

2021

RESEARCH IMPACT CANADA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

EVALUATION REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

In 2021, Research Impact Canada (RIC) held the second virtual annual general meeting (AGM). Of this year's AGM attendees, 12 respondents provided feedback to produce this report.

Together with the Network's various capacity-building activities that occur year-round (e.g., webinars, Dr. RIC, knowledge mobilization tools), the AGM provides RIC members with an opportunity to build connections, exchange knowledge and resources, and imagine the network's future. Attendance at the AGM has steadily grown since the inaugural meeting in 2014 and it welcomes a diverse audience from all member institutions. 2021 marked our 8th AGM, and the Network continually improves the structure and content of the meeting through evaluation and adaptation to better meet members' needs.

The findings presented below result from the evaluation survey distributed following the AGM. In total, 12 members responded to the survey (11 complete responses), sharing their general perspectives about the AGM along with perceived outcomes and areas for improvement in future AGMs. Respondent characteristics were as follows:



Previous meeting attendance

- 5 first-time attendees
- 7 repeat attendees



Participation type

- 2 presenting attendees
- 10 non-presenting attendees

INTRODUCTION CONT.



Professional position

- 8 impact practitioner
(e.g., knowledge mobilization officer, knowledge broker)
- 4 higher education administrator



Use of French interpretation

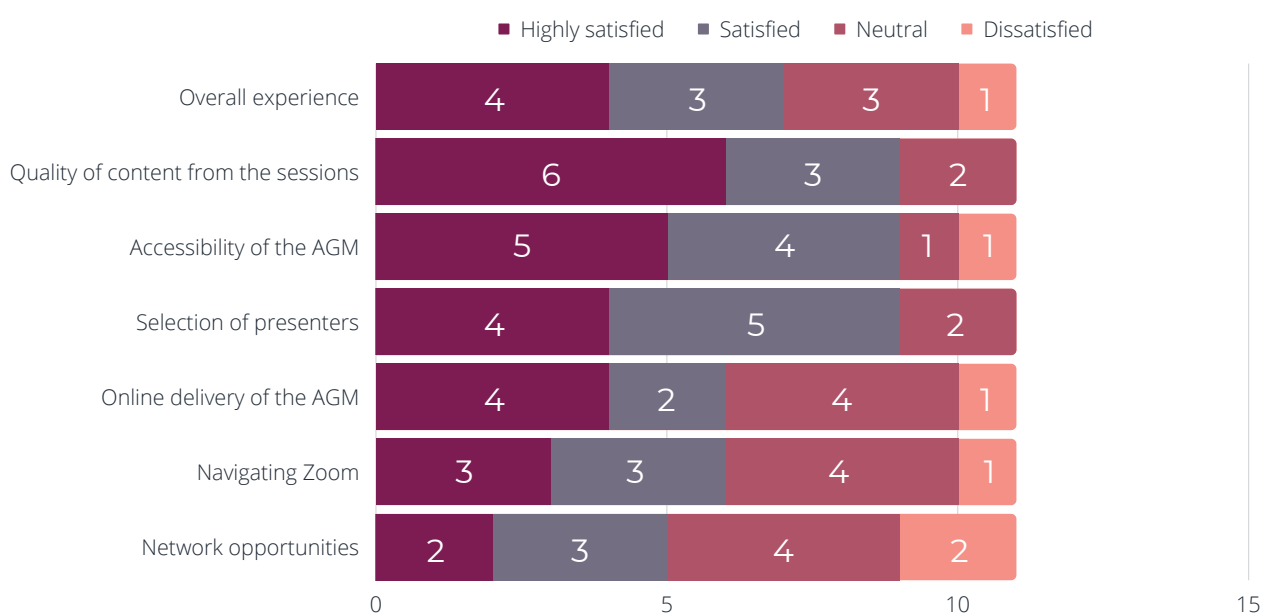
- 10 people did not use French interpretation for any of the sessions
- 2 people use French interpretation at for at least one of the sessions and believed that the French interpretation was worth the continued investment

GENERAL PERSPECTIVES

When asked about their experience with the content and organization of the 2021 AGM, most respondents reported that overall, they were **satisfied or highly satisfied**.

Specifically, respondents had positive perceptions about the quality of session content, accessibility of the meeting, and selection of presenters (Figure 1). Multiple respondents spoke about how the AGM “was really smoothly run” and included “highly relevant topics” to their professional work. There were also comments about the usefulness of the event timetable, which enabled attendees to plan out their involvement in advance and ensure they could clear time in their schedules. In keeping with the year prior, respondents extolled the general programming and facilitation.

Figure 1: Attendees’ Reported Satisfaction with the 2021 AGM



GENERAL PERSPECTIVES CONT.

Another question asked of respondents concerned their **objectives** for attending this year's AGM.

While responses varied, several commonalities emerged, including the following in order of precedence:

- 01 Getting to know and re-connecting with other RIC members and the network itself (e.g., mission, vision, successes);
- 02 Recharging excitement about KMb;
- 02 Setting strategic directions for the network;
- 03 Learning KMb skills, practices, or initiatives that could be imported into home institutions;
- 04 Getting “back up to speed” with the field of KMb; and
- 05 Seeing how the AGM functions.

The AGM had ostensibly met these objectives for all but two respondents, both of whom were hoping for more informal networking opportunities.

GENERAL PERSPECTIVES CONT.

Perceived challenges were also present in this year's AGM.

FORMAT

There was mixed reception for the online format, similar to what was found in the evaluation survey for the 2020 AGM. Although respondents emphasized their understanding that the online format was necessary given the COVID-19 context, they felt Zoom was limited for effective meeting delivery. The main shortcoming related to the challenges of networking in an online environment, which some respondents worried may have been particularly limiting for new members. In brief, some repeat attendees expressed the belief that online AGMs are unable to engender the same sense of connectedness as in-person meetings. This viewpoint is salient in light of Phase II of RIC's evaluation, which found that the AGM was a key mechanism for generating positive perceptions about RIC among new members.

TIMING

An additional challenge was the AGM timing. Despite recognition that few optimal meeting times exist, several respondents mentioned how the AGM timing was challenging for members "who wear many hats – fall is an intense crunch time for reporting and grant/scholarship applications." Hence, although some respondents cited interest in multiple sessions, their actual attendance was occasionally crowded out by other commitments.

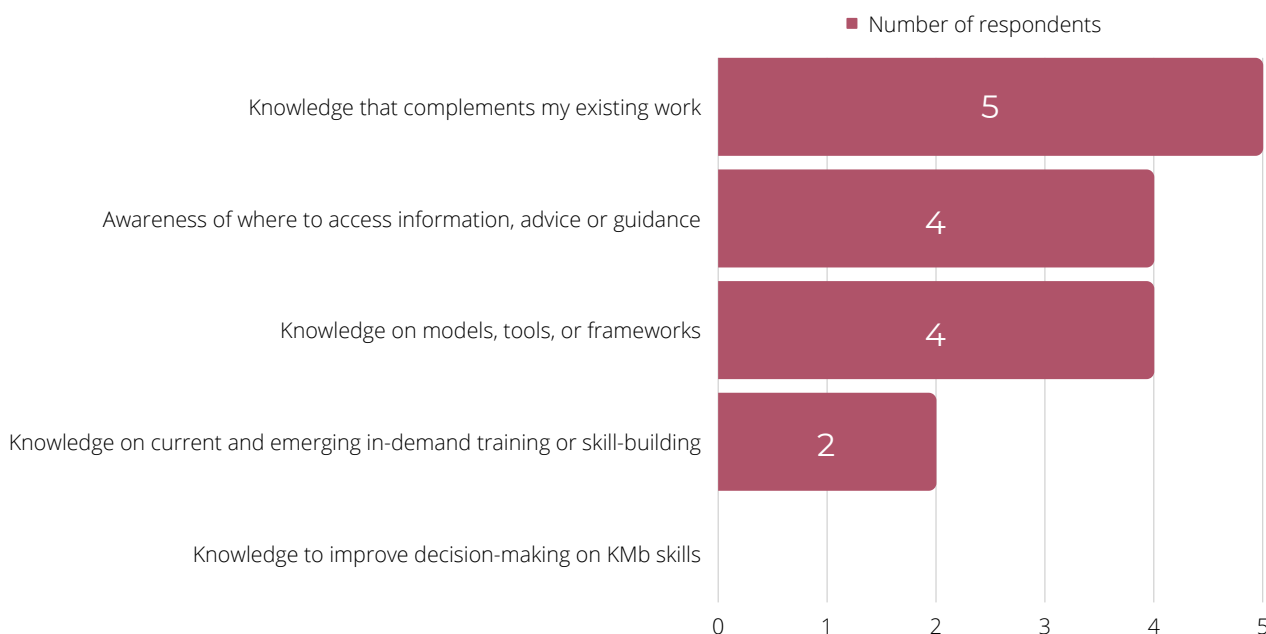
PERCEIVED OUTCOMES

Turning to the perceived outcomes of the AGM, respondents felt that **involvement** was most valuable when it provided knowledge that complemented their existing work.

Additionally, at least one-third of respondents believed that the most valuable knowledge they gained from the AGM was related to:

- a. where they could access information, advice, or guidance; or
- b. KMb models, tools, or frameworks.

Figure 2: Most Valuable Knowledge Respondents Gained from the AGM

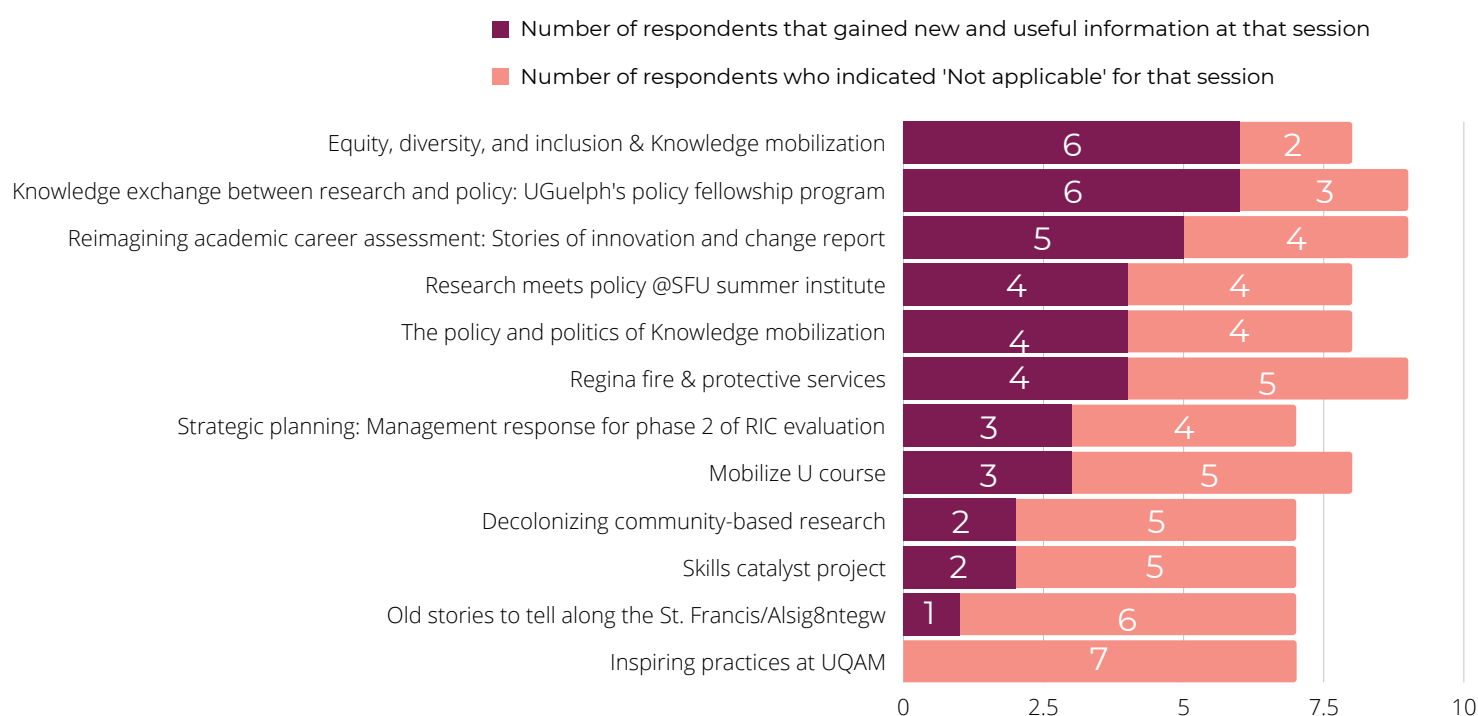


**Please note that in addition to selecting none of the options provided, the 11 respondents were able to select more than one type of knowledge they gain from this AGM that they found most valuable.*

PERCEIVED OUTCOMES CONT.

Figure 3 presents a more granular look at the new and useful information gained through participation in the various sessions offered at this year's AGM. Based on the responses received, it appears the most popular sessions focused on widely applicable KMb content (e.g., academic career assessment; equity, diversity, and inclusion and KMb). By contrast, more specific content such as the Mobilize U course attracted fewer attendees, at least among those individuals who participated in the evaluation survey.

Figure 3: Number of Respondents that Gained New and Useful Information at Different Sessions



**Please note that in addition to selecting none of the options provided, the 11 respondents were able to select more than one knowledge they gain from this AGM that they found most valuable.*

PERCEIVED OUTCOMES CONT.

Notwithstanding the varied opinions on the individual AGM sessions, seven of the nine respondents who completed the final questions of the survey said they would share what they learned throughout their other professional networks as well as recommend future AGM attendance to other RIC members.



AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Respondents provided suggestions regarding future AGMs.

01

Explore alternative online platforms

Although comments on the AGM's organization were predominantly positive, multiple respondents expressed that future online or blended online/in-person AGMs might benefit from a more feature-rich platform. It was thought that such a platform could address common issues such as providing informal networking space and organizing session resources, links, and recordings.

02

Consider shifting the event timing

Whether online, in-person, or a blend of these formats, respondents wondered whether it would be possible to shift the timing of the AGM given the busy nature of the fall term. Relatedly, several respondents reiterated the finding from the 2020 AGM evaluation survey that, when possible, it would be beneficial for the AGM to incorporate both in-person and online components.

03

Continue offering a variety of sessions

Respondents expressed their appreciation for the content variety during this year's AGM. Indeed, when asked to share ideas for the 2022 AGM, responses revolved around

1. an eagerness to participate as a presenter; and
2. suggestions about potential sessions (e.g., Indigenous perspectives on KMb, a virtual poster session, KMb approaches for different audiences, open access and research data management as KMb, research impact strategic planning, and artistic-maker sessions, to mention a few).

CONCLUSION

Overall, responses to the evaluation survey suggest that the 2021 AGM was a **beneficial** and **well-received** learning opportunity for RIC's membership.

Attendees were positive about their experience and expressed that the perceived challenges (e.g., meeting timing, online format) were understandable given the ongoing COVID-19 context in Canada. Going forward, it would be prudent for the organizers of future AGMs to build upon the successes realized to date, consider the areas of improvement outlined above, and remain cognizant of the emergent needs of RIC's membership.

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