

# Practice & theory-building: examining an age-friendly guide

Rural + Development + Planning  
Symposium  
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## Objectives

- Examine practice to inform theory-building about rural + development + planning



## Outline

- My 'praxis' argument
- Rural MB
- Intervention
- Impact
- Reflections & questions about implications for theory-building and practice

Theory ... to ... Practice

OR

Practice ... to ... Theory

OR

*theory to practice*

*practice to theory*

Theory building process:

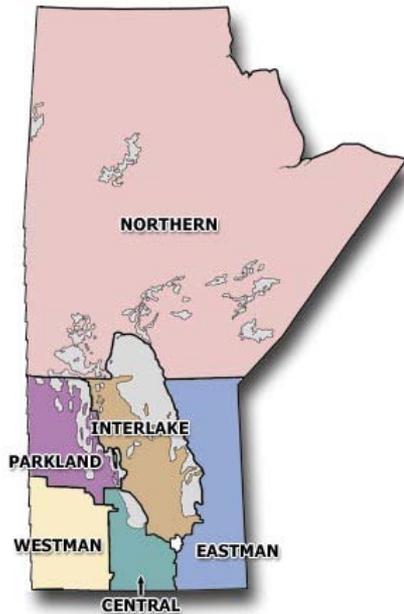
- Observations
- Hypotheses
- Testing
- Refining

Suggesting evidence based knowledge is created by:

- 1) Old replaced with new
- 2) Add new to old
- 3) Challenge old, new unclear

# My 'praxis' argument

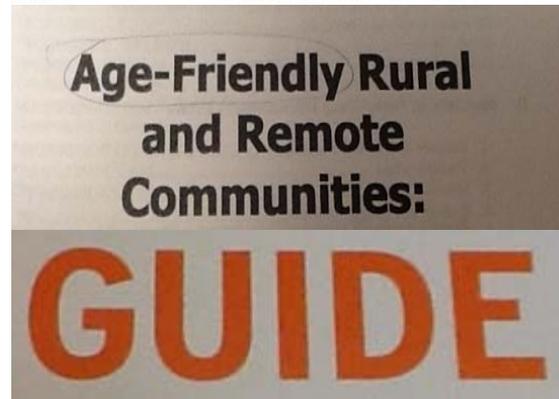
Past and present



**Rural** +  
(Northern MB)



Future



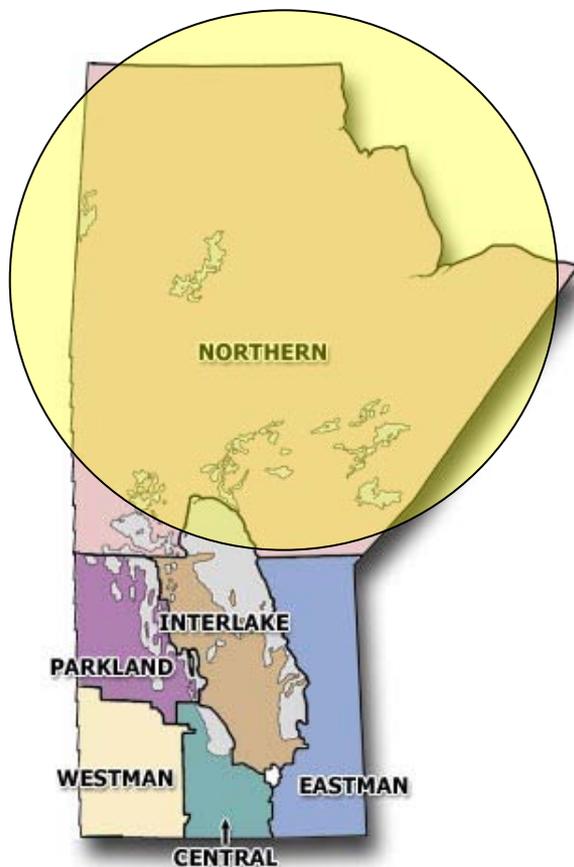
**Development** +  
(Intervention)

**Changes to**  
- Built environment  
- Social dynamics



**Planning** +  
(Impact)

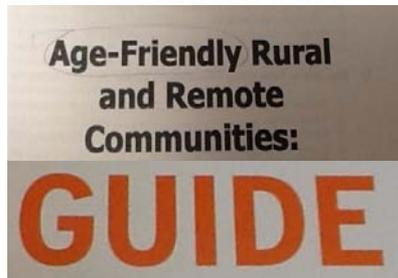
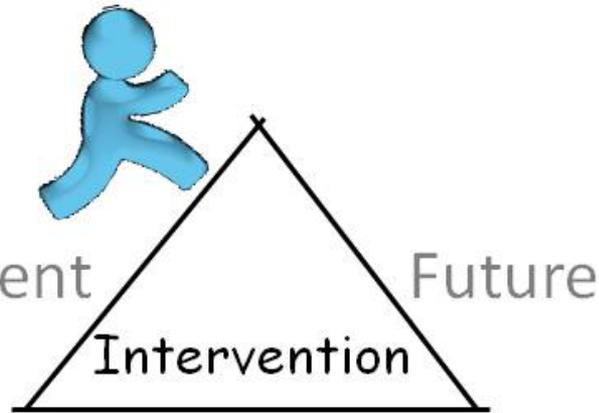
# Northern MB – selected profile



- 129 centres, 70% Aboriginal comm.
- 85,168 pop, 7% MB pop
- Aboriginal identity 72% vs 16% MB
- Avg Age 25 vs 38 yrs MB
- Seniors 18% vs 32% MB (50+)
- Avg Income \$13k/yr vs \$24k MB
- % Income: gov 30% vs 13% MB
- 51% no high school vs 26% MB

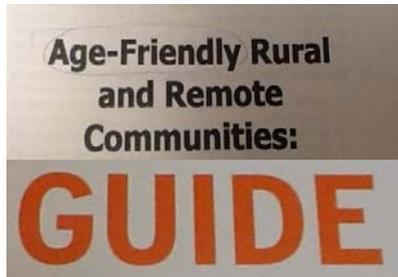
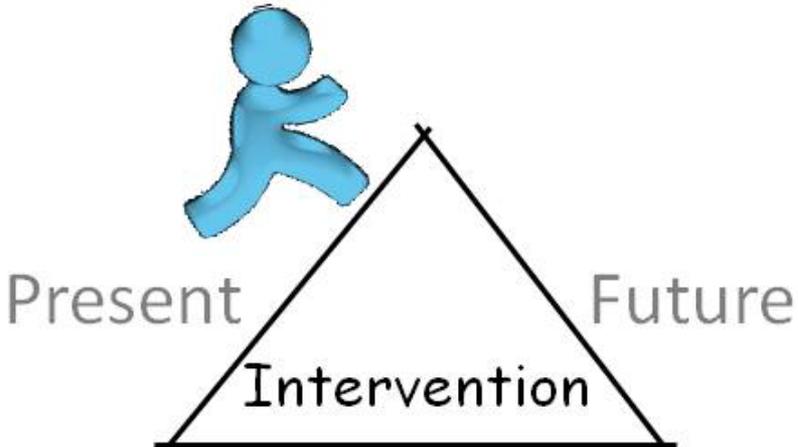
Source: StatCda 2006

# Development - intervention



- **Goal:** active, healthy seniors, 65+ yrs
- **Guide development:** 10 rural centres, 600-5000 pop, Port Hope Simpson, NFL; Gimli, MB; Alert Bay, BC
- **8 domains of impact**  
**Built x3:** bldgs, transp, housing  
**Social x5:** Respect seniors, engage them, civic involvement, connect, health services

# Impact of intervention



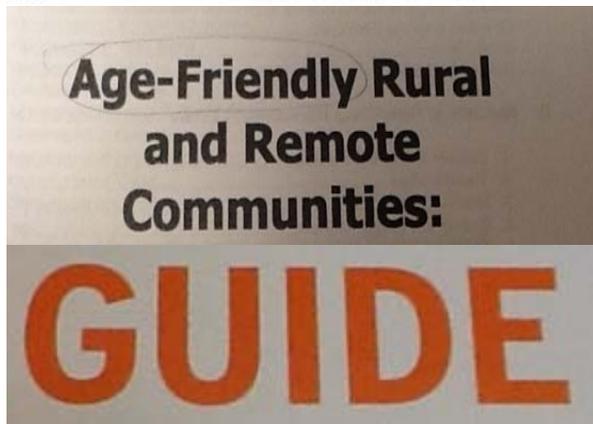
## Checklist (products x117)

- Continuous sidewalks
- Disability transportation
- Events – intergenerational
- Employment, volunteer

## Milestones (process x5)

- Establish committee
- Municipal resolution
- Plan of action
- Public awareness
- Measured outcomes

# Implications of Northern MB on guide



- Many centres, widely dispersed
- Younger age, fewer seniors
- Lower education attainment
- 44% lower income, govt subsidy
- Aboriginal identity, elder tradition

# Reflections – practice & theory building

## Practice



**Planning policy**

**Power (governance)**

**Social Justice**

**Community learning**

## Building theory

**H:**

**H:**

**H:**

**H:**

# Reflections – practice & theory building

Practice

Building theory



## Planning policy

Verb: process, doing

H: participatory models, ACF

Noun: plan, product

H: incremental

Public policy-Ltd market

H: redistribution of wealth



## Power (governance)

Guide = as outside authority

H:

Local cmt: same or new members?

H:

Limited financial & HR resources

H:

Strategic choice: ecology of basic needs H:

# Reflections – practice & theory building

Practice

Building theory

## **Social justice**

Most vulnerable seniors

H:

Trade-offs: favour needs

H:

Address root causes

H:

Obligation: no harm

H:

Responsibility: ensure impact

H

## **Community learning**

Bld on what we know and do

H:

New learning: process, plan

H:

Succession of leadership

H:





1. How did this example of practice inform theory?
2. What's the theory about?
  - i) building theory for thriving centres (end) or
  - ii) building theory for practice of thriving (process)?
3. Is practice too complicated for building a theory? Are many theories needed?
4. Why is it important that practice is related to theory and theory related to practice?

- Questions?
- Suggestions?

