



Rural Resilience

2018 Rural Talks to Rural
Conference Program

October 2018



CANADIAN
CENTRE FOR
RURAL CREATIVITY





An independent research centre and an environment for rural experiment...

Founded in 2014, the CCRC set a goal to create a workplace for innovative thought, establish an incubator to explore challenges and opportunities in rural community that leads to action for social and economic change.

By asking challenging questions, establishing unique fellowships, and bringing together creative thinkers, we explore solutions to complex questions on and about the future of rural.

By building a strong rural voice the CCRC offers creative solutions while contributing to a sustainable world in the 21st century.



Where you bank matters. And at Libro Credit Union, you matter to us. Libro is a full-service financial institution with 75 years of history building growth and prosperity across southwestern Ontario. A Certified B Corporation with co-operative values, Libro has a purpose greater than profit. We invest 100% of profits right here at home, and use business as a force for good, effecting meaningful change in local communities.



Located along the shores of Lake Huron, Huron County – Ontario's West Coast – is the most agriculturally productive county in Ontario, and a leader in numerous areas of agricultural technology and innovation. Huron County communities offer urban amenities complemented by rural benefits, providing an ideal base for both business and leisure.



RBC is committed to preparing young Canadians for the changing workforce with Future Launch, a 10-year, \$500 million commitment to help youth get more work experience, grow their network and gain new skills.

Our success comes from the 84,000+ employees who bring our vision, values and strategy to life so we can help our clients thrive and communities prosper. As Canada's biggest bank, and one of the largest in the world based on market capitalization, we have a diversified business model with a focus on innovation and providing exceptional experiences to our 16 million clients in Canada, the U.S. and 34 other countries. We are proud to support a broad range of community initiatives through donations, community investments and employee volunteer activities. See how at rbc.com/community-sustainability.

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CIP Catalogue

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Contents

Welcome	4
Foreward	5
Speakers	6
Hans van der Loo	6
Ben Fink	6
Jennifer Miltenburg	6
Gil Garratt.....	7
Nonie Brennan	7
Shanna Ratner	8
Ryan Gibson.....	8
Ken Coates	9
John Stackhouse	9
Pre-Conference Schedule	10
Tuesday October 16 – Pre-Conference Session.....	10
Conference Schedule	11
Wednesday October 17 – Conference: Day 1.....	11
Thursday October 18 – Conference: Day 2	13
Friday October 19 – Conference: Day 3	15
On-going Activities	15
Market Street Strategies	15
Research Tree.....	15
Passport to Research Scholars	16
Mary Ferguson	16
Meaghan Luis.....	16
Mikaël Akimowicz	16
Pamela Duesling	17
Renee Boileau	17
Rebecca Hasdell	17
Stephanie Gariscsak	17
Susanna Reid.....	18
Verena Kulak.....	18
Thank you to our lead partners!	19
Thank you to our sponsors!	20

Welcome

On behalf of so many good people I'd like to welcome you to Blyth, welcome to Rural Talks to Rural in the autumn of 2018.

The theme of R2R is rural resilience – the people who have gathered are exploring, in one way or another, our ability to carry on in the face of it. I thank them for bringing their passion and belief to the Village in order to share their ideas, their own brand of resilience, in how we move forward in this exponential time.

When I was young I had a fascination with the two spirit levels my father used in his carpentry. And while it might say more about my imagination than anything I could spend any amount of time tipping the balance this way and that, watching the bubble disappear, reappear, and sometimes peek into the tube half in, half out. Holding it in my hands I could struggle to get the bubble to sit perfectly between the drawn black lines. It was a little easier on flat surfaces – though I was surprised to discover that most of the surfaces in our house, from bookshelf to counter, needed a shim or two to be properly balanced. What struck me eventually was how easily, how delicate, the process of getting the bubble to true could be. It required patience. Engineering. Craft. Precision. And time. It was tricky - and with any sudden movement could be easily lost.



I'd say right now we could use some patience in order to actively listen to the many voices that make up our community – to be impacted by the imagination of others. There is also an opportunity to explore our engineering – the structures we have in place - how they've been constructed – and how they might be improved. It will take craft, art, precision and time, to get to higher ground. And inside that time is inspired example, is inclusion, creativity, critical thinking, and social awareness. And there's also collaboration available that will assist us in the reinvention of our communities in the 21st century. It will always be one step at a time, sometimes two forward, and one back, but if we keep our spirit level close by I do believe we can get our bubble to true.

Thanks for being a part of R2R - enjoy your time in the glorious Blyth, Huron County, Ontario, Canada, and we look forward to your return visit.

Pete Smith

Project Director
Canadian Centre for Rural Creativity
Co-producer of R2R

Foreward

Dear colleagues,

The people who call rural Canada home are as diverse as the landscapes on which our communities are built. This conference intentionally brings together community members, government officials, scholars, practitioners, and policy makers from different spheres of influence to think critically about rural resilience. I am pleased that you are here, joining us to share your ideas in this collaborative rural space.

As you spend time together over the next few days, the networking, learning, and idea sharing that will take place is the fuel that will propel rural Canada into the future.

I'm excited to see where our ideas take us.

Valencia Gaspard

PhD Candidate
School of Environmental Design and Rural Development
Co-producer of R2R



Speakers

Hans van der Loo



Formerly vice-president at Royal Dutch Shell, Hans is a member of the Advisory Board of www.Investancia.com, the initiator and EU Ambassador for the EU STEM Coalition (www.stemcoalition.eu), and Chairman of the Institute for Integrated Economic Research (IIER) - a non-profit research organization focused on developing an unbiased view of global economic processes.

Hans was adviser to the European Commission for the review of the European Key Competence Framework. EU Member states have set up triple-helix (government-schools-industry) STEM Platforms to strengthen national talent resource in a more strategic way to foster sySTEMic thinking capability (critical, logical and holistic thinking) needed to face the challenges of the 21st Century. For more information visit: www.energyandstuff.org.

Ben Fink

Ben Fink is lead organizer of Appalshop's Performing Our Future project. He has organized with faith, labor, and homeless organizations in Minnesota and Connecticut; directed youth theater and creative writing programs in rural southern New Jersey; served as dramaturg on the German premieres of several Broadway musicals; and served on the board of directors of Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, Inc. Ben holds a Ph.D. in cultural studies from the University of Minnesota. His writings on culture, education, and organizing have been published by the National Endowment for the Arts, Salon.com, Moyers & Company, HowlRound, and ArtPlace America.



Jennifer Miltenburg



Jennifer Miltenburg was born and raised in Detroit Michigan and graduated from Cass Technical High School in downtown Detroit. This naturally led to a diploma in Agricultural Business Management from Centralia College of Agricultural Technology in Exeter, Ontario. Jennifer has been a dairy farmer for over 30 years, and is a Municipal Councillor in Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (ACW) a rural lower tier municipality in Huron County. She is a Director for St. Joseph's Kingsbridge Community (Kingsbridge), a successful example of rural faith building re-purposing; in three years, Kingsbridge has attracted 560 volunteers and raised over \$850,000 dollars.

Jennifer is a representative on Community Hubs Capacity Development Resource Group, that provides advice, input and strategic planning to Community Hubs Division of the provincial government as well as the Rural Regeneration Lead in: Regeneration Works: Places of Faith, a collaboration with two national organizations: Faith and the Common Good & The National Trust for Canada.

Jennifer has been appointed by ACW as Community Liaison to investigate community grants and collaborative programming, examining the impact in rural communities of traditional community hub closures (schools/ churches), and the role municipalities can have supporting the regeneration and repurposing of community service hubs. She also has been appointed as ACW Community Facilitator, and is working with the hamlet of Dungannon in the creation of a new community hub, the Dungannon Community Alliance. In her spare time, Jennifer reads self help manuals entitled “how to say NO” and “Ooooh...something shiny!” and is writing a memoir (working title “Passionate Belief...or Crazy Obsession?”). Her hobbies include buying musical instruments she is convinced she will practice some day... and Kingsbridge.

Gil Garratt

Gil Garratt is a director, playwright, dramaturge, Dora Award-winning actor, and theatre administrator who has worked across Canada and internationally. With a career that has been dedicated primarily to the development of new Canadian plays, Gil has been with the Blyth Festival since 1999.

Gil is also member of the Playwrights’ Guild of Canada, several of Gil’s plays have received multiple productions, toured internationally, and been translated into French. Gil graduated from the National Theatre School’s Playwriting Program in 1998, holds an Honours BA from the University of Waterloo, and an MA from the University of Guelph.



Nonie Brennan



Helping our neighbors come “home” has been the driving theme of Dr. Nonie Brennan’s career. In every role Dr. Brennan has held, she has brought a visionary, systems-change perspective and a grass-roots collaborative approach that drives efficiency, shares learning, aligns funding, and increases positive community outcomes.

Dr. Brennan serves as Chief Executive Officer of All Chicago Making Homelessness History. Notable achievements under Dr. Brennan’s leadership include securing, distribution, and monitoring over \$70 million in public and private funding for Chicago’s homeless system annually; and implementing Chicago’s Plan 2.0 – A Home for Everyone, in partnership with Chicago’s Department of Family and Support Services. She has

led the systems change in Chicago over the last 15 years that has led to an overall reduction in the number of people experiencing homelessness by over 20%. Dr. Brennan was selected as a Senior Advisor by the Institute of Global Homelessness in 2017.

Shanna Ratner

Shanna Ratner is the Principal of Yellow Wood Associates, Inc. Shanna has over 30 years of experience managing complex research and capacity building initiatives and analyzing rural economic development opportunities. She has worked closely with federal, state, and local governments, citizen groups, and nonprofit organizations in identifying and implementing solutions to a range of economic development challenges. Shanna was one of a dozen members of the Aspen Institute's Learning Cluster on Rural Community Capacity Building, a member of the first class of Donella Meadows Fellows in Systems Thinking, a Mel King Fellow class of 2012–2013 at MIT and the thought leader for the Ford Foundation's Wealth Creation in Rural Communities, now WealthWorks, 2008–2015. Shanna holds a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from Cornell University and a Bachelor's Degree in Value Systems from New College in Sarasota, Florida.



Ryan Gibson



Originally from rural Manitoba, Ryan has a deep intrigue and respect for rural communities, rural people, and the events that shape their futures. Over the past ten years Dr. Gibson has been engaged in research projects and community development processes focused on new forms of governance, regional collaboration, cooperatives, rural philanthropy, rural revitalization, and immigration and migration.

Ryan is the Libro Professor of Regional Economic Development in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph. Ryan serves as a board member with the Canadian Community Economic Development Network and the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation. Dr. Gibson holds appointments with the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development at the University of Saskatchewan, the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University, and Assiniboine Community College.



Photo by vivelohoy.com

Ken Coates

Ken Coates is a rare public commentator who brings deep understanding of past and present realities together with compelling ideas about Canada's future. His passionate and highly engaging talks have captivated diverse audiences across the country, from college administrators and economic development officers to Aboriginal entrepreneurs and community activists. Ken is Canada's Research Chair in Regional Innovation and brings his experience in East Asia and around the Circumpolar world to bear on his understanding of Canada's strengths and weaknesses. Ken combines irreverence, insight and a sense of humour in his conversations about the issues that matter most to Canadians.



John Stackhouse



As Senior Vice-President, Office of the CEO at RBC, John is responsible for interpreting trends for the executive leadership team and Board of Directors with insights on how these are affecting RBC, its clients and society at large. Prior to this, John was editor-in-chief of The Globe and Mail (2009-14), editor of Report on Business, and from 1992-1999, a foreign correspondent based in New Delhi, India. He has authored three books: Out of Poverty, Timbit Nation, and Mass Disruption: Thirty Years on the Front Lines of a Media Revolution. John is a Senior Fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs, C.D. Howe Institute and on the boards of Saint Elizabeth Health Care and the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada.



Photo by Chris Koslo

Pre-Conference Schedule

Tuesday October 16 – Pre-Conference Session

Blyth Memorial Community Hall

This event is invitation-only and is not included in the general conference offerings. Delegates will have an opportunity to engage with this project. On Thursday at the Passport to Research session.

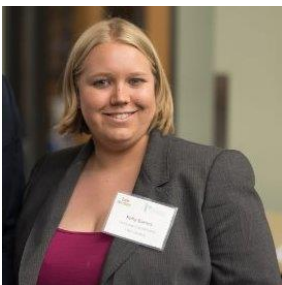
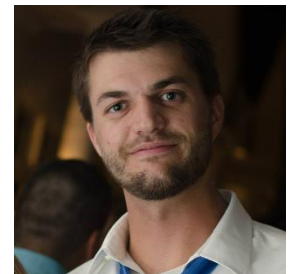
The United Way's Social Research and Planning Council will be hosting a consultation meeting with stakeholders, local politicians about their next research report How Much is Enough? Impact of Low Incomes on Families and Communities in Huron and Perth Counties.

This research engages three Signum Insights consultants: Laura Rosen, Joel Armstrong and Kelly Barnes.



Laura has a broad range of research experience, having worked in the non-profit and education sectors, as well as completing a PhD in neuroscience, and is widely published in academic and non-academic outlets. She has presented her work to a range of audiences from the local to international stage.

Joel spent several years as a Process Transformation Specialist with a focus on manufacturing and healthcare. Since then, he has spent almost a decade acquiring skills as a research scientist and a data scientist studying Psychology throughout his Masters and PhD, and applying these skills to help understand and solve social issues.



Kelly is a researcher passionate about people and dedicated to taking an evidence-based approach to social change. She has a PhD in Social Psychology and six years of experience conducting research in both academic and non-profit settings, as well as several years developing and evaluating government policy at the municipal and provincial levels.

Conference Schedule

Wednesday October 17 – Conference: Day 1

Blyth Memorial Community Hall

7:30 – 9:00 **Registration Open**

Lower Hall

Enjoy morning refreshments from local businesses and connect with fellow delegates.

9:00 – 9:30 **Territorial Acknowledgement and Greetings**

Theatre

A member of the First Nations Community on whose territorial land R2R is taking place, will be invited to tell their story. Local welcome and greetings from local dignitaries.

9:30 – 10:30 **Plenary – "Wake Up!"**

Theatre

Hans van der Loo delivers keynote presentation: Wake Up – This is (Y)Our Only Home. A Q&A on sustainability and resilience in communities follows. Hans is a member of the Advisory Board at the Institute for Integrated Economic Research (IIER) in Europe and is the EU Policy & Government Relations Advisor. He was a former Vice-President at Royal Dutch Shell.

10:30 – 10:45 **Coffee Break**

Lower Hall

Enjoy bounty from the County - tasty refreshments are provided by local businesses.

10:45 – 12:30 **Plenary – Making a Rural Culture Hub**

Theatre

The Rural Culture Hub in Whitesburg, Kentucky is founded on the principle that every community has latent assets they can turn into new community wealth – but only if they can unbind their imaginations and tell new stories about themselves. Ben Fink from the Culture Hub (a part of Appalshop) will join us to tell the story of its creation and share how a culture hub can be built in your community. Appalshop is a national leader in grassroots arts, has pioneered the practice of 'first voice/authentic voice', creating culture of and by the people of Appalachia.

Gil Garratt of the Blyth Festival will join Jennifer Miltenburg of the Kingsbridge Centre to discuss the impact the Blyth Centre for the Arts and the Kingsbridge Centre continues to have on their respective communities. Ben will then join Gil and Jennifer to talk about the creative, social, and economic impacts of rural culture hubs.

12:30 – 1:45 **Lunch**

Lower Hall

A traditional Syrian meal will be prepared by a group of local women who recently arrived in Canada as refugees. Our food comes with a story – and the stories of the food will be shared.

1:45 – 3:30

Concurrent Sessions

Session A) Strategies for a Sustainable Food System

Theatre Stage

Considering the various elements of a Food System, what are some of the practices, strategies and policies we can implement to help ensure that we are creating a resilient, democratic and ecologically sound food system? Panelists include Joan Brady (Executive Director at the South Huron Chamber and Sustainable Food consultant), Debra Swan, the Executive Director of The Local Community Food Centre in Stratford, Ivan Emke, author of Food Notes (from Memorial University in Newfoundland) and Martin Vanderloo from Huron – a company that builds unique supply chain partnerships that provide safe and healthy farm products for their global customers.

Session B) Products of the System

Art Gallery

The voices of many - including women, people of colour, LGBTQ+ folk, indigenous peoples - have been left out of decision-making systems. Isolation, exclusion, and marginalization have become part of how many people experience the rural places they call home. As we progress in the 21st century, it's time for a conversation about the systems that led us to where we are. Some of the systems are now being reimagined and this panel will explore how changing the system can lead us towards resilient rural communities.

3:30 – 4:00

Coffee Break

Near Kitchen

Enjoy bounty from the County tasty refreshments are provided by local businesses.

4:00 – 5:30

Plenary – Rural Radio Forum

Lower Hall

Join us for the relaunch of the old Farm Radio Forum - connecting R2R to kitchen tables from Newfoundland to British Columbia. The Farm Radio Forum ran from 1939-1965 and was the brainchild of Orville Shugg, a farmer, from Southern Ontario. At R2R we will broadcast on Youtube radio in two sessions: Rural Investment Strategies, and Women in Rural – moderated by Keith Roulston and Kimberley Payne – it will be a live radio experience for the entire assembly.

5:30 – 6:30

Networking

Lower Hall

Tonight's Huron Sundowner features the PhotoVoice Exhibit Opening Reception. Join us in the art gallery as photographer Terry Manzo unveils a preview exhibit of photos taken by the community that answer the question: "what it looks like to live on less than a living wage?"

The exhibit launches a PhotoVoice project by The Social Research & Planning Council connected to their "How Much is Enough" research project.

Taste of Huron and Community Futures Huron are hosting a Sundowner of great local fare. Locally made appetizers will be complimented by our local wine from Maelstrom, our beer from Cowbell, the cider from East Street Cidery and the juice of the Bayfield Berry Farm.

6:30 – 8:30 Dinner and Keynote

Lower Hall

Dinner is being prepared with local ingredients from Huron County by award winning chef Peter Gusso of Part 2 Bistro. Shanna Ratner, up from rural Vermont, will offer her considerable thought on rural community economic development – insights gathered from over two decades of working with federal, state and local governments, foundations, and not-for-profits in rural America.

8:30 – midnight Newfoundland Kitchen Party

Lower Hall

A party will break out with music, stories, dancing and plenty of East-coast influence. Thank you to the Goderich Celtic Roots Festival for their assistance in programming this event... somebody bring an ugly stick!

Thursday October 18 – Conference: Day 2

Blyth Memorial Community Hall

7:30 – 9:00 Breakfast and Registration

Lower Hall

Breakfast made and served by the Royal Canadian Legion, Blyth Branch 420, the Women's Auxiliary, and the Lions Club.

9:00 – 9:30 Opening Remarks

Theatre

9:30 – 11:00 Passport to Research

Theatre

Too often there is a divide between researchers and the individuals who can benefit most from the research being conducted, this is especially true in rural places. This morning, that divide will be bridged through interactive stations engaging rural scholars and conference participants. Rural researchers will be set up throughout Memorial Hall and conference participants will engage with them. These graduate researchers, and practitioners from across Canada are doing work with rural communities.

Cosponsored by Huron County and the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (SEDRD) at the University of Guelph. This session is introduced by Dr. Ryan Gibson, Libro Professor in Regional Economic Development.

11:00 – 12:30 Plenary – Renewable Rural

Theatre Stage

John Manitowabi, Land Director, and Theodore Flamand, Risk Coordinator are members of the Wiikwemkoong First Nation community from Manitoulin Island. Along with Emma Cubbit, sustainable architect and moderator, Jay Heaman from Oxford County, David Mayberry - warden of Oxford County - Rob McKinlay, dairy farmer from Oxford County, Graham Cubitt director of projects and development at Indwell, and Chris Lee from Huron (he and Judy have built the first Passive Grade house in Huron) will share ideas on sustainability, resilience, and environmental management in the 21st Century.

12:30 – 2:00 **Lunch**

Lower Hall

Enjoy more bounty from the County, a local land-to-table lunch catered by chef James Eddington from Eddington's Restaurant in glorious Exeter, Ontario. During the meal Dr. Ryan Gibson offers reflections on Passport to Research.

2:00 – 4:00 **Concurrent Sessions**

Session C) Millennial Machinery

Art Gallery

If a group of 20 and 30 somethings were to start a new rural community - what would it look like? Who would be involved? What would be needed? Engage in dialogue with a panel of fresh rural voices. Topics covered by our panelists include lifestyle, technology, up-skilling, recreation, and the future of farming will be discussed.

Session D) Where Are You Living?

Theatre Stage

Rural is experiencing a housing crisis – it is a challenge that impacts every strata of our society. From our ability to attract workers and families, to ensuring affordable housing for our citizens. And there's homelessness. What solutions are in play? How are rural communities dealing with the situation? The panel includes Huron County Economic Development Officer Chris Watson, Dr. Nonie Brennan, Chief Executive Officer of All Chicago Making Homelessness History, David Reycraft from Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services and Erin Schooley, Chair of the County of Huron's Housing and Homelessness steering committee.

Session E) Community Wellbeing

Lower Hall

What is a healthy rural setting? A panel of leading thinkers will explore rural community from a health, economic, cultural and social point of view. Success and failure, structure and innovation, shareable ideas are all on the menu. Join Gwen Devereaux from Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health, Dr. Heather Mair from the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Richard (Dick) Plant from 4th Line Theatre, Dr. Al Lauzon from the University of Guelph's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, and Liz Arkinstall Libro Credit Union's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager as wellbeing is discussed. It's also the 10th anniversary of Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health... so there will be the best chocolate chip cookies in Ontario served up. 11-year-old Natalie Emmerton from nearby Howick is the baker and she and her mom will be on hand for the glorious occasion.

4:00 – 5:30 **Huron Sundowner**

Lower Hall

Join us for a junk food pairing with Cowbell beer, Maelstrom wine, East Street cider and juice from the Bayfield Berry Farm. The tasty beverages will be paired with some unexpected and unconventional tasty treats.

5:30 – onwards **Dinner**

Lower Hall

Tonight's dinner is a traditional Jamaican meal prepared by local Chef Summer Crofts from Summer's Restaurant in beautiful Wroxeter, Ontario.

Friday October 19 – Conference: Day 3

Blyth Memorial Community Hall

7:30 – 9:00 **Breakfast and Registration**

Lower Hall

Breakfast made and served by the Royal Canadian Legion, Blyth Branch 420, the Women's Auxiliary, and the Lions Club.

9:00 – 9:15 **Opening Remarks**

Theatre

Minister of Education Lisa Thompson, MPP for Huron/Bruce, will get the morning started with comments about the importance of education in creating a vibrant and resilient society.

9:15 – 12:00 **Plenary – ReSkilling for the 21st Century**

Theatre

RBC's Senior Vice-President, John Stackhouse will present from the Humans Wanted project – a year long cross-Canada study looking at what skills are necessary in the exponential age. Hans van der Loo will present the work he is doing with STEM in the EU exploring the question: can we make it through the 21st century in a civilized manner? Panel discussion will follow with local entrepreneurs as well as entrepreneurs featured in the Humans Wanted report. Moderated by John Stackhouse and Hans van der Loo. Sponsored by RBC.

12:00 – 1:00 **Lunch**

Lower Hall

Enjoy the culinary creation of local chef Jason Rutledge from the Blyth Inn. Dignitaries from our local, provincial, and federal government will be in attendance and Dr. Ken Coates, Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation, will offer reflections on the conference.

On-going Activities

Market Street Strategies

Market Street Strategies, will be covering R2R from gavel to gavel with a dynamic team of young journalists who will crank out content on every imaginable platform. The conference will be a live broadcast making the rural-focused conversations shared in Blyth accessible to communities across the country and beyond. The material will be archived following R2R for future reference.

Research Tree

Leaflet die-cuts are available throughout the R2R for participants to write research needs and ideas on the leaves. At the end of R2R the list of community inspired ideas will find partners from the conference to implement the research and will be compiled and forwarded to rural focused university researchers across Canada. The ideas will also impact on the ongoing action research being developed at the Canadian Centre for Rural Creativity in Blyth

Passport to Research Scholars

Mary Ferguson



Mary's abiding interest in, and dedication to rural communities led to the recent completion of her PhD studies at the University of Guelph examining the role of rural and remote municipalities as intermediaries and practitioners in social enterprise development. Mary has been a leader in the social enterprise sector since the mid-1990s, and has worked closely with funding collaborative and hundreds of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs in Ontario and Canada. Mary has created and delivered social enterprise curriculum, worked on feasibility studies and business plans, and developed funding/evaluation frameworks for investors and collaborators in social enterprise.

Meaghan Luis

Meaghan is an environmental planner who has provided successful planning direction on a variety of environmental, social and economic planning projects, including large-scale environmental assessments and impact assessments for a variety of indigenous, municipal and private clients. Meaghan has expertise in providing policy and planning direction for rural and remote communities in Northern Ontario and internationally. In addition, Meaghan has extensive experience in cross cultural facilitation, community workshop delivery and the use of traditional knowledge in a variety of projects.



Mikaël Akimowicz

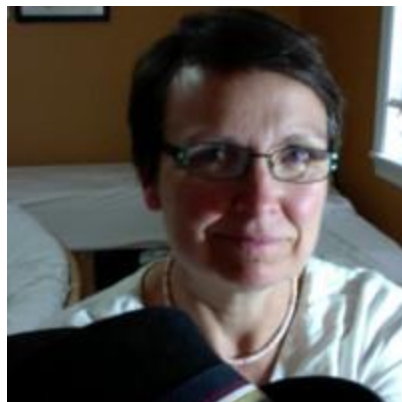


Mikaël Akimowicz is a researcher at the Rural Development Institute – Brandon University, MB. He has worked on several topics important for rural areas such as rural broadband, rural employment, and food production.

He earned his PhD from the University in Toulouse in France where he worked on farm adaptation in urban-influenced areas. He then partnered with the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph where he led a comparison of farmers' investment decision-making. His main research interest is centered around the construction of a more sustainable food system. In particular, he wants to investigate the barriers and levers for the adoption of agroecological practices in the food supply chain.

Pamela Duesling

Pam Duesling is the Director of Planning in Norfolk County and proud 6th generation farmer in Norfolk County. Pam is currently a candidate for her PhD in Rural Studies at the University of Guelph working with Dr. Wayne Caldwell.



Renee Boileau

With over 15 years experience in engineering and continual professional development focusing on mathematics, Renee has formidable skills defining problems, finding efficient solutions, and analyzing and communicating technical information in intuitive ways. Renée produces a radio show and podcast, interviewing, writing scripts, hosting and editing shows. Renee has engaged her community through storytelling in creating the Fogbank Audio Coworking Group Inc, in Newfoundland.

Rebecca Hasdell

Rebecca Hasdell is a PhD candidate in Public Health at the University of Toronto, and Adjunct Faculty in the Northern Medical Program at the University of Northern British Columbia. Her research examines public policy approaches to promote healthier food environments in smaller cities and rural regions. Over the past 15 years, Rebecca has worked in program planning and strategic policy for government, research and not-for-profit positions in several Canadian cities. Rebecca is particularly interested in approaches that involve residents in policy conversations, with specific experience in the areas of food access, environmental sustainability, poverty reduction and local economic development. She holds a BA from the University of Calgary, and a Masters of Public Health (Health Promotion) from the University of Toronto.



Stephanie Gariscsak



Stephanie Gariscsak is currently a PhD student at the University of Guelph in Rural Studies wherein her current research focuses on the experiences of seniors and marginalized populations in rural communities in relation to food security. Her previous research during her Masters focused on the experiences of LGBTQ+ identified youth in rural communities in relation to mental health and wellness. Stephanie is passionate about improving health and wellness of marginalized populations in rural communities and is an active member of the LGBTQ+ activist community in Guelph. Her current role as a LGBTQ+ program facilitator at the University of Guelph has allowed her to engage in and facilitate a variety of capacity building and educating platforms within the University of Guelph, and its greater community.

Susanna Reid

Susanna Reid, RPP, MCIP is the Director of the Social Research and Planning Council, at the United Way Perth-Huron. She worked as a municipal planner at the Huron County Planning Department from 2003-2017. She is passionate about community transformation and creating places where everyone matters.



Verena Kulak



What role do spiritual beliefs and other cultural values play on the way we relate to natural environments? How do people's values influence the implementation of technological solutions to environmental protection? Are plant clones a viable alternative to restore depleted ecosystems? These are some of the questions that brought Verena to the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (SEDRD) due to its interdisciplinary approach. Also, at SEDRD we are privileged to work closely with various Indigenous groups who have a socially recognized sense of community between humans and the natural environment.

Verena is developing a project focusing on the interrelations between Indigenous spirituality and medicinal plant restoration initiatives in Southern Ontario. A major guiding question relates to the perception and implementation of plant technology such as tissue culture as a viable strategy for ecosystem restoration while promoting the traditional use of medicinal plants.



Photo by gettyimages.com

Thank you to all the panelists, keynote speakers, volunteers, chefs, businesses, farmers, service clubs, partners, sponsors, friends who came from away, and supporters of the CCRC, who have contributed mightily to the R2R experience.

Thank you to our lead partners!



Thank you to our sponsors!



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