

Regional Communication for Sustainability Initiative (RCSI):

Benefits of Community Radio and Participatory Communications to Rural Regions in Newfoundland and Labrador



A joint report of the Rural Secretariat Office of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (St. John's, NL) and the Research Office of Grenfell Campus, Memorial University (Corner Brook, NL)

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1. Introduction

What is community radio? Why is it important?

Participatory communications such as community radio can energize rural communities. It offers a unique space for community members to work together on a project, encourages dialogue, and fosters cultural celebration – all shared via radio and/or the Internet. Community radio can serve many functions:

- As a means of communication, providing a public forum for dialogue
- As a promotional tool for events and announcements
- As a newsgathering service and to share local news
- As a community meeting space
- To sustain a community's history through sharing language, music, and stories
- As a uniquely local voice among other forms of media
- As a skills-sharing and training centre
- To provide unique educational opportunities for youth
- To provide access to the community despite physical distances, i.e. for people living away from home or for tourists looking to get information about a region
- As a means for community development

This report examines four community radio events that occurred across the island in March – June 2011. They are: Radio Bell Island (March 14th – 20th), Conche Radio (May 9th & 10th), Cape Shore Radio (May 17th – 19th), and Voice of Bonne Bay [VOBB] (May 14th – 28th). Each of these stations, operating as short-term radio broadcasts, obtained a special event community radio license as required from the Canadian Radio-Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).



Ready for broadcast in Conche

Funding and sponsorship for these events was provided by local town councils, Regional Economic Development Boards, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College of Memorial University, the Rural Secretariat of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, local schools, Ryakuga Grassroots Communications, and local businesses and organisations. The radio projects were staffed by volunteers, many of whom were new to the concept of community radio. Many of those involved expressed a desire to continue

participatory media projects in their communities once their temporary station went off the air. Radio Bell Island has since developed a committee to establish a permanent radio station on the island, and Voice of Bonne Bay is hoping to launch their permanent community radio station this summer (2011).

Community radio technology has become relatively simple and affordable. A small permanent station could reasonably be outfitted with audio production and transmission equipment – a mixing board, microphones, mic stands, an audio recorder, headphones, cables, a computer, and a transmitter – for a few thousand dollars. As the FM transmitter could be the most expensive part of such a budget, broadcasting only over the Internet could be an even more affordable solution.

For the broadcasts described below, audio equipment was borrowed, provided, and loaned to all of the stations described here, supplementing any studio equipment that may have already been available. All of the four profiled stations benefited from additional equipment and expertise provided by Ryakuga Grassroots Communications and the Rural Secretariat.

Each of these community radio events had key commonalities that illustrate the importance of participatory media in rural communities. They include:

- Providing a space for the community to come together, both physically (as in a radio studio or during a broadcasted concert or kitchen party) and intangibly (feeling connected to your community by listening to local content)
- Community members sharing skills and working together
- Providing opportunities for youth
- The importance of radio for seniors
- The significance of simultaneous Internet radio broadcast in reaching members of the community who no longer live in the area
- Using radio cooperatively with newer communication technologies such as texting and Facebook
- The importance of celebrating local culture through sharing our history, music, and stories in a fashion that encourages camaraderie among community members

Purpose and objectives of this report

This report documents radio projects of The Regional Communication for Sustainability Initiative (RCSI). The RCSI is an inclusive multi-sector 'collaborative process' that brings together government departments and agencies, academic institutions, NGOs, community communications groups, and

private-sector enterprises who have a common or shared interest in advancing the sustainability of rural NL regions and communities through improved communications. The radio projects described below provided a 'sharing and learning space' whereby all involved learned about and experimented with new and innovative ways to practically improve communication among and between communities, groups, and regions.

Participatory community media has been facilitated in this province since the 1960s and is globally known as the Fogo Process. However, little is known publicly of past or current community media practice in Newfoundland and Labrador. While an annotated history of community media is beyond the scope of this document, this report is an analysis of several recent (2011) community radio events in the province. It describes these events and provides examples of how participatory community radio has benefited these communities, and that community radio can be a viable tool to promote the sustainability of rural regions through improved collaboration and communication.

2. Methodology

This research was informed primarily by observation of and participation in the four radio projects detailed below and through interviews with participants. Radio participants included volunteers, organizers, and funders of the radio projects. While most of these interviews were conducted in person at the radio events, others were obtained by telephone and email.

Paper surveys were distributed during the Radio Bell Island, Conche, and Cape Shore broadcasts. An online survey was made available and announced on-air during the VOBB broadcast. An invitation to participate in the online survey was distributed via Facebook and email to those involved in the four radio stations.

Survey Results

The online survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/NLcommunityradio> had 76 respondents as of 28 June 2011. The largest number of respondents (59) listened to Conche Radio. Of the remaining respondents, 9 listened to Radio Bell Island, 6 to Cape Shore Radio and 5 to Voice of Bonne Bay. Respondents to this question could select multiple radio stations had they listened to more than one broadcast.

Conche Radio had a particularly active presence on Facebook and a large number of former residents and their families listening via the Internet webcast. It is likely for this reason that when asked how people heard about their radio

station, 46 respondents cited Facebook. Other popular responses were from friends/family (38), and word of mouth (31).

60 respondents to the online survey said they listened to their radio station primarily online, while 27 respondents tuned in via their radios to the FM signal.

Respondents claimed that they particularly enjoyed the following about the radio broadcasts: hearing stories from home (56 respondents), the local music (51), listening to friends and family (50 respondents), and the interviews (48), and having the chance to participate (19 respondents). Over half the survey respondents (60) listened to the radio primarily on the Internet.

Comments from the surveys included:

- [What about the community radio did you like best?] The music was a close second, but first place goes to the interviews because by listening to them I've come to know about the Gros Morne community - both the territory and the people who live there. I am vacationing, alone, in Norris Point in July and wondered what that would be like. Now it just feels like I am going home!
- This was an amazing broadcast especially for people who live away from home.... it is a great way to listen to friends and family from home and listen to local stories and music from the past. That is one thing about our community, its a place where music and friends are always a part of everyones lives.
- [What did you most enjoy hearing on air?] My 90 year old grandmother singing it will always be a memory for me
- [What did you most enjoy hearing on air?] The stories about what it was like when we were growing up a lot of which we sometimes forget in our busy day to day lives
- I don't want to miss any of the last few minutes of VOBB broadcasting, so much so that I'm here at my computer, not wanting to turn it off, instead of going to bed which is where I should be! When not at work, or at appointments, I have been glued to the computer for the last two weeks..... enjoying every minute of it. My sincere wish is that broadcasting become permanent.
- This was an amazing experience, hearing friends and family broadcasting songs and stories across the miles to those living away and people who have never even been to Conche. Would love to see this done again or on a permanent basis!

3. Community radio stations:

Radio Bell Island

In March 2011, the town of Wabana on Bell Island hosted their first radio event. Located at St. Michael's Regional High School, it ran for the week of March 14th – March 20th, broadcasting from 4pm – 9pm each day.

There was a very active radio committee for Radio Bell Island. The idea of a community radio station began as a potential initiative to support the Town of Wabana's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP), and the event was supported by the Rural Secretariat.

Joe Donkers, accounts receivable officer for the Town of Wabana, attended a workshop at Memorial University in which Ivan Emke promoted community radio as an affordable technology for communication. For Bell Island, community radio seemed to be an ideal communication medium to support the goals of the ICSP. Michelle Yetman, Regional Partnership Planner with the Avalon Region of the Rural Secretariat, says: "one thing led to another and we started having discussions around how the Rural Secretariat might be able to support or help or help facilitate, how they might be able to have a radio event.... That was after the Cape Shore events of [2010] actually. They had identified communication, they were looking at newsletters and different types of communication, what would work best.... They'd heard some good things, positive things about the radio and they wanted to experiment."



Gender Blender quiz show live on air

A few months before the event a committee was formed, directed by Kelly Russell and Tonya Kearley-Russell. It consisted of teachers and school administrators, students, members of the Wabana town council, local businesses, and residents, all volunteering their time for a cause that would encourage people to get together and celebrate their communities on the island.

To create an inviting space, the St. Michael's school library was transformed into a multipurpose radio and performance space. Overhead lights were switched off, desk lamps for soft lighting were brought in, and couches were arranged throughout. Windows at the far corner of the room were covered in black curtains

and a stage was created, complete with professional spot lighting. The production area was set up across from the stage, with a line of desks and stacks of equipment – CD, cassette, and record players, mixing board, transmitter, microphones, and a telephone – demarcating the space.

Kelly Russell, explains: “We wanted to make it feel homey so that people came in, it wasn’t a stark atmosphere. The kind of atmosphere where it felt comfortable. We had accordion players in here today that were reluctant, didn’t really know [that they wanted to come in], and I think when they came in here they got a little bit of a surprise at how relaxed it all was.”

“Volunteerism is not a problem on Bell Island,” according to one of the St. Michael’s students. In 2010, a group of local residents formed a playground committee to replace the dilapidated equipment. They raised \$80,000 for the project in less than six months. Encouraged by this, the students at St. Michael’s Regional High don’t see any barriers to setting up a permanent radio station on the island. Student Donovan Taplin mentions that “there’s just been exponential growth in people caring about the community,” describing recent ventures such as the new playground, the radio station, and a new fire truck on its way. Tonya Kearley-Russell, Vice-Principal of St. Michael’s, explains that every student involved in Radio Bell Island has decided that the radio station is something that must happen permanently on the island. She further explains the benefits to the community, both on the island and those away: “The kids with this radio station, it has been so immediate because that’s the nature of radio, it’s transparent. You can hear, it’s there, and it’s an intangible community that we have, within 30 minutes of being on the air, we had maybe 100 people in Kitchener, in Cambridge weighing in, texting and Facebooking their family and friends saying, ‘we’re having a kitchen party and you guys are the entertainment.’”

Conche Radio



Removing the basement door to fit more people inside the French Shore Interpretation Centre for the kitchen party

Conche Radio was a partnership between Grenfell Campus of Memorial University, the provincial Rural Secretariat, and the French Shore Historical Society in Conche. Broadcasting for 10-12 hours a day on May 9th and 10th from the French Shore Interpretation Centre, the equipment was set up in the upstairs office of Joan Simmonds, the centre’s coordinator. The radio logistics in this instance were

organized behind the scenes by Ivan Emke of Grenfell Campus, and Joan mentions that “at the time, I didn’t know what Ivan was talking about, community radio.” Also Chair of the Regional Council for the Rural Secretariat, Joan says that the community radio was a great fit to support the theme of communications in the region.

Conche Radio succeeded particularly as an event through the sheer enthusiasm and drive of Joan and Colleen McLean, the staff of the French Shore Historical Society. Clearly one of the great successes of Conche Radio was the kitchen party held on the last day. In a community of about 85 homes and 200 people, the kitchen party on the last evening of the broadcast saw some 40 residents show up, both as audience members and as musical performers, and there were up to 85 computers listening to the online broadcast. People of all ages came by, many showing up with food and beverages to share. The event ran from about 5:30 in the evening until it was finally shut down (amid protest) at 10:30 that night.

One of the interesting features of Conche Radio was how popular it was with Internet listeners. Further to this, Joan received many Facebook messages and emails throughout the event. Conche is a community with high-speed Internet access and no cellphone service. During the kitchen party, a young resident had her iPhone with her in the basement, open on her lap. She would relay messages from the Facebook page to those who were speaking on air; people were Facebooking music requests and birthday announcements and comments and hellos to friends and family in the room. Used together in this context, the radio and Facebook enabled this people to use Conche Radio for a multi-way dialogue, and many former residents living off the island commented on how wonderful it was to feel connected to their community despite the miles of distance.

Some of the messages received during and after the broadcast on Facebook:

- “i've been listening to the kitchen party since it started and i've got to say you do have something worth celebrating! awesome job joan, and i think I speak for everyone who can't get home as often as they would like when i say a big thank you to you! also, tell uncle gerard he sounded some good and i'll be up to see him for his birthday this weekend! thanks again and now I can't wait to get home!”
- “Pleaseee don't finish at 9pm !! :(”
- “Way to go joan..listening all day ,but i have to work at 5 had a mind to call in "homesick....keep'er goin”
- “We might not be a big community anymore but Joan&Alice&co proved today with this broadcast that we're one big family!! Job well done ladies...Good night from B.C and God Bless!!”

- “AMAZING!!! Conche is definitely heaven on earth!!!! I wish industry was booming so we could all move home...”
- “Just got off work and I'm tuned in to the last of the kitchen party. Michele is working and I'm home alone with it on blast! What a time! Hello to Mom and Dad and everyone else who's there! I really hope this gets re-aired on a weekend so I can take in what I missed the past couple of days.”
- “Joan and all the people of conche listening to all the songs and the laughter in the background makes me proud to be from the best place in the world.”
- “I love the idea of the radio shows. What I have heard is terrific. Any plans for the future?”

Cape Shore Radio

Cape Shore Radio, hosted by Fatima Academy in St. Bride's, had its second run in 2011. The first broadcast (March 2010) was an initiative primarily of Tramore Productions theatre group in Cuslett. For 2011, Fatima Academy staff and students were further involved in the radio organisation, and this year Cape Shore Radio pioneered broadcasting to nearby communities by offering repeater stations in Branch and in Point Lance.



Young Fatima Academy students

The broadcast ran for three days, with programs scheduled from 8:30am to 7pm.

Many of the teachers involved in the event found that it was a wonderful opportunity for their students, allowing them to showcase some of the work being done in their classes. Principal Darlene Walsh says: “Lots of times kids have questions about how things work, and they saw hands-on, first-hand, how an actual radio station works.”

Ten paper surveys were received from the Cape Shore. Responses included:

- “This enables people who live on the Shore and those of us away from home to keep in touch with what is going on”
- “[The communities] are given an opportunity to hear more about their heritage and culture. They are also exposed to the learning of the

students. I think it's a very worthwhile venture – it meets many curricular objectives for our students.”

- “We may not be in the one place but it brings everybody together for a few days, livens up the shore”
- “It was a lovely 3 days. Had 5 radio's on in the house going about doing chores, didn't want to miss anything. My mother-in-law phoned and said she couldn't get a thing done because she couldn't miss anything on the radio. Thanks so much for the last 3 days. Job well done.”
- “[The radio] creates true community spirit and helps promote local people and culture.”

Voice of Bonne Bay

Voice of Bonne Bay has been operating as a special events community radio station since 2008. While they have been running primarily as a complement to the Trails Tales and Tunes (TTT) Festival in Norris Point, they have also provided short-term broadcasts for CURRA (2009; a project of Memorial University) and Norris Point's Come Home Year (2010). This year, they were up to the challenge of broadcasting for the entire 15 days of the festival. They have a license to operate as a permanent community radio station and are planning to start broadcasting during summer 2011.

“Community radio is like have a blank sheet of paper that everyone can write their ideas on,” says Anita Best of VOBB. As a long-running community radio station, VOBB benefits from the energy surrounding the TTT Festival and the enthusiasm of volunteers and participants bringing in new visitors each year.

VOBB really is a labour of love for many of its volunteers. Operating out of the



Julia Ann Walsh Centre – the former cottage hospital of the region turned community centre – VOBB provides a space in which both local residents and visitors to the Gros Morne National Park region can interact with each other. Set up in a multi-purpose room (formerly a hospital ward) on the main floor of the building, the space is an alternative performance venue during the TTT Festival, with musicians, artists, storytellers, and others

frequently dropping by. On-air hosts and technicians are available to arrange live

interviews and round-table discussions, and more than once the space has been filled with dozens of audience members, experiencing the possibilities of radio as community space.

VOBB provides an outlet for both residents and visitors to produce their own radio shows or learn technical skills, and offers a lively space for community participation.

Hoping to increase access to VOBB as Bonne Bay's community radio station, in both 2010 (1 day) and 2011 (2 days) they provided a remote broadcast setup from Bonne Bay Academy in Woody Point. Geographically the communities are close but are separated by the waters of the bay. It takes over an hour to drive from Norris Point to Woody Point. As the FM signal carries quite well across water, and many homes on the south side of the bay were listening to the radio station, these remote broadcasts enabled VOBB to include as many voices from the area as possible in their broadcasts, offering a connection via the radio to one another. Broadcasts from Woody Point included interviews with town mayors, a chat with a travelling artist in residence working on a project in Gros Morne, lots of local music, and stories from some of the students at the school.

4. Benefits of community radio:

How could community radio benefit my community?

All of the following themes were identified by interview participants as important issues for the four communities described in this document.

i. Community radio can be a bridge between communities

Community radio can benefit rural towns and regions separated by physical distance by providing a venue in which they can easily communicate with each other.

During an on-air discussion, Charlie Payne of Woody Point described the benefits of community radio to the Bonne Bay area as a unique way for communities separated geographically to become re-connected. "It makes us one community again," he said, referring to the historical connection between the towns of Woody Point and Norris Point, separated by Bonne Bay and formerly linked by a regular vehicle-passenger ferry. With the closure of this service in the early 1990s, the communities of Bonne Bay – once closely connected with many workers commuting across the bay to work in forestry, the hospital, and the

schools – the towns have become isolated from one another. The kids on the north side no longer know the kids on the south side, he said.

The concept of community radio as a bridge between communities was also mentioned in interviews with volunteers of Radio Bell Island. With the FM signal also being well conducted by the waters of Conception Bay, listeners in Topsail, CBS, and Portugal Cove-St. Phillips were also often able to pick up the broadcast. A number of people on Bell Island mentioned in their interviews that disruptions in the ferry service caused major problems for people needing to travel to St. John's for work, school, or health reasons. Several people also referred to the community radio as an intangible connection with the communities along the shore. St. Michael's student Mallory Seward remarked, "It's kind of like a bridge to connect Bell Island to the rest of Newfoundland."

In the Cape Shore radio project, community radio did actually link the communities of St. Bride's, Branch, and Point Lance with transmitters being provided in each location. Though the on-air studio was in St. Bride's, these repeater stations enabled the FM signal to be transmitted further along the shore into communities that would otherwise be cut off from the radio broadcast due to the geography of the region.

An online survey respondent commented, "Community Radio is a great way to bring communities together. I believe it is an excellent addition to our cultural area of the Cape Shore! I would love to see Cape Shore Radio becoming a permanent fixture in our small towns!"

ii. Community radio and the Internet can be cooperative technologies

Making a radio broadcast available online provides a connection to a potential audience well outside the range of an FM broadcast signal. In regions where geography impedes radio access to the FM signal, a supplementary webcast automatically increases listenership capacity. Technologies such as Facebook, email, and Skype can be used in conjunction with a radio broadcast, maximizing access and therefore benefiting people near and far with connections to the community.

Using these technologies cooperatively enables those speaking on the radio to reach loved ones, family members, and friends living away from home. Coupled with additional technologies such as email, Facebook, and Skype, community radio and the Internet can have a symbiotic relationship in which those near and far can have two-way communication. In this province, where so many of our workers are employed seasonally and may be away from home for extended periods of time, community radio can provide an immediate connection with a

place despite long distances. It provides a new community meeting space, an intangible one that transcends geography. “We’re having a kitchen party and you guys are the entertainment,” was a comment from listeners in Ontario about Radio Bell Island. Mallery McGrath of St. Bride’s spoke of community members listening to the Cape Shore radio on their iPhones while operating heavy equipment in Alberta, eager to hear family and friends at home.

Other technologies such as texting and cellphones have been used to augment more traditional methods of communication. On Radio Bell Island, students found that if they asked listeners to text their music requests to a cell phone, they received much more feedback than if they had simply relied on the land-line telephone. This method also proved popular for their radio call-in show, where people could text issues they wanted the host to discuss if they themselves were too shy to actually speak on the air. Birthday and anniversary announcements were contributed to Radio Bell Island in the same way, in addition to communication by phone, email, and drop-in visitors. Facebook was also a popular feature supplementing all of the radio stations profiled in this document. It was used to promote radio stations and to provide song requests, for announcements, comments, and suggestions, and provided a unique two-way method of communication that augmented the radio broadcasts rather than overshadowing them. In Conche, members of the French Shore Historical Society Facebook page posted song requests and announcements that those at the radio station would then play on the air.

iii. Community radio is beneficial to community health

Community radio benefits community health by providing a voice to local residents, providing opportunities for residents (such as seniors) to share their knowledge – telling local histories, singing traditional songs, describing a community’s heritage – while giving younger generations the chance to learn and listen.

Joan Cranston, of the Bonne Bay Cottage Hospital Heritage Committee, says: “I think radio can contribute a lot to health initiatives, especially in rural areas. It can be used for the preservation of culture and heritage (oral history collection through a series of radio interviews as an idea). I think it can also contribute to community development initiatives.”

The energy created by community members working together on creative projects can have positive effects that extend far beyond the confines of an actual event or location. Tonya Kearley-Russell describes an elderly widower having this to say about the community radio: “This is the most company and the

best party I have had in my kitchen, it's the noisiest it's been in my kitchen in 20 years, having the radio on, listening to all you wonderful people on Bell Island.”

For those who may have mobility issues, may no longer be in the work force, spend much of their time primarily indoors or are otherwise not often seen participating in their community publicly, hearing the voices of neighbours can be “like life support.” Radio is a familiar technology for many, and open-line programs such as those on VPCM and CBC are popular, particularly in rural regions. Community radio benefits seniors by providing access via the radio to dialogue occurring within a community straight into their homes.

iv. Community radio offers unique learning experiences for students and youth

Community radio benefits youth and students by providing access to learning opportunities and skills related to audio production, broadcasting, writing, public speaking, and more. It also provides a unique opportunity for a variety of community members of different ages, backgrounds, and experience, to work together on a project.

Patrick Mansfield of Bell Island says: “I think there should be a little station here, it would be a big boost to Bell Island. I liked the way the teenagers played a big role in it. It really gives them a boost if they've got to go anywhere to work or anything like that, and you know, give them experience, plus it will give them more goals. Give them confidence.”

At Fatima Academy in St. Bride's, Cape Shore Radio was incorporated into their school curriculum activities. Teachers were encouraged to prepare activities so that their students could participate on air, and in some cases, participation on the radio also became part of student evaluation.

Robert Colbourne, the music and technology teacher at Fatima Academy in St. Bride's, created a module whereby the grade 12 technology students each had to research, prepare, and present a 1-hour on-air program on a topic of their choice. The students learned how to record and edit audio on computers using Audacity (a free sound editing program) to prepare their programs beforehand. They also each created advertisements for local businesses and organisations using sound editing software. Tyler Linehan, a student in the class, prepared a program on farming on the Cape Shore. “I had farming on the Cape Shore to let everyone know it wasn't an area originally settled for fishing,” he said.

Learning such skills and having the opportunity to apply them by participating in the community radio broadcasts gives these students a voice and provides them

with skills that could benefit them in future applications. Anita Best of VOBB mentions: “One of the things the provincial government could do, especially the Department of Education, is to make allowances within the curriculum for rural students especially to learn how to produce programs and so on, such as the school in St. Bride’s on the Cape Shore, how it was part of the work the kids did in school, they were very interested in doing it, and also they learned practical skills and all kinds of other things by being part of that.”

Participatory community radio projects aren’t only for youth and students. By providing a space in which all members of a community can interact, adults and youth can learn from each other in sharing the experience of creating a community radio broadcast together.

v. Community radio can connect community members to each other

Community radio can benefit communities by revitalizing connections among people. In encouraging people to come out and share stories, have a round-table discussion, or come and play music together, it provides a space – both a physical space and one on the airwaves – in which the community can interact and celebrate together. Participatory community media projects such as community radio stations are a creative and engaging way for local residents to discuss topics relevant to them and work together on a sustaining project for their region.

Glenn Brazil of Bell Island mentions: “I’m enjoying too, not so much the show, but I’ve met probably twenty young people that I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to meet until down the road, plus I’m seeing a lot of older Bell Islanders that I wouldn’t really see, they can be somewhat reclusive in the winter and things, so it’s become a real nice meeting place too, to touch base with people here.”

In many interviews people spoke of the radio as a way for people to connect with each other. Listeners would comment on interesting things they heard in the broadcasts and further discussion could ensue as a result of something broadcast on air, enhancing communication in a region. Participants representing different agencies also spoke of the benefits of community radio in terms of establishing relationships. “I’ve done more promotion and marketing for the Rural Secretariat in these past few days than I’ve done in the last year,” says Michelle Yetman of the Rural Secretariat. “I think that supporting the community to pull it off, to increase or enhance communication on the island was absolutely what we wanted to accomplish and I think that we’ve done that. I met so many wonderful people and established relationships ourselves that, I was just talking to Kay, the radio may end and or it may continue on, but we do so many other things and now you have a face and a name, you know, pick up the phone and call me if

there's something going on that you want us to be involved in, or I might be calling you. So we've established a whole lot of relationships... It's an excellent opportunity to make connections and establish those relationships."

The RCMP were involved in Cop Talk, a daily 15-minute program broadcast on Radio Bell Island. The show was hosted by high school students Mallory Seward and Donovan Taplin, who interviewed all five police officers stationed on the island, and each day a different topic was discussed. Cpl. Trevor O'Keefe says: "It allowed us to get our messages out, and it gave us a big audience, and people got to know us more on a personal level... outside the uniform. I think that's really important, as most people just think of us as police officers. They got to know us as community members as well."

Additionally, community radio as shared via Internet webcast benefits those living away or abroad by providing an immediate connection to home.

The webcast was as important if not more important than the FM broadcast in Conche. Joan says, "because we have a bigger population gone away than what's living in the community. and even though they're gone away, they're still very connected to this place. And like I said, they come home for weddings, they come home for funerals, they come home for birthdays, they come home for baptisms. And they want their children connected here. So it's very important." Colleen McLellan adds: "Where so many people gone away from the community, it'd give them that touch to home again."

vi. Community radio provides opportunities to share and celebrate our culture

Community radio provides a venue for the performance and promotion of community heritage. This benefits communities by supporting cultural industries as well as providing a medium to express, share, and preserve traditional knowledge and culture.

Michael Mooney of the Avalon Gateway Red Board in Branch, has this to say: "On the shore, besides the fishery and farming, our culture is our greatest natural resource I think.... I think that's



Charlie Payne performs during VOBB's remote broadcast from Woody Point

where most of our opportunity lies.” Radio can be a perfect fit for such opportunities. Arlene Morrissey of Tramore Productions, a theatre company in Cuslett, was instrumental in organising the first community radio broadcast from Fatima Academy in St. Bride’s in March 2010. She explains: “As an organisation, it would benefit us [to have a permanent radio station] because we would be able to have employees and employ people and that would in fact keep our theatre alive, which is preserving the culture and heritage through theatre... and for tourism as well.”

Community radio can foster a sense of pride of place and celebration of one’s community. Joan Simmonds of the French Shore Historical Society remarks on the experience of listening to a first-hand account by Conche resident Austin Dower. “He was telling the story of how he almost lost his life, him and Victor Byrne, out at Fox Head in the 1970s. And I’ve heard that story in the community, just a sketch of it, somebody’d say, ‘oh, that time they almost drowned.’ But to actually sit down and hear the whole story, told by Austin, that’s the most amazing thing I heard today.”

Many interview participants also spoke of the importance of audio recordings to the community radio broadcasts. Being able to hear the recorded voices of community residents that have since passed away and old songs and stories from their region was frequently a memorable experience for listeners.

Wanda Carroll mentions that being able to broadcast previously recorded interviews of Conche residents is important because: “It’s basically recording our history. So much of our tradition is oral and so much of it was lost, that this is a great way to keep it and to share it, and for us all to connect.”

vii. Community radio helps us disseminate information

Community radio benefits a region by providing a resource where people can share and receive news and information. As an addition to other methods of communication in a community – such as local newsletters, posters on bulletin boards, word of mouth and Facebook – radio is a medium that people turn to learn about things going on in their area. By providing a uniquely local space, community radio gives people reason to go out and prepare news items of interest to their region, and also provides opportunities to promote local businesses and organisations, provide ferry schedules, weather conditions, school closures and so on in a timely manner.

“When [the radio’s] on, you’re going about your work, you can still work and listen to the radio. Where if you’ve got to watch TV, you’ve got to sit down and let your work be undone,” says Colleen McLean of the French Shore Historical Society in

Conche. “Don’t get me wrong, I love reading books and I love watching TV, but a radio, you can still go on about your business, and you can still get information.”

viii. Community radio is a mirror in which we can see ourselves represented

Community radio benefits individuals and communities by providing a reflection of our region. By participating in community radio projects, we can ensure that we ourselves are represented in that picture.

Nearly everyone who provided input into this report via interviews and surveys wanted to see some form of permanent radio station for their area. This could be a full-time, 24-7 radio station, or one that broadcasted a couple of hours a day or a few days a week, or just a regular event once or several times a year. People enjoyed the radio broadcasts and expected them to continue happening in a fashion they believed sustainable in their region.

“I think ultimately what it does is, it pulls the community together,” says Kelly Russell of Radio Bell Island. “You have a lot of really interesting people here on Bell Island, somebody said yesterday, the only problem is that they don’t talk to each other. It’s an opportunity for people to really realize that we are a community and we have common interests and to hear someone you know on the radio talking about a local issue or to hear your local musicians on playing tunes, you feel like you’re part of a community, rather than just living in your home and commuting back and forth to work on the ferry or whatever. It really pulls the community together and I can’t express in words how strongly I feel that that is the result of a project like this.”

5. Recommendations and Conclusions

As a means to sustain and energize our rural communities in the province, community radio provides an enjoyable and affordable way of doing so.

Small-scale community radio projects can be supported through:

- Access to sustainable funding (e.g. wage subsidies, grants, advertising revenue, etc)
- Access to knowledge-based resources (i.e. a network of like-minded people with experience in community radio)
- Access to equipment
- Interested and available parties to be volunteers, participants, organisers, funders, and listeners

In conducting interviews for this report, I spoke to many people who previously had little to no knowledge or experience of community radio prior to the broadcast in their region. However, it was clear that they have since developed an appreciation for the power of participatory community media to support communication and celebration of their communities. The benefits to funders and sponsors, organisers, participants, and host communities of these radio projects include:

- Increased capacity for communication between groups, individuals, and communities
- Increased knowledge of a community's history, traditions, and culture
- Unique opportunities for learning, teaching, and sharing skills, particularly for youth
- Expanded access to a community through the use of radio and the Internet
- Supporting community health initiatives and the capacity to engage community members such as seniors
- Providing a means to disseminate information
- Providing a venue for active participation in one's community
- Community radio can reveal a dynamic portrait of a region

The radio projects described in this report all succeeded in providing space for dialogue, for community members to engage with and learn from one other, and as examples of the possibilities for communication and collaboration within regions.

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7a. Appendix 1: List of funders, sponsors, and partners

All stations during the four months of this project were supported by equipment and resources provided by Ryakuga Grassroots Communications.

Radio Bell Island:

Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
St. Michael's Regional High School
Town of Wabana

Conche:

French Shore Historical Society
Grenfell Campus, Memorial University
Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Cape Shore:

Avalon Gateway Regional Economic Development Board
Branch Cultural Historical Association
College of the North Atlantic
Cuslett Recreation Committee
Fatima Academy, St. Bride's
Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Town of Branch
Town of St. Bride's
Tramore Productions

Voice of Bonne Bay:

Bonne Bay Cottage Hospital Heritage Committee
Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance (CURRA)
Parks Canada
Town of Norris Point
Trails Tales and Tunes Festival

7b. Newfoundland Community Radio Survey:

There were paper copies of surveys available at the radio events and a survey available online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Nlcommunityradio>. Paper copies of surveys were returned only from Cape Shore Radio. Each project had respondents to the online survey who listened or participated in their radio broadcasts. By far the largest number of online survey respondents was from Conche. Conche Radio had a large number of Internet listeners; during the evening of the kitchen party broadcast on May 10th, at one point we tallied 85 computers listening online.

Below is the survey that was available online via <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Nlcommunityradio>.

Newfoundland Community Radio Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Please share this survey link. We encourage anyone who listened or participated in these community radio broadcasts to complete this survey. It will be available online until mid-June.

This survey is part of a research project of Memorial University (Grenfell Campus) and the Rural Secretariat (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador).

We are looking at the benefits of participatory community radio projects to communities in the province. In what ways can community radio enhance communication and collaboration within and amongst small communities?

If you have questions or would like a paper copy of this survey, please contact Erin McKee (emckee@mun.ca) or Fred Campbell (FredCampbell@gov.nl.ca).

1. Which community radio broadcast(s) did you listen to?

Radio Bell Island (March 14-20)

Conche Radio (May 9 & 10)

Voice of Bonne Bay (May 14-28)

Cape Shore Radio (May 17-19)

Other (i.e. Burnt Islands Community Radio; please specify below)

Additional Comments:

2. How did you find out about the radio broadcast?

Word of mouth

From friends/family

From Facebook

By email

From a website (please specify below)

I saw a poster/advertisement

I read about it in a newspaper article (please specify below)

I organized the event

Additional Comments:

3. How did you listen to the radio broadcast?

On the radio (via FM)

On the Internet

4. What about the community radio did you like best?

Listening to friends and family

Hearing stories from home

The local music

The interviews

Having the chance to participate

Working with other community members

Learning new skills

Learning about community businesses and organizations

Additional Comments:

5. What did you most enjoy hearing on the air?

6. Would you like to see a permanent radio station in your community?

Yes

No

Additional comments:

7. If you participated, what did you do on the radio?

8. Why did you become involved?

9. What do you think could have been done differently?

10. How do you hear of things going on in your community?

Word of mouth

Radio

Newspaper
Email
Facebook
Websites
Telephone
Community newsletter
Notices and posters in public places
Additional comments:

11. Where do you live?

12. Where are you from?

13. How old are you?

10-15

16-20

21-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60-69

70+

14. If you have any additional comments, we'd love to hear them!

7c. Resources for further information:

National Campus and Community Radio Association
<http://www.ncra.ca/>

CRTC Community Radio Policy
[http:// http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2010/2010-499.htm](http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2010/2010-499.htm)

Rural Secretariat (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador)
<http://www.gov.nl.ca/rural/>

Ryakuga Grassroots Communications
<http://www.ryakuga.org/>

Community Radio Fund of Canada
<http://www.communityradiofund.org/>

Industry, Trade and Rural Development (INTRD) (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador)
<http://www.gov.nl.ca/intrd/>

Industry Canada (Government of Canada)
<http://www.ic.gc.ca/>

Voice of Bonne Bay
<http://www.vobb.org/>

Regional Economic Zones of Newfoundland and Labrador / RED Boards
<http://www.nlreda.ca/>