

# Making it Work: Innovation and Regional Development in Kittiwake, NL



## Project Background

Since 2010 a four-province, multi-disciplinary research team led by Dr. Kelly Vodden has investigated the state of regional development and prevalence of new regionalism in Canada. The project is called Canadian Regional Development: A Critical Review of Theory, Practice and Potentials (CRD). Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador builds on the work of CRD, providing project participants the opportunity to gather and share ideas and experiences (Hall and White, 2013). This poster presents the most pressing identified challenges, opportunities, and strategies for moving forward within the Kittiwake case study region (Figure 1).

Fig. 1: Kittiwake Region, NL



## Rural Innovation

Recent literature suggests that innovation is an urban phenomena, which has been reinforced by theories of clusters, industrial districts and the creative class (Wolfe, 2011). However, the projects have identified several innovative firms and projects within the Kittiwake region. Yet the literature often overlooks the necessity of innovation for the survival of firms in rural areas. The innovations carried out by firms and other rural organizations are especially impressive given the challenges they encounter in a rural context.

## Kittiwake Profile

Socioeconomic Indicator	Kittiwake	Newfoundland
Population (2011)	46,850	505,470
Population Change (2006-2011)	-3.6%	-1.5%
Median Age (2011)	44	42
Gross personal income per capita (2011)	25,000	28,900
Self-Reliance Ratio	72.6	80.1

## Challenges

- Time (working in vs. on the enterprise)
- Understanding innovation
- Lack of government support/policies and “rural retreat”
- Accessing markets
- Access to capital

*“This is my impression. The Newfoundland government wants nothing to do with rural, and the sooner you find that out the sooner you can make other decisions because no matter what they say, no matter what they project you’re the last on the totem pole.”*  
-Business Owner



Fig. 2: Innovation tour with New Wood Manufacturing

Innovative Firms	Innovative Projects
New Wood	Keep it in Kittiwake
Chatman’s	Business Network (CCIN)
Versatile	Gander Aerospace
Fogo Co-op	Fly Gander Campaign
Shorefast	Geotourism
Eastern Star Group	Gander Reverse Trade Mission
Gander Flight Training	Innovation Tours
ASK Prospecting	LEAN Manufacturing

## Moving Forward

- Innovation open house
- Training and HR strategies
- Collaboration with post-secondary
- Increased awareness of support programs
- Government flexibility
- Networks

## Conclusions

The Kittiwake region, and arguably other rural areas, have encountered tremendous institutional and demographic withdrawal. The ability of firms in the region to remain resilient demonstrates their dedication and innovation. However, these firms do not operate in isolation. There are multiple development actors that try to provide services that benefit these local agencies. Such success stories need to be showcased to demonstrate the potential of rural firms and the effect of innovation in the periphery. If the actors in Kittiwake can make it work, can it work in other rural regions?

## References

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