





**NRE<sup>2</sup>** BUILDING RURAL CAPACITY IN THE NEW ECONOMY



## (In)Visibility for KM: the NRE experience

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- Three objectives:
  - Identify some of the KM activities and outcomes of the New Rural Economy Project
  - Consider some of the challenges we have faced – particularly with respect to organizational barriers to KM
  - Offer some suggestions for reorganization in order to give KM the visibility and credibility it deserves – in our institutions and our careers
- The NRE Project represents considerable investment
- Contributions of many groups and individuals
  - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
    - Especially their INE initiative with Industry Canada
  - Concordia University – and all universities in our network – we need and appreciate their support
  - The Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-food Canada
  - Statistics Canada
  - CRRF
  - NRE Research Team
  - Rural Citizens in our field sites
- Open Session 2: *KMb Best Practices and Opportunities*
  - 
  - 11:00 – 12:30
  - 
  - Panel presentations by invited speakers from SKC, CURA and KIS Programs (*an exchange between Gisèle Yasmeen, Alan Maceachern, Carole Lévesque, Bill Reimer and the participants*)
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  - Discussion Questions:
    - 
    - An example of practice that has worked really well.
    - Key results that are being achieved.
    - Lessons learned for the future.
    - How is the evolving KMb environment of the online interactive world being integrated in your work?
    - 
    - *Format: Opening Remarks: Craig McNaughton, Contextualization, KMb at SSHRC; followed by formal presentations from the resource people, followed by an open mike for questions and to allow participants to share their own best practices, results and opportunities for future action.*
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    - *Chair: Craig McNaughton, Director, SSHRC KMb and Prorgame Integration Division*
    - *Resource People: Alan Maceachern (University Western Ontario); Carole Lévesque (Institut national de la recherche scientifique); and Bill Reimer (Concordia University)*
    - *Recorders from SSHRC: Mathieu Ravignat, Luc Lebrun, Jacques Critchley*

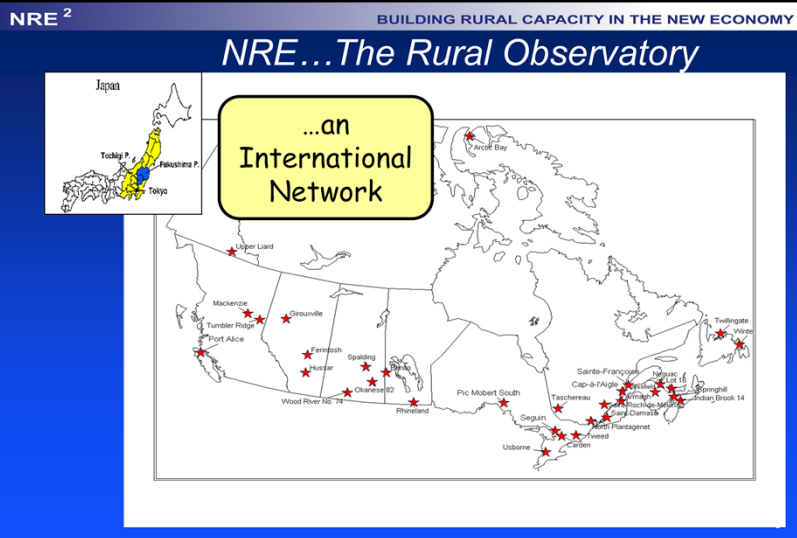
## The NRE Project

- Established in 1997
- 15-20 researchers from all across Canada
- Rural Observatory: 32 sites + 2 in Japan
- Organization – 4 Themes + Integration
- Data collection and analysis
- Workshops and conferences (2/yr)
- Researchers, Policy-makers, Rural People
- International collaboration
- SSHRC Support (NRE<sup>1</sup> and NRE<sup>2</sup>)

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### The NRE Project

- Established in 1997
- 15-20 researchers from all across Canada
- Rural Observatory – 32 rural sites + 2 sites in Japan
- Organization:
  - Central administrative office (Concordia)
  - 4 themes centred in other (rural) locations
    - Services (UNBC)
    - Governance (UQAR)
    - Environment (UNB)
    - Communications (Mt Allison)
- Data collection and analysis
- Workshops and conferences
- Researchers, Policy-makers, Rural People
- International collaboration
- SSHRC Support
  - NRE<sup>1</sup>: Strategic Grant – Social Cohesion \$900,000, 3 years
  - NRE<sup>2</sup>: INE Major Collaborative Grant – Building Rural Capacity in the New Economy \$3 million, 4 years



- **Identify and organize collaboration across disciplines and spheres but with respect to common, strategic foci.**
- (S) Problem: How do we get people with diverse backgrounds, completing demands, and different commitments to talk to one another?
  - Find a common interest that cuts across as many as possible
  - Our selection of geographically defined field sites and locations has served us well in this respect: they bring diverse interests together to address a common object of research.
  - A common cause may also serve this function
  - Regional nodes
- > We identified 32 rural sites which we have referred to as the Rural Observatory
  - Went to people in each of these sites and asked them if they would like to work with us
  - As a result, we have worked with most of them over 9 years
  - Community profile data (every 2 years)
  - Household survey (1995) households in 21 sites (2001)
  - Collaboration with community members through local meetings, give-backs, exchanges, and invitations to our events (cf. people here today)
- Our Japanese colleagues were very impressed with this approach and asked us if we would collaborate with them to do the same thing in Japan
  - > With our help they selected 2 sites in Japan and ran a parallel and comparative project with ours
- This design allows us to not only understand the dynamics within each site, but allows us to make comparisons across sites – thereby separating out characteristics unique to each site from those that are due to contextual conditions

## My Favorite KM Examples - I

- The Rural Observatory
  - Impacts on local policies
  - Impacts on international methodologies (Japan, USA, Australia, Central, South America)

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- There have been many exciting results from this research – results that have advanced our knowledge of rural Canada, communities, policies, and programs. True to the Knowledge Mobilization objectives, they have also had impacts on policy-makers, practitioners, and citizens.
- When thinking about these impacts for the presentation today, I have made note of their:
  - Direct impacts
  - Indirect impacts (short and long term)
  - Likely impacts
- I then asked:
  - What are the most exciting of those impacts – those that reflect the value of our work?
  - How many of them are reflected in the institutional forms and considerations of our universities and granting agencies (like SSHRC)?
  - What is missing in those evaluations?
- I started by looking at my own formal CV as it is constructed along the lines specified by SSHRC and my university.
- Use myself as example – since I am out of the running
- The first question: What are the most valuable outcomes and impacts of our work?
- >The Rural Observatory
  - Local policies – Japan trip and Hussar (Clay Armstrong establishes local committee to plan a regional high school after visiting a similar initiative in Japan; Benito: Delegate decides to run for mayor after being inspired at our conference)
  - Impacts on international methodologies (Japan, USA, Australia, Central, South America) Policy Impacts

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## My Favorite KM Examples - II

- Integrated Conferences
  - Policy-makers, practitioners, citizens
  - Go to the target groups
  - Local impacts
  - Local broadcasts

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- Integrated Conferences – in rural places, in collaboration with rural people, local visits, conference radio
  - Policy-makers, practitioners, citizens
  - Go to the target groups
  - Local impacts: e.g. Tweed (then Wollaston Township – Deputy Clerk)
  - Local broadcasts

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## My Favorite KM Examples - III

- Students
  - Gatineau conference
  - Where they've gone
- Policy Impacts
  - Cabinet Minister's Workshop
  - Senate Committee
  - Knowledge pool

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- Students
  - E.g. Gatineau conference – organized by alumni
  - Where they've gone (admin as well as research – Doctorate work in many universities, Heritage Canada, Health Canada, Statistics Canada, Treasury Board, OECD, Boutique Jacob)
- >Policy Impacts
  - Cabinet Minister's Workshop (Hon. John Godfrey)
  - Senate Committee
    - Witnesses
    - Locations for committee visits
  - Pool of knowledge

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## NRE Project Outcomes

- The Rural Observatory (200+ people)
- Integrated Conferences (800+ part.)
- Student Capacity-building (125+)
- Policy influence (e.g. Senate Committee)
- Partnerships with funding (7)
- Partnerships without funding (38)
- Academic Publications (250: 14 bks, 50 ref.)
- Community flyers/booklets (80+)
- Media products (50+)
- Presentations (350)

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•Let's look at the way in which we might classify these outcomes and activities for the purpose of career and merit evaluation – and for project evaluation.

•Here's a suggestion of the way in which I might classify those from the NRE:

- >The Rural Observatory (200+ people)
- >Integrated Conferences (800+ part.)
- >Student Capacity-building (125+)
- >Policy influence (e.g. Senate Committee)
- >Partnerships with funding (7)
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## Institutional Filter

- The Rural Observatory (200+ people)
- Integrated Conferences (800+ people)
- Student Capacity-building (125+)
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- Media products (50+)
- Presentations (350)

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- Now let's look at the way in which these activities and outcomes might stand up to the filter imposed by our institutions
  - Include both 'products' and 'legitimation/evaluation'
- Focus on CVs since
  - They are the most critical filter for career position, advancement, and encouragement
    - Primary focus for researchers and students – even if they are working within community-academic partnerships
  - They are widely used (universities, funding agencies) – and legitimized
    - E.g. they cut across all funding programs for SSHRC
  - Eventually colour the long-term activities and nature of our academic institutions and research activities
- SSHRC CV asks for:
  - Funded Research
  - Research Contributions over the last 6 years
    - Refereed contributions: books (where applicable, subdivide according to those that are single authored, co-authored, and edited works), monographs, book chapters, articles in scholarly refereed journals.
    - Other refereed contributions, such as: conference proceedings, papers presented at scholarly meetings or conferences, articles in professional or trade journals, etc.
    - Non-refereed contributions, such as: book reviews, published reviews of your work, research reports, policy papers, public lectures, creative works etc
  - Other Research Contributions
    - Describe any other contributions to research and the advancement of knowledge within the last six years, including your research contributions to non-academic audiences (e.g., general public, policy makers, private sector, non-profit organizations, etc.).
  - Most Significant Career Research Contributions
  - Contributions to training
- Now let's look at how many of the most exciting outcomes of the NRE Project are reflected in such CVs (and thereby committee discussions).
  - >None of the rural observatory activities and people
  - >None of the integration of researchers, policy-makers, practitioners in our annual conferences and workshops
  - >Only a small part of the student capacity-building activities (e.g. number of students paid)
  - >None of the policy-influencing activities
  - >Some of the partnerships
    - >— but only those where funding is involved
  - >Many of the academic publications
  - >None of the community flyers, information booklets, and related materials
  - >Most of the media-communication materials
  - >Only a few of the presentations
- My university forms are even more restrictive – and my peers on most evaluation committees are frequently more limited in their recognition of value.
- As a result many of the most important knowledge mobilization materials are invisible for financial and career considerations.
- ...including the KM objectives of SSHRC program requests themselves:
  - E.g. SSHRC Cluster proposal adds:
    - Knowledge mobilization: describe the quality and breadth of the cluster's plans for
      - synthesizing and applying knowledge in innovative ways among knowledge users and
      - producers, both within and beyond traditional postsecondary institutions.
    - Knowledge impacts: describe the value of the anticipated intellectual, cultural, social and
      - economic benefits of the cluster in both national and international contexts; capacity of the
      - cluster to foster innovative research agendas and to add value to existing research projects;
      - the potential of the cluster to develop new research opportunities



## Increasing KM Visibility

- Events and activities
- KM-related institutions established
- Tools for analysis and action
- Media activities
- Policy events and impacts
- Partnerships
- Student outcomes

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- What are we to do about it?
- Consider revising our filters – what we request from our researchers – for merit and promotion especially
- Identify the barriers in the process
  - Markers of accomplishment
  - Legitimation
  - Resource allocation
- Establish priorities for reducing/shifting barriers
- Categories and Information
  - Events and activities
    - Conferences and workshops (persons involved, hours of involvement, roles)
    - KM-related meetings (persons involved, hours of involvement, roles)
  - KM-related institutions
    - Rural Observatory (persons involved, hours of involvement, roles)
    - Clearinghouse, data repository, and web gateway
    - Best practices repository
    - Endowment fund
  - Tools for analysis and action
    - Asset mapping
    - Community development tools
    - Research tools
  - Media activities
    - All forms (who initiated, hours of involvement)
  - Policy events and impacts
    - Events (who initiated, people involved, hours of involvement, roles, policy outcomes)
    - Products (who initiated, people involved, hours of involvement, roles, policy outcomes)
  - Partnerships (who involved, hours of involvement, roles, objectives)
  - Student outcomes
    - Dissertations and products
    - Community education activities
    - Events (who involved, hours of involvement, roles)
    - Careers (during and post-project involvement)





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- This is a long term process, but one that can be facilitated by putting the time and resources to proposing a model
- Check it out with the many KM successes we have seen (especially with the SSHRC programs)
- Encourage our institutions and colleagues to use them and adapt them for their particular purposes.