



# Community Hub Evaluation

# 2017



## Background

This evaluation was undertaken in 2016-17 by Ricardo Ramirez Communication Consulting. It describes the achievements of two community hubs in Southwestern Ontario: Langs in Cambridge, and the Family Centre, of Family & Children Services of the Waterloo Region (FACS) in Kitchener. The two hubs evaluated provide multiple services under one roof. Their leaders understood early on that their clients' needs would be best served in an integrated manner.



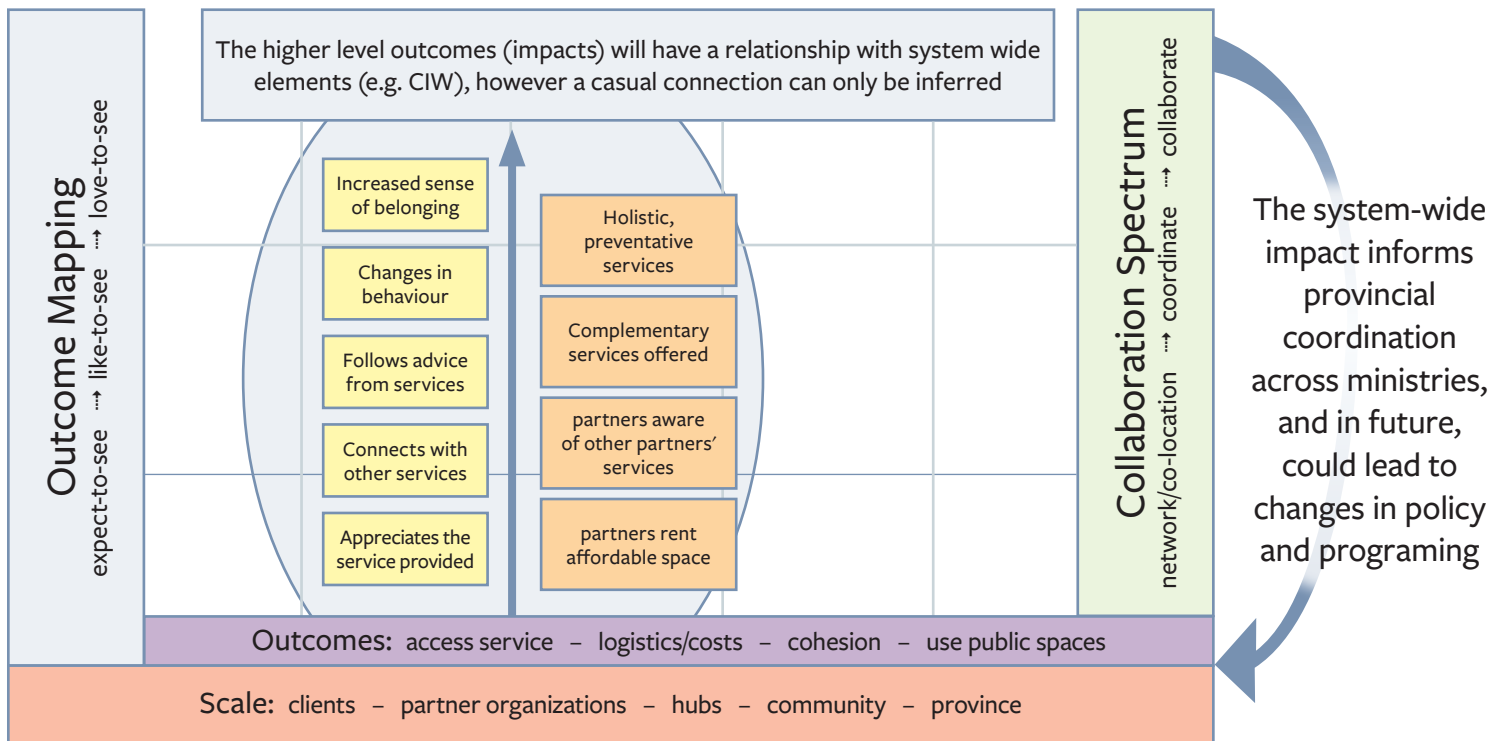
Their visions long preceded the Government of Ontario's strategic framework and the construction of the current facilities, yet when they were built, they augmented the opportunities to provide multiple services and programs under one roof. Langs a community development organization has had a rich history of collaboration for close to 40 years and was co-located with community partners prior to the establishment of the Hub@1145. Family and Children's Services was incorporated in 1894 as a local Children's Aid Society.



In 2001, the organization's Strategic Directions focused on building relationships with families and community partners to address the safety and well-being of children. The organization moved away from a traditional model of child welfare to a community based approach to service delivery. At that time, Langs invited Family and Children's Services into their neighbourhood location. This early partnership and the success of the Langs model has helped influence the development of the current hubs.

Although both hubs are unique in their design, there are core elements in both.

## The Community Hub Theory of Change



## Methodology

The methodology undertaken to complete this evaluation included:

- Establishment of evaluation committee
- Development of a theory of change
- Documentation review
- 2 focus groups with clients (1 at each Hub)
- 2 focus groups with partners (1 at each Hub)
- 2 focus groups with staff (1 at each Hub)
- Client Survey (154 responses)
- Online Partner Survey (41 responses)
- 20 key informant interviews (8 Hub staff and partners, 12 local/provincial stakeholders)

## Profile of Hub Users

**60%** of the survey respondents were 50 years old and over;

**74%** of the survey respondents were female;

**41.2%** had secondary / high school education or less

**41.8%** had a household annual income of less than \$30,000; and

**70%** of the clients (who filled in surveys) visit one of the hubs once a week or more.

## High-level Findings

The table provides samples of short, medium, and long-term outcomes for clients and partners located at the hub:

	Clients	Partners
Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased sense of belonging</li> <li>Feeling healthier and happier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved health outcomes for clients</li> </ul>
Medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connecting with other (and / or new) services</li> <li>Benefitting from multiple services</li> <li>Changes in lifestyle (more exercise)</li> <li>Changes in behaviour (referring others to the hub)</li> </ul> <p><i>“Attending the Family Centre is like fun for kids. It is affordable, free, a great opportunity for kids to learn new skills. Its like starting a new chapter in a book.”</i> (FCS Client)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase effectiveness</li> <li>Increased efficiency</li> <li>Increased reach</li> <li>Time savings</li> </ul> <p><i>“It breaks down those barriers: the reluctance, the fear, the anxiety that comes from transitioning services to another agency...the familiarity piece, the trust that has already been established”</i> (Partner)</p>
Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciate the feel of the place</li> <li>Are aware of more services provided</li> <li>Appreciate the mix of people</li> <li>Make friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate professional space</li> <li>Opportunity to work with other partners</li> <li>Increased awareness about other services</li> <li>Secure (safe) environment</li> </ul>



**81.8%**  
of respondents  
said they met  
new people



**82%**  
of clients feel having  
multiple services under  
one roof is important



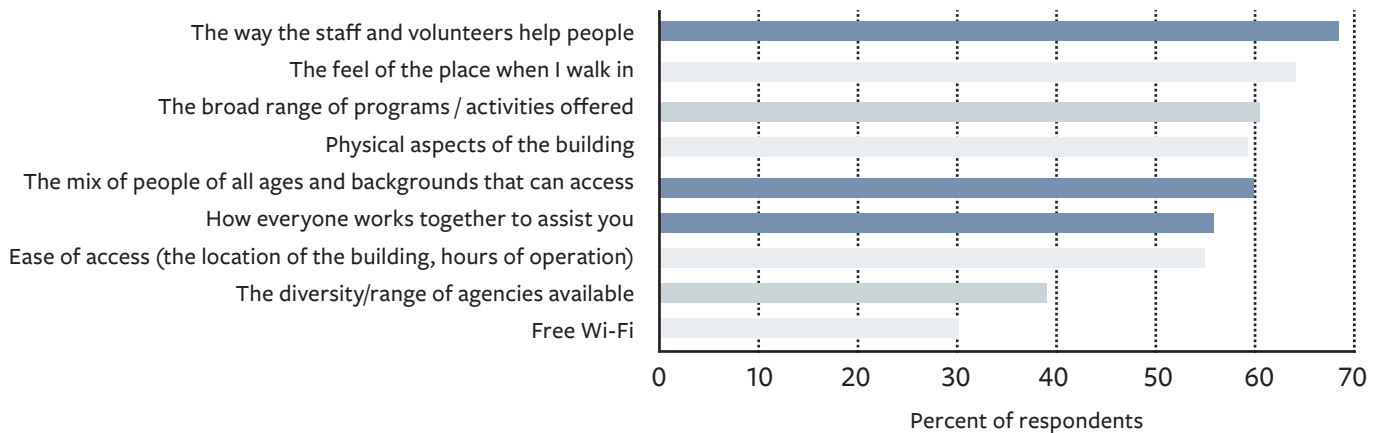
**74.5%**  
said they became more  
aware of services in  
their community



**72%**  
accessed new  
programs

*“I end up walking people to another service quite often....it has been really useful, when a person says I could use that service and I can say: ‘hey I know the person, I know their name, lets’ see if they are in their office’ ...many times I found that it helps them make the transition to the other service, whereas they might not have done it if it hadn’t been right there.”* (Staff)

## What Hub Users Like the Best ( $n = 154$ )



### Most Common Benefits of the Hub Model Identified by Partners

Better able to serve residents of the community

Increased awareness of other services

Opportunities for collaboration

Our clients access other services

Better able to serve the target population

### Benefits of the Community Hub Model

**Reduced isolation**

**Welcoming feel of facilities**

**Buildings that invites collaboration**

**Clients experience access to multiple complimentary services**

**Hubs are serving many of the most vulnerable people**

*“I come here for five different things - I enjoy being with people, I meet people and have fun. (Langs Client)”*

### Recommendations

1. Learn from one another
2. Adopt new communication strategies to promote the Hub
3. Replicate the Hub – there is no cookie cutter, emphasize the starting point is a community development approach
4. Co-location is not the same as collaboration
5. Share the results of these findings

***“Both organizations are driven by their respective visions that respond to their unique location and community needs, yet they share a focus on prevention, on community building and on addressing the social determinants of health and wellbeing” (Ricardo Ramirez, Evaluator)***