

# Northern Directions Directions Nord

## Presentation Session: Rural Revenue Generation

### DATE:

Friday, November 18th, 2022

### TIME:

9:00–10:30 AM

### FORMAT:

Four 15-minute oral presentations followed by a 30-minute discussion

### SESSION DESCRIPTION:

This session presents different research, case studies, and stories on rural revenue generation in Northern Ontario or other rural, remote, northern, and island communities. It touches on themes such as rural economic development, sustainable rural development, innovative rural business models, lasting rural income generation, and others. It also provides participants with the opportunity to join the discussion, give their input, and share their knowledge, best practices, or stories with the other participants.



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# Presentations :

## Presentation 1

Time: 9:00–9:15 AM

Title: Shaping Regional Agriculture and Sustainability through Canadian Technology

Authors: McKenzie Huneke (University of Waterloo), Tara Vinodrai (University of Toronto), and Heather Hall (University of Waterloo)

Abstract: As advanced technologies reshape the agri-food sector, Canadian ag-tech producers offer promising solutions for growers to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and address the challenge of sustainably increasing food production. However, little academic and policy research examines the leading-edge technologies that Canadian firms design for agriculture, how these solutions enable specific business advantages and sustainability benefits, or their geographic links with rural and remote farming contexts. This research project explores the landscape of Canadian ag-tech producers, including the scale and types of technologies enabling agricultural solutions, their target use cases on farms, and intended business and sustainability benefits for growers. It also investigates the relationships between ag-tech firms' structure, management team gender diversity, and spatial context of technology production and use. We assembled a unique dataset of 202 firms based on Crunchbase, supplemented by analysis of ag-tech producer websites. Our findings identify the characteristics of firms likely to offer significant potential for business and sustainability impact in Canadian agriculture. This research can inform rural policymakers by enhancing understanding of how technology producers, regional governments, industry associations, and intermediaries can facilitate user-producer alignment to drive enhanced sustainability in agriculture.



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## Presentation 2

Time: 9:15–9:30 AM

Title: Estimating rural Canada's intergenerational wealth transfer: Application in selected Ontario communities

Authors: Alex Petric (University of Waterloo) and Ryan Gibson (University of Guelph)

**Abstract:** The transfer of wealth between generations is often proposed as an untapped source of revenue for community investment/development and philanthropic resources. When community members pass away, they may leave bequests to local institutions, and organizations that consciously work to secure such donations may accrue long-term benefits. However, while many organizations appear optimistic about benefitting from this transfer, relatively few appear to have substantial plans around it. One possible reason for this difference is that the potential size of this transfer within Canada remains unknown, especially in rural communities, which complicates strategic efforts. Using data from a custom Statistics Canada request, we propose an initial method for estimating rural wealth transfers in the coming decades based on key wealth holdings, demographic data, and estimated mortality rates. We note limits to the current approach and discuss the relevance of results by examining implications for selected communities in southern and northern Ontario.

## Presentation 3

Time: 9:30–9:45 AM

Title: Cultural asset mapping on the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland: Co-developing an online tool for cultural promotion and entrepreneurship opportunities

Authors: Brennan Lowery (Postdoctoral Fellow, Grenfell Campus of Memorial University), Seyi Awosiyan (Master of Arts in Environmental Policy Student, Grenfell Campus), Kelly Vodden (Professor [Research], Environmental Policy Institute, Grenfell Campus), and Richard May (Executive Director, CBDC Nortip)

**Abstract:** Rural and Northern communities worldwide have used mapping tools to identify, preserve, and promote their unique cultural assets. Cultural asset mapping can also inform revenue generation opportunities and, when done in a community-driven manner, demonstrate the value of cultural assets that are often overlooked in mainstream economic development theory and practice. The proposed presentation will discuss a cultural asset mapping initiative on the Great Northern Peninsula (GNP) of Newfoundland, a region with rich cultural heritage but which also faces challenges with promoting new economic development opportunities. This action research project, co-led between academic researchers and Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC) Nortip, is currently building an online asset mapping tool on the GNP. The project has been funded by the Mitacs Accelerate program, which has supported a graduate student intern. At the proposed presentation, we will discuss the methods undertaken, including the review of cultural asset mapping frameworks, compilation of asset data from existing sources, visits to cultural sites across the region, and design of an interactive website to share the cultural asset inventory. We will also share plans for workshops to present an initial version of the asset inventory with local residents and collectively identify new opportunities for cultural entrepreneurship.



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## Presentation 4

Time: 9:45–10:00 AM

Title: Reconsidering and reclaiming economic development options for northern contexts: The case for decolonizing economic development approaches for rural reinvestment and sustainable rural development

Authors: Dr. Anita Vaillancourt (Lakehead University) and Professor Pelham Matthews (Algoma University)

Abstract: Persistent economic challenges encountered by northern towns and cities remain intimately connected to colonial conceptualizations of growth and approaches to economic development that are limited in their ability to produce sustainable options for population retention and economic stability. The continued favouring of rural economic development models that are premised on principles of extraction, acquisition, and expansion maintain and reproduce a limited range of options that are widely recognized as both unsustainable and ineffectual. Drawing on two northern cases that feature explicit economic development challenges of a small town and large city in northern Ontario, the authors interrogate the dynamics and impacts of the dominant colonial structures, systems and processes and their implications for constraining the identification and adoption of inclusive and sustainable alternatives. Informed by the case analysis, the paper presents a continuous quality improvement framework to systematically leverage and diversify northern rural and non-metropolitan economic development opportunities. Barriers to identifying, assessing and operationalizing northern economic development alternatives that privilege the inclusion of historically marginalized community members, leverage local knowledge, resources, and assets will be discussed. The presentation will close with recommendations for shifting from colonial to sustainable approaches to rural economic development.



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