

Fostering Sustainable Futures for Rural Communities through Philanthropy

Philanthropy, especially through the community foundations, is a powerful catalyst for strengthening communities in Canada. Community foundations strive to build stronger communities through philanthropic leadership. The goal of this project is to examine how community foundations can influence and participate in regional development in rural areas to support revitalization and sustainability. Regional development, for the purposes of this project, is conceived in a holistic manner encompassing social, cultural, humanitarian, community development, and capacity building.

In addressing this goal, this project will achieve four key objectives. First, it will build two case studies of community foundations in Canada to enhance understanding of how philanthropy is being utilized to make a difference to sustainability and revitalization.

Researchers will present their findings from the analysis of these two case studies with a national audience to gather feedback on their relevance, similarities and differences. By gaining different perspectives from professionals in related fields, researchers will be able to better mobilize this knowledge to community stakeholders, policy makers, as well as other academics.

Moreover, the project will identify potential roles, actions, and activities of the community foundation model that can facilitate regional development. It will address complex issues such as whether or not philanthropy can serve as a catalyst for rural community and regional development. The proposed research will examine if the community foundation model can serve as an appropriate tool to facilitate regional development due to the diversity of their board of directors and their role in the community.

Lastly, the project will initiate dialogue and share knowledge across actors from academia, government, private sector, and community/regional development practitioners. This will be done through meetings with community stakeholders, presenting at national conferences, as well as writing academic reports to engage a variety of individuals.

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