



USASK SIGNATURE AREAS

## COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY



Scan for more  
information

### Exploring the interrelatedness of human communities and natural ecologies

**Co-Lead:** Dr. Lori Bradford (PhD), College of Engineering

**Co-Lead:** Dr. Dionne Pohler (PhD), Edwards School of Business

**Co-Lead:** Dr. Vicki Squires (PhD), College of Education

Embracing a spectrum of research approaches that are collaborative, relational and community-oriented, the University of Saskatchewan's (USask) *Communities and Sustainability Signature Area of Research* is working alongside communities as they develop meaningful solutions to pressing challenges. This Signature Area explores the interrelatedness of human communities and natural ecologies. Recognizing that communities have distinct and important needs, priorities, models and structures, research activities within this area move beyond conventional scholarship models and towards shared and reciprocal sustainable community outcomes. USask and community researchers are working together to #BeWhatTheWorldNeeds.

Research in the *Communities and Sustainability Signature Area* embraces a strengths-based model wherein both university researchers and community members play an important role. While work in this area engages a wide range of social and applied sciences, two-way learning and processes that position the voices, experiences and knowledge of all involved members remain central. Embodied in the Cree/Saulteaux concept of wāhkōhtowin, research in this area looks to understand the relationships among different people and the natural world, ensuring that they are maintained in a good way. These approaches to research prioritize relationships, push boundaries between and across disciplines, and strive to decolonize both processes and outcomes.

USask researchers are working with communities of different scales and models. These include: Indigenous communities, northern, rural and remote communities, cooperatives, municipalities and more. Respecting the unique nature of each community, researchers are leveraging the strengths of university-community collaborations to appropriately identify and address challenges.

The *Communities and Sustainability Signature Area* will be guided by steering and advisory committees that include members from diverse communities and organizations with the goal of enriching research goals and supporting strong relationships. This Signature Area also embraces a range of USask infrastructure, including the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, Research Junction, Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit, the Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health, and more.

#### Notable Areas of Focus:

- Promoting social innovations through community connections and local capacity-building.
- Driving economic and social development in rural, remote, Northern and Indigenous communities.
- Supporting empowered decision-making within communities and organizations with a focus on governance, self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability.
- Helping communities and organizations identify and establish the policies, practices and resources needed to address the realities of a changing climate.