



**RPLC**  
RURAL POLICY LEARNING COMMONS

**CAPR**  
COMMUNAUTÉ D'APPRENTISSAGE  
DES POLITIQUES RURALES

*building rural policy through international comparative analysis*

*construire des politiques rurales fondées sur l'analyse comparative internationale*

Volume 1: Issue 2 | October 2015

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

[ACUNS 2015 Student Conference](#)

Nov 4 - 5, 2015, Calgary, Canada

[EU Cohesion Policy: Territorial Dimension](#)

Nov 3 - 6, Lisbon University, Portugal

[Workforce Development Forum](#)

Nov 5, Kelowna, Canada

[Manitoba Farm Women's Conference](#)

Nov 15 - 17, Winkler, Canada

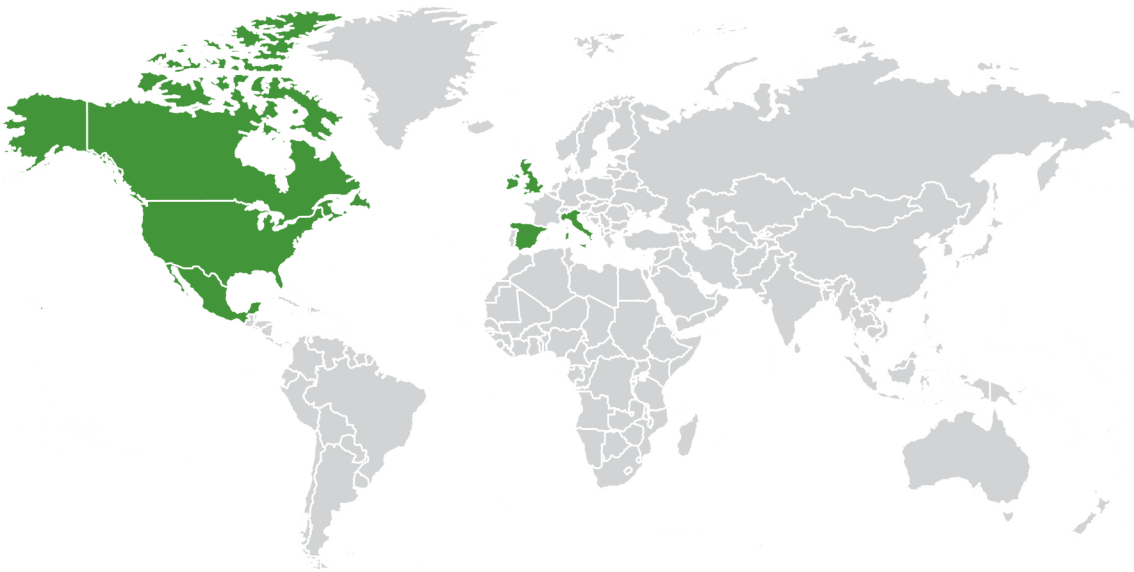
[Rural Health Leadership Conference](#)

Feb 7 - 10, Phoenix, United States

**Thank you for your interest in the RPLC!** In the past year, here is a summary of what the RPLC has been up to:

- Developed a 12th team—Transformations in Indigenous Communities Team
- Hired 3 students to join the Secretariat — 2 Liaison Officers and RPLC Coordinator
- Hosted 6 webinars on rural policy — human capital and migration (2), research and exchange (3), and infrastructure and services (1).
- Collected 3 legacy materials
- Developed 4 publications — State of Infrastructure in Canada (2), Governance (2)
- Supported ICRPS 2014 in Mexico and the CRRF Conference in Thunder Bay.
- Supported travel to rural development conferences for students.
- Integrated a web-based platform for cross-national comparative research methods, professional development tools and internship opportunities
- Completed a scan of policy programs in Canada with a rural focus

**PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS FROM 9 COUNTRIES**



**OVER 30 PARTNERS**

Universities, Governments, Organizations interested in rural policy



**OVER 60 INDIVIDUALS**

Faculty, Government Representatives, Policy Organizations, International Organizations



Hosting conferences and webinars reaching over

**1,000 PEOPLE**



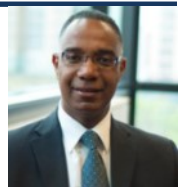
**12 TEAMS**

**7** Knowledge Mobilization Teams

**5** Research Teams

*"Brandon University is excited to lead the network amid this growing interest in comparative research and cases. We know that this shared knowledge will add considerable value to policy discussions, among faculty, students and leaders in our communities."*

- Dr. Gervan Fearon, President of Brandon University.



# What's New?

## NEW LIASON OFFICERS

Since our May newsletter, we have welcomed two new Liaison Officers – Marco Pagani (Bologna, Italy) and Michael Blatherwick (Brandon, Canada). You can see their introduction on page 4 of the newsletter.

## AWARD WINNING BOOK

A big congratulations goes to Andrew Copus and Philomena De Lima (Human Capital and Migration Team Lead), editors of the recently published 'Territorial Cohesion in Rural Europe: The Relational Turn in Rural Development (Regions and Cities)', for being awarded a Regional Science Association book award. Tom Johnson (Research and Exchanges team lead) and Pam Kelrick (Liaison Officer) helped author part of the book.

## RPLC at CRRF 2016

The RPLC digital information hub made a presentation of the RPLC website at the CRRF conference in PEI last September. Exciting changes to the website will allow users to customize information based on research themes. More to come in the future.

## STATE OF RURAL CANADA 2015

RPLC has partnered with Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) and the Rural Development Institute to develop a report on the State of Rural Canada 2015. For more information on the report, the team of authors and media releases, please visit the State of Rural Canada website: <http://sorc.crrf.ca>

## The RPLC is...

- A Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Grant
- Focused on developing and strengthening partnerships amongst researchers, research institutions and rural stakeholders
- An ongoing project that is inclusive of all countries: east and west, north and south
- A project that will build the capacity of rural policy researchers, policy analysts and community stakeholders

## The RPLC is NOT...

- A SSHRC Research Grant
- A research project
- A project focused on developing countries - although it does not necessarily exclude them
- An academic project alone



## ICRPS 2015 Ireland - Review with James Breen

### **Q: What was the summer school about?**

The ICRPS summer school is based on a trans-Atlantic comparison of rural policy issues and how rural policies are being implemented around the world. In the context of this summer school, rural Ireland was the topic. Themes such as environmental issues, regional development issues, rural tourism, access to rural services and other

themes most relevant in the Irish context were studied over the two weeks.

ICRPS is about expanding that network of people interested in rural policy and how they are dealt with or tackled indifferent regions. ICRPS is an ever growing family of faculty and students.

### **Q: What was your most**

### **memorable experience?**

For those who were visiting Ireland for the first time, it was having that opportunity to give them their first experience of rural Ireland, and giving those who have already been to Ireland exposure to other aspects of rural Ireland – getting a sense of what rural experiences are like. For example, learning about Connemara and the heritage and culture that can be seen there at the Burren and the Aran Irelands. These were the two most memorable parts of the summer school for me.

### **Q: How did it make a difference?**

Certain initiatives in Ireland prompted a lot of interest from ICRPS participants. Examples: the Origin Green Initiative struck a lot of people – comparing different sustainability issues in countries. The Burren life project was another initiative that people could see the success of the project and the multi-disciplinary nature of it, which is what ICRPS is all about.



## SAVE THE DATE! - ICRPS Alaska, July 14-26, 2016

Set your calendars to attend ICRPS Alaska, July 14-26, in 2016. The 13th annual event will offer a unique opportunity with a “northern perspective on global challenges.” A variety of topics are to be covered include; the Food, Water and Energy Nexus, Health, Environmental Justice, Renewable Energy, and Climate Change.

Located in the heart of Alaska and only 200 miles from the Arctic Circle, the University and the city of Fairbanks offers modern amenities and wilderness access minutes outside of town. Excursions will expose participants to the amazing environment of Alaska’s Interior, and also to the challenges of the rural North that result from misuses like climate change and energy development.

Helping to coordinate ICRPS 2016, Phil Loring, Assistant Professor at the School of Environment and Sustainability, University of Saskatchewan describes the overall theme of the conference as giving, “a northern perspective on all of those things that ICRPS does (comparative rural policy). Specific themes: Food energy, water policy, environmental justice, and indigenous issues will be talked about that haven’t been as high profile as in earlier summer schools.”

A highlight of ICRPS 2016 is that it will also overlap with the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics which will be an interesting thing for participants to witness. Mark your calendars and see you in 2016!



## Meet RPLCs new Liaison Officers



Michael Blatherwick is currently enrolled in the Masters of Rural Development program at Brandon University. His research interests include exploring the relationship between recreation infrastructure and community sustainability and population retention.

Having grown up in northern Manitoba and with several years of previous work experience with the Province of Manitoba, Michael is very interested in supporting rural community capacity building and governance.

Michael works in the RDI office in Brandon.

Marco Pagani has a Masters in Physics from the University of Milano and is a professor of Mathematics and Physics. He obtained a PhD in Agro-food Science from the University of Bologna, researching the energy footprint in dairy and rice farming. He is particularly interested in energy and sustainability issues in agriculture and rural areas, with a focus on the introduction of renewable energies.



Since June 2015 he works as Regional Liaison Officer for Europe and Team Support of the Publication Team. As RLO he is particularly involved in the evaluation of RPLC outcomes and impacts

## What Will We Accomplish in the Future?

- Develop a Comparative Rural Policy Study Abroad Program
- Develop a credit-based Graduate Certificate in Comparative Rural Policy
- Increase collaboration and networking opportunities with national and international research centres, government agencies (OECD, UN), students, faculty and policy analysis
- Develop approximately 250 publications
- Support 7 Institutes
- Develop 15-20 Rural Policy briefs—peer reviewed manuscripts
- Train more than 500 students and professionals in international rural policy issues

**FEATURE STORY IN NEXT ISSUE:  
NEW TEAM - Transformations in Indigenous Communities**

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