Facilitating Collaboration among Researchers, Policy-makers, and Communities

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The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
Researchers

Policy-makers

Community people
Outline

1. Researchers
   - Expectations and requirements
   - Institutional and professional constraints
   - Challenges for collaboration
2. Policy-makers
   - Expectations and requirements
   - Institutional and professional constraints
   - Challenges for collaboration
3. Community people and groups
   - Expectations and requirements
   - Institutional and professional constraints
   - Challenges for collaboration
4. Strategies for collaboration
   - Researchers
   - Policy-makers
   - Community people and groups
5. Summary and Discussion
Provide good explanations

- Long term
- Esoteric jargon
- Conditional conclusions
- Open communication
Institutional Constraints

• Demands for
  • Teaching
  • Research
  • Community service

• Challenges for collaboration
  • Discipline focus \(\therefore\) rural has lower priority
  • Academic focus \(\therefore\) non-academic have lower priority
  • Imprecise criteria for success \(\therefore\) limited networks
Make good decisions in a complex world

• Good information
• Authority
  • Appropriate representation
  • Accountability
• Public vision
Institutional Constraints

- Quick decisions
- Appropriate representation and accountability
- Limited cross-department collaboration
- High turnover
Challenges for Collaboration

• Short time frames
• Impatience with qualifications on results
• Difficulties with jargon
• Reliance on hearsay and anecdotes
• Informal community groups excluded from resources
Create sustainable livelihoods

- Food, clothing, shelter
- Human capital (talents and skills)
- Social networks (social capital)
- Safe environment
Institutional Constraints

• Competing demands
• Voluntary activity
• Searching for quick and simple solutions
• Policy regimes too general
• Limited information
Challenges for Collaboration

• Short term demands
• Little recognition of volunteer constraints
• Accountability and representation requirements
• Researchers seen as exploiting
• General policies seen as insensitive
Strategies for Researchers

• Involve non-academics early, frequent, critically
• Use the “mother-in-law” test
• Support community-engaged research
• Organize strategically within research networks
Strategies for Policy-makers

• Engage researchers and community early, frequently, critically
• Create venues for research and community members
• Provide opportunities for students
• Support long-term research networks
• Take on more knowledge translation
Strategies for Communities

• Build a learning community
• Integrate newcomers
• Use your local assets to entice researchers and policy-makers
• Formalize community groups
In Summary

• Researchers
  • Include local knowledge

• Policy-makers
  • Treat researchers and community members as volunteers

• Community members
  • Create multiple venues for collaboration

• Expect and welcome surprises in each collaboration
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