

Food and Research...Teaming up with Island Campuses

Across Vancouver Island community groups have been undertaking a wide range of community based research projects as part of their work to build stronger local food systems and improve community health. Some of this work has been integrated into formalized research in conjunction with our local universities and colleges; but much of it has not. With over \$150 million dollars going to Vancouver Island Campuses annually for research and with almost 30,000 students engaged in learning and research, there is great opportunity to work more closely to solve pieces of our Island food security puzzle.

The creation of the Vancouver Island Community Research Alliance (VICRA) this year is a notable step forward. Through VICRA, five island post-secondary campuses have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to make a commitment to collaboration and support for community based research.

Currently CR-FAIR, Cowichan Green Community, Lush Valley Food Action Society and the Vancouver Island Traditional Foods Network are working with the Office of Community Based Research at the University of Victoria to look at building capacity to work together. The project is looking at questions such as:

- What types of community based research are being done, and have been done on Vancouver Island around food and health?
- What are some of the best examples/worst examples we can learn from?
- What can we do to strengthen community campus partnerships to undertake community based research?
- What are communities pointing to as the most important priorities for research on the island?

In March and April 2009, each of the groups involved hosted a workshop or meeting of foodies in their community to explore these questions. In the Capital Region we held the workshop called ***Hooking Up! Building Community University Partnerships on Food*** as part of our Annual Food Matters Forum. The workshop participants were:

Moderator: Linda Geggie, CR-FAIR

Dr. Jenny Horn, PHD- Vancouver Island University, Jenny is undertaking a Feasibility study on the development of an Agriculture Resource and Innovation Centre (Jennifer.Horn@viu.ca)

Maeve Lydon, Office of Community Based Research, Uvic and the OCBR Capacity Building Project (Mlydon@uvic.ca)

Lorenzo Magzul, PHD Candidate, University of British Columbia, Faculty of Land and Food Systems (magzul@interchange.ubc.ca)

Robin Tunnicliffe-Organic Farmer and MA student, Strategies for Economic Survival for small scale agriculture (robin.tunnicliffe@hotmail.ca)

Kate Hughes –MA student, Horticulture regulations appropriate for small scale operations (kehughes@uvic.ca)

Paula Hesje-CR-FAIR, TLC and MA student, development of a Food Policy Council (phesje@conservancy.bc.ca)

Sandra Mark-Edible Strategies- Sustainable Institutional purchasing and partnership with universities and other institutional purchasers (sandmark@shaw.ca)

Also in April, CR-FAIR co-hosted an event entitled ***Sharing Food and Knowledge Event*** at UVic. The event explored what communities are doing in terms of research and also highlighted academic work at UVic (Dr. Aleck Ostry) and Vancouver Island University (Dr. Jenny Horne). To build on this work there will be the Sharing Stories and Spaces Community Based Research Institute on May 14 and 15. [Click here to see more information on the institute](#). There will be two other institutes later this year at Vancouver Island University and also in Port Alberni.

One way information is being gathered about Community Based Research on the Island around food and health is through the Community Campus Partnerships and Food CBR Survey. If you have something to contribute, please fill out the survey. There is a draw prize for completed surveys. The survey link is:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=nLqpCs8A0ZE62hAqFeaDyA_3d_3d

More about Community Based Research

What is Community Based Research (CBR)?

CBR involves research done by community groups with or without the involvement of a university. In relation with the university, CBR is a collaborative enterprise between academics and community members. CBR seeks to democratize knowledge creation by validating multiple sources of knowledge and promoting the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination. The goal of CBR is social action (broadly defined) for the purpose of achieving (directly or indirectly) social change and social justice. (*Kerry Strand et al, 2003*)

University of Victoria Office of Community Based Research:

The UVic OCBR exists to facilitate collaborative community-university research projects and partnerships that enhance the quality of life and the economic, environmental and social well-being of communities. Over the next few years they are implementing a capacity building project which focuses on aboriginal health, housing and food issues. As part of this project CR-FAIR and other community groups are working to identify opportunities for collaborative work. As well, an inventory and database of research, education and food related work being done at UVic and Vancouver Island University is being compiled and will be available through the OCBR website.

The Knowledge Mobilization Unit at UVic operates within the Office of Community Based Research and offers:

- The Research Help Desk
- Interdisciplinary Graduate Courses in Community Based Research
- Student Led Research Grants from the BC Government
- Community Based Summer Internship Program

For more info see: <http://web.uvic.ca/ocbr/>

The Community-based Research Laboratory (CBRL) at UVic hosts a group of researchers that is committed to participatory research in Canada and abroad. Their vision is to link global issues with local actions for sustainable change by establishing partnerships with different stakeholders (university, government, civil society, NGOs, business sector) to improve the livelihoods of individuals and communities. Their work involves responsible consumption, waste reduction and resource recovery, social inclusion and gender equality, co-management of resources, and social/solidarity economy.

<http://www.cbri.uvic.ca/en/welcome/index.html>

Vancouver Island University Community Based Research Institute

The Institute's mandate is to foster and coordinate Community Based Research activities in such areas as community health, well-being and development, and family, community, or social issues, as well as other community based research projects across the institution as a whole.

Community Based Research Canada and the Global Alliance for Community Engaged Research web site is www.communityresearchcanada.ca.