

# Innovative Rural Communities

## Rural Vitality

From Surviving to Thriving  
An Eastern Ontario Perspective

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# IRC Project - Collaborative

- Multi-partner, multi-year
- Funders – federal, provincial, corporate, non-profit
- Administrator - University of Guelph & OACFDC
- Rural innovators and champions

# The nature & scope of rural innovation

## Characteristics of innovative communities



# Rural Innovations ...

- Commercialization
- Community development
- Natural resource & environmental management
- Policy & program
- Incremental -> disruptive

# Presentation Highlights

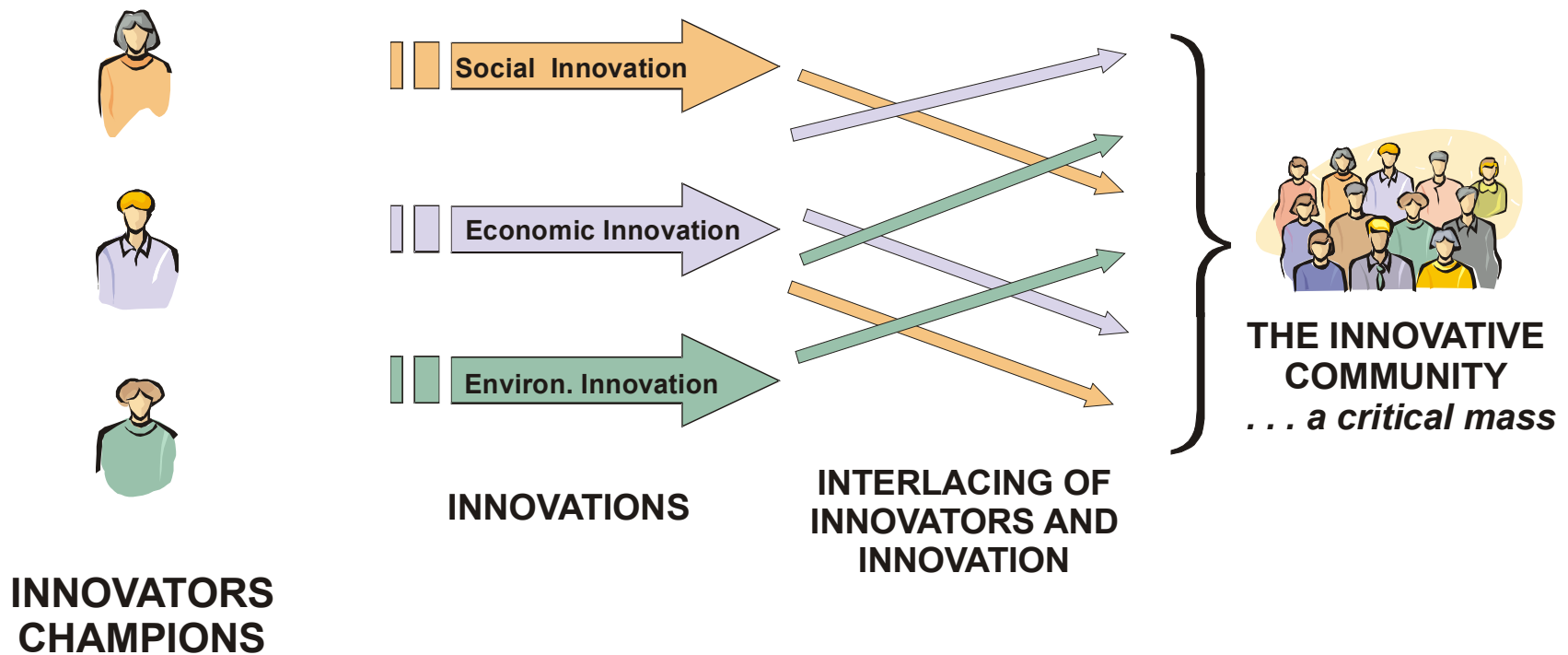
- The innovators
- The innovation-based CD model
- The innovative community
  
- Some questions

# The Innovators

## Identify them ... engage them

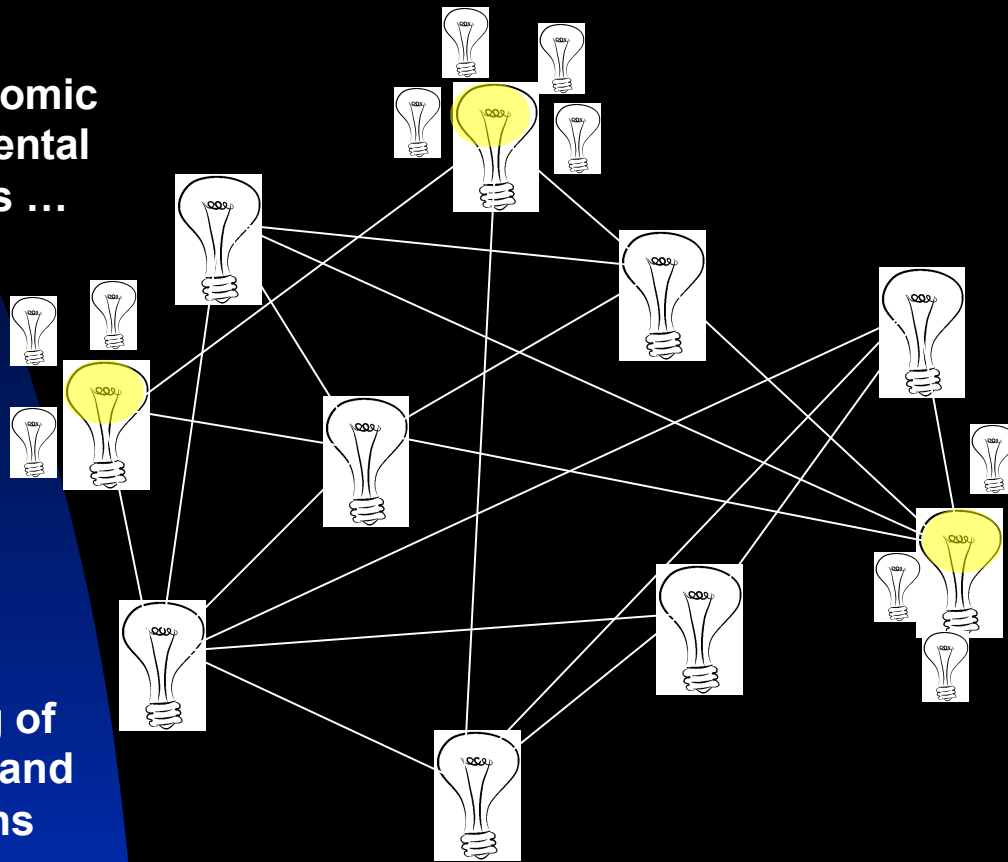
- Attitudes
- Skills
- Actions
  
- Innovation Muskoka

# Innovation-based community development model



# A dynamic model

Social, Economic  
& Environmental  
Innovations ...



Interlacing of  
innovators and  
innovations

Moving toward a  
culture of  
innovation

...



# Innovative Communities ...

## From the innovators' point of view

- Leaders – strong, informed, innovation champions
- Openness to diverse ideas
- Local networks
- External network - FLOWS
- Co-operative culture
- Regional perspectives
- Action-oriented, risk tolerant
- Recognized for innovation
- Access ICTs
- Build on local assets
- Innovation begets innovation – confidence

# Hubs facilitate networking

- Organizations
- Places
- Events
  
- Muskoka Futures  
Innovation Symposium

# New governance models ....

- Government as supporter of innovation – issues of flexibility, risk, accountability
- New organizational arrangements
- CFDCs – well positioned to lead
- “Get your ducks lined up” – make it easy to support

# What attracts the innovator ...

Traditionally ...

- Rural connections
- Jobs
- An industry base - skills and resources

New thinking ... quality of place

- Innovative communities?
- Creative communities?
- Homogenizing rural? Competing?
- Implications of a 'rooted' rural?

# Conclusion ... What's important

- PEOPLE
- INSTITUTIONS
- NETWORKS
- COMMUNITY

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