



The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation

25 Years of CRRF: What we have learned

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 Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

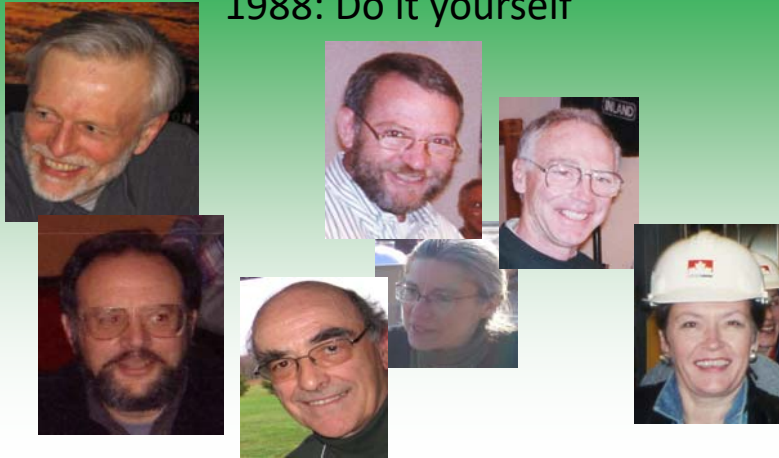
Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

 Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada

11

1988: Do it yourself



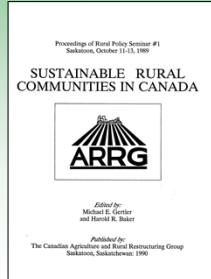
- Context: *“In the late 70’s and early 80’s, there was zero, to the nearest significant digit, zero interest in rural research”.*
 - R. Bollman referring to the state of rural prior to the founding of ARRГ
 - “The other perspective at that meeting, beside the issues of economic, agricultural and global restructuring, was the notion that governments were not able to handle the job of economic development and the alleviation of some of the difficult consequences for rural people”*
 - P. Apedaile commenting on the first ARRГ meeting
- Learned:
 - Must do it ourselves if we wished to build knowledge and capacity regarding rural Canada
- Present at that first ARRГ meeting were:
 - Daniel Gouin, Universite de Laval-GREPA (Agricultural Economics)
 - Serge Lebeau, Universite de Laval-GREPA (Economie rural)
 - Fran Shaver, Concordia University (Sociology)?
 - Tony Fuller, University of Guelph (Rural Planning and Development)
 - Ray Bollman, Statistics Canada
 - Sally Rutherford, Executive Director of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture
 - Pamela Smith, University of Regina
 - Michael Gertler, University of Saskatchewan (Sociology)
 - Hartley Furtan, University of Saskatchewan (Agricultural Economics)
 - Richard Rounds, Brandon University (Rural Development)
 - Tuli Ulderan (sp?), ??
 - Phil Ehrensaft, University de Quebec a Montreal (Sociology?)
 - Peter Apedaile U of Alberta (Agricultural Economics)
 - Bob Cumming (?), Representative from Agriculture & Agrifoods Canada
 - Don ?, Representative from Agriculture & Agrifoods Canada



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1989: Nurture your friendships

- First annual conference: Saskatoon
- With Secretary of State, Donner Foundation, Agriculture Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada, Statistics Canada, University of Saskatchewan)



- First annual conference: Saskatoon
- Agriculture and Rural Restructuring Group
- With support from the Secretary of State, Donner Foundation, Agriculture Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada, Statistics Canada, University of Saskatchewan)
- Learned
 - Take stock of your friends and nurture the friendships – individuals and through them, organizations



1990: Dream large

- Visioning at Econiche
- Ottawa and Gatineau



- Ray Bollman championed our next meeting in Ottawa
- With a follow-up retreat in the Gatineaus – Econiche
- It was there that we developed and solidified the vision for ARRG as a network of researchers, policy-makers, rural citizens working to build our understanding of rural Canada – to serve as a basis for good policy and action.
- Learned:
 - When dreaming – dream large, for inspiration and strategy
 - Watch out for hot tub feliculitis



1991: Sectoral policies are limited

- ARRG renamed to CRRF
- Coaticook, QC Workshop
- Stimulating Rural Economies: Camrose, AB
 - Meet in rural sites
 - Give local control
 - Integrate local focus (with tours)



- ARRG renamed to CRRF
- Workshop in Coaticook, QC
- Stimulating Rural Economies: Camrose, AB
 - Learned (how to run a conference):
 - Value of meeting in local areas
 - Benefits of local control over the design of the conference
 - Value of local tours



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1992: Rural manufacturing and tradable services remain strong

- CRRF granted charitable status
- Workshop in Brandon, MB
- Conference in Goderich, ON



- Workshop in Brandon, MB
- CRRF granted charitable status
- Conference in Goderich, ON on Rural manufacturing and tradable services
 - Learned: both of these are strategic initiatives for rural communities since they remain strong



1993: Partnerships are strategic

- SSHRC Networking Grant, PI: Peter Apedaile
- Workshop: Merrickville, ON
- Development Strategies for Rural Canada: Evaluating Partnerships, Jobs, and Communities: Wolfville, NS



- SSHRC Networking Grant, PI: Peter Apedaile
- Workshop in Merrickville, ON
- Development Strategies for Rural Canada: Evaluating Partnerships, Jobs, and Communities: Wolfville, NS
- Learned:
 - Public, Private, NGO partnerships can create new opportunities and increase capacity for rural initiatives
 - Multiple versions of these partnerships
 - Importance of partying

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1994: Rural institutional restructuring requires imaginative approaches

- CRRF invited to testify at Joint Senate and House Committee on Agriculture, Agri-Food, and Forestry
- Workshop in St-Clément, QC
- Rural Institutional Restructuring: Grande Prairie, AB



- CRRF invited to testify at Joint Senate and House Committee on Agriculture, Agri-Food, and Forestry
 - Toward a Whole Rural Policy
 - Note the themes which continue to this day (rural vs. sectoral policies, recognition of collateral damage from policies, support of local)
- St-Clément, QC and Grande Prairie, AB
 - St-Clément: illustration of rural opportunities and initiative re. power failure
- Rural Institutional Restructuring: Grande Prairie, AB
- Learned:
 - Little research done on the restructuring of institutions
 - Government withdrawal from rural areas
 - Voluntary groups under stress
 - Need research on these changes
 - Grande Prairie showed us how it might be done – re. hospital reorganization

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1995: Rural employment is complex

- Workshop in Corner Brook, NL
- International Perspectives on Rural Employment: Coaticook, QC (co-sponsored by OECD)





- Workshop in Corner Brook, NL
 - Ray introduced us to our first 'Great Debate' event
- International Perspectives on Rural Employment: Coaticook, QC (co-sponsored by OECD)
 - Held in rural town with 1 motel (39 rooms), no conference centre, and inadequate facilities
 - Local community furnished a local barn-showroom, catered from a local high school, trained students to wait tables, and organized a regional billeting and transportation system
 - Later marketed themselves as a conference centre
- Learned:
 - The power of local initiative and entrepreneurship
 - That CRRF conferences can become a rural economic development tool
 - Heather Clemenson introduced us to our first Internet-integrated conference event

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1996: NAFTA challenges commodity and manufacturing trade

- CRRF testifies before the *Standing Committee on Natural Resources* of the House of Commons
- Workshop in Quesnel, BC
- NAFTA and the New Rural Economy: Gimli, MB





- CRRF is invited to testify before the *Standing Committee on Natural Resources* of the House of Commons
 - CRRF input is featured prominently in the Committee's 1997 report, 'Think Rural'
 - Including the suggestion of a position in Cabinet with a mandate to consider rural implications for each piece of legislation or policy considered
- Workshop in Quesnel, BC
- Conference on NAFTA and the New Rural Economy: Gimli, MB
- Learned:
 - Uncertain futures for both commodity trade and manufacturing industries in rural Canada
 - Greater competition challenges traditional commodities and new markets create opportunities for rural manufacturing
 - Government selectively open to input for research-based findings
 - We are learning how to do it
 - Potentially takes significant resources

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1997: The new rural economy is diverse and dynamic

- HRDC, AAFC, FEDNOR support the launch of the NRE Project
- Workshop in North Bay, ON
- Rural Revitalization, West Prince County, PE





- HRDC, AAFC, FEDNOR support the launch of the NRE Project (Understanding the New Rural Economy, Options and Choices)
- Workshop in North Bay, ON
- Conference on Rural Revitalization, West Prince County, PE
- Learned:
 - Main characteristics of the NRE:
 - Diversity
 - Change
 - Services and knowledge gaining in importance over primary commodities



1998: Transportation and service delivery challenges marginalize key rural populations

- Established Rural Observatory
- Agreement with the *Institute for Rural Revitalization in the 21st Century*, Japan
- Workshop in St-Donat, QC
- Rural Marginalization, Nelson, BC



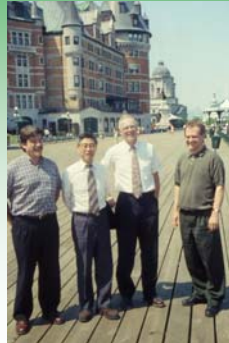
- Established Rural Observatory
- Agreement established with the Institute for Rural Revitalization in the 21st Century, Japan
- Workshop in St-Donat, QC
- Rural Marginalization, Nelson, BC
- Learned:
 - Wide range of local capacities in rural sites (Rural Observatory)
 - The value of international comparisons
 - Transportation and service delivery challenges key rural populations
 - Elderly
 - Single women
 - Youth



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1999: Local capacity creates opportunities

- Name changed to Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
- Canada-Japan exchanges
- SSHRC supports 3-year \$600,000 project on Social Cohesion, PI: Bill Reimer
- Workshop in Newtown, NL
- Partnership with Université Rurale Québécoise, Trois Pistoles, QC



- Name changed to Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
 - Following lead of our Japanese colleagues
 - To avoid negative connotations of 'restructuring'
- Canada-Japan exchanges
- SSHRC supports 3-year \$600,000 project on Social Cohesion, PI: Bill Reimer
- Workshop in Newtown, NL
- Partnership with Université Rurale Québécoise, Trois Pistoles, QC
- Learned:
 - URQ has developed the principle of local communities driving conference focus and activities with impressive results
 - Local capacities combined, multiple communities, significant direction of topics and program
 - Canada-Japan comparisons yield valuable models for different approaches
 - E.g. encourage youth to leave, maintain contacts
 - Use local assets to build social capital

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2000: Social cohesion is multifaceted

- Workshop in Nanaimo, BC
 - Collaboration with fledgling International Rural Network
- The New Rural Economy, Alfred, ON



- Workshop in Nanaimo, BC
 - Collaboration with fledgling International Rural Network
- Understanding the New Rural Economy, Alfred, ON
- Learned:
 - Research on rural health and education needs special collaboration initiatives because of separate institutional funding
 - Multiple conceptual frameworks for social cohesion imply separate multiple processes of generation and impacts (subjective and objective)
 - Value of student assistants



2001: Social capital is multifaceted

- Field trip to Japan
- Workshop in Sackville, NB
- The New Rural Economy: From Challenge to Action: Meunster, SK



- Field trip to Japan (Apedaile, Jean, Halseth, Wall)
- Field trip to AB sites (Hussar, Ferintosh)
 - Develop and elaborate social capital framework
- Sackville, NB and Meunster, SK
- The New Rural Economy: From Challenge to Action: Meunster, SK
- Learned:
 - More insights and inspiration from Japan
 - Social capital can be manifested in a number of different ways
 - Each of them with slightly different normative structures
 - Can complement or conflict with one another
 - Capacity can be increased by the strategic blending of these different forms

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2002: Local initiatives are tools for regional collaboration

- CJ Project extended to 2004
- SSHRC supports \$3 million project on the New Economy, PI: Bill Reimer
- Workshop in Altona, MB
- Rural Matters: Miramichi, NB



- CRRF and the *Organization for Urban/Rural Interchange Revitalization* in Japan extend their agreement into 2004
- SSHRC supports \$3 million project on the New Economy, PI: Bill Reimer
- Workshop in Altona, MB
- Rural Matters Conference: Miramichi, NB
- Learned:
 - Value of Internet for rural manufacturing (Altona – Friesand's Printing)
 - Regional collaboration can create critical mass
 - Regional collaboration can be generated from the bottom up – and include a wide variety of partners
 - E.g. Miramichi salmon fishers and the watershed committee

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2003: Governance is key to capacity building

- CRRF transformed for endowment initiative
- Rural leaders field trip to Japan
- Workshop in Ferintosh, AB
- Building Capacity in the NRE: St-Damase and Gatineau, QC (first trek to Ottawa)



- CRRF transformed for endowment initiative
- Rural Observatory leaders' field trip to Japan (Laura Ryser)
- Workshop in Ferintosh, AB
- Conference: Building Capacity in the NRE: St-Damase and Gatineau, QC (first trek to Ottawa)
- Learned:
 - Field trip inspires local initiatives in Canada
 - Hussar: regional health collaboration
 - Benito: Run for Mayor, develop library
 - Governance capacity is critical for rural development
 - Governance is more than government

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2004: Rural-urban alliances are strategic

- CRRF partners with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- NRRN First National Think Tank, Prince George, BC
- Rural-Urban Footprints: Implications for Governance, Tweed, ON



- CRRF partners with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- CRRF partners with the Rural Secretariat to hold the First National Think Tank of the National Rural Research Network (NRRN) in Prince George, BC
 - Rural-Urban Footprints
- National Conference Rural-Urban Footprints: Implications for Governance, Tweed, ON
- Learned:
 - Globalization crisis as stimulus for capacity-building (Mackenzie story)
 - Rural-urban alliances critical for rural Canada (note Japanese inspiration)
 - Regional collaboration key strategy for rural development
 - CRRF conferences as a tool for regional governance
 - E.g. Tweed conference (creation of Comfort Country – Tweed Marmora, Madoc, Stirling)
 - Conference radio station as tool for local capacity-building and knowledge mobilization

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2005: Immigration is a tool for rural development

- 2nd NRRN Rural Think Tank (Immigration), Altona, MB
- Big Lessons from Small Places: Governance in Rural North America and the North Atlantic Rim, Twillingate, NL



- Second NRRN Rural Think Tank, Altona, MB
 - Focus on immigration and rural Canada
- Big Lessons from Small Places: Governance in Rural North America and the North Atlantic Rim, Twillingate, NL
 - Inaugural conference of NRRN (Twillingate)
- Learned:
 - Immigration an unrecognized asset for rural revitalization
 - Altona/Winkler as leading region
 - Power of local capacity to overcome longstanding social divisions
 - Techniques for making social cohesion visible (radio station)



2006: We can be optimistic for rural futures

- CRRF Researchers invited as witnesses to the *Senate* special study on *Rural Poverty*
- Workshop at Tachereau, QC
- Hat Trick conference: NRRN, NRE, and the Future of Rural Canada: Gatineau, QC and Lanark, ON



- CRRF/NRE Researchers invited as witnesses to the *Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food* special study on *Rural Poverty*
- Workshop in Tachereau, QC
- Hat Trick conference: NRRN, NRE, and the Future of Rural Canada: Gatineau, QC and Lanark, ON
- Learned:
 - Capacity-building strategies and actions
 - Role of Boards of Governance for NGOs
 - Internet technologies rely on traditional communications methods
 - Bottom-up development facilitated by long-term regional infrastructure
 - Environmental sentiments in rural and urban regions are similar – differences occur in practice due to infrastructure
 - Multiple social capital uses are strategic for local development
 - Rural futures
 - Optimistic and realistic
 - Rural Canada has assets to work with, needs imagination and capacity to explore options
 - Need for research, knowledge mobilization, infrastructure for collaboration
 - Value of students
 - NRE alumni: conference plus diaspora for intelligence gathering and ambassadors for rural Canada

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2007: Regional governance is strategic

- CRRF/FCM workshop on Rural-Urban Relations, Woodbridge, ON
- Connecting Communities: Rural and Urban, Vermilion, AB



- CRRF/FCM workshop on Rural-Urban Relations, Woodbridge, ON
- Connecting Communities: Rural and Urban, Vermilion, AB
- Learned:
 - Wide variety of rural-urban alliances required and demonstrated
 - Challenges for debating conflicting interests in a 'safe' environment

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2008: Regional governance and social cohesion build local capacity

- NRRN Workshop, Northern Dialogues: Whitehorse YT
- Boom-Bust Economies: Impact on Rural and Remote Communities: Inuvik, NT

- NRRN Workshop, Northern Dialogues: Whitehorse YT
- Boom-Bust Economies: Impact on Rural and Remote Communities: Inuvik, NT – June 18-20.
- Learned:
 - Innovations emerge from local cohesion and regional engagement (e.g. Carcross)
 - Requires flexibility and risk-taking by higher level governments
 - Often only occurs after power struggle (e.g. Land claims, Self-government agreements)
 - Regional structures can create venue for debate, decisions, and action
 - But requires time and resources
 - Conference: Booming communities need to invest in social capital to smooth out the bust part of the cycle
 - Social capital builds social cohesion, commitment to place, and external networks that provide capacity during the busts

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2009: There are good regional governance models

- Regional boundaries not always functional
- Québec's innovation in rural policy
- Remember the disenfranchised
- Value of international comparisons





- *From Rural Recession to Revitalization*
- Quebec City – with OECD
- Learned:
 - Regional boundaries not always functional boundaries
 - The uniqueness of Québec rural policy – and the international interest in it
 - Remember the disenfranchised – in rural as well as other contexts (Shortall)
 - The value of international comparisons

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2010: Networks, culture, and immigration provide opportunities

- Extensive network of rural research centres in Canada
- Cultural capital can make a significant contribution to the economy
- Rural immigration can match metro



- CRRP National Conference: *On the Bright Side – Rural Canada Works*
- Brandon MB
- Learned:
 - The extensive nature and capacities of rural research centres throughout Canada
 - 28 Primary NRE Centres
 - 37 Partnership Centres
 - 147 Rural-related networks
 - 69 Other activities or institutions
 - 152 Field Sites and NRE communities
 - Strong core for a national network of research capacity
 - The power of cultural capital for economic and labour growth

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2011: Research and policy are disconnected

- Research-policy gaps are large
- Inter-departmental interests are first to go
- Research-policy engagements a vulnerable



• From Policy to Research and Back

• First Annual Canadian Rural Research Network Workshop, Ottawa, ON

• Learned:

- Enormous gaps between researchers and policy-makers

- But innovative initiatives to overcome them – collaboration with desire

- Vulnerability of government institutions/departments with an inter-departmental mandate (first to go when budgets are cut)

- Value of research-policy engagement in spite of forces against it – CRRF even more important

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2011: Culture, Place, and Identity are at the Heart of Regional Development



- New researchers' enthusiasm
- Culture is infinitely innovative



- Culture, Place, and Identity at the Heart of Regional Development
- St John's NL
- Learned:
 - New researcher's enthusiasm for engagement
 - Innovations in culture



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2012: The political landscape has changed

- Little federal interest in rural communities
- Challenges of maintaining equity with place-based approaches



- *Policy and Research in Community Investment*
- Second Annual Canadian Rural Research Network, Ottawa, ON
- Learned:
 - Little federal interest in rural communities – they are now provincial and regional concerns
 - Challenges of maintaining equity with place-based approaches to development



2012: Create Rural Connections

- Impressive variety of regional organizations



- *Creating Rural Connections*

- Olds, AB

- Learned:

- Impressive variety in regional organizations – trusts, corporations, co-ops, community action, and third sector groups.



2013: Thunder Bay



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The next 25 years?

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 2013/10/24






















#31

- What do we look to for the next 20 years?

- Mission:

- Revitalize rural Canada through education and research for rural leaders, in communities, business and commerce, and in government.
- Build mutually beneficial rural/urban relationships. Improved understanding of the common interest of rural and urban Canadians advances the fortunes of all, and reduces rural dependency.

- Strategy:

- Collaborative, Comparative, Comprehensive

- A sustainable CRRF

- Passionate people – researchers, policy-makers, activists, students, citizens
 - Building on our strengths
- Financial control
- Useful and imaginative research