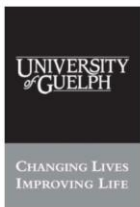


Rural Social Enterprise Constellation – Ontario RSEC-O

Collaborating Partners



Funding Partner

Ontario
Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium
de l'Ontario

“New Directions Research Grant” through Rural Social Enterprise Constellation

Social enterprises play a key role in supporting rural communities in Ontario, and we need to know more about how rural social enterprises thrive. This new research project provides the opportunity to take a comprehensive look at four nonprofit social enterprises in rural Ontario. What barriers have they overcome? What has helped them to succeed? Out of the research, partners will develop policy recommendations to better support rural social enterprise in Ontario.

The research is a project of the [Rural Social Enterprise Constellation \(RSEC\)](#), a unique partnership amongst a diverse network of organizations and people. RSEC aims to connect, support and grow social enterprise in rural Ontario. Social enterprise is one tool for nonprofits to create sustainability and drive their missions forward.

The New Directions research builds on the first project of RSEC, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation from 2012 to 2015, to support regional social enterprise capacity and develop strategies for sector building in four rural regions in Ontario, including Huron and Perth Counties; Greater Simcoe County; Peterborough and the Kawarthas; and Thunder Bay region. Now, RSEC is branching out to capture valuable data on rural social enterprise in the province.

This vital research will help assess what kind of enabling environment can be created for rural social enterprise, putting data into action to identify good supports shared by successful social enterprises that can help others, too. With more knowledge about the effect that intermediaries, financing options, regulations and legislation can have in strengthening rural social enterprise, we can build the case for the best roles that governments, nonprofits, funders, and businesses might play to help out.

The New Directions project will complement other information gathering being done in the nonprofit sector. For example, last fall the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) released findings of its research on social enterprise in Ontario. You can find out more in [“Inspiring Innovation: The Size, Scope and Economic Impact of Nonprofit Social Enterprise in Ontario”](#).

The New Directions research will be showcased on [SEontario.org](#).

We are encouraging social enterprises to share their stories on [SEontario.org](#), a new community-driven showcase of Ontario’s social

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economy, developed by a partnership of nonprofit provincial and regional organizations. Capturing stories of nonprofit social enterprise is an important way to demonstrate the breadth of enterprising activity underway in the nonprofit sector and its impact on Ontario's communities.

Background on rural social enterprise in Ontario

Rural areas across Ontario face unique challenges when it comes to harnessing economic development, funding and resources. Community builders outside city centres are eager to leverage existing resources and increase social enterprise skills training and capacity. Yet there have been barriers to access resources and support needed in rural areas. In addition, the unique voices of rural nonprofits are often not heard in discussions about social enterprise systems and policies.

About RSEC and project partners

RSEC is a provincial working group of the Ontario Nonprofit Network. It's an evolving and growing group of nonprofit organizations and individuals in regions across the province. This project is being convened by [the Ontario Nonprofit Network](#) working with RSEC partners, including the University of Guelph. The research team includes Dr. Al Lauzon, Mary Ferguson, Cathy Lang, Heather Laird, Dr. Barbara Harrison, and Kelly Gillis.

Acknowledgments

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