ... So for 3 1/2 or 4 years, I basically published five articles every week by researchers, and I want to emphasize that those five articles were not done in a day. So even though I published an article a day, those articles sometimes take 3 weeks to finesse and get out. We want to make sure that the articles and the information that we're putting out is correct and it goes out with integrity, so we take our time when we put those articles out there. But the podcast has a whole completely different feeling to it in that I take 3 weeks with a topic, go deep dive and research it and then speak with two researchers from two different areas. Okay. Now, I really want to take questions because I know that this is the most important time for you guys. Send me your questions. Can we open up the floor so that I can answer some questions?

Hannah Paveck:

Absolutely we can. Thank you so much, Vinita, for your insights and also your guidance for how to contribute a conversation, and also, thank you to all the panelists today. These were some really interesting presentations with a lot of food for thought. One of the threads that I noticed going across the three presentations was a real focus on collaboration and relationship building as being key to research impact, whether that was talking about in terms of a shared space with Connie, with critical community-engaged scholarship with Liz Jackson, and I love the way you talked about ... It's not an academic invention. It's an academic methodology. I thought that was a really helpful nuance there. And just this process of collaborating, whether that's with communities, stakeholders or even editors, as you mentioned as well, Vinita. And I'd like to also thank everyone who's been submitting and voting on questions. Really great to see all the engagement there. I'm going to take a question from the floor as we're nearing time, but first, a note that we will be sharing the recordings, so you will have a chance to revisit this conversation.

So first off, we have a question for Vinita from Sandra Jeppesen. Are there strategies for trying to figure out what is interesting in our research in an outside audience? Sometimes I'm so deep in it, I find it difficult to see from the outside.

Vinita Srivastava:

It is hard. It is really challenging. One of the things that sometimes happens is, we get pitches and then get into a conversation with that scholar and hear a little bit more about what they're doing. And then I think by starting the conversation, meaning start your pitch, then you can open up a dialogue with the editor who can help kind of guide your ideas through. So just to think of it as a collaboration, but start the pitch. So I think, again, one of the ways is just to stay on top of, or as you are listening to the news or as you are reading the news, to start jotting down ideas like, "I have something to say about that," and then start to make your pitches that way. And, again, these are not op-ed, so to make sure that you do have evidence-based research to back up your idea.

Hannah Paveck:

That's excellent. Thank you, Vinita. There is one question that I will just phrase to the group. This is from Kristen Bourassa. And thank you, Connie and Liz, for adding in your responses to these questions from the audience as well. This is just the start of some conversations.

From Kristen, "Given the importance of this kind of work, I wonder what advice you might have for universities, funders and policy makers valuing this kind of knowledge mobilization and impact work when it comes to think like university ranking versus trying to focus on grant dollars and citations," and I imagine a lot of early career researchers and graduate students would be thinking about this at the moment. So, Connie, I don't know if you want to raise your answer to the floor, that would be very helpful.

Connie Tang:

Sure, absolutely. It's definitely a topic that comes up during our monthly member discussion clubs all the time. So, David Phipps, Network Director of Research [Indistinct] and the person I mentioned who is the assistant Vice President of Research Impact and Strategy at York. He wrote a blog post, actually, kind of around this topic because it's ... We framed it as a 10-year in promotion, but it's kind of the same question, right? How can we make academics value knowledge mobilization work and engaged scholarship work in way in the same way they might value impact factors or journals or university rankings or whatnot? So I don't have, "Here's the perfect advice to do that," I certainly don't know it. But we do have a couple of resources that are linked in this blog post that I've also put in the answer section of the Zoom chat that I welcome people to check out. And Kristen had a follow-up question about specifically indicators and at an institutional level, and I've linked two other resources that we've done. This is mostly catered to an academic post-secondary institution. But some of the indicators that some of these institutions hadn't used kind of on an institutional level, not as an individual researcher.

Hannah Paveck:

Wonderful. Thank you, Connie. Liz or Vinita, did either of you want to tap in on this question?

Dr. Liz Jackson:

I wouldn't mind. At Guelph, where I'm based, there was quite conservative effort by the previous director of the unit that I now direct a group of faculty associates, some education developers and then some external experts on community-engaged teaching and research. And it did have actual result in terms of changing the ways in which faculty members tenure promotion files were structured and were evaluated. So I don't think it solved the whole problem, but there is now space, ink and weight given to engaged activities that wasn't formerly there. So that was probably 12 years ago, I would say. The journey is far from over. I would also suggest at a

different ...in a slower path, maybe, that another way in which I think our College of Social Applied Human Sciences and the College of Arts at Guelph are making visible the value of engaged work is by ... Each one has recently launched a new interdisciplinary graduate study program. So in the arts, there's an MAPHC, and then CSOD is the Social and Applied Human Sciences. There's a PhD program that are both explicitly practitioner based, engaged and seeking direct, I hate this, but real-world impact. Sorry, Connie, I know you're probably cringing when I say that. But you know what I mean, right? So they're both aimed at people with existing practices, existing relationships and communities, and that work is being valued and integrated and supported as academic work in a way that I think often a student has trouble finding a supervisor to do an engaged program with. So now built in structurally, valued at the institution, resources are flowing to it. Ideally, one day, hires will be allocated to it. So I do feel quite hopeful in the long view. And I also think a little more cynically, and then I'll stop. Not cynically, practically, we have funding bodies now, including SSHRC and NSERC that are explicitly asking people to do engaged work. Now, that happens well and poorly, but it's valued and funded at a very high level. So knowing that funders are encouraging engaged work, for whatever reasons of their own, I think can enable researchers, including student researchers to keep moving up that path, getting grants, being visible, publishing and having that kind of work value to differently than maybe it would have been 10 or 20 years ago. That's all there. Thanks.

Hannah Paveck:

Thanks, Liz. Vinita, did you have a perspective on this from your work with The Conversation Canada? No, absolutely. That's okay. We have time for one more question, so I will ... It's actually directed to you, Vinita. And this is from Crystal Shure. My question is for Vinita. What are some of the most common mistakes that scholars make when pitching an article to the Conversation Canada? I think that would be a great place to end.

Vinita Srivastava:

Yeah. I think some of the most ...The most common mistakes are that when pitching, people forget to connect their research to their idea. So they say they have an idea, and they forget to source it and remind the editor that they have the expertise to talk about this. So that's one thing. And then the other thing is the mistake is to think of it as an op-ed. I have this, "This is driving me crazy. I really want to talk about this thing." Well, you know what? Everybody wants to talk about this thing right now, but tell my why you're the right person to talk about this thing and why you're going to talk about it in an evidence-based way so that our readers can trust it.

Hannah Paveck:

That's excellent. Thank you. Vinita. And unfortunately, that's all the questions we have time for today. Just looking at the clock here. But I wanted to thank all of you again for sharing your

thought-provoking perspectives on building research impact. I really, really appreciate the conversation today. I also like to thank our sponsor, University Affairs, for their support of this webinar and "Career Corner" series. And if you'd like to revisit this conversation, do keep an eye on your inbox because we're going to be sending a link to the recording and other resources in the next few days. So do watch out for that. And as we close out the webinar. I'd like to thank all of you for coming and bringing such excellent and insightful questions. Have a wonderful afternoon.