

**RURAL RESEARCH AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
ANNUAL REPORT**

**Supported by
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development**

April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014



Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute in 1989 as an academic research center and a leading source of information on issues affecting rural communities in Western Canada and elsewhere.

RDI functions as a not-for-profit research and development organization designed to promote, facilitate, coordinate, initiate and conduct multi-disciplinary academic and applied research on rural issues. The Institute provides an interface between academic research efforts and the community by acting as a conduit of rural research information and by facilitating community involvement in rural development. RDI projects are characterized by cooperative and collaborative efforts of multi-stakeholders.

The Institute has diverse research affiliations, and multiple community and government linkages related to its rural development mandate. RDI disseminates information to a variety of constituents and stakeholders and makes research information and results widely available to the public either in printed form or by means of public lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences.

For more information, please visit www.brandonu.ca/rdi

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Submitted to:

Mona Cornock and Kim Beilby
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
1129 Queens Ave.
Brandon, MB
R7A 1L9

Submitted by:

Wm. (Bill) Ashton, PhD
Director
Rural Development Institute
Brandon University
Brandon, MB R7A 6A9

Prepared by:

Yakub Adediran
Research Assistant
Rural Development Institute
Brandon University
Brandon, MB R7A 6A9

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1.0 Introduction

Rural Development Institute's (RDI) strategic goal is to utilize research to define rural issues and opportunities and to foster better public policies at the local, regional, provincial, and federal levels. This goal is achieved through projects covering such topics as rural economic development, community governance, environmental and agro-economic issues, and information and technology utilization. These research activities are both applied and multi-disciplinary, and include a broad cross-fertilization of perspectives and expertise based on the involvement and collaboration among each projects' stakeholders, including academics (faculty and students), government and rural community stakeholders, NGOs, and rural-policy professionals. This exchange of insights among and engagement with community stakeholders has led to the establishment and enhancement of key partnerships for building new capacities, broadening knowledge and skills that in turn have been brought to bear on critical issues relevant to rural policy-makers and peoples living and working in rural and northern areas. RDI's goal is advanced further by the broad dissemination of projects findings and other research activities, ranging from conference presentations, public lectures and workshops, print media, and web-based formats such as webinars.

Through this sharing of insights and expertise, RDI has refined its research program to be interactive and innovative; a collaborative effort that is cognizant of existing challenges and barriers that impact on rural communities while also progressive and flexible enough to address new opportunities that can impact positively on the social and economic prosperity of rural and northern areas.

2.0 Memoranda of Agreement

In recognition of a shared interest in the rural development that exists between Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD) and Brandon University, a series of Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) have been established between the two organizations over the last 15 years. The most recent MOA was signed in 2011 for a 5-year period expiring March 31st, 2016. The MAFRD-BU Agreement steering committee administers and oversees the MOA by setting annual priorities and receives updates. The main objectives and purpose of the MOA were to facilitate greater collaboration between RDI and MAFRD for research purposes through the advancement of rural economic development, to ensure capacity enhancement through the development of skills and human resources, ascertain knowledge transfer and sharing opportunities, and introduce new strategies and models for rural and northern Manitoba. Under this 5-year Agreement, RDI is finding ways to complete both one-off projects and pursue topics that extend over several. One such example began with examining immigrants in the food industry in Manitoba, which extended to examining growth scenarios, and will investigate opportunities with bulk food ingredients.

This annual report reviews the achievements, presents the funding allocation to particular research activities, and outlines the deliverables over this same period.

3.0 Achievements under the MAFRD-BU Agreement

When stepping back from the day-to-day activities, this section helps indicate larger achievements regarding rural economic development, building capacity, transferring knowledge from RDI activities, and identifying new and emerging strategies and models for rural development.

3.1 Advancing rural economic development through research activities

Research activities undertaken over the course of the last year had an important impact on issues relating to the social and economic well-being of rural and northern communities. The two designated research projects completed over this reporting period are directly related to this agenda. Given the economic strength of the Food and Beverage Processing Industry within the province, the proposed pathways to advance and expand this industry over the five to ten years such as expanding export markets and developing value-added food processing, will have a direct bearing on economic growth through new processing capacity and employment growth in rural communities and regions. Developing new ways and practices to adjusting to this business development was a main impetus for conducted the Integrated Community Adjustment projects. Meeting the government service and programming needs of rural communities already challenged the rapid growth due to economic development is already a critical issue; the findings made available from this research will have an impact on the case-study town of Neepawa as it moves forward with its housing, labour and business development agenda, but these lessons can also be adapted to meet the interests and particular circumstances of other rural communities and regions experiencing rapid growth.

Research projects covering a range of issues such as rural immigration integration, rural population retention, resilient rural communities, and rural broadband are also linked to the advancement of rural economic development. The project undertaken in partnership with the Southwest Regional Development Corporation, for example, provided a unique opportunity to investigate and adapt best practices around business succession as well as innovation and entrepreneurship to fit the context and aspirations of businesses in this region of the province. This project demonstrates that maintaining the status quo on business service or product development and delivery is not an option; the research reveals that economic development will remain a key driver for rural communities but that this issue also requires closer coordination among the community's broad constituencies (e.g. business, education, etc.) and other government stakeholder.

3.2 Building capacity through knowledge and human resources

RDI's research activities and projects have continued to focus on capacity building, both inside Brandon University and RDI, and off-campus with others. Central to this goal is the involvement of students and faculty on campus. For example, Masters of Rural Development students are involved in all aspects of research, from planning, gathering and analyzing data, to presenting findings. This involvement is crucial to the development and enhancement their skills and knowledge as researchers. RDI believes this approach contributes to fostering interest and inspiring legitimate careers for students focused on *rural development* research. As a demonstration of this commitment to capacity building, RDI supported students through project-

based internships and by financing 14 students to attend workshops and conferences over this past year. It also supported 3 students in completing their thesis, and one student, Matt Grills, continues studies as a PhD candidate at Memorial University.

Capacity building through faculty involvement was made possible through the Community Outreach program. Over the course of this year, six Community Outreach research projects with student participation were funded. Each project, described below in *Brandon University Community Outreach Service*. These cooperative projects are expected to advance the scholarly activities and partnership building skills of faculty involved in community-based research, and they also enrich the community member's capacity by gaining new knowledge and skill sets that emerge through the project's activities.

Capacity building among Brandon University faculty and others was significantly advanced through their involvement in the development of the full proposal that was submitted Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Partnership Program. This proposal focusing on the development of a Rural Policy Learning Commons includes some 29 international partners from Canada, US, and Europe. This SSHRC project provides real opportunities for faculty to showcase their research expertise and capacities to build additional partnerships.

Off campus, RDI strengthened capacity in two ways: first, directly by working in concert with organizations on specific research projects or by engaging discussions in partnership with organizations sharing issues of common interest, and second, indirectly via events, especially webinars that enabled a broad spectrum of participants. As an example of the first, after months of interactions with the Southwest Regional Development Corporation, RDI clearly contributed to building their capacity for strategic planning and decision making in a project aimed at developing strategies designed to impact regional business continuance and foster an environment of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Capacity building was the purpose of initiating new relationships with such organizations as Innovate Manitoba, Manitoba Premier's Economic Advisory Council, Conference Board of Canada's Immigration leadership roundtable, and Queen's University Business School Monieson Centre. Sharing knowledge and expertise on issues such as strategies to improve innovation in the agro-food sector, or best practices on immigrant retention were offered to improve and inform decision making around these issues.

RDI had an indirect impact on building capacity by hosting a number of webinars and workshops geared to shift participants' attitudes, perspectives and actions. As an example, RDI hosted a one-day workshop on social marketing that featured Dr. Raj Machanda, Asper School of Business, University of Manitoba, and Joel Voth and Hilary Friesen from ChangeMakers, Winnipeg; the take-home message here was that social marketing can be an effective tool to build common purpose and practices on issues relevant to a community.

Similarly, the webinar with Dr. Bill Reiner outlined a range of strategies that can be instrumental in sustaining rural communities; his challenge to participants was to consider the importance of building a more comprehensive understanding of a community's needs, challenges and aspirations, while thinking locally, regionally, inclusively, and holistically. Capacity building was also addressed in RDI's sponsored workshop on resilient communities with Dr. Nick Wilding and the webinar with Dr. Oncescu. Using unique case examples as learning loci, both drew attention to the significance of a community's broad assets and willingness to engage in

critical introspection as a means of tapping into its latent capacity to move forward with new-found confidence.

3.3 Ensuring knowledge transfer and sharing

Publications are a great source of information for across Canada and the world, thus enabling knowledge transfer and sharing of findings. RDI's publications are freely available on the web. RDI's website experiences over 4000 high quality hits/downloads monthly and over 5000 high quality hits/downloads monthly for the Journal of Rural and Community Development (JRCD) website. Our records show web visitors varied from different communities and professions around the world with the majority from Canada; they include practitioners, scholars, stakeholders, and students. RDI shared knowledge in many different ways. Twenty-three conference and workshop presentations covering a range of topics from community resilience to municipal amalgamation and rural immigration helped promote RDI's strategic interest in these areas. Similarly, over this year, the 6 national and international webinars with over 250 people in attendance from the United States, Europe, and Canada focused mainly on community resilience, a thematic concern tied closely to researching on the advancement of rural economic development.

Monthly discussions with board members of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) as well as undertaking various dissemination activities with various organizations such as the ICRPS Consortium, Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, Canadian Rural Research Network, Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Development and Policy, International Institute of Sustainable Development and a host of others, provided vital instances to share status updates on research and to strengthen existing networks and partnerships around common rural interests. These connections have helped to solidify RDI's implementation of a 'hub and spoke' communication strategy, reaching agreements with over three dozen centres across Canada, US, and Europe. All share an interest in rural issues and related policies. This reciprocal relation means they re-distribute RDI newsletters and research updates to their members and RDI does the same for them.

Engaging with students and faculty at the ICRPS Summer institute to share insights on international comparative rural policy and sharing strategies on rural broadband through a special issue of the Journal of Rural and Community Development contribute to knowledge transfer for RDI.

3.4 Introducing new strategies and models for rural and northern communities

New insights about strategies and models for rural and northern communities are often a result of reflection of practice, listening and learning during the throws of applied research projects, coupled with a willingness to take moderate risks. An update on three previous strategies and models is provided, along with a description of three emerging ones:

- Welcoming communities model for new comers. Affectionately titled the WISR model – Welcoming involves Inviting Immigrants, Settling them, and Retaining them through inclusion and integration activities. While introduced in 2009, the clear emphasis on retaining immigrant in rural and urban areas is now an important aspect of both government and business sectors strategies. Retention is featured in Citizenship

Immigration Canada's approach, along with provincial policies and programs, and emphasized by Conference Board of Canada's Immigration Leadership Roundtable, and the main theme of the 2014 international Metropolis conference. RDI continues to sharing our research and findings related to retaining immigrants.

- Rural broadband strategy. Based on forming collaborative partnerships with all three levels of government and ISPs (including independent ISPs), RDI made a scholarly contribution to this effort by publishing a special issue of the Journal of Rural and Community Development of rural broadband, which included an article on the Integrated Action Framework. Both before and after the 2014 Federal announcement of a new \$300 million rural broadband framework, this special issue and the IAF were discussed with a senior federal official.
- Policy implementation linkages with social marketing. Social marketing, though well established with practices, principles, and communications and behavioural models, has not generally been used in addressing rural challenges and opportunities. RDI continues to advance social marketing in a research project related to increasing shelterbelts for beef production and the reduction of greenhouse gases. This year, a workshop was held on the use of social marketing and involved a growing partnership with University of Manitoba's Asper School of Business and Change Makers, a consultant specialized in social marketing.

As a result of RDI's work there is an emerging model of rural development based on self-contained labour areas and two strategies. One strategy is initiating business succession and the other is engaging rural residents and businesses in innovation and commercialization.

- Defining rural areas. For the first time in Canada, RDI provided leading research in utilizing a new concept by Statistics Canada regarding self-contained labour areas. Working with Manitoba Local Government RDI calculated new boundaries for over a 100 rural municipalities. Coupled with other research efforts by RDI, this work helped form the basis for Bill 33 The Municipal Modernization Act and was presented to the Manitoba Legislative Standing Committee on Economy and Environment. These self-contained labour areas have also been discussed with Citizen and Immigration Canada in relation to defining preliminary boundaries of rural regions forming local immigration partnerships.
- Business succession. After nearly a year of research and development, RDI brought focus to a three year business succession initiative for the Southwest Regional Development Corporation (SRDC). The innovation involved identifying a gap in implementing succession initiatives and preparing an appropriate response. SRDC is implementing RDI's recommendation to address the commitment gap. This gap, identified by many business development, legal, and financial professionals, occurs early on with most individual business owners not making a commitment to prepare a plan for succession. Now called business continuity, RDI's strategy has two components: it is a call to action to specific mission critical business owners so they would make a commitment to start preparing a succession plan; and it provided a cash incentive to complete a plan. Mission critical businesses in rural areas include owners of grocery stores, gas stations, and hardware stores, and many others – those stores that if closed result in a significant

hardship for all residents. In Manitoba and we suspect in Canada, this approach is unique. SRDC has made a three-year financial commitment to initiate this strategy.

- Tapping into rural innovation. Also from the research with SRDC, RDI identified a strategy for them to contribute to innovation. This strategy builds upon the assets for the southwest – people, infrastructure, and producers. While typically one thinks of innovation and commercialization in terms of prototypes, engineering, health science professionals, and investors to name a few, this strategy focused on aiding the processes of adapting and adopting innovation. If an innovator wanted to test out a prototype product for beef producers, the SRDC would help broker what is needed. Likewise, SRDC will also work with the beef producer association to assist in bringing forward innovations in this sector from the southwest region. SRDC has made a three year commitment into this areas and RDI is currently applying for a multi-year proposal to Growing Forward 2 program.

4.0 Financial Management

The allocated \$110,000 for the fiscal year 2013-2014 is summarized in Table 1, which shows how RDI achieves different aspects of the agreement. As of March 31st 2014, various aspects of the commitments have been met or allocated.

Table 1. Budget allocation across funding activities

Designated Research Program and New Researchers Support	\$55,000
Brandon University Community Outreach Service	\$10,000
RDI Research Fellows Program	\$5,000
Contributing to MRD Student Development	\$5,000
Community Development & RDI Program Support	\$35,000
Total	\$110,000

RDI works hard to create new relations and attract partners for the activities funded by this agreement, which can also be instrumental in subsequent activities and efforts. In general, the MAFRD funding of \$110,000 leveraged financial resources from other research partners including the Federal and Provincial government and Brandon University. This year, RDI leveraged MAFRD funding 3.2 times.¹ This financial capacity enabled RDI to engage in other areas of rural projects and community development. 21% of the funding was contributed by Brandon University; 60% was by federal, provincial and other sources, while 19% was the MAFRD allocation. Some of the funding sources include:

¹ Leverage of 3.2 is higher in part due to the acceptance of funding for two projects at the end of March, 2014.

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; which provided funding from the Agriculture Green Gases Program, a four year project that has just completed its third year;
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) provided funds for the development of the full proposal for the project, Rural Policy Learning Commons: Building Rural Policy through International Comparative Analysis; \$20,000 assisted in increasing the number of partners from 12 to 29 with their cash and in-kind contributions moving up from close to \$1.3 million to over \$2.7 million;
- Brandon University provided salaries, office space, equipment and supplies.

Rural Research and Community Development Activities Supported by MAFRD

1. Designated Research Program and New Researchers Support

Funding to encourage research alliances, enhance or build collaborative efforts with government or communities.

Organize and sustained program of activities for professional development across a number of sectors involved in community economic development.

Provide opportunities for students and new researchers to become involved with RDI research and projects.

Encourage dissemination of findings through workshops, speakers, and webinars.

Expected Outcomes/Deliverables

Support to:

- Attend meetings for comparative rural policy networking, research, knowledge transfer.
- Participating and contributing to research networks & alliances e.g., Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF).
- Promote the research efforts of RDI affiliates.

Report and Comments

Integrated Community Adjustment:

Funding through Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism and Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development, the purpose of this project was to determine the types of Manitoba provincial government interdepartmental integration and regional interactions that can provide more effective and relevant programming in response to a rural region that is adjusting to rapid growth. The town of Neepawa was selected as the case study for the project. Neepawa's rapid growth from immigration within the last decade has led to community priorities in the areas of immigration, housing and business development. Past research on the subject and feedback from stakeholders in Neepawa and area have indicated that government integration may be beneficial in developing effective responses. (See <http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2011/02/Neepawa-and-Area-Research-Report-FINAL-ElecCopy.pdf>).

The project's research methodology involved first developing a working model of integration, for this project the team borrowed from the research of Szirom et al. (2002) in "Working Together – Integrated Governance", a study that explores three types of interaction, including cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. The research team then compiled a list of provincial departments from the Government of Manitoba's website to identify those with programs related to the key issues. The project team reviewed 10 departments and selected 5 departments based on their programs related to the three rapid growth priorities: Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Development, Manitoba Labour and Immigration, Municipal Government, Housing and Community Development, and Jobs and the Economy.

Twelve interviews were conducted in person and over the phone with provincial government employees across the five provincial departments. The key informants ranged from director level to frontline workers, and one ex-employee who was knowledgeable about the department's programs and past relationship with Neepawa and was referred by people in the department. Generally, the key informants were chosen because they were knowledgeable about one or more programs in their department related to the rapid growth priorities. Informant were asked about the barriers and opportunities to integration in the delivery of department services and programs, and to identify what practices worked well for integrating with other departments and the local community. They were also asked about how important they felt it was for their department to work with other departments and to work with a local community like Neepawa and area to address rapid growth priorities.

An analysis of the interview findings generated five conclusions. The conclusions provide evidence that programs applicable to the rapid growth priorities exist across departments and that integration is also evident in the 5 provincial government departments that were analyzed.

- Programs related to the rapid growth priorities of immigration, housing and business development exist across provincial government departments. For example, programs that could be applicable to the housing priority were available across all 5 of the priority departments as identified in this research.
- Integration is evident among the 5 departments and is impacting Neepawa's adjustment to rapid growth. Between the prioritized provincial departments addressing immigration, housing, and business development there are numerous connections and types of interaction. Most of the program's connections with the community were cooperative in nature with no collaborative connections identified.
- The adapted model from the "Working Together – Integrated Governance" document provided an adequate method to describe types of integration to the program connections interdepartmentally and with local communities, though one of the adapted model's limitations was that it was difficult to discern the difference between the cooperation and coordination.
- The research found that joint committees or working groups as well as information sessions are the top practices for working together with other departments and with communities like Neepawa and area. The notable barriers to integration were found to be a lack of financial and human resources and the need for more direction for departments and programs to work together.
- This research provides a framework for future study of the role of provincial government integration in response to priorities raised by local communities, including an analysis of

more departments and programs, which could provide insights about types of integration with other priorities besides rapid growth.

Manitoba Food and Beverage Processing Industry:

In 2013 Rural Development Institute completed a research project on the Manitoba Food and Beverage Processing Industry with funding provided by Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD).

The purpose of this research was to analyze Manitoba's Food and Beverage Processing Industry, identify key trends associated with it and envision the next seven years of progress for the 10 NAICS sectors included within the project's design. In addition, this research attempted to identify key opportunities for public policy to positively impact the growth of the Food Processing sector. The significance of this project is especially apparent given the diversity and financial impact of the province's food processing industry.

Statistics Canada data, MAFRD reports and other sources were used to identify key indicators, drivers, and trends for the Manitoba food processing industry and related sub-sectors, in particular key factors such as transportation, water availability, country of origin labeling, monetary exchange rates, labor availability, and costs. This information was used to calculate a projected best-case scenario for the food processing subsectors through to 2020. Fact sheets and initial projections were prepared for each subsector of the industry. Quantitative data collection revealed that the food and beverage processing (FBP) industry represents close to 30% of all manufacturing revenue in the province and around 15% of all exports. This industry employs over 12,000 people, representing nearly one quarter of those employed in manufacturing. Sales estimates for the represented sectors exceed \$4.7 billion for 2011. The Pork, Canola, and Potatoes sectors account for 55% of sales in the Food and Beverage Processing Industry with exports amounting to 50% of sales.

Given the incompleteness of quantitative data available through Statistics Canada, the project team undertook qualitative data collection by conducting semi-structured 25 interviews with stakeholders, including associations and representatives from a range of sectors, to ascertain and verify the sector projections, identify sector-specific opportunities and innovations, barriers and challenges, and examine how public policy can support the growth of the industry. Leaders with a broad knowledge of each industry or sub-sector were recruited as research participants. Findings from these interviews will be used to understand past trends and identify possible growth projections to 2020.

The public report presents two scenarios for future growth: Plan A (Business as Usual) outlines a steady as you go framework that relies on maintaining existing markets with a focus on the 3 main industries of pork, potatoes, and canola; Plan B (Effective Action) looks to expand existing markets, again focusing on the strength of the latter sectors, while also envisages opportunities for new entrants in the industry and developing new niche market.

All in all the project revealed some of the real challenges facing the industry, some based locally while others are more global in reach; yet it also highlights the resilience and innovation that are the hallmarks of the province's food processing industry. The project concludes that pathways for growth will close cooperation between industry and government, including engaging in collaborative action on key sectors, jointly-developing strategic plans for encouraging

investment across the industry, expanding value-added processing of bulk agricultural products, and exploring niche markets for exports.

2. Brandon University Community Outreach Service

Financial support for 6 approved projects that responded to two calls for proposals under the Community Outreach Service. This funding is for applied collaborative research involving communities, students and faculty. The BU Outreach Service also manages the Student Service Learning program (SSL). Students are required to complete a minimum of 20 hours of volunteer service in the community, which has been confirmed by a faculty mentor, to receive service learning annotation to their BU transcript.

Expected Outcomes/Deliverables

Research Proposals reflecting MAFRD's strategic priorities.

Prepare Community Outreach Service Annual Report.

Validate, approve and process student service learning applications.

Approved project proposals:

Title: Development of a Geospatial Database for Monitoring Bluebirds and their Habitat

Project Partners:

Community: Herb Goulden, Friends of the Bluebird, Brandon

Faculty: Dion Wiseman, Department of Geography, Brandon University

Student: Rob Shearer, Department of Geography

Funding Approved: \$3,000

Currently, Bluebird monitoring records are recorded on paper forms and members have hand-drawn maps showing the location of the nestlines along which the nestboxes are placed. The intent of this research is to compile nestbox and monitoring data into a spatially-enabled database to allow for more detailed analysis of trends in Bluebird populations in Manitoba.

The database will be integrated into the Friend of the Bluebird website (mbbluebirds.org) allowing members to enter future monitoring data online or via a mobile app and have summary information. By centralizing data storage, the organization will be generating a large dataset which will allow for further evaluation of trends in Bluebird populations in Manitoba. Any trends could be evaluated against trends in climate conditions and changes in land use.

Researchers will track changes in land use and landscape metrics and evaluate this against bluebird population thus, creating an insightful analysis of the condition of these species in Manitoba, which will eventually inform bird watchers, and may lead to an increase in tourism income.

Title: Downtown Hub Business Research

Project Partners:

Community: Braden Pilling, Renaissance Brandon

Faculty: Mike Malazdrewicz, Department of Business Administration, Brandon University

Funding Approved: \$2,996

This research project aims to revitalize the downtown Brandon by collecting data from the downtown businesses in order to understand what the present situation is and proffer, if needed a better and far reaching strategy. The revitalization is about evolving from a civic/business/commercial centre to a more diverse and complete community with more residents.

This revitalization project will investigate ways to increase the satisfaction of existing business in the hub as well as to create strategies for improving the business environment and increasing traffic into the hub such as incorporating aesthetic enhancements and improving parking, transit, land zoning, and site planning in the downtown area.

Title: Capacity Development in Rural Chapters of Habitat for Humanity

Project Partners:

Community: Danielle Adriaasen, Habitat for Humanity Manitoba: Brandon

Sessional Instructor: Dr. Glen Gatin, Department of Creative Writing, Brandon University

Funding Approved: \$3,000

This project seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the ways that Habitat for Humanity Manitoba, Brandon chapter, can fulfill its mission in providing housing to partner families particularly in rural communities in Manitoba.

This project will employ survey instrument to determine how Habitat for Humanity - Manitoba accesses the impact of social media, web-based Social Marketing and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategies as instruments to improve communications among partners and donors.

Also, the project will test whether web-based instruments can streamline the administration of rural chapters of Habitat for Humanity. The Research findings will help Habitat for Humanity - Manitoba determine the effectiveness of current patterns of communication and provide evidence that can be used to engage partners and donors who are involved in addressing the goal of affordable housing for all.

Title: Participatory and Effective Landscapes: Community Gardening and Social Justice

Project Partners:

Community: Naomi Leadbeater, Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation

Faculty: Dr. Serena Patrella, Department of Sociology, Brandon University

Student: Venantie Nutmendie, Department of Political Science

Funding Approved: \$3,000

Community gardening is often undertaken by low income families and newcomers as a way to increase the healthy food available in their day to day diet. Tracking the people involved with community garden has often been very problematic for the Community Garden Network.

Having an informed understanding of resident's participation is very important, especially for the purpose of increasing reporting requirements. It is essential that the Garden Network develops tracking tools. The Community Garden Network is also interested in finding ways to help with planning for the future development of community gardens in Brandon.

This research aims to help improve the organization and operation of community gardens by collecting information that would enhance gardening practices in the Westman region. This research hopes to create an effective community and grass root community organization as a strategy to mitigate the systematic barriers that many low income families experience.

Title: Business and Service Providers Perception of the Impacts of the Sand Hills Casino

Project Partners:

Community: Ralph Oliver, Rural Municipality of North Cypress

Faculty: Doug Ramsey, Department of Rural Development, Brandon University

Funding Approved: \$2,970

Opportunities and risk comes with Casino Business, as observed in several researches carried out in both USA and Canada. There are many unknowns with casino business especially in a rural community; this is why the community around the Sand Hill casino to be opened in Swan Lake, Rm of Cypress wants to know what impact the casino would have on their environment.

How will the casino affect, for example, employment prospects, impacts on seasonal labour pools in agriculture, the need for highway improvements, business opportunities, service demands, and Housing demands.

This project will give a baseline of views and planning that business and service providers have taken (or not) with respect to the casino.

This project will provide opportunity for Brandon University students to gain valuable knowledge at all stages of the survey-research process as well as gain important experience in collaboration building in rural communities.

Title: Building Community through Percussion Ensemble

Project Partners:

Community: Graydon Cramer, Waverly park School

Sessional Instructor: Victoria Spark, School of Music, Brandon University

Funding Approved: \$1,788

Percussion ensemble presents a unique opportunity to present world cultures and history through musical instruments, Brandon university percussion studio is looking to use percussion ensemble to develop stronger ties with the community.

It will involve Brandon University music students who have shown an interest in education to develop percussion- ensemble with student's from the Waverly Park School. The project involves teaching of music by students to students, while occasionally guest artist will be brought in to inject professional details into the teaching.

This project wants to encourage student to be community leaders and independent learners as they grow into their role in the music community. The exercise will include a survey of the

participants at the end of the exercise to understand the impact of the projects in the community.

3. RDI Research Fellows Program

Funds assisted in supporting five webinars and one workshop, and related events in support of advertising these scheduled events. Support included transportation, nutritional breaks and logistics supports. A total of 250 people attended these events, and the participants came from Canada, United States, and Europe. Funds also supported and improved out-bound communication with software I-contact and Adobe connect for webinars.

Expected Outcomes/Deliverables

Six events and five scholars fostered community engagement and knowledge transfer.

Webinars and Workshops:

November 28th, 2013

Dr. Lars Hallstrom – Public Policy and Implementation in Canada – Rethinking the Implementation Gap.

In his webinar, Dr. Halstrom challenged participants to rethink the policy implementation gap in its current context in rural Canada. By exploring common presumptions underlying our understanding of the implementation gap, such as identifying it as contest between political will and a capacity to act, or as failure to act based in negative thinking, the policy implementation is recast in terms of three key concepts – Desire, Action, and Fidelity. These notions are used to examine implementation in terms of two main modes. Implementation as performance underscores that policy design is static and that fidelity serves as a check-list to ensure desire leads to action; In contrast, implementation as conformance understands that policy design differs yet can conform with action and that fidelity serves as a normative rather than as a compliance principle. These two modes of implementation are then used to tease out the operational and procedure factors that have an impact on policy implementation, a key one being how rural capacity building can help inform, enact, and motive rural policy.

Dr. Hallstrom is the Director of the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities. The Centre is charged with linking the research, outreach and educational capacity of the University of Alberta with students, researchers, rural communities, rural community organizations and policy makers at multiple levels across the province, nationally, and internationally.

November 28th, 2013

Dr. Charles Conteh – Implementation Canada's Rural development Policy in a Knowledge-driven Economy: Case of Manitoba.

Dr. Conteh's presentation provided a comprehensive overview of main challenges experienced by rural Canada over the last two decades, highlighting important changes, for example increased global economic restructuring and competition from emerging

economies, resource depletion in key sectors such as agriculture, forestry mining and fishing sectors, and relocation of natural resource industries to developing nations. This background review serves to introduce three policy frameworks that have been developed to respond to the evolving rural scene, followed by a case study of how Manitoba has dealt with the current situation. This case study helps clarify how one framework (develop an agency to resolve the problem) has evolved from a centralized (government) initiative to a decentralized one where rural communities are increasingly responsible for rural economic development, which has in turn led to more collaborative partnerships involving rural stakeholders as well as government agencies. While promising, the latter framework relies on three key variables – intra-organizational capacity, multi-level governance, and state-society partnerships – that have in turn led in serious challenges in implementing rural policy such as institutional fragmentation, jurisdictional rivalry, and inconsistent policy interventions. Notwithstanding these issues, Dr. Conteh contends there is a lesson to be learned – collaborative governance can help soften jurisdictional rigidity and bureaucratic rivalry.

Dr. Conteh is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Brock University. He specializes in Public Policy & Management, Political Economy and Governance. His current research focuses on governance structures and processes in complex and dynamic policy systems, particularly examining collaborative and strategic policy formulation and implementation.

November 25th, 2013

Dr. Bill Reimer – Seven Strategies for Sustainable Community Futures.

Two questions framed Dr. Reimer's webinar: What are the major changes affecting rural Canada, and how can we develop effective rural policy to address these changes? To the first, five changes that dominate the rural landscape are outlined: increasing urbanization, greater reliance on mechanization in primary industry sectors, increased immigration in the globalized economy, government downloading of its social mandate to rural communities, and limitations on natural resources extraction or utilization. Rather than a quick fix to this complex of issues, seven interrelated strategies are reviewed: (1) Look to changing urban demands as an opportunity to develop new valued-added products; (2) Identify niche markets that could be local or global; (3) Integrate new Canadian to better enable them to contribute to rural communities; (4) Build social infrastructure such as education, health and recreation to increase the amenity base of rural communities; (5) Build capacities across a range of domains from market-based to communal-, and organizational-based; (6) Think regionally to build partnerships and collaborations with a cross-section of community stakeholders; and make interdependencies visible by embracing a holistic approach to rural issues and concerns. Dr. Reimer presentation resolves on the optimistic note that the rural can contribute directly to its own future in the globalized world.

Dr. Reimer is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University in Montréal. From 1997 to 2008 he directed a Canadian national research project on the New Rural Economy which included 13 universities, 35 partners, and 32 rural communities from all parts of Canada.

February 25th, 2014

Dr. Nick Wilding – Exploring Community Resilience – a discussion

Working from a definition of resilience offered by R.E. Horn (2002), Dr. Wilding opened his workshop with a series of personal experiences that offered opportunities to learn about community resilience in action. These cases helped frame his explanation that resilience can be understood through an asset-based approach. This approach provided a framework for examining more examples to understand the import of these assets for building resilience communities. Dr. Wilding presented a series of mantras – It's about people and their participation in their community, it's about culture as a welcoming place, it's about marshaling community assets, it's about community connections – to come to his main thesis that community resilience is dependent on the interrelation between people, culture, economy and linkages. He closed his workshop with two exercises that called on participants to measure their own community's resilience.

Dr. Wilding is a fellow of the Carnegie Foundation (UK) and retired professor. His research interests span action research, community resilience and organizational transformation. He is a community development worker, University lecturer, group facilitator and designer of learning networks. He presented at a joint collaborative discussion organized by BU-RDI, Urban Studies Institute of University of Winnipeg, University of Manitoba, and Manitoba Professional Planners Institute.

The next day Dr. Wilding presented a one-day workshop on community resilience at the Manitoba Planner's Conference. His session was introduced and moderated by Dr. Ashton.

March 25th, 2014

Dr. Jacquelyn Oncescu – Recreation's Role in Community Resiliency.

Dr. Oncescu's webinar offered explored two case studies, one on a schools closure and the other on a declining fishery community, to illustrate how community resilience can be fostered through the development of recreation in rural communities. These recreation activities can be as diverse as sports, arts and music programming to cultural festivals. She argued that recreation provided a unique opportunity to enhance the three key factors of community resilience, including collective interactions, expressions of community, and community action. Her point is that recreation in rural settings embodies all three when participants of various ages engage in community-based activities that are creative and adaptive to changing interests and programs but also work to establish, maintain, and expand human, social, institutional, and built capital. The webinar closed with a review of best practices in creating community resilience through recreation.

Dr. Oncescu is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Studies at University of Manitoba, a researcher in the area of recreation, community development, and leisure education.

4. Contributing to MRD Student Development

Support for student research and learning activities in Brandon University, including the Department of Rural Development (DRD).

Expected Outcomes/Deliverables

Assist each qualifying master's student to support his/her thesis research

Assist interested master's student by funding conference/workshops and internship attendance

Report and Comments

- Registration for one graduate MRD student to attend the International Comparative Rural Policy Studies (ICRPS), Summer Institute, July, 2013 in Italy (Immaculate Nabisere)
- Registration for 5 MRD graduate students to attend CEDnet Gathering, October 25th, 2013 in Winnipeg (Okeke Cyprian, Adediran Yakub, Zubi Azim, and Adebayo Olugbenga)
- Registration for 3 RDI staff and 3 MRD graduate students to attend Dr. Wilding's presentation "Exploring Community Resilience –in times of Rapid Change" at the Manitoba Planners Conference pre-session, March 26th, 2014 in Brandon (Xanthe Zarry, Ray Thompson, Cyprian Okeke, Emmanuel Okoh and Adediran Yakub)
- Support for thesis research for three MRD graduate students (Jack Lovell, Ian Grant, and Sean Irwin).

5. Community Development & RDI Program Support

Funding enabled RDI to respond in a flexible and effective way to emergent opportunities and issues confronting rural and northern communities.

Expected Outcomes/Deliverables

Assisting research activities and enabling community development projects.

Creation and maintenance of open-source electronic publications.

Report and Comments

External funding proposal development and discussions:

- Drafting of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada proposal, Introducing Communities in western Canada to Local Immigrant Partnerships (LIPs). This proposal aims to seek up to 30 western Canada communities to use LIPs to increase the number of stakeholders engaged in settlement and to improve the retention rates of immigrants.
- RDI and Department of Rural Development proposed Statement of Intent, Stanley Knowles Distinguished Visiting Professorship (SKDVP) in Public Policy, submitted to Brandon University. This proposal will engage a scholar specialized in policy implementation and evaluation.
- Social Science Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) proposal on Rural Sustainability: Context, Planning, Policy and Implementation. The core objective of the proposal is understanding rural and sustainability planning and policy, community engagement, and commitment to making a difference.

- Drafting the Growing Forward 2 proposal, Cultivating Innovation in selected Agri-food sectors and across Manitoba. This project aims to understand the factors impacting on innovation in selected sectors in the Manitoba Agri-food Industry and to outline mitigation strategies. Key objectives of project include identifying these impediments from the perspectives of both the innovators and stakeholder within the industry as well
- Drafting the Workman's Compensation Board proposal, Digital Safety Learning for Small Meat Processors in Rural Manitoba. The goals of this project included ascertaining the workplace health and safety needs of selected small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in the Manitoban Food processing sector and to develop and test various social marketing strategies designed to enhance their safety protocols and procedures.
- Drafting the Strategic Focus Project: Southwest Regional Development Corporation Proposal. This project was to develop a number of strategies to impact regional business continuance and foster an environment of entrepreneurship, innovation and economic prosperity.
- Travel support for MRD students to attend CEDNET; The Gathering Conference
- Conference Board of Canada; Leaders Roundtable on Immigration. RDI supported and participated in meetings held in Winnipeg and Brandon
- Support MB Planners Conference
- Support for RDI staff and student participation in Dr. Nick Wilding's session on Resilient Communities at the Manitoba Planners Conference in Brandon
- MAFRD Memorandum of Understanding and Fall Update reporting to Steering Committee
- Support for RDI researchers' attendance at the Local Immigration Partnerships meeting in Winnipeg

5.0 Looking Forward

Rural Development Institute and Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development have had a long collaborative relationship that has benefited the province and many rural communities and producers. Community engagement, knowledge disseminations, and applied research undertakings have been a very pertinent part of the collaboration, and we hope to continue with these efforts in the coming years.

RDI also understands this research is occurring against a backdrop of on-going changes and challenges evident within MAFRD and extending across many government departments as well as in many federal government departments.

RDI is currently initiating a series of events for celebrating our 25th year anniversary and key project findings, including strategic research directions. These will purposely link to the intentions of the existing multi-year agreement with MAFRD as RDI seeks to positively impact rural development in Manitoba and elsewhere.