

## Social Innovation Project Summary

Social Innovation project is a collaborative applied research effort that involves RRC students, innovation leaders, businesses, and community organizations in Manitoba. Multidisciplinary, multicultural student groups in the Business Administration and International Business programs are given a task of exploring social innovation as a global trend that brings perspectives and nations together to jointly contribute to the success and wellbeing of all communities.

Phase 1 of this project is intended to challenge students to define the ambiguous term “social innovation” by comparing definitions and describing examples of socially innovative organisations from different countries and communities.

In Phase 2, students compare global practices with local ideas. The future business leaders are asked to identify local innovative entrepreneurs, meet with them and conduct interviews to learn about the business models, barriers and opportunities facing social entrepreneurs in our community. The research results are then analyzed to identify key success factors for each social enterprise.

The last phase of the project involves documenting the research and analysis results, highlighting solutions to social challenges, and presenting the findings to all students who participated in the project. The best presentations are shared with a multi-perspective panel of adjudicators.

Through this experiential learning process, RRC students learn about the best practices in delivering triple bottom line results. The project is supported by Winnipeg based company National Leasing. It draws on four years of successful implementation of applied research initiatives in RRC business programs, with a focus on global business intelligence and strategic planning.

Outcomes related to the applied research and education process innovation include:

- Developing strategies for experiential learning
- Enhancing curriculum to foster innovation and create social change
- Identifying innovative models for engaging small business, community organizations, students, and faculty in a positive sum game
- Testing approaches to involving large, diverse students groups in applied research process

The applied research objectives of this project are to:

- Identify key success factors, barriers, and opportunities associated with social innovation design and implementation
- Compare local findings with global practices and draw conclusions about trends and best practices in social innovation