



2020–2024 Annual Report

Libro Professor of Regional
Economic Development



ruraldev.ca

The Libro Professor of
Regional Economic
Development was
established in 2016 through
the generous donations from
Libro Credit Union, the
Klosler family, and the
Roberts family. Together, a
\$1 million gift was created
to serve as a catalyst for
enhancing regional
economic development in
Southwestern Ontario.

Overview

The past few years have been a series of unprecedented change for communities, governments, and economies around the world. Throughout these years, the Libro Professorship in Regional Economic Development has remained committed to producing research that responds to emerging challenges while supporting evidence-informed decision-making for rural and regional communities. This report highlights the breadth of that work and reflects the collaborative partnerships that have made it possible.



Over the past five years, the Professorship has expanded its research program significantly, securing more than \$1.5 million in competitive research funding as principal investigator across more than twelve successful grants. Through collaborations with colleagues and partner organizations, total research funding exceeded \$4 million. These funds supported applied research addressing issues such as labour force development, housing, immigration, entrepreneurship, economic resilience, and community prosperity, with a strong emphasis on generating practical outcomes for communities and policymakers.

The Libro Professorship continues to be committed to translating research into practice. During this reporting period, our work resulted in 8 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, 12 technical reports, and more than 80 additional knowledge mobilization products, including policy briefs, presentations, webinars, and other resources designed to make research accessible to diverse audiences. More than 40 presentations were delivered at regional, national, and international conferences, creating opportunities to share findings, exchange ideas, and strengthen collaborations across disciplines and sectors.

Beyond research, the Libro Professorship has played an active role in supporting policy development and community decision-making. Consultations with municipal, provincial, federal, and international governments have ensured that research findings contribute directly to policy discussions and strategic planning. Throughout the reporting period, numerous conferences, workshops, and stakeholder forums were convened to foster dialogue, strengthen partnerships, and encourage the exchange of ideas among researchers, practitioners, community organizations, and government leaders.

Equally important has been the investment in developing future leaders. Over the past five years, the Professorship has provided mentorship and research opportunities for 52 graduate students and 1 postdoctoral fellow. Their contributions have enriched every aspect of our work, while the experience they have gained will continue to strengthen the field of regional economic development well into the future.

The accomplishments presented in this report are the result of sustained collaboration and the dedication of many individuals and organizations. I extend my sincere appreciation to our students, research partners, community collaborators, funding agencies, and colleagues whose expertise, commitment, and support have helped advance the mission of the Libro Professorship.

Sincerely,
Ryan Gibson, PhD
Libro Professor Regional Economic Development

2020–2024 Highlights



Illustrative Student Engagements

Student engagement, training, and mentorship are a corner stone of the Libro Professorship. Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are provided experiences to apply skills from the classroom in the communities, advance research projects, network with key audiences, and share knowledge to advance regional economic development and community prosperity. The following three examples illustrate the breadth of graduate student engagement facilitated through the Libro Professorship during the 2020–2024 period.

Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference, North Bay (November 2022)

Five graduate students — Louis Helps, Alex Petric, Blake Glassford, John Dale, and Joshua Barrett — attended and presented at the annual Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation conference in North Bay, Ontario, themed Working to Scale: Reconciliation, Revitalization, Retention, Regional Transportation, and Revenue Generation. Students shared research on rural labour shortages, intergenerational wealth transfers, local government entrepreneurialism, and knowledge mobilization. This experience connected students directly with Canada's leading rural research and practitioner community, providing professional development opportunities that go well beyond the classroom.



Rural Symposium, Guelph (March 2023)

Multiple graduate students — including Blake Glassford, Heather Graham, and Abigail Shimada — presented research at the 2023 Rural Symposium held in Guelph, Ontario. This annual event brings together graduate students, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs staff, rural practitioners, and community leaders to share emerging rural research. Presentations covered the Urban Exodus, rural knowledge mobilization, and smart village initiatives. Symposium papers were published in the open-access Rural Review journal, ensuring broad practitioner access to graduate student research.



North Atlantic Forum (2024)

Lucas Berek, Joshua Barrett, and Damilola Oyewale participated in the 2024 North Atlantic Forum in Letterfrack, Ireland. Each presented their research at the conference and participated in capacity building, networking, and community visits. .



Highly Qualified Personnel

The Libro Professor provided primary supervision for graduate students in three programs: the Master of Science in Rural Planning and Development, Master of Planning, and PhD in Rural Studies. The following students were supervised and/or engaged as research assistants during 2020–2024.



Fahad Abrahani

Master of Planning



Jennifer Aikman

Master of Science
(Planning)



Phyllis Agyemang

Master of Science
(Planning)



Victoria Agyepong

Master of Science
(Planning)



Joshua Barrett

PhD in Rural Studies



Behnaz Bahrefar

Master of Science
(Planning)



Ken Chew

Master of Science
(Planning)



Maria Ciotti

Master of Science
(Planning)



Natasha D'Souza

PhD in Rural Studies
(co-supervised with
Wayne Caldwell)



John Dale

PhD in Rural Studies



Blake Glassford

Master of Science
(Planning)



Heather Graham

Master of Science
(Planning)



Sara Hajsaleh

Master of Science
(Planning)



Danika Hammond

Master of Science
(Planning)



**Muhammad Haris
Zadid**

Master of Science
(Planning)



Tracey Harvey

PhD in Rural Studies



Louis Helps

Master of Science
(Planning)
PhD in Rural Studies



Erin Helsby

Master of Science
(Planning)



**Lissel Hernandez-
Gongora**

Postdoctoral Fellow



Ferdous Huq

Master of Planning



Emmanuela Jada

Master of Science
(Planning)



**Mohammed
Jalabi**

Master of Science
(Planning)



Sean Jeffery

Master of Science
(Planning)



**Madeline
Kowalchuk**

Master of Planning



Koren Lam

Master of Science
(Planning)



Yanjung Liang

Master of Science
(Planning)



**Melanie McCann
Lang**

PhD in Rural Studies



**Kathryn
McNamara**

Master of Planning



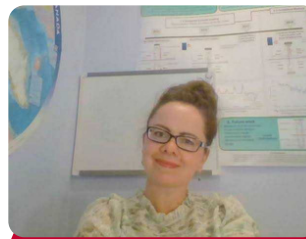
Keith Marshall

Master of Planning



**Shayan Madani
Ghahfarokhi**

Master of Science
(Planning)



Ela Mastej

PhD in Rural Studies
(co-supervised with
Sheri Longboat)



Niju Mathew

Master of Science
(Planning)



**Adebayo
(Michael) Olubiyi**

Master of Planning



Damilola Oyewale

Master of Science
(Planning)



Sarah Parish

Master of Science
(Planning)



**Marie-Carmelle
Ourlaine Pashley**

Master of Science
(Planning)



Kalind Patel

Master of Planning



Brandon Raco

Master of Science
(Planning)



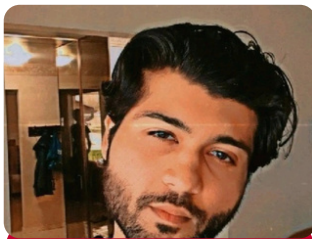
Geetanjali Rana

Master of Planning



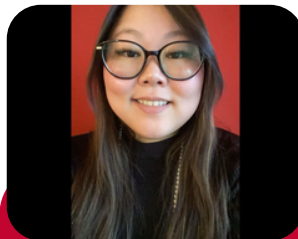
Rebecca Roibas

Master of Science
(Planning)



Mehul Safiwala

Master of Science
(Planning)



Evelyn Shin

Master of Science
(Planning)



Niva Shrestha

Master of Science
(Planning)



Paul Sitsofe

Master of Science
(Planning)



Chloe Spear

Master of Science
(Planning)



Rana Telfah

PhD in Rural Studies
(co-supervised with
Wayne Caldwell)



Andrea Torok

Master of Science
(Planning)



Chris Van Dyke

Master of Planning



Melissa Visser

Master of Science
(Planning)



Ashleigh Weeden

PhD in Rural Studies



Shanley Weston

Master of Science
(Planning)



Vinit Yadav

Master of Planning



Research Engagement: Active Projects 2020–2024

The Libro Professor was actively engaged in the following research initiatives during the 2020–2024 period. Each initiative engaged multiple partners including communities, nonprofits, local governments, Indigenous communities, and provincial and federal government ministries. Graduate students were involved in each initiative.

- Building for the Future: Rural Infrastructure and Regional Economic Development
- Condemnation to Collaboration: An Examination of Relationships between Canadian Governments and the Cannabis Sector
- COVID-19 and the Future of Ontario's Agricultural Workforce
- Equity in Rural Transit: Investigating the Feasibility of Permanent Public Transit in Wellington County
- Getting to Work: Investigating Labour Market Challenges in Saugeen Shores
- Housing Integration of Mexican SAWP Workers in the Ontario Economy
- Labour Shortages through Newcomer Attraction
- Knowledge Translation and Transfer to Advance Rural Economic Development
- Making a Difference? Evaluating Rural Development Policy Interventions
- Promoting Economic Development and Vitality of Rural Communities in Ontario
- Rural Futures: Mobilizing Knowledge and Sustaining Partnerships
- Rural Housing and International Agricultural Workers
- The Labour Crisis in Rural Ontario: A Co-operative Solution
- The Urban Exodus: Understanding the Impacts of Migration to Rural Ontario as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Each of these research initiatives engages a series partners, including communities, organizations, nonprofits, local governments, Indigenous communities, provincial government ministries, federal government ministries, and international partners. Graduate students are engaged in each of these research initiatives, providing them opportunities for gaining employable skills, building networks, and enhancing their knowledge.

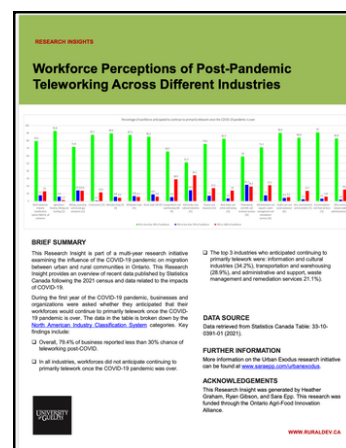
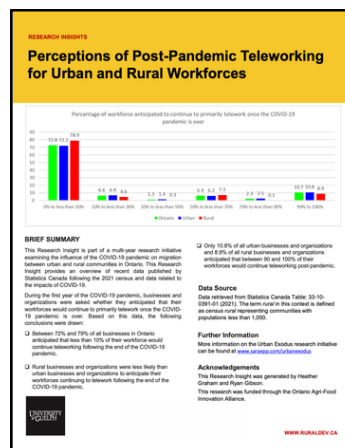
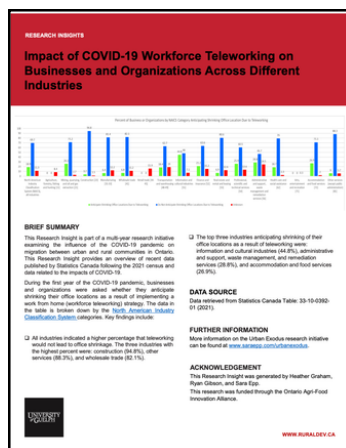


Research Project Profiles

The following profiles highlight four research projects that were active during 2020–2024.

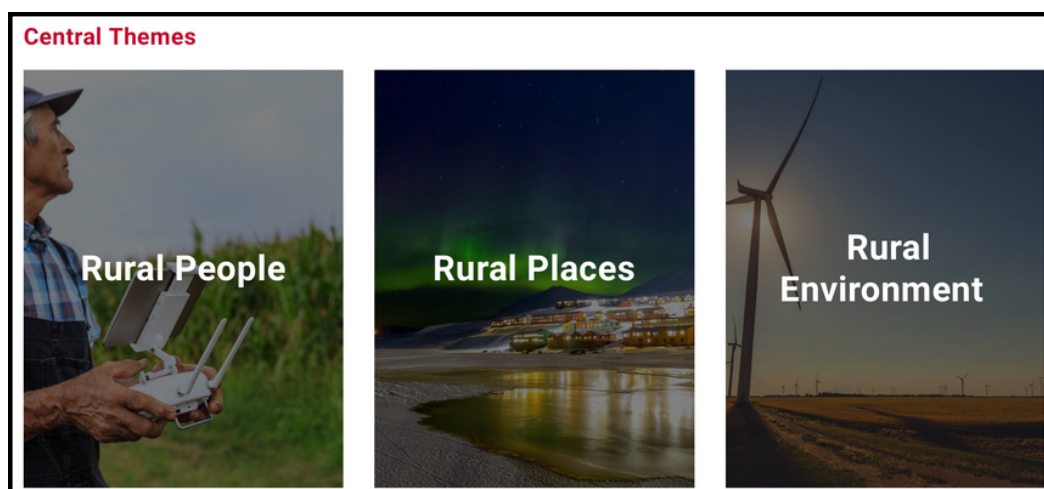
The Urban Exodus: Understanding the Impacts of Migration to Rural Ontario (2022–2024)

This initiative examined the significant population shifts to rural Ontario communities that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on a province-wide survey of municipal governments and analysis of Statistics Canada population data, the research documented the scope, nature, and community impacts of this urban-to-rural migration wave. Findings revealed that while many communities welcomed the influx, rapid population growth created pressures on housing, infrastructure, and services that municipalities were not prepared to manage. The project produced peer-reviewed publications, practitioner-facing research summaries, and presentations to government audiences, making it one of the most timely and policy-relevant initiatives of the period.



Rural Futures: Mobilizing Knowledge and Sustaining Partnerships (2021–2023)

The Rural Futures initiative was designed to bridge the gap between rural research produced at the University of Guelph and the communities, organizations, and governments that need it most. The initiative developed a suite of knowledge mobilization products including online researcher profiles, policy briefs, and plain-language research summaries. The initiative demonstrated how university-based research could be systematically mobilized to create practical value for rural Ontario.



Building for the Future: Rural Infrastructure and Regional Economic Development (2017–2023)

This initiative examined the relationship between rural infrastructure investment and regional economic development outcomes. Working with partners across Ontario, the project explored how communities could leverage infrastructure improvements — from broadband and transit to green infrastructure — as catalysts for broader economic development. The research produced multiple peer-reviewed publications, including a study on advancing green infrastructure solutions in Southwest Ontario co-authored with Simon Fraser University colleagues.



Making a Difference? Evaluating Rural Development Policy Interventions (2020–2023)

This project examined how rural development policy interventions are designed, delivered, and evaluated across Ontario. The project worked with rural communities, local governments, and provincial partners to assess the effectiveness of a range of policy tools in fostering rural economic development. Graduate students played central roles in data collection and analysis, and the initiative produced multiple reports and knowledge mobilization outputs.



Knowledge Mobilization: A Catalyst for Change

Throughout 2020–2024, the Libro Professor served as a catalyst for change by sharing research directly with policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders across Ontario, Canada, and internationally. Below are a few illustrations of knowledge mobilization activities and their impacts on policy and practice.

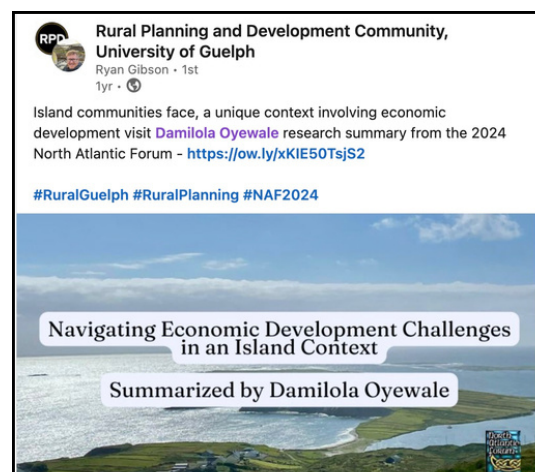
Hosted Meetings of Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Departments of Rural and Northern Economic Development

From 2020–2023, Prof. Gibson organized and facilitated a knowledge sharing forum among representatives of federal, provincial, and territorial government departments responsible for rural and northern economic development. The meetings provide opportunities for government departments to meet their colleagues, share insights on policies and programs, and identify commonalities. Research conducted through the Libro Professorship was regularly shared with government representatives.



Social Media Advocacy for Rural Research and Policy

Throughout 2020–2024, Prof. Gibson and the research team actively used social media platforms including LinkedIn, Twitter/X, Facebook and the ruraldev.ca website to share research-informed insights and engage professionals in discussions about rural policy and practice. By curating relevant content, sharing plain-language research summaries, and fostering dialogue among rural practitioners, policymakers, and community leaders, these social media activities helped translate academic research into accessible knowledge. The Professorship's online presence grew substantially during this period, supporting broader awareness of rural research generated at the University of Guelph to audiences throughout Ontario, Canada, and internationally.



Keynote Presentation at Communities in Transition Conference (2023)

In March 2023, Prof. Gibson also delivered a keynote presentation at the Communities in Transition Conference in Edmonton, Alberta,. The presentation was titled Navigating Transitions: The Future of Rural Communities, further extending the reach of Libro Professorship research into national policy and practice conversations. A local artist visualized the presentation, which can be seen below.



Outputs: 2020–2024

* Notes graduate student or postdoctoral fellow

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

Akimowicz, M., *Weeden, A., & Gibson, R. (2022). Searching for a conceptual nexus? A critical analysis of community, place, and territorial approaches to rural development. *The Annals of Regional Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00168-022-01125-x>

Gibson, R. & *Dale, J. (2022). Do more, with less: The realities of local government in rural Ontario. *The Canadian Geographer*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12816>

*Helps, L., Silvius, R., & Gibson, R. (2022). Vulnerable, inequitable, and precarious: Impacts of COVID-19 on newcomers, immigrants, and migrant workers in rural Canada. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 16(4), 159–177.

*Petric, A., & Gibson, R. (2022). Embedding rural capital? Community Investment Funds in Canada and their implications for rural communities. *Community Development Journal*, 54(5), 1–20.

*Weeden, A., *Goretsky, R., Longboat, S., Epp, S., & Gibson, R. (2022). State of rural Ontario. In *State of Rural Canada: Opportunities, Recovery, and Resiliency in Changing Times* (pp. 54–63). Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation.

Abdulai, A., Gibson, R., & Fraser, E. (2023). Beyond Transformations: Zooming in on agricultural digitalization and the changing social practices of rural farming in Northern Ghana. *Journal of Rural Studies*.

Akimowicz, M., *Weeden, A., & Gibson, R. (2023). Building bridges across the plurality of rural development research. *The Annals of Regional Science*.

Technical Reports

Breen, S., *Sutherland, C., *Trueman, M., Gibson, R., & Markey, S. (2022). *Navigating Rural: Place Based Transit Solutions for Rural Canada*. Selkirk College.

*Helps, L., & Gibson, R. (2022). *Rural philanthropy in Oxford County: Summary report*. University of Guelph.

*Hernandez Gongora, L., & Gibson, R. (2022). *Exploring Rural Transit Policies and Initiatives*. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Other Publications and Knowledge Mobilization Outputs

Gibson, R. & *Dale, J. (2022). *Rural Local Governments Need to Pursue Entrepreneurial Strategies to Support Rural Futures*. Rural Ontario Institute.

Gibson, R. & *Barrett, J. (Eds.) (2022). *Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation National Newsletter – January through December 2022 editions* (12 issues).

Gibson, R., Epp, S., & Longboat, S. (Eds.) (2022). *Rural Review: Ontario Rural Planning, Development, and Policy*, 6(1).

Gibson, R. (Ed.) (2023). *Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation National Newsletter – January through December 2023 editions* (12 issues).

Gibson, R., & *Dale, J. (2023). *Rural Local Governments Need to Pursue Entrepreneurial Strategies*. Rural Ontario Institute.

Gibson, R. (2023). *Innovations in Agriculture and Food in Ontario*. Prepared for the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education Conference, Guelph.

*Glassford, B., & Gibson, R. (2023). *Monthly Rural Research Profiles in CRRF Newsletter* (January–December 2023) on topics including food security, farmer mental health, smart villages, rural transit, and watershed resilience.

*Glassford, B., *Helsby, E., & Gibson, R. (2022). *Rural Research at the University of Guelph: Preliminary Report*.

*Graham, H., Gibson, R., & Epp, S. (2023). *Research Insights series on the Urban Exodus* (6 briefs covering teleworking, population change, and COVID-influenced migration). Available at saraapp.com/urbanexodus.

*Graham, H., Gibson, R., & Epp, S. (2023). *COVID-Influenced Urban Exodus to Rural Ontario: Trends from Statistics Canada*. Available at ruralontarioinstitute.ca.

*Helps, L., & Gibson, R. (2022). *New Insights on COVID-19 and Rural Immigration*. Rural Ontario Institute.

*Oweyale, D., & Gibson, R. (2023, November). *Exploring the Rural Research Landscape across Ontario*. Rural Ontario Institute.

*Petric, A., & Gibson, R. (2022). Hidden Treasures: Planning Around the Intergenerational Transfer of Wealth in Rural Communities. Y Magazine: Ontario Professional Planners Institute, 12, 25–27.

*Petric, A., & Gibson, R. (2022). Supporting Rural Development by Embedding Financial Capital. Rural Ontario Institute.

Graduate Student–Led Research – Theses and Major Research Papers

Bahrefar, B. (2022). Influence of a Global Pandemic for Ontario Newcomers. MSc (Planning) Thesis.

Barrett, J. (2024). A New Localism for Newfoundland and Labrador? PhD Dissertation.

Dale, J. (2022). Mutual Aid and Third Places during the COVID-19 Pandemic. MSc (Planning) Thesis.

Glassford, B. (2023). The Peaks and Valleys of Connection – Lessons from Smart Village Initiatives and Supportive Policies in the EU and UK for a Canadian Context. MSc (Planning) Thesis.

Graham, H. (2024). Threats of Municipal Planning Policy on Heritage Planning in Ontario. MSc (Planning) Major Research Paper.

Hammond, D. (2023). Rural Communities and the Pursuit of Funding Support: An Evaluation of BC Rural Development Policy. MSc (Planning) Thesis.

McNamara, K. (2021). Sustainability of Rural Transit through Partnerships. Master of Planning Major Research Paper.

Oyewale, D. (2024). Evaluation of the Impact of the Provincial Policy Statement on International Agricultural Workers' Housing in Ontario. MSc (Planning) Thesis.

Patel, K. (2024). Rural Broadband in Northern Ontario: Investigating the Status of Connectivity and the Role of Planners. Master of Planning Major Research Paper.

Sitsofe, P. (2024). Workforce Development in Rural Ontario: An Examination of Experiences and Strategies. Master of Planning Major Research Paper..

Telfah, R. (2023). The Early Settlement Experiences of Syrian Families in Southwestern Ontario. PhD Dissertation.

Visser, M. (2022). Capacity Building in Rural Ontario Infrastructure: An Analysis of Collaborative Infrastructure as an Exploration for Policy and Economic Development. MSc (Planning) Thesis.

Weeden, A. (2022). Place, Power, and Policy in the 'Nuclear North': A Critical Comparative Analysis of Policy Narratives about Rural Innovation Systems Anchored by the Nuclear Energy Sector in Scotland and Canada. PhD Dissertation.

Weston, S. (2024). Darkest Days: A Scoping Review of Violent Crime in Rural Canada. MSc (Planning) Thesis.

Van Dyke, C. (2024). Home on Borrowed Land: Geographies of Land Leasing and the Impacts of Colonial Land Policy on Housing in the Northwest Territories. Master of Planning Major Research Paper.

Conference Presentations

*Abdulai, A., Gibson, R., Hambly, H., Laposte, J., & Loring, P. (2020, May). COVID-19 social impacts on rural communities. Arrell Food Institute Webinar Series 'Agri-Food in a Time of Disruption'. Guelph, Ontario.

*Agyepong, V., Bollman, R., & Gibson, R. (2020, October). Impacts of COVID-19 on rural employment and workforce development. Supporting Rural Recovery and Resilience: 2020 Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference. Virtual.

Conference Presentations

Akimowicz, M., *Weeden, A., & Gibson, R. (2020, August). Bridges and Pitfalls? A Critical Analysis of Different Theoretical Approaches to Rural Development. Territorial Futures: 60th Congress of the European Regional Science Association, Bolzano, Italy. *Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.*

Atterton, J., Shortall, S., Gibson, R., Brown, M., & Rabock, I. (2020, July). Rural policy – is rural proofing the answer? IRSA XV 2020 World Congress of Rural Sociology, Cairns, Australia. *Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.*

Breen, S., Vodden, K., Hall, H., *Dale, J., & Gibson, R. (2023, May). The Future of Work – Changing Workforce and the Implications for Rural Canada. Panel Discussions presented at the Canadian Association of Geographers Conference, Montréal, Québec.

Brinklow, L., Gibson, R., Hall, H., & Markey, S. (2020, October). Rural and island resilience. Supporting Rural Recovery and Resilience: 2020 Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference. Virtual.

Bucklaschuck, J., Hindus, A., Zell, S., Denetto, S., Gibson, R., *Helps, L., Halldorson, E., & Silvius, R. (2022, March). Hosting and Housing: Newcomer Options for and Obstacles to Accessing Appropriate Housing. Presented at the 24th National Metropolis Conference, Vancouver, BC.

Chowdhury, A., *Kabir, K., Gibson, R., & Morris, M. (2023, April). Assessing stakeholders' perception of underreported pluralistic advisory service system in Ontario, Canada using the Q-methodology. Presented at the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education Conference, Guelph, Ontario.

*Dale, J., & Gibson, R. (2024, March). Optimizing local governance: How municipalities navigate the impacts of austerity in rural Ontario. Liminal Spaces: Two Days of Rural Canada, St Catharines, Ontario.

*Dale, J., Gibson, R., & Breen, S. (2024, May). Addressing Labour Shortages Through Newcomer Attraction in Rural Ontario and British Columbia. Northern Dialogues Conference, Whitehorse, Yukon.

Gibson, R. (2020, February). Rural Research at SEDRD. Presented at the 2020 Rural Symposium, Guelph, Ontario.

Gibson, R. (2020, February). What's Coming Next? Insights into Rural Economic Development Trends. Presentation at The Future of Rural Economic Development in Renfrew County, Pembroke, Ontario. *Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.*

Gibson, R. (2020, January). Rural Economic Development and Infrastructure: Building the Future. Presentation at Rural Ontario Municipal Association Annual Conference, Toronto, Ontario.

Gibson, R. (2020, June). Rural recovery and resilience: Impacts of COVID-19 for rural Ontario. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Webinar Series, Guelph, Ontario.

Gibson, R. (2020, May). Rural Philanthropy – Opportunities to Embed Wealth in Place. Presentation at Community Wealth Transfer: Creating Public Benefit from Individual Legacies, Owen Sound, Ontario. *Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.*

Gibson, R. (2020, November). Where to from here? Local economic development trends, insights, and implications. Community Futures Northeastern Ontario Conference, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Gibson, R. (2022, November). Rural Immigration: Strategies for Rural Economic Development and Labour Force Planning. Presented at the Research in Action Webinar hosted by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Gibson, R. (2022, November). Rural Immigration: Strategies for Rural Economic Development and Labour Force Planning. Presented at the Research in Action, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Guelph, Ontario.

Gibson, R. (2023, August). Immigration and Migration in Canada: Impacts on Economies, Policy, and Communities. Presented at the Financial and International Economics Conference, Toluca, Mexico.

Gibson, R. (2023, March). Navigating Transitions: The Future of Rural Communities. Presented at the Communities in Transition Conference, Edmonton, Alberta.

Gibson, R. (2023, November). Embedding Wealth in Communities: Community Investment Program Experience in Rural Canada. Presented at the International Association of Community Development Research Forum, Glasgow, Scotland.

Gibson, R. (2023, October). Social Finance, Place, and Local Development: Innovations from Afar. Place Dialogues Conference, St Anthony, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Gibson, R. (2024, August). Finding and Retaining Workers: Innovative Approaches to Addressing Labour Force Challenges in Rural Ontario. Canadian Association of Geographers, St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Gibson, R. (2024, May). Supporting rural youth in achieving sustainability. Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture–Embassy of Columbia, Ottawa, Ontario.

Gibson, R., *Dale, J., & *Helps, L. (2023, May). Addressing Labour Shortages through Newcomer Attraction – Preliminary Findings. Presented at the Canadian Association of Geographers Conference, Montréal, Québec.

Gibson, R., *Graham, H., & *Sitsofe, P. (2024, June). Addressing Workforce Development through Innovative Approaches: Perspectives from Rural Canada. Sustainable Livelihoods: Regenerating Integrated Development through Innovative Communities, Letterfrack, Ireland.

Gibson, R., & *Dale, J. (2022, May). Do More, With Less: The Realities of Local Government in Rural Ontario. Presented at the 2022 Canadian Association of Geographers Conference, Toronto, Ontario.

Gibson, R., & Annis, R. (2020, July). Harnessing Regional Assets Through Collective Action. International Centre for Local and Regional Development Cross-Border Collaboration Conference, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland.

Gibson, R., & Glassford, B. (2023, April). Rural Futures: KTT in Action to Support Rural People, Places, and Environments. Presented at the 2023 Knowledge Translation and Transfer Symposium, Guelph, Ontario.

Gibson, R., Denbow, J., Crewe, M., & Lemoine, J. (2020, June). The future of rural economic development. Imagining Rural Futures Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.

*Glassford, B., Caldwell, W., Clow, K., Gibson, R., Leach, B., & Mann, S. (2023, March). Rural Connections: Mobilizing Rural Knowledge and Sustaining Partnership at the University of Guelph. Presented at the 2023 Rural Symposium, Guelph, Ontario.

*Glassford, B., Caldwell, W., Clow, K., Gibson, R., Leach, B., & Mann, S. (2022, November). Rural Futures – Mobilizing Knowledge and Sustaining Partnerships at the University of Guelph. Presented at Working to Scale: Reconciliation, Revitalization, Retention, Regional Transportation, and Revenue Generation in Rural and Remote Contexts, North Bay, Ontario.

*Glassford, B., Gibson, R., Breen, S., & Snyed, A. (2023, April). The Peaks and Valleys of Connection: Lessons from EU/UK Smart Village Projects and Supportive Policies for a Canadian Context. Presented at the Technology, Pluralism, and Inclusiveness in Agriculture, Food, and Environment Conference, Guelph, Ontario.

*Graham, H., & Gibson, R. (2024, March). Engaging Newcomers in Rural Ontario to Address Workforce Challenges. Rural Symposium, Guelph, Ontario.

*Graham, H., & Gibson, R. (2024, March). Innovation Workforce Strategies for Engaging Newcomers in Rural Ontario. Our Immigration System: The Way Forward Conference, Montréal, Québec.

*Graham, H., Gibson, R. (2024, March). Innovation Workforce Strategies for Engaging Newcomers in Rural Ontario. Our Immigration System: The Way Forward Conference, Montréal, Québec.

*Helps, L. & Gibson, R. (2020, March). Housing Strategies for the Integration and Wellbeing of Seasonal Agricultural Workers. Beyond 2020: Renewing Canada's Commitment to Immigration, Winnipeg, Manitoba. *Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.*

*Helps, L., Breen, S., Gibson, R., Guyadeen, D., Nicol, P., & Sarapura, S. (2022, November). Addressing Rural Labour Shortages through Newcomer Attraction and Retention: A Scoping Review and Impacts for Communities. Presented at Working to Scale: Reconciliation, Revitalization, Retention, Regional Transportation, and Revenue Generation in Rural and Remote Contexts, North Bay, Ontario.

*Helps, L., Silvius, R., & Gibson, R. (2020, October). The impacts of COVID-19 on immigrants, newcomers, and migrants in rural Canada. Supporting Rural Recovery and Resilience: 2020 Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference. Virtual.

*Helps, W., & Gibson, R. (2020, October). Labour Migration in a Time of Global Crisis: The Impact of COVID-19 on Ontario's Agricultural Migrant Workforce. Creating Inclusive Economies: Building Bridges Between Public, Private, and Civil Society Organizations, Rimouski, Québec. *Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.*

*Hernandez-Gongora, L., & Gibson, R. (2020, October). The Next Rural Policies: Identifying Future Priorities for a Prosperous Rural Canada. Creating Inclusive Economies: Building Bridges Between Public, Private, and Civil Society Organizations, Rimouski, Québec. *Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.*

*Jacques, C., *Berek, L., *Oyewale, D., *Main, H., Breen, S., & Gibson, R. (2024, June). Analysis of Ontario Transit Projects Supported By Federal Funding. Sustainable Livelihoods: Regenerating Integrated Development through Innovative Communities, Letterfrack, Ireland.

*Jacques, C., *Berek, L., *Oyewale, D., *Main, H., Breen, S., & Gibson, R. (2024, March). Rural Transit Funding – Ontario Analysis. Rural Symposium, Guelph, Ontario.

Markey, S., Gibson, R., & *Weeden, A. (2022, May). Community engaged research and the “right to be rural”. Presented at Horizons: Crisis and Social Transformation in Community-Engaged Research, Vancouver, British Columbia.

*Moore, N., Epp, S. Gibson, R., & Fullerton, C. (2024, March). A Literature Review and Media Reporting on COVID-19 Related Mobility. Rural Symposium, Guelph, Ontario.

*Oyewale, D., Gibson, R., Leach, B., Mann, S., Clow, K., & Caldwell, W. (2024, March). Rural Futures: Bridging Research and Community Solutions for a Resilient Ontario. Rural Symposium, Guelph, Ontario.

*Petric, A., & Gibson, R. (2020, October). Embedding Local Capital: Assessing Community Investment Fund Programs in Canada. Creating Inclusive Economies: Building Bridges Between Public, Private, and Civil Society Organizations, Rimouski, Québec. *Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.*

*Petric, A., & Gibson, R. (2022, November). Estimating rural Canada's intergenerational wealth transfer with applications in selected Northern Ontarian communities. Presented at Working to Scale: Reconciliation, Revitalization, Retention, Regional Transportation, and Revenue Generation in Rural and Remote Contexts, North Bay, Ontario.

*Petric, A., Gibson, R., Markey, S., Vodden, K., & Fürst, B. (2024, May). Exploring the impact and potential of place-based philanthropy for community development in rural and northern Canada. Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference, Whitehorse, Yukon.

*Reid, B., Hall, H., Gibson, R., Vodden, K., & Brinklow, L. (2022). Knowledge Mobilization – New Researcher Forum. Presented at Working to Scale: Reconciliation, Revitalization, Retention, Regional Transportation, and Revenue Generation in Rural and Remote Contexts, North Bay, ON.

*Shimada, A., *Graham, H., Epp, S., Fullerton, C., & Gibson, R. (2023, March). The Urban Exodus: Understanding the Impacts of Migration to Rural Ontario as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Presented at the 2023 Rural Symposium, Guelph, Ontario.

*Sitsofe, P., *Mathew, N., & Gibson, R. (2024, March). Addressing Rural Labour Shortages: Innovative Ontario Case Studies. Rural Symposium, Guelph, Ontario.

*Weeden, A. & Gibson, R. (2020, February). Building the Future – Rural Infrastructure and Regional Economic Development. Ontario Good Roads Association Conference, Toronto, Ontario.

*Weeden, A., *Goretsky, R., Epp, S., Gibson, R., & Longboat, S. (2022, May). Navigating Challenge and Change – The State of Rural Ontario. Poster presented at the Creating Inclusive Economies: Building Bridges Between Public, Private, Civil Society Sectors Conference, Rimouski, Québec.

*Weeden, A., *Malone, J., Gibson, R., & Markey, S. (2020, October). Building the Future – Rural Infrastructure & Regional Economic Development. Creating Inclusive Economies: Building Bridges Between Public, Private, and Civil Society Organizations, Rimouski, Québec. *Note: Conference canceled due to corona virus.*

*Weeden, A., & Gibson, R. (2023, May). Territorial Development – Building the Future of Rural Infrastructure and Regional Economic Development. Presented at the Canadian Association of Geographers Conference, Montréal, Québec.

New Research Grants (2020–2024)

COVID-19 and the Future of Ontario's Agricultural Workforce – Mitacs, 2020, \$30,000.

Promoting Economic Development and Vitality of Rural Communities in Ontario – Mitacs, 2020, \$60,000.

Getting to Work: Investigating Labour Market Challenges in Saugeen Shores – Mitacs, 2020, \$15,000.

Housing Integration of Mexican SAWP Workers in Ontario – Mitacs, 2020, \$6,000.

Making a Difference? Evaluating Rural Development Policy Interventions – Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Tier 1, 2020–2023, \$139,000.

Rural Futures: Mobilizing Knowledge and Sustaining Partnerships – Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance KTT Mobilization, 2021–2023, \$39,000.

Equity in Rural Transit: Investigating the Feasibility of Permanent Public Transit in Wellington County – Mitacs, 2021, \$20,500.

Condemnation to Collaboration – Mitacs, 2021, \$15,000.

The Labour Crisis in Rural Ontario: A Co-operative Solution – Ontario Ministry of Labour, 2021–2023, \$40,000.

Entrepreneurialism and Small Local Governments – SSHRC Insight Grant, 2020–2023, \$150,000. Co-applicant (lead: Greg Halseth, University of Northern British Columbia).

The Urban Exodus – Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Tier 1, 2022–2024, \$117,000. Co-applicant (lead: Sara Epp, University of Guelph).

Navigating Rural: Place-Based Transit Solutions for Rural Canada – SSHRC, 2021–2023, \$25,000. Co-applicant (lead: Sarah-Patricia Breen, Selkirk College).

Labour Shortages through Newcomer Attraction – Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Tier 1, 2022–2025, \$113,500.

Rural Housing and International Agricultural Workers – Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Tier 1, 2023–2026, \$205,000.

Knowledge Translation and Transfer to Advance Rural Economic Development – Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance KTT Mobilization, 2023–2025, \$47,000.

Sustainable Rural Livelihoods – Government of Ireland, 2023, \$15,000. Co-applicant (lead: Kevin Heanue, Connemara West).



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