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

Photo courtesy of The Western Star
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
The Context

- 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

Photo courtesy of The Western Star

Photo: Neil Robbins

A Role for Government
• 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
• The Gros Morne Cultural Blueprint

• Arts Collective

• Artists On-Stop Shop

• Rotary Arts Centre

To This
Conclusion

- Role of “outside” agencies in cluster development
- The pitfalls of prescription
Lessons learned

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

Photo: Neil Robbins