

Sustainable Northern Coastal Communities Regional Engagement Session

Great Northern Peninsula Session Report

Contents

Background to the session.....	1
In Attendance	1
Session: Regional Asset Identification	2
Project 1: Grenfell's Gardens.....	4
Project 2: Fisheries Innovation.....	5
Project 3: Canada-EU Trade.....	6
Participants.....	7
Summary.....	8
Acknowledgements and Closing Remarks.....	8

Sustainable Northern Coastal Communities (SNCC) is a collaborative project of the Harris Centre with the Grenfell Campus Office of Engagement and the Labrador Institute. The goal of this initiative is to coordinate and enhance a suite of teaching, research, and public engagement activities across Memorial to better support and empower students, faculty, staff, external partners and communities to advance sustainable solutions to Northern issues and challenges. The initial pilot areas for this initiative are the Great Northern Peninsula (GNP) and Southern Labrador regions of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). Part of the initiative is the provision of funding for research projects, and three projects have been approved for funding by the SNCC fund evaluation committee for the Great Northern Peninsula Region. This Engagement Session was organized to bring these project investigators to the region to build connections and encourage collaboration between researchers, industry partners, local stakeholders and community residents.

On the Great Northern Peninsula, this session and the projects funded by SNCC respond to findings from the conference *Our Way Forward*, held November 15-18, 2016 in St. Anthony NL. *Our Way Forward* was organized by Grenfell Campus in collaboration with the Town of St. Anthony to shift prevailing dialogue about the region from challenges to opportunities and generate ideas for future development. Discussions focused on four themes: Regional Governance, Fisheries and the Port, Tourism, and Entrepreneurship and In-

novation. Discussion uncovered several existing assets and potential opportunities for future development in the region. A local advisory committee was also developed for the GNP area of the SNCC initiative, and this committee further developed and refined the above themes to provide more focus for the research fund.

This report provides a summary of research project presentations and roundtable discussions organized around regional asset identification and the three SNCC funded projects: Grenfell's Gardens, Fisheries Innovation, and Canada-EU Trade. It includes thoughts voiced by Memorial University researchers, industry representatives, local stakeholders and residents of communities within the study region.

The engagement session was held December 5-6, 2017 at the College of the North Atlantic in St. Anthony, NL. Presentations/discussions were broadcast online via www.ryakuga.ca and also accessible on the air via Bay of Islands Radio (Corner Brook) and Voice of Bonne Bay Radio (Norris Point).

In Attendance

The session was attended by 33 individuals. Attendees included SNCC collaborators, Memorial University and Grenfell Campus researchers, staff and students, as well as government and industry representatives, local stakeholders and Northern Peninsula residents. More participants in and outside of NL listened in on the discussion via radio and online.



Session: Mobilizing Regional Assets

Title: Identifying & Measuring Regional Assets to Support a Vibrant Great Northern Peninsula Region

Investigator & Presenter: Brennan Lowery (Interdisciplinary PhD, Grenfell Campus, Memorial University)

Facilitator: Ken Carter (Grenfell Campus, Memorial University)

Presentation

Fostering sustainable and vibrant Northern coastal communities means understanding and mobilizing their unique capacities. On the tip of the GNP, this understanding must start from the strengths of communities, as opposed to what are labelled as their weaknesses. This presentation aimed to set the stage for the rest of the forum by encouraging participants to 'start with what's strong, instead of what's wrong' in approaching new opportunities for the region. Lowery shared a set of tools and concepts related to Asset-Based Community Development. Many rural communities and regions across Canada have used this approach to tap into talents, abilities, and strengths that are often overlooked by mainstream approaches to community development. Among the tools shared in the presentation were concepts like community capital, which represents different areas of well-being that communities must safeguard and protect to ensure sustainability – such as natural capital, social capital, and human capital. The presenter also discussed how communities can use locally-defined indicators to identify their vision for sustainability and track progress toward their goals over time. The presentation concluded with reflections from the presenter's experience working on a community indicators project on the Bonavista Peninsula, and findings from a 2014 asset mapping study by Grenfell researchers that catalogued different assets in the GNP region.

Discussion

Following the presentation, the participants engaged in a targeted discussion to identify key re-

gional assets and opportunities for enhancing existing assets. This discussion encouraged participants to use the asset-based approach and consider how the research projects funded by SNCC could tap into and enhance these assets. Attendees were asked to consider: "Imagine the Tip of the GNP region is a vibrant and sustainable region for a diverse range of existing and new residents. What would that look like?" In this discussion, participants broke out into four groups based on asset categories matching the sections below, identifying both existing assets and opportunities for enhancing those assets.

Socio-Cultural Assets

Participants identified extensive social and cultural assets in the region, ranging from trust and reciprocity to social networks, as well as opportunities for taking fuller advantage of those assets in areas like fisheries and recreation issues.

Existing Assets

- Great culture of trust
- Great relationship between RCMP and communities
- Church organizations, clubs, etc.
- Enormous asset in strong volunteer network
- Strong social networks
- Strong sense of community
- Community values
- Everyone takes care of each other
- Low rates of social assistance

Expanding on Our Assets

- Solving public safety challenges should build on relationships in communities
- Use the skills of fishers to help build and enhance needs in the community
- Bridge social and cultural assets

Natural Assets

The region has vast natural assets ranging from its diverse ecosystems to aquatic and land-based resources that sustain the regional economy. Participants identified numerous opportunities for taking greater advantage of these assets through a variety of projects.

Existing Assets

- Peat moss, bogs
- Limestone barrens
- Gold deposits
- Bird habitat and nesting grounds
- Offshore fishing grounds are extremely important
- Forestry – potential for pellet plant in Roddickton-Bide Arm
- Anaerobic digestion opportunities
- Renewable energy opportunities – wave energy, etc.
- Opportunities for aquaculture (e.g. salmon smolts, char,

mussels)
Potential for agriculture
Opportunities for hydroponics/greenhouse agriculture
Opportunities for expanding winter tourism
Well-positioned to take advantage of the Northwest Passage

Expanding on Our Assets

There are lots of assets, but how do you make them a marketable product?
For fisheries, how do you package smaller amounts of product and get it straight to high value markets like restaurants?
Climate change is affecting changes in species, whale tourism, and creating new opportunities in the future
Empty buildings could be used for agriculture

Economic & Human Assets

The region has a skilled workforce and strong sectors like fisheries and tourism, as well as human capital assets like training and healthcare services. Opportunities were highlighted such as fostering entrepreneurship, connecting existing assets to each other, and increasing year-round services in the region.

Existing Assets

Many skilled workers such as fishers, woodsmen, heavy equipment operators
The older workforce is an asset - often has a stronger work ethic, more loyalty, and a broader skillset
Many workers hold different jobs in different seasons
Workers are getting additional training to improve skills
Key sectors:
Healthcare is an important employer, many skilled jobs, bringing younger people to GNP
The fishery remains a very important sector
Groundfish coming back
Some small-boat fishers around
The fish plants are struggling because of lower wages, seasonal work
Tourism is becoming a more important sector
Forestry
Agriculture
Financial resources available apart from traditional loans (CBDC Nortip offers business loans and counselling, skills training; also funding from TCII, ACOA)
Collaboration helps us connect each other to resources
Entrepreneurship opportunities
Training services through the College, always looking for gaps in regional training opportunities, programs offered by Hospitality NL and others
Healthcare needs met by the hospital and several small regional clinics; people still have to leave the region for highly specialized services; we rely on nurse practitioners for many procedures

Expanding on Our Assets

A lot of assets, but we need to draw them together
Need more positions for skilled workers in the region
Opportunities to utilize shrimp shells and other fish waste products

Possibilities for oil and mineral exploration
Existing sectors have the potential to grow
Could expand daycare services as an option to attract young families to region
Seasonal tourism-dependent businesses cannot expand their season
We need to encourage entrepreneurs to have original business ideas
Municipalities need to assess business applications to encourage new businesses that are unique and meeting an unmet need in the community

Institutional Assets

Participants identified numerous public, private, and non-profit institutions active in the region, from government agencies to shopping and tourism facilities to local NGOs. An institutional and economic opportunity identified was the creation of a more diverse set of services and encouraging residents to create new amenities.

Existing Assets

Education: elementary and high schools, CNA
Health: Health services, seniors housing/long term care, hospital, clinics
Access to healthcare is good in St. Anthony
Recreation: sports centre, ski and snowmobile trails and lodges, walking trails, seasonal swimming pool, sports fields, skateboard park, dog park, fishing and hunting, karate, painting, glass-making
Services: malls and shopping facilities, library with internet, gas stations, daycare/childcare, government offices, business services and supplies, RCMP in four communities, banks, marinas
Fisheries: cold storage facilities, fish plant
St. Anthony harbour being expanded for larger vessels in a \$1.2M project by Eimskip
Tourism: facilities for tourists (laundromats, washrooms, campsites, parks, etc.); port for cruise ship traffic; Chamber of Commerce visitor interpretation centre; RV parks; tourism sites (museums, Grenfell Historic Properties, L'Anse Aux Meadows, Port Aux Choix)
Transportation: airport, ferry connection, shipping access to Europe, public transport is not that great, but there is a taxi service and bus to airport, bus service/couriers to and from Corner Brook
NGOs: Lions Club, Kinsmen, Boys and Girls Club, community youth networks, social enterprises e.g. SABRI, Hospital Foundation, Women's Institute and related groups, walking and recreation groups, church groups, International Grenfell Association, Chamber of Commerce

Expanding on Our Assets

A few large projects might be coming up (mining, offshore supply port, etc.), which offer great potential for new infrastructure
Mines for gold, silver, copper are possible
We need diversification in different sectors to make the region more sustainable
We have all the facilities here, but we need to invoke interest for people to make something new

Project 1: Grenfell's Gardens

Title: Grenfell's Gardens: Researching, Restoring, and Re-telling the Story

Investigator & Presenter: Dr. Greg Wood (Grenfell Campus, Memorial University)

Presentation

Food security is a well-known challenge for northern and coastal regions, such as the Great Northern Peninsula. According to Dr. Wood, Dr. Grenfell and the International Grenfell Association (IGA) played a significant historical role in the introduction of agriculture in St. Anthony. This included bringing pigs and reindeer to the Town for farming and consumption, and the construction and maintenance of a greenhouse on Tucker's Lane. This project, building on discussions around food security and tourism from *Our Way Forward*, has three objectives: 1) research the history of IGA farming enterprises in St. Anthony, 2) with support of regional partners, develop a funding proposal and replicate IGA enterprises as a means to encourage local food security and as a tourism draw, and 3) expand the organizational structure of the farm to incorporate locally-generated waste materials (e.g. composting of fish waste materials from local fish plant).

Dr. Wood is planning to collect and analyze data from objective 1 in the winter-spring 2018, completing his report by summer/fall 2018. He is hoping to submit an additional funding application in fall 2018 to assist in the development of a community garden in St. Anthony by spring/summer 2019.

Dr. Wood needs community support, input and participation in the development and actualization of the Grenfell's Garden project. Some initial outreach showed that community partners in St. Anthony, such as the Family Resource Centre, are interested in collaborating in the development of

this project. He asked session participants to provide feedback and suggestions following his presentation. In addition, he asked anyone interested in helping with the project directly to get in touch with him.

Discussion

Overall, attendees were supportive of the project. They felt that Grenfell's Gardens built on many existing assets in the region including: human capital (e.g. knowledge of local residents on how to be self-sustaining), unique cultural heritage (e.g. the Grenfell Legacy), and existing community gardens (e.g. Town of St. Anthony gardens, Family Resource Centre Gardens).

Attendees raised some potential challenges and questions about the project relative to the development goals of the region. For example, though the project would benefit residents of St. Anthony and act as a tourism draw, it was questioned whether it would be enough to attract new residents to the region, particularly in communities outside St. Anthony. It was also suggested that volunteer commitment has been an issue in existing community gardens due to the time and effort required to maintain a garden and that the hiring of a seasonal employee may need to be considered. Though a livestock component of the project was not emphasized, it was suggested that municipal restrictions may limit the ability of the project to include livestock.

Despite these challenges, attendees felt that Grenfell's Garden would be a good fit for the community and region in pursuit of its development and sustainability goals. In terms of tourism, it was felt that the project could be a successful tourism draw to St. Anthony but also the region if partnerships with existing greenhouses and agricultural projects in other communities (e.g. greenhouse in Roddickton) were pursued. Many felt that partnerships could also be sought out with local schools to engage youth and add a teaching/learning component to the project. Attendees suggested that diversification of crops, as opposed to Dr. Grenfell's focus on root vegetables,

could benefit both the region and project. Participants also felt that Grenfell's Garden could bring more assets to the region by fostering community cohesion (e.g. between local and international residents, between residents of different age groups), providing an opportunity to explore community composting, and continue the Grenfell Legacy. Overall, attendees expressed that the Grenfell's Gardens project would build on regional assets and contribute to the often overlooked historical narrative of agriculture in NL.

Project 2: Fisheries Innovation

Title: Feasibility Study on Innovative and Value-added Dried Fish and Dried Aquatic Products for Canadian and International Markets

Investigators: Dr. Jose Lam, Dr. Lakshman Galagadara, Dr. Greg Wood (Grenfell Campus, Memorial University)

Presenters: Brennan Lowery, Ken Carter, Greg Wood (Grenfell Campus, Memorial University)

Presentation

Food security is a major concern worldwide and, like agriculture, sustainable development in local fisheries may provide opportunities to address this concern. On the Great Northern Peninsula, where fisheries have traditionally been important for local sustenance and economic development, innovation in this sector may address food security locally, allow access to new market opportunities for dried and value-added fish and fish products, and address a need for differentiated, high-value local products, creating new opportunities for the region. The goals of this research project are to: 1) determine the commercial viability of innovative and value-added fish and aquatic products, 2) revisit old, undifferentiated products and explore potential for new niche markets and

products to refine it, and 3) introduce innovation into the dried fish industry (production, storage, product development, marketing, promotion, pricing, and packaging).

It is hoped that this research will: introduce innovative methods to dried fish production; encourage entrepreneurial development of new products, develop new domestic niche markets and customers; address food security and protein nutrition issues locally; address sustainable harvesting, packaging, and source labelling; encourage new production facilities and employment opportunities to the Great Northern Peninsula region; make use of existing port infrastructure to target international markets; and, introduce new tourism products and destinations to the region.

A case study of the island Ellingsøy in Norway was offered as a success story. Like the Northern Peninsula, Ellingsøy had historic local employment in the cod fisheries. In the 1990s, they strengthened their position in the Norwegian salt fish-processing sector with a turnover of 160 million Euro in 1997 and 20% of the local workforce employed. They accomplished this through deregulation to allow small and family owned firms to obtain their own export licenses, building on community assets including specific knowledge of the cod fisheries, and by investing in new equipment and technologies to make production more efficient and diversify products. Based on this case study, attendees were asked to consider the following question: Can the Great Northern Peninsula region build on existing local assets to tap into markets for innovative and value-added dried fish locally?

Discussion

Attendees felt that innovation in the fisheries sector would be significant and timely for the Great Northern Peninsula region. It was felt that existing assets in the region, such as port and fish plant infrastructure, could be expanded to tap into international and niche markets.

Project 3: Canada-EU Trade

Title: Impacts of Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement on Sustainability of Northern Tip Coastal Communities

Investigator & Presenter: Jack Daly
(Master of Arts Student in Geography, Memorial University)

Potential challenges were raised by attendees with regards to the participation of NL in international markets. It was felt that the cod market was filled by countries like Iceland and Norway and that it would be difficult for NL to compete with their more advanced technologies and efficient processes at a large scale, particularly in fresh fish production. Attendees also expressed that human capital might pose a challenge to the future of fisheries in the region, as many current workers are approaching retirement age. Attracting young people to the industry was voiced as a challenge unless the fisheries could be operational year-round and presented as profitable business ventures.

Despite these challenges, attendees believed there was a lot of potential for existing assets to be mobilized to support small-scale firms with a focus on the production and sale of specialized, high-quality products to international niche markets. Use of existing fish plant infrastructure, coupled with place-specific, local branding and better marketing of local assets, such as the cleanliness of cod in the region (ingesting of fewer microplastics and chemicals due to geography), would make an “evolution back to salt fish products” feasible. It was also suggested that this research project may be useful in exploring the diversity of fish products that may be produced on the island, perhaps even looking at markets for niche smoked and pickled fish products in addition to dried and value-added.

Overall, it was hoped that this research project would present a picture of what the future of fishing will look like for the Great Northern Peninsula. It was suggested that the region would not be in a place to compete in the global market at a large scale in the near future; however, it was hoped that this research project would assist in identifying potential niche markets, act as a catalyst for supporting small-scale, local firms and fish harvesters, and help develop a system for regional and/or province-wide branding and quality specifications to ensure sustainable growth of the Great Northern Peninsula’s fisheries sector.

Presentation

The Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), signed in late 2016-early 2017, hopes to create a high level of economic interaction between Canada and the European Union (EU). The EU is the largest importer of seafood in the world and CETA could benefit rural NL communities such as those on the Great Northern Peninsula. On the Great Northern Peninsula, CETA will result in tariff reductions (phased out over the next few years), frozen tariffs phased out immediately, and \$100 million in funding from the federal and provincial governments to spur innovation.

The objectives of Daly’s project are to: 1) Evaluate responses to the policy initiatives coming into place under CETA, 2) Evaluate how the goals of CETA align with the preservation of the small-scale fisheries on the Great Northern Peninsula, and 3) find ways that the region can best utilize the change that CETA will bring. This project will be led by Daly for his Master’s Degree in Geography at Memorial University, but is linked to a larger project, “Too Big to Ignore”, led by his supervisor Dr. Ratana Chuenpagdee. He plans to examine CETA policy documents, study fisheries policies for the region, and conduct in-depth interviews with local stakeholders.

Daly hopes that the results of this project will help rural communities, which are often left out of agreements of this scale, learn about and take advantage of the opportunities presented to them by CETA. On the Great Northern Peninsula, this

knowledge could help build international import/export networks and stimulate new business development in the region.

Discussion

Many attendees felt this research project would be important as an educational tool for regional industries to learn about CETA and how to benefit from it. Though it was agreed that CETA presented opportunities for developing international import and export networks, it was also felt that not enough knowledge about CETA is available on the ground for operators and industries.

Responses to the project were optimistic overall. Attendees believed it addressed a significant knowledge gap among local industries and operators and thus responded to a need in GNP communities. One attendee suggested that the education component represented a tall order, though it would be necessary for the opportunities presented by CETA to be acknowledged and built on.

Given that smaller rural communities and organi-

zations may not be able to take advantage of CETA alone, it was expressed that the project could help assess how rural communities and organizations can work collaboratively to benefit from CETA, and that this would benefit the GNP region as a whole. Attendees also felt that the project built on existing assets in the region including port infrastructure and the presence of EIMSKIP, an Iceland-based shipping company. A better understanding of CETA could allow harvesters and industries to work together and build import and export opportunities for the region employing these existing assets. It was also suggested by one attendee that CETA could potentially open doors for other ventures that could benefit the region, like wind energy.

Daly would like to return to the region in the near future to deliver an update on the project and potentially run a workshop or other knowledge-mobilization activity. It was suggested to him that a local advisory committee on his project may be helpful for him. Stakeholders in the room expressed interest in having Daly return and would like to assist in whatever way they can.

Session Participants

Abdul-Rahim Abdulai

Thresa Burden

Melanie Callahan

Fred Campbell

Ken Carter

Lavinia Crisby

Dwayne Cull

Jack Daly

Lynn Dempster

Sheila Downer

Paul Dunphy

Sam Elliot

Ivan Emke

Sheila Fitzgerald

Marilyn Forward

Bojan Furst

Gerry Gros

Amy Jones

Mac Lavers

Brennan Lowery

Desmond McDonald

Nina Mitchelmore

Andre Myers

Gary Newell

Glenda Noble

Richard Nyiawung

Brad Pilgrim

Mark Pilgrim

Shanna Pilgrim

Curtis Richards

Barry Rowe

Mark Tierney

Greg Wood

Great Northern Peninsula Engagement Session

Summary

Discussions over the course of the Great Northern Peninsula Engagement Session placed great emphasis on the importance of place-based development building on existing regional assets. The Grenfell's Gardens project proposes to study the unique historical narrative of Dr. Grenfell and his agricultural enterprises in St. Anthony and other communities in the region. The goal of this project is to use the experience and legacy of Dr. Grenfell as inspiration for a new community garden enterprise to link with existing gardens in the region, promote local food security and community/regional cohesion, and develop a potential experiential tourism opportunity. The Fisheries Innovation project also hoped to promote local food security and act as a tourism destination by evaluating the feasibility of dried and value-added fish product development in the region. This study would build on existing infrastructure and human capital assets in pursuit of sustainable growth of the sector. Finally, the Canada-EU Trade project expects to identify potential impacts of the CETA agreement on communities in the Great Northern Peninsula region and identify opportunities for regional participation in international trade. This project would also build on existing regional assets, including the presence of

EIMSKIP and existing port networks and infrastructure.

Feedback provided for the projects emphasized the inclusion of local knowledge through participation and engagement with stakeholders, residents, and industry partners in the region. It was felt that each of the projects was well-positioned to help empower the region in addressing existing challenges by engaging local actors and responding to needs voiced by members of the region at *Our Way Forward*. It was asked that the project investigators focus less on development in single communities, but rather look at how each project can connect with existing enterprises and community projects throughout the region to ensure communities across the Great Northern Peninsula are engaged and can benefit from the research conducted. A network of linkages also emerged between the three projects and across socio-economic sectors including, agriculture, fisheries, and tourism, all with the goal of improving the sustainability and livability of communities on the Great Northern Peninsula through engagement with local actors.

The session hosts expressed a commitment to return to the region with updates and/or organize additional meetings/facilitated sessions to allow for continued collaborative discussion related to the SNCC projects.

Acknowledgements and Closing Remarks

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with thanks to Brad Pilgrim, CNA Campus Manager, and team.

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This report was completed on December 22, 2017 thanks to Leanna Butters, Brennan Lowery, Amy Jones, Marilyn Forward and Ken Carter.

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