



Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence
La promotion des relations et l'élimination de la violence

FINAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2006 TO 2011

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**Networks of Centres
of Excellence
Réseaux de centres
d'excellence**

The *Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network* (PREVNet) was funded as an NCE *New Initiative* (NCE-NI) in 2006. With this funding we created a network comprising 62 leading Canadian researchers and their students from 15 academic disciplines and 56 national youth-serving organizations. Our primary focus of the NCE-NI was to build collaborative and trusting relationships within the network, and to enhance bullying prevention knowledge and the practice of adults involved with children and youth. With researchers and partners in the NCE-NI, we co-created more than 80 organization-specific bullying prevention initiatives, including educational presentations, activities, and resources. Through these network activities, we developed a research-positive culture among our partners in which evidence-based knowledge and practice are viewed as necessities and vital to organizational effectiveness and advancement. In Canada and beyond, PREVNet is now recognized as the authoritative voice for the prevention of violence and the promotion of healthy relationships.

Rationale for Establishing a National Network in Canada

Canada does poorly on the international stage on critical early indicators of interpersonal violence, ranking in the *bottom third* on bullying and victimization (Craig et al., 2009). Bullying predicts interpersonal violence (dating aggression, sexual harassment, violent crime) (Farrington & Ttofi, 2011; Pepler et al., 2008). In Canada, 12% of boys and 6% of girls engage in severe bullying; 15% of boys and 13% of girls are chronically victimized (Molcho et al., 2009). The most effective strategy to prevent youth violence is to promote healthy relationships (e.g., Moretti & Obsuth, 2011); however, Canada fares poorly on the quality of family and peer relationships, ranking 18th out of 21 developed nations (UNICEF, 2007).

Poor social relationships are as big a contributor to early death as smoking, drinking, and obesity (Holt-Lunstead et al., 2010). The cost of a single youth whose troubled relationships lead to a life of crime is estimated to be \$2.6 to \$4.4 million (Cohen & Piquero, 2009). Although there are many activities at local, provincial, and national levels in Canada to prevent bullying, these are uncoordinated and have often been developed without evidence of effectiveness; very few have been evaluated and even fewer have a rigorous assessment.

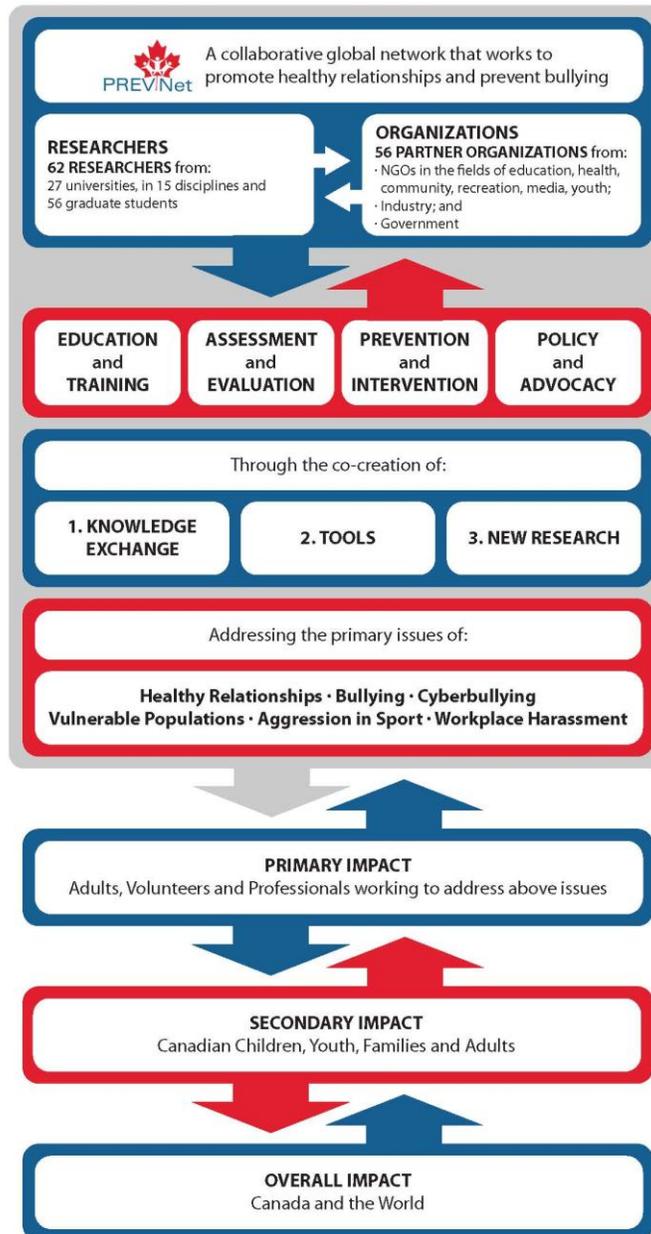
PREVNet's Strategic Plan for Knowledge Mobilization

PREVNet is creating social-cultural change in Canada regarding the use of power and aggression in relationships. PREVNet links NGOs and other partners with researchers for a national effort to promote safe and healthy relationships for Canadian youth. PREVNet partnerships serve as the catalyst for social-cultural change through enhanced professional and research practice and informed social policy. PREVNet's NGOs partners have outreach to promote these activities within every community in Canada. Through our partnerships, we have the potential to reach over 11 million children and 1 million adults who work with them. According to Statistics Canada (2006), this number exceeds the Canadian population under 19 years of age of 5,688,840. This "double counting" indicates the added value of the network: we have the potential to reach children in multiple contexts to provide consistent messages and responses to promote healthy relationships across settings where they live, work, and play.

Figure 1 shows the PREVNet's model of knowledge mobilization including the four strategy pillars. The *Education and Training* pillar is to develop awareness and knowledge, change attitudes, and build commitment to promoting healthy relationships and addressing bullying problems. The *Assessment and Evaluation* pillar is to provide assessment tools to evaluate bullying problems and children's relationships, as well as the effectiveness of programs. The *Prevention and Intervention* pillar is to provide empirically-based tools and strategies to reduce bullying problems and promote healthy relationships. Finally, the *Policy and Advocacy* pillar is to

stimulate policy development to provide evidence-based guidelines for ensuring children’s rights to be safe and supported in all contexts.

Figure 1. PREVNet Model of Knowledge Mobilization



Assessing the Effectiveness of PREVNet

Growth and Excellence of the Network

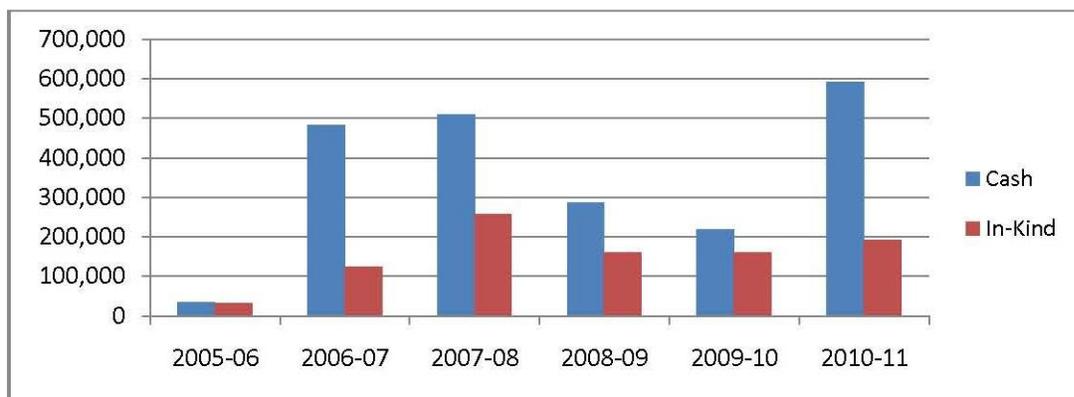
The primary objective of the NCE-NI program is to support networking activities among researchers and promote new partnerships with receptor communities. PREVNet began as a network of 21 researchers, and over the subsequent five years expanded to 62 researchers from 27 Canadian universities, in 15 different disciplines including psychology, psychiatry, social

work, child and youth studies, sociology, criminology, justice and policy studies, epidemiology, health, nursing, paediatric medicine, law, business, human resources management, and education. Over the past five years, PREVNet’s researchers have been very productive. Researchers have written more than 675 journal articles, 230 book chapters, 30 books, and 120 reports. PREVNet researchers delivered more than 800 presentations and workshops in Canada and internationally. Additionally, the NCE-NI program has enabled PREVNet researchers to secure more than \$36 million in new grants.

We encourage researchers to engage graduate students in PREVNet activities. We began with a strong group of 29 graduate students, which expanded to 56 graduate students. When 15 of our students graduated and were eager to continue their involvement with PREVNet, we established a Young Professionals category. In addition, there is a Student Advisory Committee which consists of seven graduate students and is responsible for organizing student events, advising Executive Committee, and generating new ideas student activity in network.

When we applied for NCE-NI funding, 30 national youth-serving organizations agreed to join. From the original 30, we have expanded to 56 PREVNet partners over five years with representation from the industry sector (n=5), federal agencies (n=3), provincial agencies (n=1), and NGOs (n=47). Over the NCE-NI grant period, PREVNet partner organizations have provided more than \$2.1 million in cash contributions and close to \$1 million in in-kind contributions (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Summary of PREVNet Partner Cash and In-Kind Contributions (in Cdn Dollars)



We have met the NCE goal of establishing and growing a network of researchers “so as to encourage them to form new partnerships with receptor communities”. We have seen growth of 195%, 93%, and 87% for our researchers, graduate students, and partners, respectively.

Development of Knowledge Mobilization Resources and Tools

The PREVNet partnership model is based on forging trusting relationships. In working with the NGOs, we recognize the need to tailor our approach and work at the point along the social change continuum where they are currently focusing. The partnerships are beneficial to both researchers and NGOs. Researchers within PREVNet learn from the NGOs’ deep practical understanding built through day-to-day work with children and youth. NGOs within PREVNet meet researchers who have knowledge, skills, and tools to inform and evaluate their practices.

Partnerships between researchers and receptor communities are established through direct consultations with partners, student activities, interactions on working groups and at annual general meetings and conferences, and contributions to the PREVNet series.

We have worked with 100% of our partners over the past five years. We have co-created more than 80 organization-specific bullying prevention initiatives, including educational presentations, activities, and resources.

Through PREVNet's three primary mechanisms (research project teams, working groups, and conferences with book series), knowledge mobilization resources are developed and refined. By collaborating with partners, we work to ensure that PREVNet's resources are relevant, state-of-the-art, and evidence-based. We have created eight working groups that serve as catalysts for knowledge mobilization and grant applications including: Education and Training, Assessment, Prevention and Intervention, Policy, Social Aggression, Aboriginal, Cyber Risk, and Workplace Harassment. Over the past five years, 92% of researchers, and 69% of partners, and 60% of students have participated in one or more working groups.

We have hosted five annual general meetings with our researchers and partners, followed by a full-day conference for community professionals with more than 24 workshops to choose from. We have had consistently high ratings from attendees for the content in our conferences. More than 1,500 people have attended the "public day" conferences over the past five years.

PREVNet's resources have taken many forms including: training tools and manuals (n=31), brochures (n=5), tipsheets (n=30), literature reviews (n=4), articles for partner associations (n=8), and computer games (n=2). Some examples of tools that we have co-created with our partners include:

- Creation of a *Healthy Relationships Training* module to train all adult volunteers for Big Brothers, Big Sisters (which mentored more than 30,000 children last year), Scouts Canada (with 24,000 adult volunteers and 78,000 children participating), and Canadian Red Cross (reaches over 122,000 adults and 180,000 children/youth per year).
- Handbook for Principals (*Bullying in Schools: Guidelines for Prevention and Intervention*) available to more than 14,000 principals across Canada
- Creation of cyber bullying resources for Canadian Teachers' Federation for more than 220,000 teachers across Canada
- Created teachers' guide for three of Family Channel television shows which reach more than 5.8 million children
- Created *Girls United* Training Module and e-learning module with Girl Guides delivered to 22,000 guide leaders who will interact with 85,000 guides.
- Created training manual for Kids Help Phone counselors who help more than 5,600 children/year

In its four years of operation, the PREVNet website welcomed more than 175,000 site visits from 181 countries with visitors downloading materials more than 29,000 times. Over 99.9% of users who downloaded resources found the information helpful (82% indicated the information was very helpful and 18% indicated it was somewhat helpful).

In addition to our work with PREVNet partners, we have also collaborated with other organizations both in Canada and internationally. For example,

- PREVNet is involved in a leadership role in the Health Behaviours Survey of Children and Youth, a survey conducted in 43 countries. The results of this survey provide essential

information to the World Health Organization and UNICEF in creating country ratings of youth's health and well-being.

- Through work with the Canadian Red Cross, PREVNet is building a partnership with the Australian Red Cross to evaluate their adaptation of Walking the Prevention Circle for Aboriginal Communities in Australia.
- At an International Think Tank on Bullying Prevention, PREVNet Scientific Co-Directors and 5 PREVNet researchers co-led the creation of the Kandersteg Declaration - an international commitment by researchers from 15 nations to prevent bullying and victimization in children and youth.
- PREVNet Scientific Co-Directors consulted to Austria, Republic of Georgia, Colombia, Italy, and the United States to translate the PREVNet model of addressing bullying at a national level through partnerships.

To summarize, knowledge mobilization is promoted through the four PREVNet pillars:

- *Education and Training Pillar:* We have developed more than 30 training manuals / education resources for our partners. These resources have added value by enabling NGO partners to provide consistent messages and responses to bullying. This work also added value to the researchers as they worked with NGOs by identifying key issues and current gaps in scientific knowledge. PREVNet's collective work provided the first stage of understanding for social-cultural change regarding relationships.
- *Assessment and Evaluation Pillar:* PREVNet helped to develop of state-of-the art web-based assessment tools which have enhanced the evaluation capacity of our partners.
- *Prevention and Intervention Pillar:* PREVNet has added value in providing NGOs and governments with a new capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of their bullying prevention and interventions efforts within a particular context or across many levels of organizational systems. For the researchers, PREVNet has added value in developing tools for new collaborative and coordinated large-scale evaluations of current and emerging best practices to address bullying in Canada and internationally.
- *Policy and Advocacy Pillar:* Through PREVNet's extensive network, we will add value by providing a united voice to advocate for policies and programs to ensure children's rights for safety and inclusion and to promote healthy relationships.

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