



Social Cohesion in Rural Canada: Implications for Policy

- Thanks for invitation
- Collaboration between researchers and policy-makers critical
 - Provide up-to-date insights and research results to people making policy
 - Provide reality-checks for researchers
- Thanks to supporters for our work
 - Rural Secretariat
 - Co-operatives Secretariat
 - Social Cohesion Network of Heritage Canada (Policy Research Initiative)
 - SSHRC – Strategic Grant on Social Cohesion
 - CRRF
 - Rural people

Social Cohesion in Rural Canada

- What is social cohesion?
- What have we done?
- What have we learned?
- What are the implications for policy?

Social Cohesion in Rural Canada

- What is social cohesion?
- What have we done?
- What have we learned?
- What are the implications for policy?

- Problem
- Does SoCo help?
 - Yes – conditionally
- How can we improve SoCo
- Evaluation of SoCo
- Policy implications

Social Cohesion is a complex concept

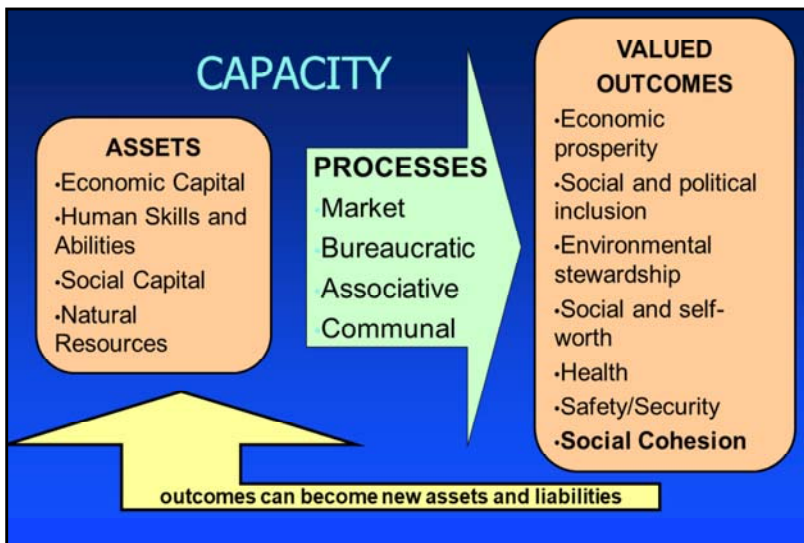
- Perception vs. behaviour
- Multiple levels – local, regional, national, global
- Value-laden
- 4 types – linked to Social Capital, Capacity
- Multiple policy implications

CRRF/NRE Approach: Rural Revitalization

SoCo – the concept

- Complex concept
 - (S) Some focus on perception, some on behaviour
 - (S) Different meanings for different levels
 - (S) How much does one include the values in the definition?
 - E.g. ‘a community of shared values... based on a sense of hope, trust, and reciprocity’ (Jeannotte, 1997: Canadian Heritage, Strategic Research and Analysis)
 - (S) We have found it useful to differentiate by the nature of the social relations on which SoCo is based (4 types)
 - Linked directly to other key concepts: Social Capital, Capacity
 - (S) important because of the many policy implications
- (S) Our approach – consider it from the point of view of rural revitalization
- Add to it – your concern with policy

- [Story
 - At workshop organized by SSHRC for all of the research teams investigating SoCo
 - Asked to write a definition of SoCo
 - One group insisted on including a blank piece of paper
 - Received the most votes]



(Re)vitalization occurs when capital and resources are (re)organized to produce desired outcomes. The ability of rural communities to do this in an appropriate and successful fashion is what we refer to as the community's capacity.

- Social cohesion is an outcome and an asset

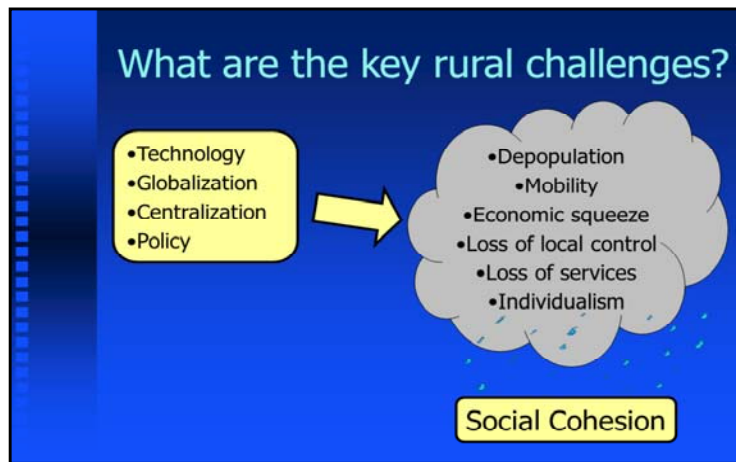
Social Cohesion

The extent to which people respond collectively to achieve their valued outcomes

- SoCo is acting together
- SoCo is temporal – specific to activities
- SoCo scales – specific to groups
- SoCo requires evaluation – may be positive for some, negative for others

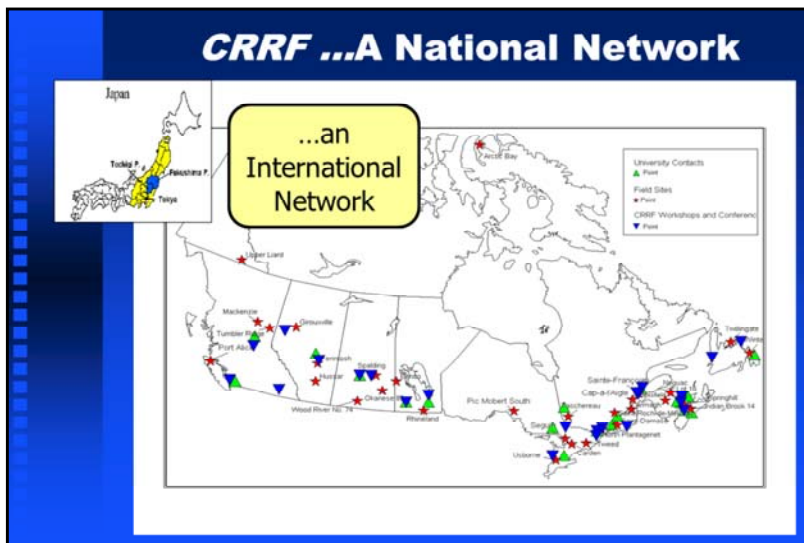
(S) Social Cohesion: The extent to which people respond collectively to achieve their valued outcomes

- (S) SoCo is people acting together
 - Focus on behaviour, not belief
 - We have found that there is only a low level of correlation between the 2
- (S) SoCo is temporal – specific to activities
 - Community may be fragmented around where to put the garbage dump, or whether to build a new arena, but cohesive with respect to fighting a fire.
- (S) SoCo scales – specific to groups
 - Community may be divided into 2 or more cohesive groups – producing a lack of cohesion for the community in general
- (S) SoCo requires evaluation – may be positive for some, negative for others
 - Cohesion of biker gangs may be negative for the rest of society
 - Not equated with conformity or homogeneity
- Using this point of view, we have asked how the changes in rural Canada have affected the level and type of social cohesion
- Approached this question using a framework that has been developed over several years of our research (see following slide)



What are the key rural challenges?

- Summary of our NRE research
 - (S) Driving forces in rural economy and society
 - Technology – labour-shedding for resource industries
 - Globalization – opens smaller communities to competition
 - Centralization – shifts control away from rural places
 - Policy
 - State involved in commodity trading
 - Fiscal pressures produce contraction of services and shift to private sector
 - (S) Impacts on rural social cohesion:
 - Depopulation as technology sheds labour
 - Mobility to urban and within-rural challenges SoCo
 - Cost-price squeeze with concentration on independent commodity producers (fishers, farmers, foresters)
 - Concentration and centralization
 - shifts control of local assets outside the rural communities
 - Makes it more difficult for them to capture value
 - Contraction of the state means loss of services or more conditions on services
 - Opening of mass culture produces more individualistic behaviour and dispositions
 - (S) all of these directly affect social cohesion
 - Most often challenge its traditional forms: associative, communal
 - Give advantage to new forms: market, bureaucratic



How do we know?

Who are we? CRRF

Our perspective is based on collaborative rural research over the past 15 years

- (S) Researchers associated with more than 20 universities and institutes
- (S) Program of workshops and conferences – in our 15th year, about 28 locations (always select rural areas)
- (S) 32 field sites chosen (5 dimensions of comparison)
- (S) International collaboration
 - 2 sites in Japan (Iitate, Awano)
 - Colleagues and centres in USA, UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Mexico
- We invite you to work with us

What Have We Done?

- Macro analysis using census and survey data
- Annual workshops and conferences
- 32 field sites – a 'Rural Observatory'
 - Local economies (SMEs, Coops, Entrepreneurship)
 - Social capacity (governance, 3rd sector, services, communication)
 - Social exclusion (social cohesion)
 - 1995 Household Interviews (20 sites)
- Web Site (nre.concordia.ca)
- Over 100 documents: books, papers, reports, flyers

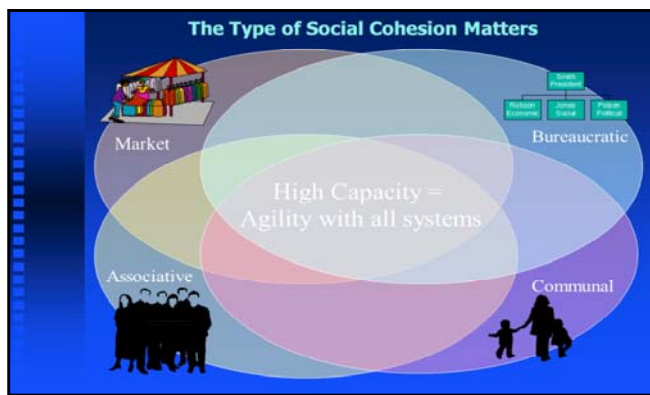
What We Have Done

- (S) Macro analysis using census and survey data
- (S) Annual workshops and conferences
- (S) 32 field sites – a 'Rural Observatory'
- We are learning about:
 - (S) Local economies (SMEs, Coops, Entrepreneurship)
 - (S) Social capacity (governance, 3rd sector, services, communications)
 - (S) Social exclusion (social cohesion)
 - (S) 1995 Household Interviews (20 sites)
- (S) Web Site (nre.concordia.ca)
- (S) Over 100 documents: books, papers, flyers, posters

What have we learned
about rural Social Cohesion?

...that is relevant to policy?





- This insight arises from our recognition that social cohesion is based in social relations (bring people together. It's what we mean by cohesion (the glue that binds)).
- Social relations are organized in different ways
 - Expectations, norms, institutions, rights, obligations are all different and integrated
- Each is supported and enforceable by socially recognized institutions (norms, entitlements, laws)
 - (S) Market relations (e.g. commerce, labour markets, housing markets, trade)
 - Based on supply & demand, contracts
 - Supported and controlled by trade agreements, competition legislation, labour law, better business bureau, and the courts
 - (S) Bureaucratic relations (e.g. government, corporations, law, formal organizations)
 - Based on rationalized roles, authority and status, generalized principles
 - Controlled by legislation, corporate law
 - (S) Associative relations (e.g. baseball, bridge clubs, environmental groups, meals on wheels)
 - Based on shared interest
 - Controlled by civil law, municipal by-laws, social norms, and informal sanctions
 - (S) Communal relations (e.g. families, friendship networks, gangs, cultural groups)
 - Based on family, reciprocity, favours
 - Controlled by informal norms, legislation, family law, and government support agencies
- The systems by which they are organized can reinforce or conflict with one another.
 - Conflict: Associative and Bureaucratic relations:
 - Bureaucratic require competition for resources and accountability in their use.
 - Associative require commitment to the shared interests of the group
 - Partnerships between bureaucracies and volunteer groups are therefore problematic
 - Bureaucracies divert people from the shared interests and
 - Associative suffer stress from lack of finances and membership burnout
 - Complement: Several of our research sites relied primarily on associative relations in the face of school closings. In some, the citizens learned how to articulate, lobby their case on the basis of bureaucratically recognized principles, and got their school back. Social cohesion based on associative relations were used to build capacity in bureaucratic ones.
 - the Hutterite community next door to one of them uses communal relations intensively (family supported by religious belief) and combines them with bureaucratic relations (again legitimized by religion) to successfully compete using market relations (have even been able to expand while others fail).
 - In this case, the three systems reinforce one another
- Primary thing to note: (S) All forms are necessary in a complex, changing environment - The more agile a group is in being able to use all systems, the greater will be their capacity - especially under conditions of change. Each of them forms the basis for people working together – for social cohesion.

Context Affects Social Cohesion

	M	B	A	C
Global Economy	H	L	L	L
Stable Economy		L		H
Metro Adjacent	L		L	H
Institutional Capacity	L	L		L

Conditions for use of social cohesion (Conditions -> SoCo)

- Social cohesion does not occur in a vacuum.
- Examined some of the external conditions where we found high levels of social cohesion
 - Social Cohesion based on all types of social relations
- Most of them were linked to conditions which are largely beyond the control of local communities
 - (S) Global or local economies: Global markets -> higher levels of market-based SoCo
 - Does this mean that as rural areas become more involved in the Global economy, we will see the increased importance of Market-based relations for social cohesion (people working together)? And lower use of bureaucratic, associative, and communal?
 - (S) Stable or fluctuating economies: Stable -> higher levels of communal-based SoCo, lower levels of bureaucratic-based SoCo
 - (S) Metro adjacency: Adjacent -> higher levels of communal-based, but lower levels of market-based and associative-based SoCo
 - (S) Institutional Capacity (schools and hospitals): (provincial and federal jurisdictions) more capacity -> lower levels of all but associative-based SoCo
 - Reflects other findings regarding social capital: The availability and use of social capital are not strongly related
- NOTE: Bureaucratic-based social cohesion:
 - Local economies
 - Fluctuating economies
 - Low Institutional capacity
 - Do bureaucracies serve remedial roles – provide a safety-net for vulnerable sites?
- Two main points:
 - We shouldn't treat social cohesion as a single phenomenon – it has roots in a variety of social relations
 - The type of 'glue' that binds people in rural areas varies by characteristics that are beyond their control
 - Often the result of more general policies and programs
- Regression analysis (pscoh30) (1995 HHs)

R ² =.15 (betas)	Agriculture (.210)
High Institutional Capacity (-.631)	West & North (-.214)
Global (-.517)	# years in the community (-.103)
<gr 9 ed (-.449)	Distributive services (-.101)
Construction (-.223)	Metro adjacent (.101)
Social Services (-.218)	Producer services (-.090_

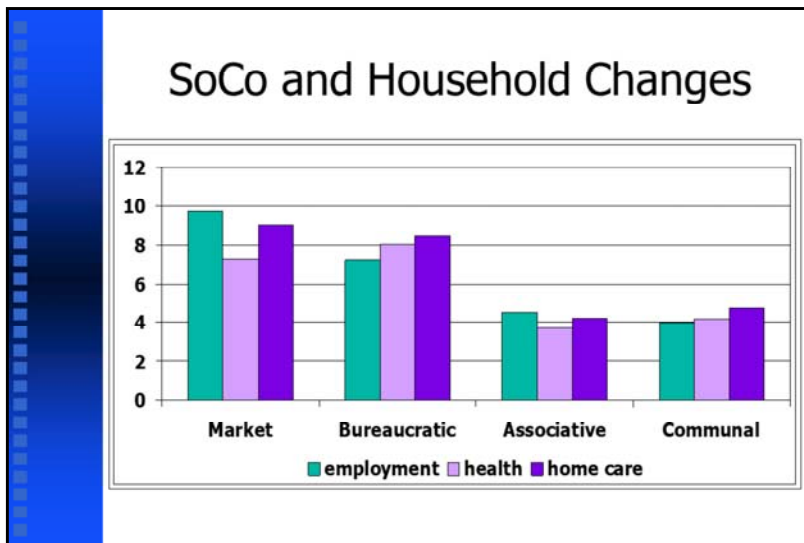


SoCo -> Income

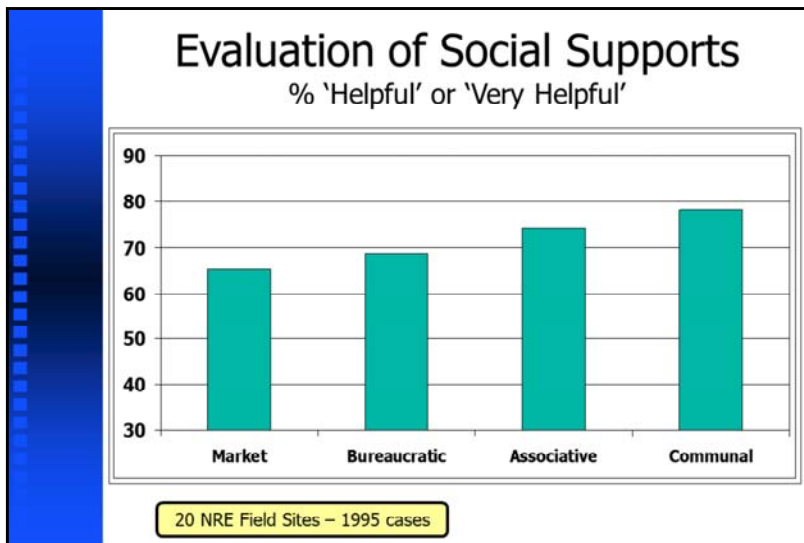
- One of the major advantages of a systematic study such as the NRE
 - Allows us to estimate interactions among variables: Relative, Additive, Conditional effects
- What happens to a rural community that faces a fluctuating economy?
- (S) Focus on household income for simplicity
- Multiple regression analysis
- (S) If household is located in a site with a fluctuating economy -> Decrease of \$7,000
- (S) If they rely on market-based social cohesion -> Increase of \$4,500
- (S) If they rely on bureaucratic-based social cohesion -> Decrease of \$700
- (S) However: important interaction effect between Globalization and reliance on bureaucratic-based SoCo
 - Bureaucratic-based in Global or Non-bureaucratic-based in Local economy: higher incomes (+\$2000)
 - Bureaucratic-based in Local economies or Non-bureaucratic based in Global: lower incomes (-\$2000)
 - Perhaps:
 - In Global economies -> best strategy is to build bureaucratic-based social cohesion
 - In Local economies -> best strategy is to build other types of social capital
- Summary
 - (S) Many factors beyond the control of local people: Global, Fluctuating, Location
 - (S) Still some ways in which local action can mitigate those exogenous factors
 - (S) Beware of generally applied policies – many conditional effects
- Included education in the equation:
 - Not as large an impact (standard error) as Market-based SoCo
 - Not as large an impact as Stability in the economy
 - Increased income by about \$3200

• R² Adjusted = .281

Constant	\$10,346		Associative	\$573	.077
Market	\$445	.517	Bureaucratic	-\$680	-.074
Stability	\$7167	.129	Cap x Ause30	-\$876	-.059
Communal	-\$1097	-.110	High Cap	\$2667	.051
Glo x Buse30	\$1917	.105	Stb x Cuse30	-\$868	-.042



- Major Changes and Social Cohesion
- This examines the type of responses that people made to the major changes occurring in their households.
- Three types of major changes have been selected:
 - Employment
 - Health
 - Home Care
- What types of social cohesion were utilized in response to these changes?
- (S) Employment: Market, then Bureaucratic, then Associative and Communal
- (S) Health: Bureaucratic, then Market, Communal, and Associative
- (S) Home care: Market, then Bureaucratic, then Communal, and Associative
- Main point: Services and supports for social cohesion need to recognize the different types of networks and social relations called upon.
- Research: Are they called upon simply because these are the supports available?
 - We have found only a weak relationship between the availability of social capital and its use.
 - Important questions for service delivery



How do people evaluate the different types of social supports?

- Social support a critical element of behavioural social cohesion
- Asked them what were the major changes that had occurred in their households over the last year
 - How did they deal with/respond to these changes? (Different types of SoCo)
 - To who did they turn?
 - Important component of social cohesion
- Were the supports helpful or very helpful for the majority of people
- (S) Varies by the type of social support
- Varies as well by the type of change that occurred (additional analysis)
 - E.g. home care: communal and bureaucratic
 - Financial: communal much higher, associative second, then market, with bureaucratic last
- Note difference with previous analysis of use:
 - Market used most
 - Yet market least helpful (suggested by these aggregate figures)

Anchor Social Cohesion

Consider:

- For whom?
- When?
- Where?
- In what ways?
- For what issues?

Rural Revitalization

- SoCo as action
- 4 types of social relations
- Evaluate for building capacity

Policy Implications

- Importance of continuing our discussions beyond this venue
 - As researchers we can provide expertise in the collection and analysis of information
 - but we need continued collaboration with you to identify the critical choices and issues that you are faced with on a daily basis
- Thus, the points I make here are meant to be suggestive and they rely on further discussion to work out the details
- Social Cohesion must be anchored in a context:** a problem, or a location.
 - Cohesive for who?
 - Cohesive when?
 - Cohesive where?
 - Cohesive in what ways?
 - Cohesive for what issues?
 - With the many possible approaches to the topic, I am convinced that it is necessary to set the context for our discussions by identifying the issue or challenge to which social cohesion is relevant
 - In our case, the primary concern is with rural revitalization
- For Rural Revitalization, social cohesion is best conceptualized as:
 - Working together
 - 4 types of social relations
 - Evaluate for specific objectives

Strengthen SoCo's Many Forms

- Social cohesion is sensitive to external conditions
 - Policies can modify those conditions
 - Seek policies that strengthen all types
- Social cohesion makes a difference locally
 - Build flexibility to meet local conditions

Social cohesion is manifested in many different forms (4 types)

- We can take advantage of this to build capacity
- (S) Since SoCo is sensitive to external conditions, we can advance those policies that strengthen particular types of social cohesion.
 - (S) e.g. business development and Internet infrastructure
 - Or address the ways in which those policies might undermine other types of social cohesion
 - e.g. Pay for the bureaucratic-imposed demand for competition and accountability (e.g. SSHRC, Letter of Intent structure)
 - Still need to convince governments to pay for accountability
 - (S) Integrate social and economic policies so they don't conflict, but reinforce one another
 - Relax the demand for CAP sites to be self-financing (recognizes the non-Market advantages of the Internet)
 - Build the case for multi-functionality of rural economic activity to reflect the contributions of various types of social cohesion to economic activity
- (S) Recognize that local communities also have significant degrees of freedom to build their own cohesion.
 - But that they must be free to do so in a manner that is appropriate for their local situation.
 - Not all locations are endowed with market-based social cohesion (e.g. entrepreneurs and businesses).
 - On the other hand they may have great strengths in associative or communal forms
 - Thus providing a strong basis for social cohesion if they are appropriately supported.

Embrace Social Innovation

- Remain sensitive to local conditions
 - Facilitate grass-roots involvement
 - Increase local control over assets
 - Improve small-area data and analysis
- Social cohesion does not mean conformity
 - Take the long term view
- Take advantage of local strengths
 - Support local social innovation (all 4 types)
 - Plan for failures/take risks

(S) Policies must recognize local conditions

- Look for mutual interests, ways of operating, types of relations
- Economic and geographical conditions will mitigate general policies
- (S) Develop policies and programs that facilitate/encourage grass-roots involvement
- (S) Improve the access that local people have to their natural resources and financial assets
- (S) Develop information which is sufficiently detailed to be sensitive to local variation
 - Municipal-level services are the ones most used by rural people
 - Federal services are least known
- (S) Social cohesion does not always mean no conflict
 - Capacity-building and learning involve tension and conflict
 - Lack of controversy should not be the primary goal – debate etc. are important component of capacity building
 - This is one lesson of our finding that perception and behaviour re. SoCo are quite different processes
 - (S) Long-term view is best – It takes time to build capacity
- (S) Policies should take advantage of local strengths in innovation
 - (S) There is a great deal of local social innovation taking place
 - Market-based:
 - Corporate organizations, new marketing arrangements, lending circles, niche market development
 - Bureaucratic-based:
 - Less hierarchical, distributive
 - Encouraged by SSHRC: Letter of Intent stage to support costs of competition
 - Associative-based:
 - More flexible, broader (Internet opportunities) – eg. Japanese transform hobby into market
 - Communal-based:
 - New family structures (blended, mobile) – newsletters and Internet?
 - Roles for women continue to change
 - Need innovation regarding the caring for and support of the elderly
 - Must look to opportunities emerging across types of relations – even as we recognize the points where they conflict
 - Facilitate it, Take risks
 - (S) Understand that failure is a necessary part of learning and building capacity
- This is why we have advanced our research program to examine to look at Community Capacity
 - How it functions; How it can be built

**Rural Matters:
The CRRF 'Rural University'**

October 27-29, 2002
Rodd Miramichi River Hotel and NBCC

Field Trips:

- Citizens and natural resource management
- Agricultural development and diversification
- Information technology
- Social and economic change in rural communities
- Tourism-based economies

- Invitation to the CRRF Annual Conference
- Oct 26th – special workshop for rural citizens from the NRE field sites
- Field trips
 - Citizens and natural resource management (social innovations – forestry, Blissfield)
 - Agricultural development and diversification (Acadian innovations - agriculture)
 - Information technology (Moncton)
 - Social and economic change in rural communities (Neguac and Burnt Church - fishing)
 - Tourism-based economies
- Web site via CRRF or NRE web sites

Social Cohesion in Rural Canada

A Project of the Canadian Rural
Revitalization Foundation

www.crrf.ca

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September 23, 2002

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