



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Enhancing Rural Policy
Through Collaboration

Share Your Science Conference 2021
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Ryan Gibson



gibsonr@uoguelph.ca
[@ryanfgibson](https://twitter.com/ryanfgibson)

Lissel Hernandez Gongora



hernandl@uoguelph.ca
[@lisselHG](https://twitter.com/lisselHG)

THE CONTEXT



WHY RURAL POLICY FOCUS?

- 6 million Canadians live in rural communities
 - 1.386 million in Ontario
- Uniqueness of Rural Areas
 - Smaller population densities, larger distances between places
 - Limited economic diversity, prevalence of natural resource-based economies
- Rational for the research
 - Diversity in rural communities making policy difficult
 - Lack of evidence for rural policy decisions
 - Lack of forums for rural policy discussions

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- 4 year initiative funded through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance
- Project contained multiple research initiatives (see yellow box →)
- Focus on presentation on collaborative, inter-government rural policy activities
 - Focus groups (2017, 2018, 2019)
 - Key informant interviews (2019, 2020)
 - FPT Rural Working Group (2020-present)

Additional Activities in the Project

- Comparison of rural lens approaches in Canada and internationally
- Examination of cannabis legalization in rural economic development
- What is the evidence on evidence-based decision making in rural policy in Canada
- Rural immigration and migration attraction
- Impacts of COVID-19 on Rural Policy in Canada

RURAL POLICY WORKING GROUP



RURAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

- **Purpose:** to facilitate knowledge sharing, building relationships, and identifying common
- **Participation:** 10 governments, see →
- **Focus:**
 - Rural lenses
 - Rural responses to COVID-19
 - Partnerships and collaborations
 - Rural data
 - Population growth strategies
 - Workforce development (upcoming in June 2021)
- **Evaluation:** Conducted in Nov. 2020

Participating Governments

- British Columbia
- Canada (CenRED, StatCan)
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Ontario (OMAFRA, MNDM)
- Prince Edward Island
- Saskatchewan



KEY FINDINGS

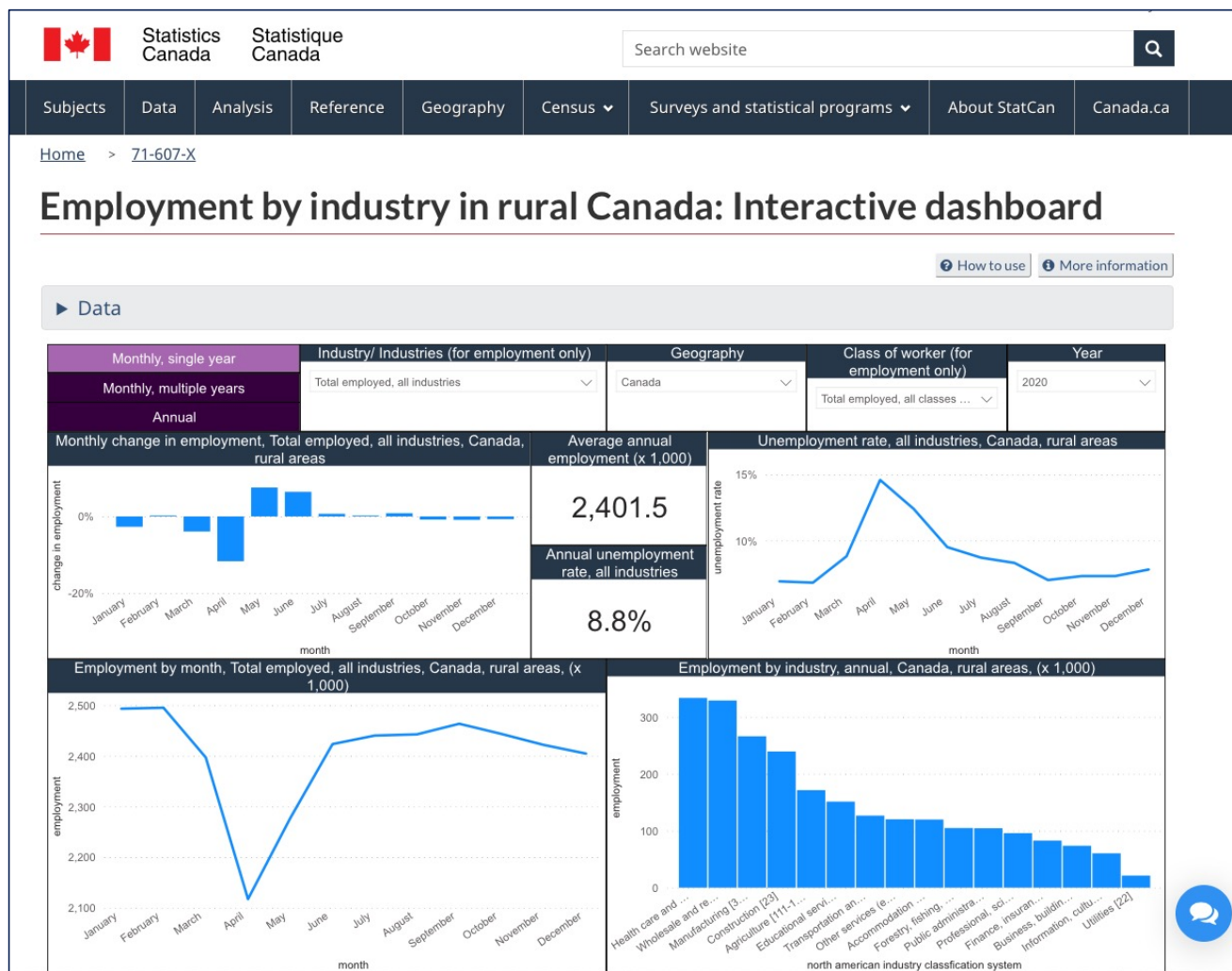
Value of horizontal collaboration

- Networking opportunities - Rural policy 'units' are not always located in the same ministry in each government
- Knowledge sharing - data sets, policy evaluations, funding mechanisms/structures, and policy implementation

NEXT STEPS

Rural Policy Working Group will continue to meet

- June meeting to focus on workforce development
- Fall meeting to focus on rural transit



@ryanfgibson @lisselHG



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation's Rural Insights Series on COVID-19](#)
 - [Supporting Rural Recovery and Resilience After COVID-19](#) (Hall, Markey, Gibson, Weeden)
 - [Addressing the Digital Divide: COVID-19 and the Importance of Connecting Rural Canada](#) (Weeden, Kelly)
 - [Rethinking Infrastructure Investments: Supporting Post-Pandemic Rural Recovery and Climate Resilience through Green Infrastructure](#) (Maloney, Kraehling, Tolsma, Weeden, Markey, Gibson)
 - [The Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadian Agriculture and the Agri-Food Sector](#) (Sousa, Epp, Caldwell)
 - [Rural Employment and Workforce Development: Impacts and Opportunities](#) (Agyepong, Bollman, Gibson)
 - [Supporting Newcomers and Migrants in Rural Canada During and After COVID-19](#) (Helps, Silvius, Gibson)
- [Creating Effective Rural Policies: Rural Lenses and Their Effectiveness](#) (Louis Helps)
- [Making a Difference: Reflections on Knowledge Mobilization in Provincial Rural Policy](#) (Asleigh Weeden)
- [Beyond the Smart City: Assessing open data in rural Ontario](#) (Alex Petric)
- [Understanding Rural: A Comparison of Academic, Political and Lay Discourses of Rural](#) (Neil Stoop)





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