

Immigration and Sustainable Development Conference

The Immigration and Sustainable Development Conference took place on November 29 and 30, 2018 at Memorial University in St. John's, NL. The conference was organized through a partnership with the Atlantic Research Group on Economics of Immigration, Aging and Diversity (ARGEIAD); Dr. Tony Fang, Jarislowsky Chair in Cultural and Economic Transformation; the Association for New Canadians and Memorial University's Internationalization Office. Funding was provided by ARGEIAD and Memorial University's Faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The conference was composed of two portions: a public keynote address with Dr. Ivan Emke (November 29) and an Immigration and Sustainable Development Symposium (November 30) featuring a range of panelists and speakers. The keynote address was free and open to public. The symposium was also free and by invitation.

The public keynote address by Dr. Ivan Emke was titled, "And Who Will Help Me Grow the Food: The Fable of the Little Red Hen in an Age of Food Insecurity and Labour Uncertainty." The Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, Jennifer Simpson, gave opening remarks. In this talk, Dr. Emke explored issues of population growth, immigration, rural vitality and economic sustainability through the fable of the Little Red Hen. He sought to offer hope that there are workable solutions available that will grow communities - and food - in Newfoundland and Labrador but also discussed challenges, such as labour shortages and the low prices of food items as making it difficult for farmers to earn an income.

The Immigration and Sustainable Development Symposium was a day of informative panels, productive breakout sessions and networking. The Honourable Bernard Davis, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour offered opening remarks, followed by Dr. Aimée Surprenant, the Associate Vice-President and Dean, Graduate Studies. The panels, Rural Development and Skills Training, featured a diverse group of experts who shared their insights into current challenges in their fields as well as innovative solutions that are being implemented across Newfoundland and Labrador and in Atlantic Canada. There has been significant policy conversation in the province about agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and renewable energy over the past few years. These are sectors that have been identified as priorities for government and businesses as we all work together to identify opportunities for growth and sustainability in our communities and economy. Memorial University has also made these sectors a priority, particularly through some of the world-renowned programs at the Marine Institute. But Newfoundland and Labrador, like other provinces in Atlantic Canada, also faces human capital challenges as we require skilled labour to drive growth in these sectors and entrepreneurs to invest in innovative businesses that will allow the province to compete regionally, nationally and increasingly globally. Immigration offers several opportunities to address some of these challenges and the federal and provincial governments have been working together to attract and retain skilled workers and entrepreneurs.

During the breakout sessions, guests had the opportunity to join with other participants to discuss the roles that immigration can play in meeting some of the challenges that the agricultural, fishery and renewable energy sectors are facing, as well as how private businesses, nonprofits and government can work together to address the challenges involved in welcoming and integrating newcomers into the region. It is our hope that the panels, presentations and the conversations that took place during breaks, lunch and the breakout sessions were informative, inspired new partnerships and generated

conversations and projects that will extend well beyond this day and place. The panels and breakout sessions will inform a report that will be published in the coming months.

Rural Development Panel:

Dr. Gregory Cameron, Associate Professor (Dalhousie University)

Ms. Gillian Skinner, Assistant Deputy Minister of Region Development (Government of NL)

Dr. Ivan Emke, Honorary Research Professor (Memorial University)

Skills Training Panel:

Dr. Ather Akbari, Chair (Atlantic Research Group on Economics of Immigration, Aging and Diversity)

Ms. Delia Warren, Director (Iron and Earth East)

Mr. George Lee, President (New Land Canada Futures Inc)

Ms. Sarah Thompson, Project Manager (Association for New Canadians)