

Research
Dialogue
Analysis
Reflection

Northern Ontario Research, Development, Ideas and Knowledge

NORDIK
INSTITUTE



Research in Action Annual Report 2012-2013



NORDIK Board of Directors, 2012-13

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NORDIK Q&A

What is NORDIK?

The Northern Ontario Research, Development, Ideas and Knowledge Institute evolved from the CESD program at Algoma University and is a community-based research institute. NORDIK is committed to further developing Northern Ontario's capacity by working closely with its community partners and providing mentoring to new researchers.

NORDIK Vision

Promoting more vibrant, caring and sustainable communities through research, dialogue, analysis and reflection and dedication to the practice of holistic community development.

NORDIK Principles

- Collaborative community-university partnerships
- Builds community capacity to conduct its own research for sustainability
- Holistic - economic, social, cultural, and legal/political development
- Inclusionary and participatory
- Strengths-based
- Sustainable

Undergraduate Programs

Algoma University offers degree programs in Community Economic and Social Development (CESD) and Community Development (CD). The CESD and CD programs promote the growth of sustainable communities - economically, ecologically, socially, and culturally. Apply today and start your studies on a full or part-time basis. The CESD Spring Institute offers 5-day courses in June 2014.

For more, visit :
www.nordikinstitute.com
www.algomau.ca/cesd

Director's Report



NORDIK's work has always depended on partnerships and collaborations, and the 2012-13 year demonstrated this over and over again, as we saw some longtime partnerships come to fruition and some new collaborations develop.

In February, I travelled to Colombia to participate in the final stages of curriculum development for a community economic and social development program with ASOPRICOR, our longtime community research partner, and Uniminuto University. Their work to advance community-based research, education and development is a wonderful example of how communities and universities can work together to advance development in rural regions through the valuing and respect of one another's knowledges.

NORDIK also formed some important new collaborations that have resulted in four significant projects in our region that will be continuing for varying periods of time. Next year's report will provide much more detail as these projects unfold. Much time and effort was spent this year in building partnership, developing funding proposals, and engaging communities in growing ideas to action plan.

Research Staff and Students

Director of Research

Dr. Gayle Broad

Faculty

Dr. Gayle Broad
Dr. Sheila Gruner
Professor Emerita Dr. Linda Savory-Gordon

Research Coordinators

Jude Ortiz
José Reyes
David Thompson
Jessica Bolduc

Research Assistants

Brittany Paat
Meghan Ableson
Victoria Thomas

Student Researchers

Luther Konadu
Daryl Nelligan
Ray Trecartin
Allyson Schmidt
Stephan Piazza
Carly Breckenridge
Dustin Hoogsteen
Shannon Moan

by Dr. Gayle Broad

This past year has also been a year of transition for NORDIK – two of our long-time researchers, José Reyes and David Thompson left NORDIK to take up new positions elsewhere: José with the Sault Ste. Marie Indian Friendship Centre, where he is leading an exciting project called “Urban Aboriginals Thrive” (UACT); and David to provide leadership to the Rural Agri-Innovation Network (RAIN), a project designed to build the agricultural economy across the Algoma District.

Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains

Over the past few months the Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains (CAPT) has played an important role in helping to organize a network of rail groups in Northern Ontario called the Northern and Eastern Ontario Rail Network (NEORN) (www.neorn.ca) which is committed to the revitalization of passenger rail service. CAPT is also partnering with Searchmont Resort and the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library to organize the Searchmont Polar Express on Dec 21, 2013.

CAPT Presentations – Sept 22-23/12: Group of Seven/Glenn Gould train Event; **Nov 5/12:** City Council Declaration for SSM to locally declare **Nov 7** as National Rail Day; **Nov 5/12:** film screening of *De-railed: the National Dream* at Concordia University; **Nov. 8/12:** Community Public Forum, guest speaker: Dr. Barry Wellar; **Mar-June/13:** Exhibit at SSM Museum: Over 100 Years of Passenger Rail Service; **April 4/13:** Toronto Premier film Screening: *De-railed: the National Dream*

Thank you José and David

A very heartfelt ‘thank you’ to José and David, for helping NORDIK for more than five years in our development and growth and best wishes to you both in your new positions.

Congratulations Broderick Causley

Building on his success in the Math in Moscow program he has been awarded a NSERC grant to continue studying at a prestigious Russian institute. During the summer of 2011 he joined NORDIK as a Research Assistant contributing to the Lamb and Chevron Feasibility Study.



Research

Selected News

Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux

Lecture: The Aboriginal Communities Thrive project focuses on approaches, strengths, challenges and alternatives in researching indigenous communities. Co-sponsored by the Anishinaabe Initiatives Division and NORDIK.

Cooperating for Change in the International Year of the Cooperative:

Recipient of the "Amy and Tim Dauphinee Scholarship", David Thompson presented on challenges and opportunities for Northern coops and place-based businesses that support a value chain for local beef. **Did you know** there are over 30 coops in the Algoma District? Coops are proven to reduce poverty. Check out On Coop (one of our great coop partners) for much more information at: <http://www.ontario.coop/page.php?id=106®ion=717&view=alpha&pg=1>

Distinguished Faculty Award:

Congratulations Dr. Gayle Broad! "She has worked tirelessly to promote Algoma's institutional mission and vision, and was instrumental in developing the CESD program, and NORDIK Institute. She is recognized as a leading edge scholar in community development by academics throughout the world. She has contributed greatly to governance of the University, including serving as Department Chair, Speaker of Senate, on the Joint Working Group, on the AUFA negotiating team and on Peer Review Committee" (AU Press Release).

Building Resilient Communities through Community Based Forest Management

The first ever interdisciplinary conference to advance community-based forest management (CBFM) as a model for collaborative decision-making in Canada was held in Sault Ste. Marie January 13-16 2013. Hosted by the Northern Ontario Sustainable Communities Partnership and NORDIK Institute, the conference goals included spearheading the formation of a pan-Canadian CBFM network of research and knowledge mobilization. Over 150 delegates ranging from CBFM practitioners and researchers, students, environmental NGOs, First Nations and Métis, unions, forestry industry and government representatives, and the general public gathered from across Canada as well as a few international participants for a series of presentations, discussions and a book launch.

In examining CBFM as a strategy for development, dialogues covered a range of topics including municipal governance structures in community forestry projects in B.C.; recent developments in Ontario forest tenure reform; and; a variety of community forestry approaches and practices in Canada and abroad including First Nations and Indigenous examples.

Participants had the opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of successful community forests and the benefits of community forestry as a method of diversifying economies. They will now be able to share knowledge gained at the conference with their communities, work to take steps in managing their forests and stimulate economic development leading to increased community resilience and sustainability.

A key component of the proceedings were the 'talking circles' which drew on conference delegates in discussing ways of supporting CBFM initiatives, influencing policy makers and building a Canadian research and practice network for CBFM. Strong interest was expressed in forming a pan-Canadian community forest network, including a national community forest charter, to be entitled "Canadian Community Forest Network." This network will further the development of a Canadian policy network in seeking to influence forest tenure and community forest charters.

As part of the conference events Ryan Bullock and Kevin Hanna launched their book, "Community Forestry: Local Values, Conflict and Forest Governance" (Cambridge University Press). An article in May's issue of *affaires universitaires*, "Universities and rural communities: Joining together to assert control over the forests" written by Ryan, Gayle Broad, Lynn Palmer and Peggy Smith was based, in part, on conference dialogue. Bullock is authoring a second book discussing community based forestry.



Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Mentoring: Supporting local and regional culture development

Strong arts organizations foster local and regional culture development that contributes to Northern Ontario's creative economy. Currently the region is undergoing significant social and economic change including a substantial demographic shift, and these are negatively impacting the organizations. NORDIK facilitated the creation of a peer network between three arts organizations in Northeastern Ontario to share, generate and mobilize knowledge in strengthening organizational capacity. The

participating groups were: The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie; Conseil des Arts de Hearst; and 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island.

The project provided the time and space necessary to initiate an internal dialogue within each organization, as well as a dialogue with community members and mentoring partners. Specifically, the project indicated peer mentoring increased: organizational capacity; engagement, community relations and social capital development; and, knowledge

mobilization in understanding sustainability within the Northeastern Ontario context.

Partners suggested the peer mentoring process could be used as a model for building sustainability throughout the region as it established critical support in a region that is challenged by geographical distances and contextual differences to southern Ontario.

Project funding: Ontario Arts Council. Researchers: Jude Ortiz, Meghan Ableson and Dr. Gayle Broad.

Dialogue

Community-based research provides rich opportunities to dialogue, identify issues, and bring about action.

The Sault Ste. Marie Soup Kitchen Community Health and Child Care Centre

The Soup Kitchen Community Centre is undergoing a transformative process, expanding into a community health and child care centre in addressing challenges people who experience poverty face. The focus is on individuals and families primarily living in the “Old West End”, an area identified as highly at-risk on several measures of social, economic, health and employment well-being.

Based on the Community Health Centre model which operates successfully across Ontario and Canada, and supported by the Association of Ontario Health Centres, the

Soup Kitchen and its Community Health and Child Care Centre Advisory Committee have been working diligently developing relationships and partnerships within the community and beyond to see this project become a reality. The ‘Treehouse Vision’ underpinning the new Centre is rooted in community health and child care with ‘many doors in and many doors out’ to support the multi-faceted and complex nature of and its relationship to its members and the community. As a community development model it aims to strengthen the community

through well-being, advocacy, treatment and support. Its goal is to offer diverse programs ranging from community kitchens to needle exchanges to alternative education to health teams led by the patients themselves, thus truly fostering ‘development from within’. The Centre’s next steps include conducting a pre-feasibility study followed by a strategic plan. Project funding was provided by the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie and Area. Research Team: Allyson Schmidt and Tony Martin.

The People’s Garden: Building Community Networks



Launched as a joint CESD program and AU Student Council project in 2009, and supported by NORDIK, the People’s Garden blossomed this summer with plentiful produce and events that encouraged community members to pitch in, get dirty learning and enjoy harvesting. Beginning with a Planting Ceremony followed by activities such as Weedy Wednesday and a Summer Celebration, Carly Breckenridge, a CESD student, spent

her summer raising awareness of the importance of local food production. In attempting to increase the Garden’s sustainability, she developed networks to the broader AU community, surrounding neighbourhoods and other farming initiatives in the city. A ‘User Manual and Master Binder’ assembling information and past documents was compiled and will be an invaluable tool for future years.



Society and Security In an Age of Ecological Uncertainty

The Society & Security project was proposed as a research partnership by OISE/University of Toronto, involving co-applicants, collaborators and input from 11 post-secondary institutions, and 7 community organizations. It set out to examine the re-organization of educational and social services in response to policy mandates that emphasize the security/securitization of youth. The project was not funded but led to the development of a dedicated group of researchers who presented at conferences. Dr. Sheila Gruner was invited in March 2013 as an international keynote speaker at the University of Huddersfield, where Dr. Gruner is also a Visiting Fellow.

Scotland International Conference

April, 2013, Gayle Broad and Linda Savory Gordon were invited to speak at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland about their research on community benefits of employee ownership at Algoma Steel, 1992 to 2002. The conference was entitled “Strengthening Democracy at Work and in our Communities”. Given increased interest in employee ownership and participation and evidence of their ‘spillover’ effects, the conference aimed to contribute to public debate on how organisational/workplace democracy can strengthen broader civil involvement in democracy. This is of particular interest as Scotland approaches a key decision on its political future. Title of Broad and Savory Gordon’s presentation: “Community spillover in a major employee buyout”.

Cooperating for Change in the International Year of Cooperatives

In 2012-13, ASOPRICOR, a community partner in Colombia, saw one of its hopes realized – a university course that responded to rural experience delivered in a compressed one-week format in the rural community of Alto del Trigo. Over 20 ASOPRICOR leaders, many of them youth, spent an intensive week studying community development practice and applying it to the problems raised in their communities. ASOPRICOR and Uniminuto University, in cooperation with NORDIK and the CESD program at Algoma University, have established a Memorandum of Understanding which all partners hope will lead to more international exchanges of knowledge and experience.

Analysis and Reflection

Research is done within a context of analysis and reflection: What have we learned from this work? How can we apply it in different situations? How does this change both what we do and how we do it?

David Thompson and José Reyes:

NORDIK Researchers Continuing Careers in Community-based Research



During the five years David Thompson worked as a NORDIK Research Coordinator (2006-12) he assisted in fostering the development of many projects. One such initiative, the Rural Agri-Innovation Network (RAIN), in partnership with the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre, is where he is now employed as the Research

Coordinator. The development of RAIN involved bringing local agricultural businesses, communities, organizations and funding agencies together to investigate ways of building capacity. Over the next three years the project aims to connect producers in maximizing the value of rural based crops, products and services through a variety of practical workshops and development projects.

As a Research Coordinator for NORDIK (2006-12) José Reyes continued working with ASOPRICOR, a community-based not-for-profit organization representing many rural organizations, co-operatives and communities in rural Colombia that he was involved

in creating. A recommendation evolving from the research has led to the establishment of a post-secondary program for community Economic and Social Development leaders and animators similar to Algoma's (CESD) program. (See article on page 4)

Now as Research Team Lead, José is working with Amy Boyer, a former NORDIK researcher and Algoma U graduate, in conducting the SSM Indian Friendship Centre's project, Urban Aboriginal Communities Thrive (U-ACT). The study assists in self-determining community strengths and priorities. It builds on the growing resurgence of pride in Aboriginal peoples' cultural identity and raises the profile of their historic connection and on-going contribution in shaping the Sault Ste. Marie area.

During the 2012 CESD Spring Institute José and David joined forces to co-teach *Food Security, Sovereignty, and Globalization* and are co-teaching a similar course this fall. José also teaches the Learning Lab component of the Introductory CESD course.



Upcoming Research

The Northern Constellation of Constellations Project

A number of organizations and individuals across Northern Ontario will be working collaboratively in developing networks and tools needed for youth to launch social enterprises i.e. initiatives aimed to address social problems by utilizing business strategies. NORDIK and the North Claybelt Community Futures Development Corp are co-leading the three year Ontario Trillium Foundation funded project and invite organizations and youth interested in this field to join in.

Animating the John Rowswell Hub Trail

Community organizations have partnered with NORDIK Institute and the City of Sault Ste. Marie Planning Department in providing information regarding the rich historical, cultural and environmental ecosystems adjacent to the Hub Trail. The information, including healthy active living, will be widely accessible through mobile devices and a trilingual Trail Guide and Audio Tour. The two year project is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Community members are invited to share their information.

Downtown Dialogue in Action

The John Howard Society, Sault Ste. Marie Police Services and NORDIK have partnered in creating a Strategic Action Plan for social development in the city's downtown core by sharing ideas and experiences through dialogue on what is needed to create a safe, secure, and thriving downtown with an emphasis on including voices of marginalized groups. This project is funded through the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' Proceeds of Crime program and a grant from United Way's Community Endowment Fund.

Economic Development in First Nation Communities

NORDIK is continuing to work with First Nation communities in establishing 'triple bottom line' (land, people and economy) sustainable development models. Research includes Operation Plans, Due Diligence' evaluation checklists; sustainability framework documents and community engagement discussion papers in moving from an economic development to a Community Economic Development approach.

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Concluding Research

The Paquataskamik Project

Paquataskamik Project and Collaborative Research The Paquataskamik Project is a project of Fort Albany First Nation, a community-based research and learning initiative aimed at fostering inter-generational dialogue and understanding about the importance of traditional territory to social, cultural and economic well-being. NORDIK was invited to participate between 2008-2012, offering support to community based research, education and training, and documentary assistance. The final activities of NORDIK's involvement concluded in December 2012, including an evaluation, public meeting and presentation of a final report and comprehensive community archive with maps and materials (a special thanks to Research Assistant Shannon Moan). Subsequent collaborative written work during 2012-2013 has been advanced, including a collaborative series of two publications co-authored by Dr. Jean Paul Restoule (OISE/UT), Dr. Sheila Gruner (Algoma University) and Elder Edmund Metatawabin, (Metatawabin Productions and Research, Fort Albany First Nation), as well as a forthcoming article by Dr. Gruner on decolonizing, inter-generational, cross cultural concepts of land and development.

Thank you to our Funders and Partners



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CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO



CESD Club

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arts • land/scape • community



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NORDIK Institute
Algoma University
1520 Queen St. E.
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario
P6A2G4

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