

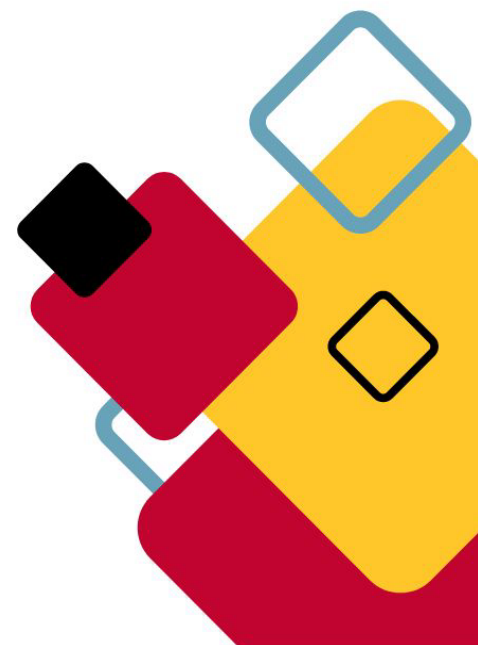
Plain Language Summaries

Webinar Evaluations

July 2024

Lucas Berek

Ryan Gibson



Introduction

Knowledge mobilization is critically important to ensure rural communities and businesses have relevant information to make their decisions. Getting knowledge from individuals and organizations who generate knowledge to users is a vital skill. On 12 June 2024, the Plain Language Summary Workshop was held online examining what are plain language summaries, how they are created, the targeted audiences, and best practices. This report provides an analysis of the evaluation feedback from participants of the Plain Language Summaries Webinar. The feedback illuminates' researchers to have the necessary feedback and information for improving future workshops and knowledge mobilisation.

The Plain Language Summary Workshop was part of the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Connecting International Research to Rural Ontario Communities and Practitioners initiative funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the [Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance](#). The initiative is a collaboration among researchers, policy makers, and practitioners from Atlantic Technological University, Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, Connemara West, Memorial University of Newfoundland, North Atlantic Forum, Rural Ontario Institute, University of Guelph, and University of Prince Edward Island. Further information on this knowledge translation and transfer initiative can be found at <http://ruraldev.ca/connecting-international-research-to-rural-ontario-communities-and-practitioners/>.

The Plain Language Summary Workshop

The Plain Language Summary Workshop was held on June 12, 2024, from 10.00 am – 11.00 am EDT. The workshop featured contributions from:

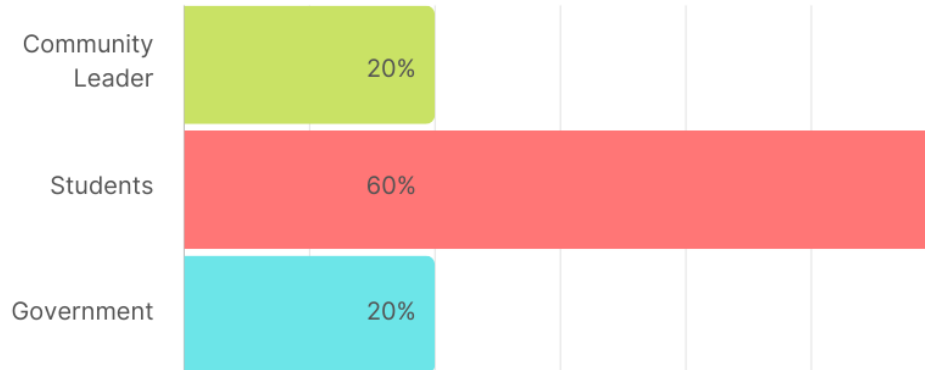
- Bojan Fürst, Manager of Knowledge Mobilization at the Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Policy and Development at Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Nicole Breedon, Engagement Researcher and Knowledge Mobilization Coordinator at the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University
- Lucas Berek, Master of Science (Planning) student at the University of Guelph
- Ryan Gibson, Libro Professor of Regional Economic Development at the University of Guelph

The online workshop attended by 15 individuals, representing community development practitioners, students, and researchers. A recording of the workshop can be found [online](#). At the conclusion of the workshop all participants were invited via email to complete an anonymous evaluation survey. A reminder email was sent to encourage survey completion. A total of five participants completed the survey, representing 33% response rate.

Workshop Feedback

Affiliations of Workshop Participants

The majority of workshop participants were students, followed by community leaders, and government.



Highlights of the Workshop

Participants were asked to identify the highlight(s) of the workshop. Participants had overall positive feedback and were able to gain communication, networking, and plain language skills. The relevance of the workshop was mentioned, and this indicates the importance of plain language summaries and workshops in the research process. Highlights from workshop participants are noted below:

- “Hearing different perspectives on the use of plain language, the final speaker provided a slightly differing view but still provided some good insight into communicating your work with different audiences.”
- “The highlight of the session for you was how the webinar on creating plain language summaries was beneficial for writing your research and organizing your presentations. As a current graduate student, these skills are crucial for effectively communicating your research findings in a clear and accessible manner. This support can help you present your work more effectively to a broader audience, including those who may need to be more experts in your field.”
- “The best part was learning to tailor plain language summaries for different audiences, ensuring clarity and relevance for everyone.”
- “Meeting people working in similar fields”
- “It was a really refreshing session, a break from the jargon filled world we live and work in!”

Suggestions for Future Capacity Building Sessions

Workshop participants were asked to identify suggestions for future capacity building session. The following comments were received:

- “More topics surrounding knowledge mobilization would be really interesting”
- “Training in scientific writing, data analysis, Workshops on storytelling, visual aids, and public speaking”
- “Please issue the Zoom link well in advance, so we can put it in our calendars. The original advert said the start time would be 1pm Irish time, but on the day, we got notification that it was at 3pm. As a result, I was not able to interact, as I was not in my office.”

Attending the 2024 North Atlantic Forum

Workshop participants were asked if they planned to attend the upcoming [North Atlantic Forum](#) being hosted in Letterfrack, County Galway, Ireland. Forty percent of workshop participants indicated they will be attending the North Atlantic Forum.

Summary

The feedback collected from workshop participants highlights the workshop was a success and relevant to the fields of community development practice, government, and research. The communication from facilitators must be responsive to suggestions and the zoom links for future workshops must be released with sufficient time for participants to have been included in their calendars. The usefulness of experts was vital for the success of the workshop and gave further opportunities to include resources to the project.

Acknowledgement

This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance, a collaboration between the Government of Ontario and the University of Guelph.



WWW.RURALDEV.CA