



Social Enterprise Round Table Report

February 28th-March 1st, 2018

By Katie Blunt and Caitlin Wieja

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following individuals and organizations who contributed to the success of the Social Enterprise Round Table:

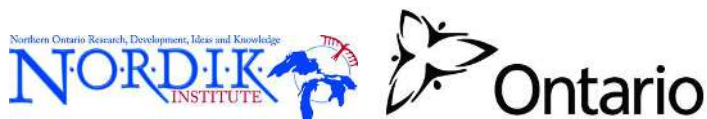
NORDIK staff including Sean Meades, Gayle Broad, Jude Ortiz, Lauren Doxtater, April Welsey, Zach Low, and Samantha Kyle;

Quattro Hotel and Conference Centre for their hospitality and expertise;

Panelists, Moderators, Speakers, and Funders that helped to make the event successful;

And to the many participants, who shared their time and words in the Round Table.

We also gratefully acknowledge our funders Ministry of Economic Development and Growth, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre and Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie and Area. Opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the authors and do not represent those of the funders.



SEE is a partnership between NORDIK Institute, PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise, YouLaunch On Campus Entrepreneurial Activities Program, Timmins Business Enterprise Centre, and Northwest Innovation Centre.

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Executive Summary

The two-day Northern Ontario Social Enterprise Round Table welcomed almost 60 participants drawn from social enterprises, business development officers, and community members to have open discussions and learn through interactive workshops. Its objective was to create opportunities for learning and dialogue through panel discussions and interactive workshops and to build an ecosystem of supportive peers, funders, and service providers.

Danielle Levine, keynote speaker, shared her various experiences, successes and challenges in working with social enterprises (SEs) and explained the importance of a strong business plan for starting and/or growing SEs. Her on-the-ground experience in the field, especially with Indigenous communities, as well as educating and supporting SE development, lent authenticity to her remarks and resonated with participants. A diversity of panelists and workshop leaders explored topics such as challenges to SEs in the North and tips for overcoming them; governance structures; scaling up; measuring the value of SEs; asset mapping, and access to funding and other resources. A funders' forum which included service providers such as small business advisors and economic development officers, a networking lunch and numerous opportunities for dialogue and discussion encouraged networking and relationship building.

The informal environment at the event encouraged candid interactions among attendees who identified numerous benefits to having an annual event such as this to facilitate learning and networking for social enterprise development across the region. Most participants agreed to share their contact information to facilitate peer learning/mentoring.

1.0 Introduction

The Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (SEE) partnership hosted the Northern Ontario Social Enterprise Round Table¹ February 28th-March 1st, 2018 in Sault Ste. Marie. The purpose of the event was to build a supportive ecosystem for social enterprises (SEs) in the region by strengthening connections between SEs, funders, business development officers (BDOs) and other service providers, and community members. The event provided an opportunity to learn about SE business models, methods to communicate their value, and successful scale up examples.

SEs are often started by, or operated in partnership with, people who have been economically marginalized within society such as women, people with disabilities, and indigenous peoples, and thus are a key component to building a sustainable, inclusive economy. The SEE partnership developed a definition for social enterprises that reflects the experience of SEs in the region, and used this definition as a basis for developing the Round Table and other events across the North:

SEs have a mission to address social, environmental or cultural challenges by reinvesting profits back into their missions, and using a triple bottom line (people, planet, profit) to measure their success. SEs take many forms, including, non-profits, co-operatives and sole proprietorships to name a few.

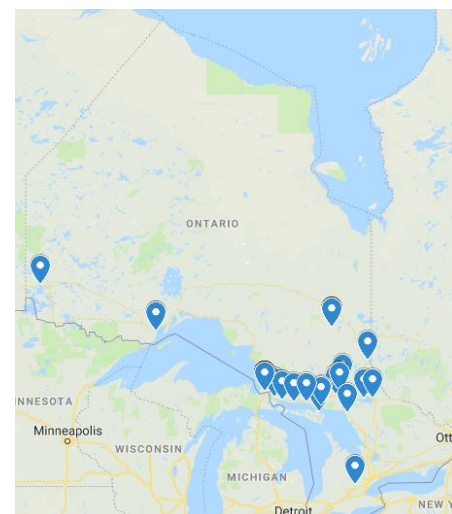
The SE Round Table Report² summarizes the event, outlines its successes and limitations, and concludes with recommendations for future events.

1.1 Event Participants

The Round Table attracted fifty-nine people from various locations and organizations. Economic sectors represented by SEs included environment and food security; accessibility; arts, culture and entertainment; and labor market development to name a few.

Twenty-one different communities were represented at the Round Table showcasing the diversity of Northern Ontario. A total of twenty-three service providers attended the event including six EDOs, five BDOs, four COOP representatives, and eight staff. Of the twenty-three service providers there were six funders, two francophone representatives, and twelve Indigenous organizations. The Round Table attracted a total of nineteen social enterprises in various stages of development. The overall attendance was diverse as illustrated by the map above.

Figure 1: Attendee Map



¹ Hereafter referred to as the Round Table

² Hereafter referred to as the Report

Travel subsidies, offered on a first come/first serve basis, facilitated a broad range of SEs to attend from various locations. This diversity was instrumental to the event providing unique perspectives and experiences in the SE field. The success of this outreach was in part due to NORDIK's expansive network across the region.

2.0 Round Table: An Overview

Barbara Day, an Anishinaabe-kwe living in Sault Ste. Marie, provided a welcome to Anishinaabe territory, as well as a short teaching on Anishinaabe traditions, and a traditional closing to the event. This provided participants with an inclusive reminder of the significance of Sault Ste. Marie as a gathering place. Sean Meades, Director of NORDIK Institute, and Maggie Matear, of The Small Business Enterprise Centre in Timmins, shared the Chair over the two-day event.



2.1 Round Table Objectives

The overall goals of the Round Table were threefold: a) to increase service providers' understanding of the value of supporting SEs' role in strengthening the region's economy and providing improved access to the resources needed to do so; b) to provide a platform for SEs in northern Ontario to showcase their diversity and impact and strengthen their support networks; and c) to develop/strengthen a regional ecosystem for SE development and growth.

Learning goals for attendees of the Round Table were to increase their understanding of the nature and extent of social enterprises in the region; to enhance their understanding of how social enterprises differ from other enterprise types (social mission, governance models, measurement and redistribution of profits); introduce attendees to social return on investment (SROI), asset-mapping, scaling up and peer mentoring; and to create opportunities for networking, and learning about working with new partners.

2.2 Keynote Speaker, Danielle Levine, Danielle Levine Consulting

The Round Table's keynote speaker, Danielle Levine, BA, MBA, is a business educator, innovative program designer, business advisor and social enterprise practitioner. Danielle operates her own consulting practice, Danielle Levine Consulting, where she works with various organizations to design programming that works in communities, particularly those communities which have been marginalized and/or excluded by the mainstream economy.

She is currently working on indigenous entrepreneurship programs in Canada's North focusing on country foods and entrepreneurship and she is the Director of Technical Assistance and Capacity building with Raven Indigenous Impact Fund. She was the proud founder of Kanuu Indigenous Innovation Society which is a national non-profit organization that focuses on Indigenous entrepreneurship.



During Danielle's presentation she highlighted two major social enterprises she started, which include: 1) The Aboriginal Women's Sewing Circle and 2) The Skwachays Lodge, a unique boutique hotel in Vancouver.

The Aboriginal Women's Sewing Circle started out creating blankets and quilts from high end material, such as wool. This created employment opportunities for Indigenous women who have traditionally faced barriers to employment within the community. The demand for these high end products created new markets that expanded the product line, but 'catastrophic growth' adversely affected the nascent enterprise. Increased employment, leadership skills and confidence in themselves and their capacity to manage a business, were some of the key benefits of the social enterprise.

The development of Skwachays Lodge was a second social enterprise in which Danielle was integrally involved. This hotel represents the diversity of Indigenous cultures in BC by having each room themed and decorated by a different First Nation artist. The profits generated by room rentals at the hotel are redistributed to support 24 artists through accommodation and work space to increase their professional development, while creating local and international exposure supporting Indigenous art, culture, and tourism.

Danielle took the opportunity while in Sault Ste. Marie to enjoy a private tour of Algoma University and the Residential School Archives hosted by NORDIK staff.

2.3 Panel Discussions

The Round Table consisted of three diverse panels, each with a chair and three social enterprises. The purpose of the panel discussions was to raise awareness of social enterprises, the challenges and successes social enterprises face, the value they contribute to communities and the methods of scale-up across the north (See [Appendix](#) section for panelist biographies).

2.3.1 Social Enterprises in the North

Chair: April Wesley, NORDIK Institute, Sault Ste. Marie

Panelists:

- 1) Erin Horvath, New Vision Unlimited, Sioux Lookout;
- 2) Denik Dorval, Conseil de la Cooperation de l'Ontario (CCO), Timmins; and,
- 3) Robin Sutherland and Miranda Bouchard, Thinking Rock Community Arts, Thessalon.

This panel illustrated the diversity of social enterprises in the north, methods of operating and forms of governance. April Wesley introduced the discussion by providing SEE's definition of social enterprise including the three components of the definition that are integral to social enterprise (mission, redistribution of profits, and triple bottom line).

Erin Horvath of New Vision Unlimited spoke to the importance of partnerships with communities, institutions, and organizations. New Vision Unlimited is using experiential learning programs to provide indigenous peoples with increased capacity to start social enterprises within their communities. This program has been made possible through leveraging partnerships with organizations, communities and academic institutions.

The second panelist, Denik Dorval provided an overview of a number of French cooperatives operating in northern Ontario, including La Maison Verte, a cooperative greenhouse in Hearst that was developed by women to address a lack of employment opportunities in a forestry-dominant community. Additionally, Denik highlighted the cooperative governance structure and the methods of decision making in a cooperative enterprise.

The panel was rounded out by Robin Sutherland and Miranda Bouchard of Thinking Rock Community Arts who demonstrated the significance of community participation and inclusion to social enterprises that have a mission to address social and/or cultural barriers in remote and rural communities. 'The River Speaks' was a theatre performance that sought to tell stories about the history of water and its importance to different communities in the Algoma region of the Robinson Huron Treaty area. This was a collaborative effort and community participation was pivotal to its success.

The three social enterprises provided a broad overview so that attendees had adequate background knowledge to participate in Round Table discussions as topics progressed into more specific issues surround social enterprises in the north.

2.3.2 Communicating Your Value

Chair: Lauren Doxtater, NORDIK Institute, Sault Ste. Marie

Panelists:

- 1) Dr Gayle Broad, NORDIK Institute, Sault Ste. Marie;
- 2) Eva Dabutch, Trailblazing Beads, Sault Ste. Marie; and
- 3) Rebecca Hunt, Temiskaming Shores Public Library, Timiskaming Shores.

The second panel, Communicating Your Value, explored how social enterprises can and do demonstrate their social, economic and environmental value to customers, funders, and potential markets. The [Lentil as Anything](#) video provided an overview of a café in New Zealand that completed a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study.

Dr. Gayle Broad of NORDIK Institute provided an overview of the importance of measuring and communicating value that is beyond economic impact. She briefly illustrated NORDIK's value as a community based research institute, and how it contributes to northern Ontario by building research capacity, informing and influencing policy, and contributing to a more just society in northern Ontario.

Eva Dabutch, owner and operator of Trailblazing Beads in Sault Ste. Marie, discussed the various ways in which her enterprise contributes to social inclusion and healing through access to traditional cultural practices. Trailblazing Beads is a social enterprise that is focused on creating better access to Indigenous crafts supplies for the purpose of supporting the culture and providing the tools necessary to do so.

The Public Library of Timiskaming Shores had recently undergone a formal social return on investment analysis and Executive Director Rebecca Hunt walked attendees through the formal structure of the analysis. This presentation provided in-depth information about communicating value and how to measure an enterprise's value.

The panel 'Communicating Your Value' was very informative and eased attendees into the topic of social return on investment. It was an important aspect of the Round Table because more 'mainstream' enterprises usually focus on profit generation, whereas social enterprises are measuring their success using a triple bottom line.

2.3.3 Scaling-up Your Social Enterprise

Chair: Maureen Strickland, PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise, Thunder Bay

Panelists:

- 1) Julie Schryer and Pat O’Gorman, The Algoma Traditional Music and Dance Group, Desbarats;
- 2) Andrea Habinski, Cloverbelt Food Co-op, Dryden; and
- 3) Richard Eberhardt, Green Economy North (ReThink Green), Sudbury.

The final panel, Scaling-Up Your Social Enterprise, explored the successes and challenges of scaling-up in the north, as well as the various forms scale-ups can take. Chair Maureen Strickland used examples of scale-ups from her career to introduce the topic at the Round Table. She emphasized that a strong business plan is an essential foundation to the success of a social enterprise scale-up.

Julie Schryer and Pat O’Gorman presented various challenges The Algoma Traditional Music and Dance Group (Algoma Trad) has faced over the years, and how they overcame these to now be in a position to scale up. This social enterprise is now at second-stage in the approval process with NOHFC for funding to construct a new venue to host their family music camp programming, and extend it to a larger group of people over a longer period, thus becoming a significant attraction for the rural area in which they are located.

Cloverbelt Food Co-op has greatly expanded the region serviced as well as the number of products offered to customers over the years. Andrea Habinski highlighted several key aspects to its scale-up success including: a) the need for adequate market research to know what products and services can be diversified or expanded; b) the necessity to have good communication and promotional materials to attract new customers; and c) the importance of staying true to the SE’s mission.

Richard Eberhardt discussed Green Economy North’s scale up efforts. He indicated that not only is there growth in the team and service region, but the services being offered are also expanding to leverage new customer demands.

Each of these three social enterprises spoke to their experience scaling-up and the various challenges and successes faced throughout the process. A common theme among all three was the passion and perseverance to continue to grow and scale their enterprises in order to create more impact.

2.4 Facilitating Asset-Mapping Workshop, by Dr. Gayle Broad, NORDIK Institute

Building on the strengths and/or assets of a community has been demonstrated to be a powerful tool in creating a sustainable and inclusive economy. This workshop provided service providers, community members, SEs and aspiring social entrepreneurs, with training to facilitate Asset Mapping in their own communities to support SE development. [A Facilitator's Guide to Community Asset Mapping](#) is available and SEE staff are pleased to provide ongoing support to any community wishing to undertake such an exercise.



2.5 SE Resources, Katie Blunt and Zach Low

SEE has developed a number of bilingual, culturally appropriate resources available on its website. Katie Blunt and Zach Low of NORDIK Institute took workshop participants through these resources including:

- [Social Enterprise Checklist for Service Providers](#)
- [Designing A Social Enterprise: A Workbook](#)
- [Social Enterprise Boot Camp Toolkit](#)
- [Funding List for Social Enterprises in Northern Ontario](#)
- [SEE's Web Portal](#)



3.0 Networking and Relationship-Building

Participants were encouraged throughout to dialogue, ask questions and provide comments, and network with one another, understanding the need to reduce isolation and encourage support across Northern Ontario's vast geography and cultural uniqueness. Two events were specifically designed to build relationships: a networking lunch that kicked off the event, and a funders' forum on the evening of Day 1.

3.1 Networking Lunch with Regional Tables

As Round Table attendees arrived, they were provided with a buffet lunch and seated at regional tables to facilitate localized network development. For example, the 'Greater Sudbury' Table had SEs, BDOs and individuals from the Sudbury-Nipissing-Manitoulin area. During the lunch attendees were able to converse freely with their tablemates prior to a facilitated session. Attendees were then asked to introduce themselves and their organization (if any). To capture the geographic reach of the attendees, SEE staff plotted on a map the attendees' home communities (see Figure 1 above).

3.2 Funders' and Service Providers' Forum

Funders and service providers were able to display their promotional materials throughout the two-day event, and additionally, during the evening of the first day, a forum was organized for casual networking and for information dissemination of funds and services available across northern Ontario.

The following organizations participated in the forum:

- 1) Community Development of Sault Ste. Marie & Area
- 2) Conseil de la Cooperation de l'Ontario
- 3) Millworks Centre for Entrepreneurship, Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation
- 4) Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
- 5) SE Northern Ontario and PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise
- 6) Waubetek Business Development Corporation
- 7) YouLaunch and Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre

Attendees at the Funders Forum gained insights on different funding and loan opportunities, and had an opportunity to speak directly to funders about their experience and needs.

4.0 Conclusion

The inaugural SE Round Table was successful on many fronts. Attendees gained new knowledge and skills that they can share throughout their networks, and the resources now available can be used by service providers, SEs and communities to strengthen the region's economy.

The development of a regional peer mentorship and support network will continue to strengthen the SE ecosystem and movement in northern Ontario. The SEE partnership can continue to build on this network to attract larger attendance at future events, and develop a strong, supportive eco-system for SEs across the region.

Given the demonstrated interest across sectors, cultures and linguistic groups in the north, events such as this Round Table should be well attended in the future, and the region will continue to benefit from individuals and organizations who choose to reinvest their profits in social, environmental and cultural missions.

Appendix A – Panelist Biographies

Erin Horvath, New Vision Unlimited is a social entrepreneur, experiential educator, and collaborative artist that uses her eclectic skills to strengthen communities from the grassroots. Co-founder and Executive Director of New Vision Unlimited (New VU) (2006), she has lead several initiatives and enterprises within Northwestern Ontario and Muskoka. Erin uses her formal training in mediation, psychology (Hon BSc), community development (M.A.), social entrepreneurship and education (Ph. D. in progress), collaborative planning and challenge course facilitation, along with her experience living and working within First Nation and rural communities, to create meaningful initiatives focused on systemic change and community growth. One of her recent projects, *The HUB Muskoka*, earned New Vision Unlimited a Rural Ontario Leadership Award in the not-for-profit category. Through IMPACT Arts, the artistic branch of New VU, she engages groups in collaborative storytelling to address issues of social, historical or cultural importance. These stories are brought to life through film, theatre or dance and include her recent award winning film, *Autumn Springs (2017)*.

Dènik Dorval, Conseil de la Coopération de l'Ontario (CCO) discovered his passion for the social economy through his work and his education. He's currently completing his interdisciplinary Bachelor in the Study of Human and Social Challenges at the "Université de Hearst" and has done numerous research projects and dissertations concerning the social economy in Northern Ontario. He started working in the field of economic development since he has been studying at his University. He has worked for the Regional Center for Research and Intervention for Economic and Community Development in Hearst for two years and worked for three French Credit Unions in Northern Ontario. With his current position as a Development Agent in Timmins with "Le Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario", Dènik has been able to respond to the needs of the Francophone community through promotion and consultations of the collective businesses of Northern Ontario, which represent more than 30 active business projects.

Robin Sutherland, Thinking Rock Community Arts was raised in the remote community of Chub Lake in the beautiful Mississauga River Valley. After graduating with a degree in Theatre and Arts Management at the University of Toronto, she worked in Toronto's arts and nonprofit sector for five years, specializing in marketing, communications, community outreach and project and event management. In 2012 she managed the country's first ever National Youth Arts Week as the General Manager of ANCY (Arts Network for Children and Youth). She returned to Algoma to start Thinking Rock Community Arts in August 2013, while at the same time establishing the Algoma "Nest" of the Youth Social Infrastructure (YSI) as the YSI Northern Coordinator. With Thinking Rock, Robin was Artistic Director of the highly acclaimed Rivers Speak Community Play, presented in Mississauga First Nation in September 2017 following a four-year community-engaged artistic process involving over 2000 community participants. She has presented provincially and nationally about her work, and has been named Youth Agent of Change by the Centre for Social Innovation, a CatalystsX Copilot, a Connect the Sector Fellow by the Ontario NonProfit Network, and Gamechanger of the Year by the Algoma Visionary

Awards. Robin holds an MSc in Health, Community and Development program at the London School of Economics and a Graduate Diploma in Social Innovation from the University of Waterloo.

Miranda Bouchard, Thinking Rock Community Arts is a community & visual artist, arts administrator and independent curator. Early community involvement and a semester of co-operative education at the White Mountain Academy of the Arts (Elliot Lake) led her to study studio art and art history at the University of Guelph and at Lahti University of Applied Sciences' Institute of Fine Arts (Finland). Her work and volunteer experiences with several arts & culture organizations - including 180 Projects, the Art Gallery of Algoma, the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre (Sault Ste. Marie), the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre (Guelph) and YYZ Artists Outlet (Toronto) – have given her a unique understanding of the sector. Miranda has supported Thinking Rock Community Arts since its early days, serving as Curatorial Advisor for the Changes and Perspectives PhotoVoice Project, as General Manager, and as Lead Designer for the highly acclaimed Rivers Speak Community Play. She is currently pursuing studies in Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Management (Ryerson University), and mentorship in Artistic Direction with Ruth Howard of Jumblies Theatre.

Dr. Gayle Broad, NORDIK Institute has long been interested in the development and scaling up of social enterprises and entrepreneurship, both as a founder and proponent of several social enterprises and within her research in Northern Ontario and in Colombia. A lifelong resident of Northern Ontario, Gayle's knowledge and interest in resource-dependency and its impact on people and the environment, has led her to take a holistic approach to researching community sustainability and resilience, including such diverse areas as culture and the arts, housing and poverty, Indigenous community economic development and worker ownership and cooperatives.

Eva Dabutch, Trailblazing Beads is passionate about teaching beading classes and having Indigenous people recover their cultural practice of beading. The process of decolonizing through beading helps Indigenous people build cultural identity, improve self-esteem, and helps create a sense of well-being. Eva has been beading since her youth and has found the practice to be a positive way of life. Currently Eva works at the Indian Friendship Center as a mental health worker. She has a background in child welfare and graduated from Algoma University with a Bachelor's degree in Anishinaabemowin, Honours Bachelor's degree in Social Work, certificate in Social Welfare and a certificate in Interdisciplinary Aboriginal Learning.

Rebecca Hunt, Timiskaming Shores Public Library moved to Ontario from Nova Scotia in January 2006 for the position. She possesses a Master's degree in Library and Information Studies from Dalhousie University and has 18 years' experience working in public, school and university libraries in Alberta, Nova Scotia and Ontario. Rebecca continues her education having completed a certificate in the Management of Non-profit Organizations from Ryerson University in the fall of 2015. In 2017 she was elected as Northern Caucus representative on the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries board of directors for a three-year term. Rebecca founded a library networking group in Northeastern Ontario called the Northern Lights Library

Network in 2007 and continues to chair this organization. She is also co-chair of the Leave a Legacy Timiskaming organization, and a member of the board of directors for the Conseil des arts Timiskaming Arts Council. Current large library projects for Timiskaming Shores Public Library include participation in the Near North Mobile Media Labs Digital Creator North project and participation in Ontario Library Services North library value study. Rebecca enjoys living in Northern Ontario with my two daughters and takes advantage of the hiking, camping, canoeing, cross-country skiing and skating available in Northern Ontario.

Julie Schryer and Pat O’Gorman, AlgomaTrad are the founders and artistic directors of AlgomaTrad: The Algoma Traditional Music and Dance Group (www.algomatrad.ca), an organization dedicated to building community through the sharing, learning, and celebration of traditional music, dance, and heritage arts that are rooted in the Canadian historical experience. For 15 years, AlgomaTrad has organized an annual, weeklong, multigenerational Camp on St. Joseph Island as well as community dances, concerts, music and dance lessons, and arts and heritage craft workshop opportunities for learners of all ages throughout the year. AlgomaTrad has also worked with other community groups and municipalities to provide music and dance programming for their own events, including the recent Thinking Rock production of "The Rivers Speak", a community theatre project that featured an artistic collaboration between First Nations and Settler communities. At present, AlgomaTrad is developing plans for a heritage arts center on St. Joseph Island that will operate yearlong programming in its core areas of traditional music and dance and heritage arts.

Prior to founding AlgomaTrad, Julie Schryer and Pat O’Gorman each had over 25 years of experience working as musicians and instructors in the traditional music milieu and have toured and recorded over the years with several of Canada's cutting edge traditional music groups. They continue to perform and record with their family group, The O'Schraives.

Andrea Habinski, Cloverbelt Local Food Co-op was born and raised in Sioux Lookout – a small town of 5000 in rural Northwestern Ontario. She attended the University of Guelph where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Animal Biology and later a Master of Science in Animal and Poultry Science. After completing her studies, she moved back to Northwestern Ontario and began a one-year internship with the Cloverbelt Local Food Co-op as the Agricultural coordinator. In this role, she assisted local producers in accessing funding to increase their capacity and worked with local institutions to increase the amount of local food purchased in the region. In May, she transitioned into the role of the Sioux Lookout Community coordinator where she’s assisting in the creation of the Kenora and Rainy River Districts’ first-ever food charter and is working towards increasing the amount of local food purchased in Northwestern Ontario.

Richard Eberhardt, Green Economy North and ReThink Green engages a background in strategic communications, service development, and grassroots organizing in his role as Program Director. Responsible for the Green Economy North program, Richard is helping to build the Low-Carbon Economy in Sudbury and Northeastern Ontario. Supported by a team of planning, energy management and communications professionals, Green Economy North works

directly with member organizations in the private and institutional sectors to identify and deliver greenhouse gas reductions. Meeting with and engaging new members is Richard's favorite aspect of the role, which has helped establish Green Economy North as the fastest growing business-focused energy and sustainability program in the province. He is excited to be looking to expand the program outside of Sudbury and Manitoulin districts later this year.