



About Rural Women Making Change

Rural Women Making Change (RWMC) was a Community University Research Alliance (CURA) funded from 2004-2010 by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The six year program supported rural women's 'projects for change' in the many settings of their living and working. **Development and selection of these projects was largely driven by the community members.**

Eight research teams in three areas of research:

- Rural women's organizations' day to day work: Rural women's organizations reflect rural women's everyday issues to the numerous institutions and policies that directly and indirectly affect their work and the lives of rural women.
- Rural women's and girls' everyday experience : In their everyday living and working; rural women and girls experience difficulties with jobs and opportunities, un- and underemployment, education and training, transportation, and a variety of governing and corporate business practices that affect them.
- Gender and rural policy in trans-local arenas : Policies and ways of representing and analyzing rural issues frequently fail to incorporate just how policies and implementation practices operate; as a result fail to identify how to change policies and procedures so that they recognize and support women. RWMC addressed issues of gender and rural policy across local, provincial, national and international levels.

Overall Goals/Objectives

- To engage rural women's organizations, academics and policy-makers, in a process of identifying and mapping the institutional processes that affect rural women's everyday, in order to strengthen their knowledge and capacities for effective action;
- To assemble a body of ethnographic knowledge on rural women's organizations and policies that affect them; contribute to scholarly work on everyday practices that concern women in rural communities;
- To consolidate existing community, scholarly research and new knowledge and make it accessible to those interested in it and who can use it in multiple sites.

Team

The dynamic and accomplished group of community members, academics, graduate students and policymakers came from across Canada, each having made a significant contribution to both academia and the broader community. **The agenda(s) of the team varied from member to member but they were unified by the overall goals and objectives outlined in the following section.**

Successes

- Different agendas co-existed with unified goals- everyone valued the importance and ultimate success of the project
- Significant resources, financial and otherwise
- Excellent leadership which operated with the participation of all researchers
- Engaged partnership who were interested in and passionate about the research
- Excellent internal communication, particularly impressive when communication requirements were taken into account

Highlights: construction of the website, two speaking engagements at the United Nations, the development and filming of "Standing on her Shoulders." More highlights at <http://www.rwmc.uoguelph.ca>

Challenges

- Communication-Challenged with "virtual" and asynchronous communication
- Research culture sometimes clashed with the real world need to "do stuff"
- Excitement and momentum decreased, a process that began about two years from the end of the project. It became more difficult to mobilize
- Unclear expectations regarding outputs (different from outcomes)

Projects and Partners

The partnerships existed prior to the application for the SSHRC CURA funding program.

Agenda's of all partners were served and fulfilled, flexibility was the key to success, not the presence of a single or unified goal driving the project.

- ACTEW
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Antigonish Women's Resource Centre
- Caw Local 88- Women's Committee
- Centre for Families Work and Well-being
- Girls Action Foundation
- Justicia for Migrant Workers
- Mundo Peetabek Education Authority
- National Farmer's Union Women's Committee
- New Brunswick Partners in Agriculture
- Rural Women Take Action on Poverty
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
- University of Guelph
- Women Today of Huron
- Women's Employment Resource Centre

