Enns, J. E., Brownell, M., Casidsid, H. J., Hunter, M., Durksen, A., Turnbull, L. A., ... & Sinclair, S. (2023). The full SPECTRUM: Developing a tripartite partnership between community, government and academia for collaborative social policy research. Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement, 16(1), 1-13.

Enns et al. (2023) describe the creation of the partnership between community organizations, government, and academia to understand their process of the collaborative approach. Stressing that policy development is usually not collaborative, the SPECTRUM (Social Policy Evaluation Collaborative Team Research with Universities in Manitoba) partnership between community organizations, government, and academia hopes to ensure that policies have the desired outcomes. This is not academics telling government officials how to create or change social policy. It is a collaboration of all partners to devise social policy solutions.

While the SPECTRUM partnership studies social needs and whether the solution is effective for the social policy’s goals, this report explains the formation of the collaborative teams. Researchers at MCHP invited collaborators from their colleague network, developed three teams, and secured grant funding. The teams expanded and now contain diverse individuals, including representatives from social service organizations, cultural leaders, government officials, academic researchers, undergraduate and graduate students, and community members. Enns et al. stress a non-hierarchical approach that distributes and coordinates tasks by areas of knowledge and experience. Groups developed their relationships in workshops designed to identify team missions, values, and interpersonal relationship practices. The partnership conducts social policy research but also evaluates partner participation in the research process, looking at the communication network and closeness of relationships.