

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES UPDATE

FALL 2018

Indigenous Contributions to the Manitoba Economy



The Rural Development Institute (RDI) at Brandon University has partnered with the Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) to research and document Indigenous economic contributions to the broader Manitoban economy. First Nations, Metis, and Inuit contributions are being combined and analysed. First Nations contributions are then being analysed in isolation. This research aims to quantify the Indigenous economy in Manitoba by:

- ▶ Collecting publically available data related to Indigenous businesses and employment, expenditures (e.g. band, tribal council, business, and household levels), and investments in infrastructure;
- ▶ Analyzing data using an economic input-output model;
- ▶ Presenting results in terms of GDP, employment, labour income, and government revenues; and
- ▶ Interviewing community leaders to profile urban reserves in Manitoba as an economic development tool.

This Indigenous economic analysis addresses two broad geographic areas, Manitoba's North and South, as well as spending on and off reserve.

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Five Strategic Research Directions

To respond to rural trends, challenges, and opportunities, the needs of various stakeholders, and the necessity to sustain a viable institution, RDI is committed to pursuing five strategic research directions:

Rural Immigration. RDI examines the capacity of rural services providers and rural communities to absorb and support newcomers, which is of vital importance in all of rural and Northern Canada.

Regional Economic Development. RDI continues to undertake applied research projects and papers focused on determining functional economic rural regions. This is a key path forward for advancing vibrant and revitalized rural communities.

Governance and Capacity Building. RDI is interested in strengthening local leadership and equipping Provincial and Federal officials with the tools and knowledge they need to make effective, data-driven decisions to benefit rural communities and Indigenous communities.

Rural Infrastructure and Services. RDI is committed to conducting research that assesses how rural communities are using infrastructure and services, and how communities benefit from increased capacity. Rural broadband is one such example.

Rural Innovation. RDI is interested in research that clarifies the path to successful commercialization for rural innovators by studying rural entrepreneurs, innovators, business people, and support services.

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**Indigenous Economy
Contributions to Manitoba**
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The data collection, data analysis, and sharing of research findings among the stakeholders follows OCAP principles. The project employs student researchers from Brandon University.

This project is being funded by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and the Manitoba government's department of Indigenous and Northern Relations.

For more information on this project, contact:

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Motivation of SMEs in hiring Newcomers



Continuing with its past investigations into rural immigration, RDI has undertaken a new research project focused on the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employing newcomers to full rural labour needs. This project recognizes a number of important factors in this issues. First, SMEs are the predominant businesses in non-metro places. SMEs also create most of the new jobs in rural areas in Canada and on the Prairies. Second, by some estimations, Canada's natural growth will approach zero by 2032. As such, Canada's population growth will depend on immigration. Third, newcomers depend on jobs, who in turn will depend on SMEs being receptive to hiring newcomers. Hence, understanding SMEs' motivations for hiring newcomers are central to successful immigration over the short and long terms and as a means to strengthen business prosperity and rural community economic development.

Given this context, this project has two main

goals: 1) gain a better understanding of the motivations and interests of SME owners who employ newcomers, and what the owner's view are as related to benefits and costs, and 2) gain a better understanding of suppliers to these SME about their labour market concerns, the role of newcomers, and what it might take for them to employ newcomers, in terms of human resource management.

To achieve these goals, this project team has already met with members of the prairie provinces' umbrella settlement organizations (Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO), Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA), and Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) to strategize on helping their local Settlement Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) to recruit SMEs and their suppliers to participate in an E-survey. The team anticipates that the surveys will be conducted in the autumn with data analysis to follow.

This project was funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) via University of Manitoba - Immigration Research West (IRW).

For more information about this project, contact:

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Soybeans Projects – Supply Chain and Community Readiness Tool

In May 2018, the City of Brandon contracted the Rural Development Institute (RDI) at Brandon University (BU) to conduct two inter-connected research projects: a Soybean Industry Value Chain Assessment and a Regional Assessment of Community Information. Both projects are intended to advance the Westman Opportunities Leadership Group (WOLG)'s efforts to attract a world-class soybean processing facility to Manitoba.

The Soybean Industry Value Chain Assessment will compare the competitive advantages and disadvantages (SWAT Analysis) of locating a soybean processing facility in either Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or North Dakota. It will also describe the current soybean value chain in Manitoba and the potential market for a full line of soybean

products that would be generated by a soybean processing facility in the region. For this project, the SWAT analysis and the soybean value-chain report are well underway, while the market analysis has yet to commence.

The Regional Assessment of Community Information project will produce community investment readiness reports for five Westman communities: Brandon, Carberry, Neepawa, Russell, and Virden. Based on a list of facility requirements, including infrastructure and employment, these reports will detail available municipal assets and development incentives and describe the advantages unique to each of the five communities. Economic development officers (EDOs) can then use these reports to attract investors to their community. The five EDOs are expecting to begin their respective

community's reports shortly, while RDI will be preparing a regional summary. RDI along with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and WOLG will also be sharing readiness questionnaires with about 100 municipalities in Manitoba.



Funding for these projects is provided by the Government of Canada's Invest Canada – Community Initiatives (ICCI) program.

For more information about this project, contact:

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Manitoba Rural Broadband

The Manitoba Rural Broadband Research Project was launched in Fall 2016 with the goal to highlight the opportunities and tackle the constraints that rural Manitobans experience in their daily life regarding their utilization of digital technologies. The project was conducted by the Rural Development Institute and supported by Function Four Ltd., MITACS, the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM), and EcoWest. The project involved three communities: La Broquerie, Powerview-Pine Falls, and St Claude.

The project used a two-step mixed-methods research based on a quantitative survey tool developed by Function Four Ltd., to compare communities' results with representative data, and a qualitative analysis based on a set of semi-structured phone interviews with business owners or representatives and focus groups with youths and seniors, to access their experiences with digital technologies.

The survey was used to help assess, the usage and accessibility of digital technologies in each community and provided a way to compare usage of different digital technologies – i.e., computer, fax, fixed and mobile phones, internet, radio, and television. A comparison of the survey findings shows that the digital state of the three communities is similar. Their scores are generally average for each category of Infrastructure, Affordability, Skills, and Utilization. The three communities have strong scores for fixed phones; however, the lack of reliable services

Rural Innovation in Manitoba

This applied research project attempted to create new knowledge that enhances the process of innovation by addressing barriers and opportunities in commercialization in Manitoba's Agri-Food sector. This project focused on innovation in rural Manitoba, a less studied area, where limited information exists about the commercialization aspects of innovation.

In this project, innovation in smaller firms was examined, since SMEs are dominant in rural Manitoba. Fourteen potential firms were selected based on five criteria with five enterprises agreeing to participate. These firms included: The Canadian Birch Company Ltd., Solberry Incorporated, Canadian Prairie Garden Puree Products Inc., Floating Leaf Fine Foods, and Crik Nutrition.

These studies examined the path to commercialization and included 220 interviews from 25 communities with the innovators and those who supported them during commercialization (stakeholders). The study examined the anatomy of innovation including the how, who, and what of commercialization, along with stakeholders and supply chains.

The cases raised four major points for discussion about commercializing innovation among the five companies in Manitoba, namely the process of commercialization, the possibility of accelerating commercialization with stakeholders and addressing barriers, the importance of leadership, and organizational culture of innovation:

- ▶ *Commercialization is evident by activities that require resources, including time. Often the commercialization is generalized as sequential stages from idea to sales, but across the cases, innovation activities were also activated across multiple stages simultaneously.*
- ▶ *Stakeholders were integral to advancing commercialization. Specifically, business support and food processing support stakeholders were essential*

for internet and mobile phones suggests respondents of the three communities maintain landlines that are resilient communication systems.

The project's qualitative findings revealed that the three communities are facing the same problems. Although community residents are aware of the digital opportunities that they could take advantage of, their utilization is limited by a lack of infrastructure and access, which result in a lack of cell coverage and slow internet speed, expensive costs that do not reflect the quality of service they are provided, and overall limited skills.

Of particular importance for many is the issue of safety given fluctuant cell-coverage and internet speed. Indeed, the frequent dead spots reported by participants, and the overall lack of reliable service, impedes effective communication either for residents to call emergency personnel and emergency personnel to coordinate response efforts. Participants shared their strong desire to avoid loss of lives and property because of a lack of infrastructure.

Funding for this project was provided by Function Four Ltd. and Mitacs, a national not-for-profit organization.

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to moving the prototype to higher levels of production by assisting in arranging finance, executing product and process development, and scaling up to commercial volumes.

- ▶ *Leadership was a fundamental of entrepreneurship and identified as essential to commercializing innovation in food processing. From all five cases, it seemed that learning about commercializing innovation was garnered from the well-established institute of the 'school of hard knocks'.*
- ▶ *Neither the innovators nor stakeholders made any reference to an intentional business culture of innovation. This absence suggests that the five food development innovations may be due more to chance than a deliberate result of efforts to establish a culture internally and among their supply chain and customers. This issue provides evidence of the importance of networks, building capacities through experiences and drawing on outside expertise, and being customer-focused.*

Drawing from the five case studies, further research is needed on a number of issues to advance commercialization of food innovation, including Infrastructure or access to infrastructure, Networking among innovators and across the sector, and Accelerating commercialization and rural innovation.

This project was funded by the Canada and Manitoba governments through Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

For more information about this project, see <https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2017/10/RIM-Commercializing-Food-Processing-Innovation-in-MB.pdf>

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Rural Policy Learning Commons

The Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC) project concluded year 4 of the partnership project. Over this last year, the RPLC continued to expand capacity building, networking, knowledge mobilization, and rural policy activities. The RPLC submitted the project's mid-term report. The project received approval from SSHRC's review committee to fulfill the complete the project. Recommendations from the review committee are to help guide the strategic discussions and allocation of resources. This feedback from the review committee has already influenced decisions for the RPLC executive Council and secretariat regarding resource allocation and evaluation framework indicators. In particular over the next three years the emphasis will be on "creating policy impact". This is seen as an overarching goal with particular emphasis on engaging policymakers. This will mean refocusing on engaging policymakers and public sector partners and identify effective practises and opportunities for transferring knowledge to policymakers and to impact policy development and implementation. This goal of creating policy impact will also influence such activities as:

- **KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION** – develop a knowledge mobilization plan with more innovative activities. The knowledge mobilization must lead to knowledge transfer by the end of the project.
- **STUDENT TRAINING** – increase engagement between students and non-academic partners
- **PROJECT COORDINATION** – expand the role of the secretariat to help support activities and connect networks with one another
- **IMPACT ASSESSMENT** – increase the evidence and documentation of impacts of activities and ensure these impacts are connected to RPLC's original objectives
- **HOST SUPPORT** – continue to work with the project team and membership to improve support and address areas of need
- **PARTNERSHIP DEFINITION** – clarify the nature of partnerships in the project, accounting for different partnership types, roles, and outcomes for geographies, sectors, and scope of organizations.

Year 4 also saw an important evolution of the project governance structure. The RPLC replaced its pre-determined theme-team approach with a self-identified network model. This governance

structure evolution took place at the request and suggestion of members who identified that the teams model was too restrictive in attracting membership while also being less flexible in responding to emerging membership and rural policy trends. Over the last year, the RPLC Secretariat has also seen a number of personnel changes. The project welcomes the addition of Farheen Sajjad (Secretariat Officer), Munzaleen Sajjad (Webinar Coordinator), and Aimee Couselan (Engagement Liaison). The RPLC Team is especially appreciative of the efforts and contributions provided by those who have left the project, including Michael Adiyia (RPLC Student Support), Ariel Bryant (RPLC Student Support), Michael Blatherwick (RPLC Liaison Officer), Monique Firth (RPLC Student Support), Orthis (Otis) Adu Gyamfi (RPLC Student Support), and Meghan Wrathall (RPLC Student Support).

Support for partner members and student training remained critical for the project on a number of levels in Year 4:

- ▶ 17 Students/Post Docs were employed, including 7 Masters/PhD students at Brandon University;
- ▶ 9 student and faculty members took part in research and exchanges in Canada, the United States, Italy and the United Kingdom.
- ▶ Students, faculty, policy-makers, and practitioners presented at/attended at 9 rural policy-related events in Canada and internationally;
- ▶ 5 events were sponsored ranging on topics from Indigenous impact assessment to regional rural innovation; the geography of this support included venues located coast to coast in Canada;
- ▶ 10 items were developed related to rural policy and research, covering topics such as First Nations governance, water resource security, agricultural practices, forestry and mining, and climate change; and
- ▶ 22 webinars were offered through Year 4 with 59 presenters (27 faculty, 8 students, 27 policy practitioners); 529 people attended the 22 webinars and, as of June 4, 2018, 1608 people have viewed this year's webinars on Youtube.

Support for the RPLC is provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and over 30 Institutional Partners, including Brandon University and the Rural Development Institute.

For more information about this project, check the website at <http://rplc-capr.ca>



Francesco Cirone

is a Masters student from the Università di Bologna currently studying under Dr. Dion Wiseman at Brandon University.

"I am studying political science, and I am here to do research on local food systems, and how GIS could help to increase the efficiency of the local food system."

"Working with Dr. Matteo Vittuari, my professor at the University of Bologna, we study food waste and losses in the food system. We want to analyze and make a comparison between the local food systems in Bologna and in Brandon. We want to understand if there are differences between the losses in these two local food systems and if GIS can reduce the losses or improve the efficiency of the different food systems."

Francesco's opportunity to study at Brandon University was made possible by RPLC's Research and Exchanges Grant.

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International Comparative Rural Policy Summer Institute (ICRPS) 2018

The International Comparative Rural Policy Studies (ICRPS), hosted its 15th Summer Institute, June 24-July 7, on the historical grounds of the Tuskegee University, located in Tuskegee Alabama. The institute this year under the theme 'Social Justice, Rural and Natural Resource Policy', saw students and professors with representations from Canada, France, Jamaica, Italy, Spain, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sudan, Ghana, Nigeria and the USA. The institute sought to emphasize issues of social justice on the acquisition of land in the American South and the black belt counties of the south. We learned of injustices that are embedded and entrenched in the legal system with regard to black and minority farmers accessing jobs, land, education and other opportunities. Food security, as well as community waste systems, were also highlighted. We received lectures from Mayors, and government representatives along with professors to paint the picture of how policy can harm or improve the lives of people.

The lectures were supplemented with numerous field trips to the Legacy Museum, the Selma Interpretative center, the Edmund Pettus Bridge and many other historical landmarks that signaled the beginnings of Civil Rights activities in the south. The history lessons from the excursions were raw, real and not sugar coated; the information moved faculty and students, bringing fresh meaning to the activities that took place and are still shaping life in the southern USA. Overall, this summer's institute was quite the eye-opener and challenged all to change their perspectives on how policy is viewed and how it can make an impact on the lives of millions of people. It challenged students as upcoming policymakers to take into consideration the language of policy and how it includes or excludes specific groups of people in a town, a community, a city or even a country.

This year's contingency from RDI included Ray Bollman (Research Affiliate), Sherine Salmon (MRD student), Mikaël Akimowicz (RDI Research Fellow), and Wayne Kelly (RPLC



Project Coordinator). Ray Bollman provided a lecture on Rural and Rural Policy and another on Data Sets in the session on Research Methods. Wayne Kelly added to the institute's comparative focus presenting on the Canadian approach to rural policy. As well, he spoke on the importance of youth engagement and community resilience, and co-chair a session on Rural, Community and Economic Development and Strategic Planning. In turn, Mikaël Akimowicz lectured on the Enterprise Zone program in France and Social Justice in the Food Supply Chain.

Knowledge Dissemination

Webinars

Research Principles for Working with First Nations. Presented by the First Nations Information Governance Centre. Tuesday, May 29, 2018.

Global Perspectives on Programmatic Solutions to Bridging the Digital Divide. Presented by Madison Pearson and April Heinrich. Tuesday, April 24, 2018.

Lessons on Farmland Preservation Near Growing Urban Regions from Oregon, USA. Presented by Laura Schreiner. Wednesday, April 11, 2018.

Rural Water Infrastructure. Presented by Sarah Breen, Paul Kraehling, and Gerry Lahey. Thursday, March 22, 2018.

Forestry Skills: Thinking beyond current paradigms. Presented by Philomena de Lima, Sarah Pohlschneider, and Sarah-Patricia Breen. Wednesday, March 21, 2018.

Eco-Assets for Rural Municipalities. Presented by Emanuel Machado, Michelle Molnar, and Roy Brooke. Wednesday, March 14, 2018.

Building Capacity for Rural Climate Adaptation. Presented by Lauren Rethoret and Ingrid Liepa. Thursday, February 27, 2018.

The Implications of Neglecting Transportation Policy in Remote Areas. Presented by Mesha Richard, Stephanie Hoffmann, and Meas Danok. Tuesday, February 22, 2018.

Sustainable Rural Communities in an era of Population Change. Presented by Mark Skinner. Thursday, February 8, 2018.

Hidden Participants and Unheard Voices: Gender, Age, and other Influences on Traditional Ecological Knowledge Research in the North. Presented by Maaya Hitomi and Philip Loring. Monday, January 29, 2018.

First Nations-Municipal Economic Development Initiative. Presented by Helen Patterson and Marissa Lawrence. Thursday, January 25, 2018

Social Enterprise: Building Opportunities. Presented by Darcy Penner, Dayna Lutes, and Kyle White. Thursday, January 18, 2018.

Journal Articles

Akimowicz, M., Képhaliacos, C. (In Press). Coordonner la construction territoriale par une vision du futur : Les dynamiques d'investissement agricole dans l'InterSCoT toulousain. *Economie Rurale*.

Akimowicz, M., Vyn, R.J., Cummings, H., & Landman, K. (2018). An Introduction to Mixed Methods Research in Agricultural Economics: The Example of Farm Investment in Ontario's Greenbelt, Canada. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 61, 162-174. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0743016718300652>

Bollman, R. & Ashton, B. (2018). Rural Policy in Canada. In T. Josling (Series Ed.) & W. H. Meyers & T. Johnson (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of International Food and Agricultural Policies: Vol. 1. Policies for Agricultural Markets and Rural Economic Activity* (pp. 149 – 180). New Jersey, USA: World Scientific.

McNeely, G. & Ashton, W. (2018). Critical gaps in public policy programs in Canada: Identifying subject areas for graduate training in rural policy, *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, DOI: 10.1080/15236803.2018.1473024

Presentations

Herron, R. & Wrathall, M. (May 2018). *Coping with and Responding to Challenges: A Comparative Case Study between Service Providers Supporting Those Experiencing IPV*. Poster presented at the Canadian Rural Revitalization Federation, Difference by Design Conference, Nelson, BC.

Dynamics of Rural & Northern Manitoba

The Rural Development Institute (RDI) was contacted by Elections Manitoba on behalf of the Manitoba Electoral Divisions Boundaries Commission in November 2017 to report on the state of rural Manitoba. Like the previous one completed a decade ago, the 2018 report was intended to inform the Commission's broad public consultation process as mandated by the Electoral Divisions Act. RDI is pleased to offer this report in aid of the Commission's deliberations.

This report draws on RDI's applied research projects on issues ranging from regional economic development, and rural infrastructure and service to rural immigration, agro-food innovation, and community capacity development, to highlight significant issues, challenges, and opportunities impacting on population changes or trends in rural communities and regions in Manitoba. The report brings together often disparate topics from different disciplines centred on four key themes as a way to bring attention to the dynamics of rural Manitoba, including:

1. *Functional economic Rural Regions as self-contained labour areas;*
2. *Agricultural innovation: Production, Processing, and new technologies;*
3. *Manitoba's Resource North – Mining and Forestry; and*
4. *Indigenous Communities.*

Rural Challenges, National Opportunity

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities released a report in May 2018 that details the important contribution rural municipalities make and outlines the unique challenges they face. The comprehensive report includes recommendations encouraging the federal government to tackle these challenges head-on and raise Canadians' quality of life nationwide. The report provides recommendations to address the realities rural municipalities face. Key recommendations of this report include:

- ▶ *Applying a 'rural lens' to all federal policies and programs aimed at empowering smaller communities to better support local needs.*
- ▶ *Designing future rural infrastructure programs that provide long-term predictable funding with the flexibility to account for rural realities.*
- ▶ *Committing long-term predictable resources to expand broadband internet access in rural, northern and remote communities.*

Each issue characterizes an important dimension of Manitoba and how rural and northern folk and indigenous peoples live, work, and interact with one another in their local communities, their rural regions, and even with others around the globe. Each thematic discussion includes a set of questions intended to broaden our understanding of the nature of Manitoba's varied rural regions. The report adopts more of a narrative approach that engages the lived experience of residents, businesses, and government agencies, hoping to inform the claim the population numbers are not the only descriptor of electoral divisions located in rural and northern Manitoba.

Looking forward to the next ten years, RDI hopes this glimpse into rural and northern communities as well as their sense of economic stability, social reliance, and confidence will remain important issues for the Commission's consideration when deliberating making changes to electoral division boundaries.

For more information about this project, see <https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2018/02/RDI-Dynamics-of-Rural-Northern-MB-Final-2018-02-21-1.pdf>

For more information on this project, contact:

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The report offers a comprehension overview of the state of rural Canada and analyses of nine major issues impacting rural regions and communities, such as economic challenges and opportunities, rural infrastructure and services, climate change, and rural governance and capacity building.

RDI played a key role in the report by offering its expertise in the analysis of economic and demographic trends in Statistics Canada data.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is the national voice of municipal governments, with nearly 2,000 members representing more than 90 percent of the Canadian population. FCM is leading the way in advocating for new tools that empower rural communities to build tomorrow's Canada and has secured unprecedented federal investment in recent years.

For more information on this report, see <https://fcm.ca/documents/issues/FCM-Rural-Canada-2018-EN.pdf>

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