Achieving “Cluster Consciousness:” The Challenges of Defining and Nurturing a Cultural Cluster in a Rural Region

Presented by:

Ivan Emke
Grenfell Campus – Memorial University of Newfoundland

Susan Drodge and Mark Tierney
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
• The path we'll take
• Clusters and creative economies
• Origin theories
• Where is rural in all of this?

• "Urbanism" as a form of exclusion

• Cultural policy ignored rural, and rural policy ignored culture

Rural
• Cluster consciousness
• Acting as a cluster
• Identity and cluster membership

Is This a Cluster?
• Making the sector visible
• Communicating common interests
• Fostering broader linkages

Cultural Cluster Development in Western Newfoundland
- Regional demographics
- Regional economic overview
- Economic impact of the cultural sector
- Cultural assets

• Opportunity-based Team Approach

• Proactive Development of Opportunities

• Early collaboration with emerging clusters
What Have We Done?

- Formal sector consultation with follow-up
- Informal “kitchen” consultations
- Opportunity development
- Initiatives
• Regional arts and culture marketing strategy

• One-Stop Shop

• Arts Business Network

• Development of Gros Morne region as a cultural event destination and as a centre for professional development

From The First Round of Talks
- The Gros Morne Cultural Blueprint
- Arts Collective
- Artists On-Stop Shop
- Rotary Arts Centre
• Role of “outside” agencies in cluster development
• The pitfalls of prescription

Conclusion
Lessons learned

- Take risks
- Get into the kitchens
- Validate local culture
- Network
- Document

Photo: Neil Robbins