

# A Decade at the Research Shop: Investigating the Impacts for Community Partners and Students

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# Outline

## Research Question:

- What impacts have community partners and students experienced as a result of working with the Research Shop?

## Presentation Outline:

- History of the Research Shop, Science Shops
- Literature review
- 2018 Research Shop survey results
- Conclusions and future directions



# Introduction to Science Shops

- Carry out research – typically without a charge
- Responds to a research need from the community
- Unique, based on individual context
- "Science" is a term used broadly to incorporate social and human sciences along with natural and physical
- Most often linked to universities
  - Research done by students under supervision of faculty or staff



# Introduction to Science Shops

- Began in the Netherlands in the 1970's
  - Spread to all Dutch universities within 10 years
- Second wave in the 1980s (Germany, France, Denmark, Belgium)
- Third wave in the 1990s (Austria and UK)
- Fourth wave 1995-2000s (Middle and Eastern Europe)
- Today – across the world
  - Challenging to assess total number



# CESI's Research Shop

- Originated in 2009 at the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute
- High-impact community-engaged scholarship
  - Literature reviews
  - Program evaluations
  - Community-engaged research
- Full-time Coordinator, ~20 part-time graduate students working 5-10 hours/week
- Focus on social services and non-profit sectors; topics of research reflect the needs of partners
- Transition to paid model in 2018 from 'intern' model

# Overview of the Literature

Impacts of Community Engaged Research (CER)



# Impacts from the Literature

## Community Partners

- Access to research
- Relationships/Networks
- Organizational capacity
- Knowledge & skills

## Students

- Community connections
- “Real world” experience
- CER skills



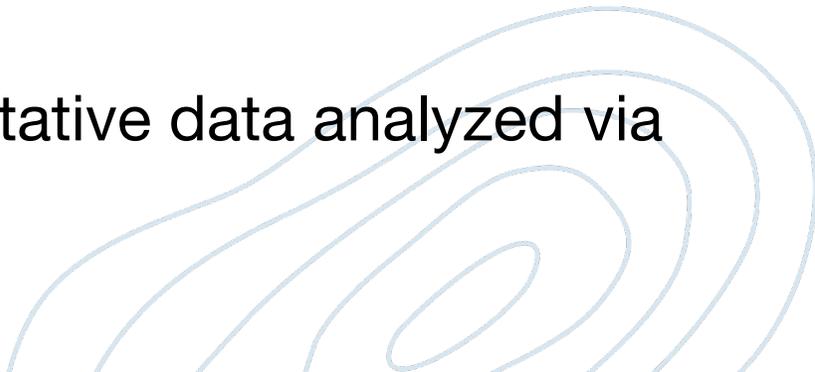
# Gaps in the Literature

- Focus on student impacts (over partner impacts)
- Predominantly focused on benefits, not challenges
- Lack of visibility of Science Shop research
  - Specifically in a North American context



# Purpose & Methods

- Case study approach
  - Community partner perspectives
  - Student perspectives
- Inspired by internal questions around impact and gaps in the literature
- Hoping to shed light on:
  - North American Science Shops
  - The collective impacts of Science Shops on students and the community
- Data collected via four surveys
- Quantitative data analyzed via Excel; Qualitative data analyzed via NVivo



# Results

Research Shop Community Partner and Student Survey (2018)



# Partner Impacts - Overview

Response rate: 29%  
(22 community partners)



# Partner Benefits – Access to Resources

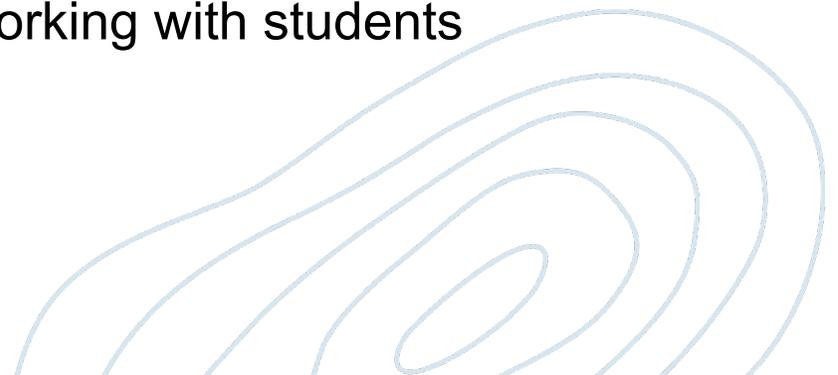
- Expertise/knowledge
  - Qualified students
- Information/resources
  - Data/literature
  - Broader access to U of G (72%)
- Accessibility
  - Low/no cost (71%)
  - Time commitment

*“The research they did was amazing. I would never have had the time to do what they did even though it was important work and information.”*

# Partner Benefits – Institutional Capacity

*“In my opinion, we have benefitted greatly from open discussions about organizational goals and ongoing engagement in project development with the Research Shop.”*

- Credibility
  - Funding applications
  - Presentations
- Serve target population/update programming
- Skill development
  - Research Skills
  - Working with students



# Partner Benefits – Working with Students

*“Being able to work with students, and having them apply research to real community problems and organizations is very rewarding.”*

*“They were so helpful and the end product was so well done and professional.”*

- Increased knowledge of working with students (78%)
- Relationship building
- Enjoy mentoring students (35%)



# Partner Challenges

- Quality
- Working with students
  - Not always content experts
  - Varying timelines

## Time

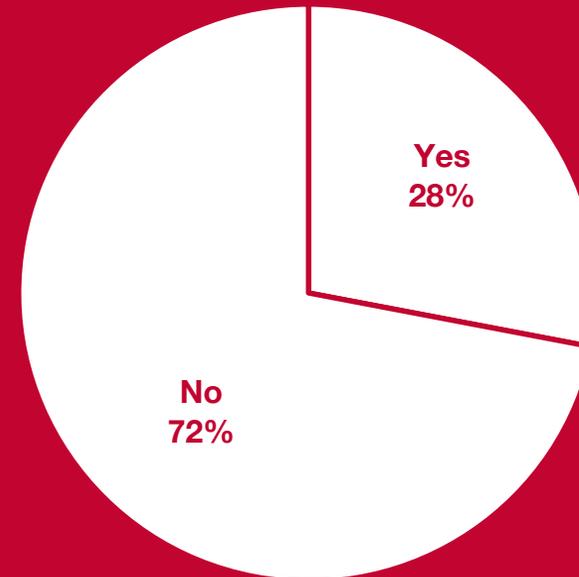
- REB
- Student schedules



# Student Impacts – Overview

Response rate: 29%  
(50 students)

Do you currently work at the  
Research Shop?



# Student Benefits – Relationships

- Built long- and short- term relationships
  - With peers and community partners
  - Mutual exchange; working with and learning from each other
  - Learning how to work with diverse, interdisciplinary groups
  - Networking opportunities

*"I met so many people, both within the Research Shop and in the community, through my work there. These connections led to career and volunteer opportunities, relationships, and overall a more open mind about the types of people I can relate to."*

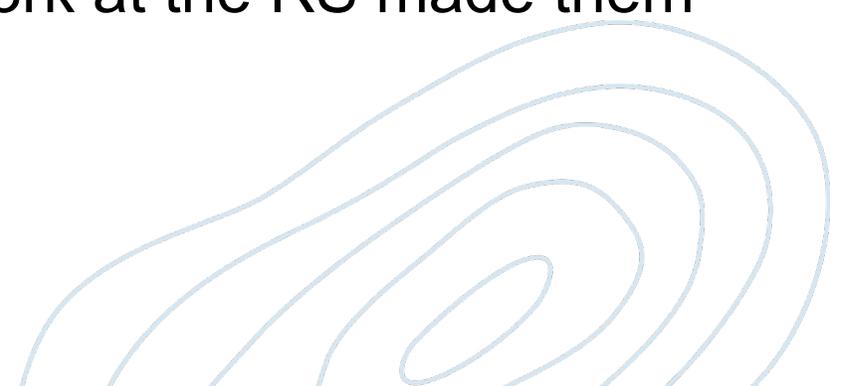
# Student Benefits – Skills & Knowledge

*"Working on projects outside of my own research allowed me to develop knowledge on a variety of topics, though the methods were similar to those within my own discipline."*

- Developed transferable professional and academic skills
  - Building work experience (62%)
  - Increased knowledge and skills (88%)
  - Exposure to new methodologies
- Gained knowledge in new fields
  - In CER, local community, knowledge mobilization, etc.
  - How research is gathered and applied outside of the academy

# Student Benefits – Increased Interest in CE

- 88% chose to work at the Research Shop due to interest in community-engaged work
- 100% reported that their interest in community issues has stayed the same or increased since working at the Research Shop
- 96% reported having participated in, or planning on participating in other CE activities
- 79% reported that their positive experiences at the RS encouraged them to seek out these opportunities
- 69% indicated that their experience and work at the RS made them more likely to pursue a CE career



# Student Challenges

- Institutional/Structural
  - Communication
  - Ebb and flow
- Time
  - Balancing with other responsibilities
- Working with community
  - Expectations
  - Unexpected changes
- Interest
  - Varied research methods and topics

*"...this is a partnership and not free research labour...there are limits on the students' time to dedicate and ability to do an abundance of things asked."*

# Limitations

- Response rate
  - Partners: 29% (22/76)
  - Students: 29% (50/128)
- Lack of statistical significance
- Many iterations over 10 years
- Literature review
  - Not systematic



# Conclusions and Future Directions

- Significant impacts associated with CER
  - Mutual, yet distinct, impacts between partners and students
  - Mostly positive, though challenges exist
  - Potential for broader impacts
- Use of results
  - Aid in the growth of the RS and used as baseline data
  - Contribute to the field



# Questions?

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