RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK (RMAF)

August 20, 2007

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List of Acronyms

CURA	Community University Research Alliance
NS	Nova Scotia
NSRJ	Nova Scotia Restorative Justice
NSRJ-CURA	Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Community University Research Alliance
OMG	Operations Management Group
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RJ	Restorative Justice
RJIS	Restorative Justice Information System
RMAF	Results-Based Accountability Framework
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

I. Profile

The Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Community University Research Alliance (NSRJ-CURA) is a collaborative research partnership between university and community partners. This partnership is funded primarily through a five-year, million dollar grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) through their CURA program. The NSRJ-CURA is also supported through, in kind contributions from, the university and community partners. Additional funding will be sought to support new research projects and specific events throughout the life of the original grant.

The NSRJ-CURA is focused on research related to the institutionalization of restorative justice practice with particular attention to the example of the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program (NSRJP). As one of the most comprehensive and developed restorative justice programs in the world, the Nova Scotia program provides a unique opportunity to explore questions that emerge beyond the pilot or nascent stage of restorative justice programs. The research agenda of the NSRJ-CURA will take advantage of the opportunities presented by the NSRJP to help elucidate and respond to some of the challenges of institutionalizing comprehensive restorative justice in theory and in practice. Through this research the NSRJ-CURA will contribute significantly to strengthening and developing the existing Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program. It will provide new knowledge about restorative justice theory and practice to system actors, policy makers, and decision makers. It will also afford an opportunity for significant skills development and training for those actively engaged in the provision of services within NSRJ. This research will also hold significant insights for the development of restorative justice programs both nationally and globally. The NSRJ-CURA will also make an important contribution to the national and international scholarship and literature on restorative justice as it takes advantage of its unique position to explore issues of theory and practice within the context of the Nova Scotia program.

The NSRJ-CURA will offer significant opportunities and benefits for student education, training, and development. The NSRJ-CURA is committed to engaging students from multiple disciplines including law, sociology, and criminology, in its research through course development and innovation, graduate fellowships, internships, and as research assistants. Through this involvement the NSRJ-CURA will equip students to contribute to the development and operation of restorative justice as practitioners, researchers and/or scholars. The NSRJ-CURA will also provide important opportunities for students to develop empirical research, writing and presentation skills key for their future success.

The partners involved in the NSRJ-CURA represent all of the major institutional stakeholders in the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program. The partners to the NSRJ-CURA are:

University
Dalhousie University
Saint Mary's University

Community
Department of Justice: Correctional Services
Community Justice Society
RCMP "H" Division
Public Prosecution Service
Island Community Justice Society
Valley Restorative Justice
Department of Justice: Court Services Division
Cumberland Community Alternatives Society
John Howard Restorative Justice
South Shore Community Justice Society
Department of Justice: Policing and Victim Services
Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network
Nova Scotia Legal Aid Commission
Southwest Community Justice Society
Halifax Regional Police
John Howard Society Restorative Justice

Each of these partner organizations has appointed a research collaborator to participate in the NSRJ-CURA. The research collaborators are as follows:

Research Collaborators

Academic
Jennifer Llewellyn (Dalhousie University) (Director/Principal Investigator)
Bruce Archibald (Dalhousie University) (Co-applicant)
Donald Clairmont (Dalhousie University) (Co-applicant)
Diane Crocker (Saint Mary's University) (Co-Applicant)
Lori Haskell (University of Toronto)
Steve Kisely (Dalhousie University)
Donald Langille (Dalhousie University)
Melanie Randall (University of Western Ontario)
Tony Thomson (Acadia University)
Michelle Williams (Indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq Initiative Dalhousie Law School)

Community
Janis Aiken (Department of Justice: Correctional Services)
Yvonne Atwell (Community Justice Society)
Keith Brumwell (RCMP "H" Division)
Mike Burns (Halifax Regional Police)
Darrell Carmichael (Public Prosecution Service)
Sylvia Dearing (Island Community Justice Society)
Marge DeBodt (Valley Restorative Justice)
Pat Gorham (Department of Justice: Court Services Division)
Daniel Harroun (Cumberland Community Alternatives Society)
Susan Henderson (John Howard Restorative Justice)
Susan Himmelman (South Shore Community Justice Society)

Stephanie MacInnis-Langley (Department of Justice: Policing and Victim Services)
Joanne Marriot-Thorne (Department of Justice: Policing and Victim Services)
Paula Marshall (Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network)
Kim McOnie (Nova Scotia Legal Aid Commission)
Tanya Porter (Southwest Community Justice Society)
Gola Taraschi (Department of Justice: Court Services Division)
Grace Vos (Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network)
Linda Watters (John Howard Society Restorative Justice)

The research will be pursued through a number of different research projects focusing on the theoretical and practical issues that arise with the development and application of restorative justice in a systematic and comprehensive way. There are 17 such projects planned to take place over the five year period of the CURA grant. Further projects may be undertaken in response to newly identified issues or in connection with new forged partnerships. The 17 research projects reflect five overarching themes related to institutionalization of restorative justice that inform and drive the research agenda of the NSRJ-CURA. They are: (i) translation of principles into practice; (ii) community; (iii) diversity & equity; (iv) gender; and (v) conceptualizing and measuring success. The specific research projects explore and examine:

- the connection/relationship among the various restorative justice programs in Nova Scotia (the NSRJ, the RCMP Program, and the Mi'Kmaq Customary Law Program) including the role of adult restorative justice in the province;
- the reception and integration of restorative justice by the criminal justice system;
- restorative justice in diverse and multicultural contexts;
- the engagement of the African Nova Scotian community with NSRJ;
- NSRJ's engagement of and services to the Francophone/Acadian community;
- the challenges and effects of urban/rural contexts to restorative justice practice;
- the extent to which restorative justice principles reflect and guide NSRJ practice;
- tensions of professionalization;
- measures of success;
- differentials in access/process options and outcomes on the basis of gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status and for other minority or disadvantaged groups;
- decision-making processes for referral to restorative justice;
- the challenge of restorative justice to the compartmentalization of government funding and services;
- the definition and role of community at the process and system level of restorative justice;
- community empowerment/capacity as a goal of restorative justice;
- the public perception/knowledge of NSRJ (and RJ generally);
- rights protection in restorative justice;
- the application of restorative justice to gender-based violence; and
- health outcomes

University and community-based researchers will work closely to design, implement and realize this ambitious and significant research agenda. The NSRJ-CURA is committed to conducting

research collaboratively between its community and university partners. To this end, community researchers will play an integral role in the governance, planning, implementation and dissemination of the research along with the university-based researchers. The governance structure of the NSRJ-CURA reflects this commitment to collaboration. The NSRJ-CURA is governed by a **Policy Board** which includes representatives from all partner organizations (generally the research collaborator from each partner is the representative) as well as all the university-based researchers. This board is responsible for the general direction of the research grant, including approval of projects, communication strategies, and major funding allocation decisions. The Policy Board receives reports from the Operations Management Group, Project Working Groups, and the Director. This board generally meets bi-annually.

More detailed operational decisions related to carrying out the policy direction set by the Policy Board are made by the **Operations Management Group**. This group also advises the Director on administrative matters. The Operations Management Group meets as needed (approximately every month). It is made up of the Director, co-applicants, and three (3) representatives from community partners.

The **Director** of the NSRJ-CURA is responsible for general day-to-day administration of the grant and supervises the Project Manager. It is the Director's responsibility to report to the Policy Board, and to consult with the Operations Management Group on major administrative issues. The Director will exercise her responsibilities in consultation with the grant co-applicants.

The research projects of the NSRJ-CURA will be planned, implemented, tracked and managed by the leader for the particular project in consultation with the Research Cluster in which the project belongs. **Research Clusters** bring together research projects that overlap or share some connection in terms of their research focus or methods. Each cluster will involve the lead researchers for each project within the cluster, as well as the community collaborators interested and involved in each research project (as researchers, not subjects of research). The clusters meet on a regular basis (every two or three months - unless more regular meetings are required). They review the progress of the research projects within each cluster, assist with research planning, implementation and dissemination. The cluster will pay particular attention to the overlap and possible connections between research projects. Further, the clusters will provide an opportunity to develop knowledge dissemination and mobilization plans and recommendations related to the specific projects within the cluster. There are three research clusters and each one will be chaired by a community collaborator. (See chart Appendix A).

In addition to these governance bodies described above, the NSRJ-CURA will benefit from the advice of an **International Panel of Experts**. This panel will be comprised of invited international experts that will provide knowledge, insights and reviews for the research projects. It will serve as a resource, and lift the profile of the CURA research to ensure wide dissemination of research results. The panel will not meet in person, except as participants in the final conference. They will participate through targeted discussions or inquiries by email or through on-line forums on the website.

II. Logic Model

Appendix B includes a logic model for the NSRJ-CURA that reflects our activities, what we hope will come of those activities and how the results of our activities will benefit the NSRJ-CURA participants and the community at large. The logic model maps out our expectations and goals. It will guide our work and will form the basis for the evaluation framework[1].

This model was developed over several months through many iterations of consultation with all members of the Policy Board. Beginning in the winter of 2007, several members of the OMG laid out an initial draft, based in part on the Milestones Report presented to SSHRC in March. All members of the OMG then met and provided further input which was again refined through an OMG sub-group. This final draft was presented to the entire Policy Board at its meeting in June. The input provided in this meeting was consolidated, edited and approved by the OMG.

III. Performance Measurement Strategy

i. Identification of Performance Indicators

Performance indicators, qualitative or quantitative, measure whether we are producing the outputs and achieving the outcomes laid out in the RMAF logic model. Indicators help us to assess and report on our performance. They indicate, either directly or indirectly, whether a particular goal is being or has been achieve (Patton 1997). Sometimes they are as simple as noting whether a report has been produced. Other times they are as complex as people's attitudes and opinions. Good indicators need to be reliable (i.e., able to be measured consistently), feasible and useful. They answer the following questions:

- have we produced the outputs?
- have we successfully achieved the outcomes?[2]

Performance indicators for the NSRJ-CURA have been developed through a consultative process, led by the OMG. In June 2007 the Policy Board prioritized outcomes, in each of the activity areas. They subsequently made selections from, and added to, a list of potential indicators developed by several members of the OMG. Finally, the OMG refined and approved the list of outcomes to be measured and the indicators that would help us to measure them.

Tables 2-5 in Appendix C summarize the indicators that we feel would best represent the short term outcomes that were identified as priorities. Given our time and resource constraints, we cannot measure all the outcomes in the logic model. We may also discover, as the evaluation framework is developed, that it is similarly not feasible to measure all the indicators. Time and cost may be prohibitive in some instances. The evaluation framework will include details on these decisions.

[1] The evaluation framework will be prepared by the Research Methods Coordinator, in consultation with the OMG. It will include full details of the evaluation design, including budget, timelines, and instruments.

[2] We will focus only on the evaluation of short term outcomes, achieved during the life of the grant (five years). It is not feasible to commit to studying long term outcomes at this time.

ii. Measurement Strategy

Development of a measurement strategy involves the identification data sources and data collection methods to assess each indicator. These have been identified by the Research Methods Coordinator in consultation with the OMG. They were approved by the OMG in August 2007. These details, summarized in Tables 2-5 (Appendix C), will form the basis of the evaluation framework. This document will provide the NSRJ-CURA participants with details on the timing, budget and exact instruments to be used in the evaluation.

IV. Evaluation Strategy

i. General Plans

We will undertake yearly fixed evaluations during the life of the NSRJ-CURA. These evaluations will involve pre-designed evaluation tools such as surveys of the CURA participants. The evaluation will be mainly formative in nature, informing change and evolution, rather than evaluating final outcomes. The evaluation process will be led by the Research Methods Coordinator with assistance from a Research Assistant and the Project Coordinator (both of whom will be responsible for administering the evaluation tools, such as questionnaires, as required).

ii. Overall Approach to Evaluation

Our evaluation will not be conducted by an external evaluator and we have not dedicated funds for contracting out an evaluation. Rather, our approach draws from the literature on "participatory evaluation." This approach to evaluation is "people-centered: project stakeholders and beneficiaries are the key actors of the evaluation process and not the mere objects of the evaluation" (Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning 1997: 1). As such, participants are actively involved in the design of the evaluation. Ideally, they should contribute to defining the goals and objectives of the evaluation as well as the measures of the program's success (Aubel 1993; Burke 1998; Cousins and Whitmore 1998; King 1998). Participatory evaluations produce results that will be recognized and used by participants to develop and/or improve the program evaluated. Further, "[a]s a result of the active involvement of stakeholders in reflection, assessment and action, a sense of ownership is created, capacities are built, beneficiaries are empowered and lessons learned are applied both in the field and at the program level, increasing effectiveness" (Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning 1997: 6). Table 1 provides a summary of the difference between participatory and traditional forms of evaluation.

To some extent, our ability to be fully participatory is somewhat constrained by the activity areas prescribed by SSHRC: partnerships and governance; research training and development; research and knowledge production; knowledge dissemination and mobilization. Having said that, we have developed this RMAF, and the details of what comes of our activities in these four groups, in consultation with one another through a thoroughly participatory approach. The participatory nature of the evaluation work that comes out of this RMAF will be facilitated by the governance structure with the OMG leading the work and regular reporting through the cluster groups and future Policy Board meetings. We also intend to take advantage of the on-line communication tools to enhance the participatory opportunities of the evaluation.

Table 1. Comparison of Conventional and Participatory Evaluation Methods

	Conventional Evaluation	Participatory Evaluation
Purpose of Evaluation	to demonstrate success of failure of a program	to develop the program, clarify roles and responsibilities, and increase satisfaction of those involved
Evaluation Questions/Indicators	developed and asked by people who are not closely linked to the program	developed by those involved with the program
Evaluation Methods	scope over depth, "product oriented" (i.e., heavily reliant on quantitative methods)	depth over scope, "process oriented"
Evaluator	external expert	program participant
Evaluator Role	leading role-- to maintain objectivity and neutrality	facilitating role—to ensure collaboration and feedback
Evaluation Findings	not open to review and discussion	shared and discussed

(adopted from Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning 1997; Burke 1998; Cousins and Whitmore 1998; King 1998; Springett 2003)

The use of participatory evaluation reflects the program objectives of the CURA program as a whole. This approach to evaluation has evolved out of the tradition of "action research" that aims to shift the research focus away from the production of knowledge for knowledge sake. Rather, action research produces knowledge that has some practical use and has been developed in collaboration with those who may use the knowledge: "[r]esearch cannot aspire to solve problems *for* the practitioners but has to work *with* the practitioners" (Brulin 2001: 441) The CURA program in general, and the NSRJ-CURA in particular, aims to produce exactly this type of knowledge. Participatory evaluation, with its move beyond positioning participants as the subjects and/or objects of evaluation also aligns with the aim of the CURA program to involve community partners as researchers, not just research subjects. (Bosio de Ortecho 1991). Further, this approach to evaluation requires that the participants learn about research and evaluation, fulfilling another one of the CURA objectives around Research Training and Development. In essence, the use of participatory evaluation will strengthen the NSRJ-CURA's ability to develop as a fully collaborative program of research.

This approach is, however, not without its drawbacks, particularly in the context of collaborative research between community agencies and academics. The literature on community-based and "action research" documents how real or perceived power imbalances, among other issues, can interfere with such projects (Cottrell 1996; Brulin 2001; Cottrell 2006). We should monitor this issue as we proceed but hopefully the consultative process leading up to this RMAF will be a solid step toward avoiding these problems.

V. Reporting Strategy

Reporting is a key aspect of any evaluation work, perhaps even more so for participatory evaluation because it assumes that the program participants will work together to address issues arising out of the evaluation. For each round of the evaluation the Research Methods Coordinator will prepare descriptive reports for the OMG who will prepare a response, and identify action items where necessary. The report and the OMG response will be available to the Policy Board at its meetings and the OMG will decide, where relevant, on other mechanisms for discussion and input. While the OMG will take the lead on addressing any issues that arise in the evaluation, each Policy Board meeting will include time for reporting on and discussing the evaluation findings.

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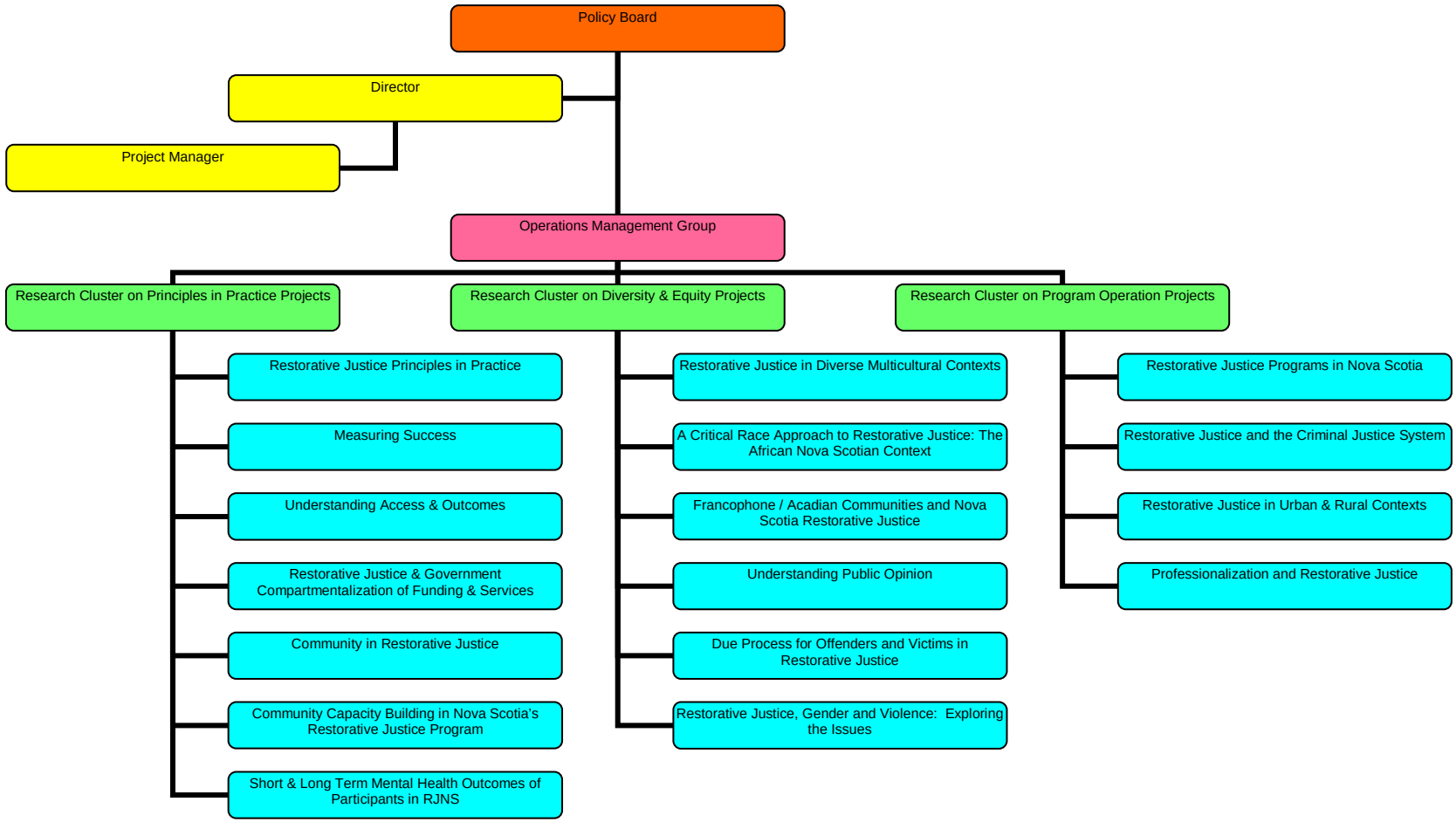
Appendix A: Governance Structure



Appendix B: NSRJ-CURA Logic Model

Activities		Results What will come of our activities?		Short Term Outcomes (during the CURA) What are the benefits/effects of what we produce?		Long Term Outcomes Our Legacy
Partnerships and Governance Developing & strengthening research partnerships between an interdisciplinary university-based research team & community-based researchers representing RJ program stakeholders in Nova Scotia	→	Inclusive/collaborative governance model Clearly articulated roles & responsibilities Opportunities, support & encouragement for all participants to be involved &/or play a leadership role Local, national, & international networks partnerships & collaborations Effective mechanisms for new affiliations within and outside the NSRJ-CURA	→	Clear understanding of roles/responsibilities & effective communication among NSRJ-CURA participants Productive and enriched working relationships, mutual learning Participants taking roles/responsibilities based on skills/expertise Understanding of strengths/constraints of diverse participants Increased capacity to take on new roles & draw on diverse resources Strengthened capacity of university to respond to community Strengthened RJ theory and practice in NS	→	Better cooperation between government, community and academics in justice decision-making More evidence-based policy development Use of community-based deliberative approaches to decision-making around justice issues
Research Training/Development Training participants, including students, in community-based research; empirical/legal/conceptual research methods; developing expertise in RJ research, theory, & practice among all participants; using experiential or active learning approaches	→	Learning/educational opportunities for all participants Educational & employment opportunities for students. Enhanced interdisciplinary & applied research capacity/skills among all participants	→	Enhanced/deeper knowledge of approaches to research, collaborative research, & applied research skills New/enhanced career paths for students Participants better able to seek funding, manage/develop research Better presentation of RJ program to all stakeholders Increased capacity for research on RJ	→	Expansion of justice research culture in NS Increased capacity to undertake research on RJ and alternative to crime &/conflict in NS and beyond
Research and Knowledge Production Researching the theory & practice of RJ, focusing on its institutionalization; producing knowledge related to five themes: translating principles into practice; community; diversity & equity; gender; & conceptualizing & measuring success, through eighteen related research projects	→	Research projects designed & implemented through collaboration of NSRJ-CURA participants New knowledge on issues related to the institutionalization of RJ and about relationships between RJ theory & practice Research that is relevant, tangible, accessible, timely, local and inclusive	→	Enhanced knowledge of issues relating to the institutionalization of RJ and of RJ theory and practice Enhanced ability to meet the challenges of institutionalization of RJ and to contribute to RJ policy development Better understanding of issues related to: translating theory to practice; developing inclusive approaches to RJ; measuring success; implementing principled RJ practice; involving community in criminal justice practices More consistency in RJ practices throughout NS	→	Improved service to victims, offenders, community NS RJ program changed in response to research on the five themes More widespread acceptance/use of RJ as an approach to justice
Knowledge Dissemination and Mobilization Disseminate & mobilize knowledge on the institutionalization of RJ to diverse audiences: RJ program stakeholders, RJ scholars & practitioners, policy makers, general public, & the academic community (locally, nationally and internationally)	→	Collaboratively developed communication strategy targeting diverse audiences using multiple modes of dissemination including, but not limited to: conferences, academic scholarship, internet, media, internal publications, public events, policy papers etc. Dissemination to local, national and international audiences	→	Effective dissemination of NSRJ-CURA research Increased knowledge of RJ theory & practice, & of the NSRJ Program locally, nationally, & internationally Increased confidence & competence in communicating & mobilizing complex ideas about justice, RJ, research and other related issues Research being used to inform RJ practice in NS Increased profile of NSRJ Program Increased use of research to inform program policy & practices	→	CURA research drives policy development on the NSRJ Program, other RJ programs & intellectual development of RJ theory Greater public/stakeholder knowledge & understanding of RJ Greater "take up" of RJ

Appendix C: Performance Measurement Strategy Tables

Table 2: Partnerships and Governance

Outcomes	Indicators	Data Source(s)	Collection Method(s)
Productive and enriched working relationships with mutual learning	Partners understand each others' needs, interests, strengths, and constraints	participants	questionnaire/interviews
	Absence of conflict among participants	participants	
	Satisfaction of CURA participants' with respect to roles, responsibilities, working relationships, participation, and level of inclusion	participants	questionnaire/interviews
	High level of partner participation and leadership activities	documents participants	n/a questionnaire/interviews
Clear understanding of roles/responsibilities among NSRJ-CURA participants	CURA participants meet their obligations: meeting attendance, deliverables, leadership, etc.	documents	n/a
	CURA participants buy into and understand the governance model and their place in it	participants	questionnaire/interviews
Increased profile of NSRJ Program	Local, national, and international networks and partnerships: affiliates cooperation, participation in conferences, hits on the website, mailing list, international advisory group participation	documents	n/a
	Change in referral patterns (more from different entry points)	RJIS	collected as per current RJ agency processes
	Better understanding of NSRJ Program among RJ stakeholders	RJ Stakeholders	questionnaire

Table 3: Research Training and Development

Outcomes	Indicators	Data Source(s)	Collection Method(s)
Enhanced/deeper knowledge of approaches to research, including collaborative research and applied research skills	Applied research skills, for example: research design, data collection and analysis, presenting results, administrative tasks, and specific skills such as website design, workshop orientation, research ethics boards, program evaluation, and conceptual research strategies.	participants	questionnaire
	Participants feel prepared to undertake future research.	participants	questionnaire
	Participants feel more skilled/knowledgeable about research methods (including community based research and RJ theory and practice)		
Increased capacity for research on RJ	New research projects collaborations	participants	questionnaire
New/enhanced career paths for students	Students engaged in research on RJ and pursuing relevant careers	students	questionnaire

Table 4: Research/Knowledge Production

Outcomes	Indicators	Data Source(s)	Collection Method(s)
Better understanding of issues related to: translating theory to practice; developing inclusive approaches to RJ; measuring success; implementing principled RJ practice; involving community in criminal justice practices	Completed research projects	Documents	n/a
	Participants have gained knowledge from the research questions about each of the five themes	Participants	Survey/questionnaire
Enhanced knowledge of issues relating to the institutionalization of RJ theory and practice.	Production of reports, papers, and articles produced that shed light on key issues.	Documents	
	Participants are more knowledgeable about issues raised	participants	questionnaires/survey
Increased confidence in the use of RJ.	Increased referrals from more diverse referral points	RJIS	Through Agency data collection
	Increased confidence among RJ Stakeholders and the general public	RJ Stakeholders	Interviews
		General Public	Poll

Table 5: Knowledge Dissemination and Mobilization

Outcomes	Indicators	Data Source(s)	Collection Method(s)
Effective dissemination of NSRJ-CURA research	# invitations to present NSRJ-CURA research, # of citations of research product	Google Scholar Lead researchers	n/a questionnaire/survey
	researchers publishing in leading journals (or prominent book collections) on all projects	Lead researchers	questionnaire/survey
Increased knowledge of RJ theory and practice, and of the NSRJ Program locally, nationally, and internationally	Increased requests to volunteer/participate in RJ	Agency Files	by Agencies
	Development of university courses/programs	Participants	survey/questionnaire
	Increased referrals	RJIS	by Agencies
	Used for more serious offences/ decrease in use of criminal justice system (court)	Policy Documents	n/a
Increased confidence and competence in communicating and mobilizing complex ideas.	Participants have learned communication skills	Participants	questionnaire/survey
	Participants feel more confident about their ability to communicate complex ideas		
Increased use of research to inform program policy and practice	Agency policy and practice informed by researcher	Key Informants in Agencies	interview