

Building and Strengthening Communities Through The Social Economy



The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP) is the collaborative effort of six regional research centres across Canada (Québec, Atlantic, Southern Ontario, Prairies and Northern Ontario, BC and Alberta and the North), their community partners, and the national facilitating research hub. CSERP reaches out to practitioners, to researchers and to civil society, through the research centres and their community partners. The project is funded through a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

A publication of



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Although our five communities face many challenges, we feel that a community economic development approach has the potential to build healthier communities - where people regain some measure of control over their day-to-day lives and where human and local needs take precedence over distant and corporate needs."

From the website of Quint Development Corporation, Saskatoon

Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships

Introduction

The following brief case studies are a representation of the 1000's of organizations that are involved in the Social Economy in Canada. These organizations are an important component of any community, be it urban or rural, small or large.

We hope that these brief studies will spark your interest in knowing more about the organizations in your community that are run like businesses, producing goods and services, but who redirect their surpluses back to the community.

Ian MacPherson and Rupert Downing
Co-Directors, Canadian Social Economy Hub
Proud Partners in CSERP

The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP)

CSERP consists of six regional research centres across Canada (Québec, Atlantic, Southern Ontario, Prairies and Northern Ontario, BC and Alberta and the North), their community partners, and a national facilitating research hub - the Canadian Social Economy Hub. The Research Partnerships reach out to practitioners, to researchers and to civil society, through the research centres and their community partners. The shared vision of the Research Partnerships is to build collaboration between researchers and practitioners to better understand and encourage initiatives at the local, provincial and national levels so that the Social Economy and its related approaches will be more widely understood and applied in Canada. The project is funded through a series of grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

The Canadian Social Economy Hub (CSEHub)

The CSEHub is located at the University of Victoria within the British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies (BCICS) and is funded through a grant from SSHRC. The Hub co-directors are Ian MacPherson from the B.C. Institute of Co-operative Studies and Rupert Downing from the Canadian Community Economic Development Network. The Hub facilitates national initiatives within CSERP. Additionally, CSEHub undertakes research as needed to understand and promote the Social Economy tradition within Canada and as a subject of academic enquiry within universities. Website: www.socialeconomyhub.ca

The British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies (BCICS)

The BCICS, the host organization for the Social Economy Hub, is located at the University of Victoria and works to develop co-operative studies as an established academic field. BCICS collaborates with credit unions, other co-operatives, post-secondary institutions, governments, individuals and communities interested in co-operative development in British Columbia and around the world. BCICS was founded in 2000 as a research institute at the University of Victoria in 2000 and is headed by Dr. Ian MacPherson.

The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet)

CCEDNet is a national, member-based, democratic organization. The membership of CCEDNet is made up of Community Economic Development (CED) community-based organizations and practitioners from every region of Canada. The Executive Director of CCEDNet is Rupert Downing.

“Core Neighborhood Youth Co-op provides a place where measures can be taken to keep youth out of the social justice system. Participants learn how to operate a co-operative business by working on group-initiated environmental projects and the youth benefit directly from revenue generated.

Juliano Tupone - Community-University Institute for Social Research, U of Saskatchewan



What is the Social Economy?

To provide a context for studying the Social Economy, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada introduces the Social Economy as follows:

“In recent years, in both North America and Europe, there has been increasing interest in what is known as the “Social Economy,” for which some authorities use the term “community economic development.” The social economy refers to those enterprises and organizations which use the tools and some of the methods of business, on a not-for-profit basis, to provide social, cultural, economic and health services to communities that need them. The social economy is characterized by cooperative enterprises, based on principles of community solidarity, that respond to new needs in social and health services, typically at the community or regional level.

Social economy enterprises exhibit distinctive forms of organization and governance such as worker co-operatives and non-profit organizations. Such organizations produce goods for and deliver services to the public. These goods and services include childcare, recycling, tourism, culture, producing goods for market, as well as financial institutions such as credit unions and the evolving social economy finance sector. To individuals and communities in need, social economy enterprises offer employment opportunities as well as goods and services at affordable rates. Such enterprises also reinvest profits in the organization, and provide opportunities for skills development that help individuals find employment.

More broadly, the social economy provides goods and services to the wider community as part of a commitment to sustainable development as demonstrated, for example, by the large number of social economy enterprises involved in fair trade and socially responsible production.”

There are many definitions used by practitioners and others interested in the Social Economy. The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) National Policy Council has the following definition:

“The Social Economy consists of association-based economic initiatives founded on values of:

- Service to members of community rather than generating profits.
- Autonomous management (not government or market controlled)
- Democratic decision making;
- Primacy of persons and work over capital;
- Based on principles of participation, empowerment.

The Social Economy includes: social assets (housing, childcare, etc) social enterprises including co-operatives, credit unions, equity and debt capital for community investment, social purpose businesses, community training and skills development, integrated social and economic planning and capacity building and community empowerment. The Social Economy is a continuum that goes from one end of totally voluntary organizations to the other end, where the economic activity (social enterprise) blurs the line with the private sector.”

Western Economic Diversification Canada defines the Social Economy as,

“Separate from the private sector and government, the Social Economy includes co-operatives, credit unions, non-profit organizations, the voluntary sector and Social Economy enterprises. Social Economy enterprises are a component of the Social Economy that are run like businesses producing goods and services for the market economy, but manage their operations and redirect their surpluses in pursuit of social and environmental goals.”



Santropol's focus is on creating a dynamic and empowering space where people of all ages can learn and grow, develop meaningful relationships, and take an active role in shaping their communities."

Marc Nisbet - Meals-on-Wheels Director, Santropol Roulant

4

Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships

Examining the Social Economy

The Social Economy in Canada contributes to public policy priorities in such areas as:

- Aboriginal Development
- Crime and Public Safety
- Immigrant Integration
- Poverty Reduction
- Affordable Housing
- Rural Development
- Inner City Revival
- Child Care
- Agriculture and Food Security

The following case studies provide some examples of the Social Economy at work.

Santropol Roulant – Montreal, Quebec

Santropol Roulant is a Montreal-based not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 by a group of young people in need of meaningful employment and work experience. The society brings people together across generations and cultures through an innovative meals-on-wheels service, intergenerational activities and various volunteer programs that create an opportunity for diverse groups of people to interact and support each other in their common needs and concerns. Santropol Roulant has identified, addressed and connected the social isolation of both youth and seniors in Montreal. Volunteers range from 4 to 101 years old and the range of ages who receive meals is large as well. Says Marc Nesbitt of Santropol Roulant, "We're plugged into a network that's not just a homecare model but a community care model...it's an effort to engage a whole community network around [a person with need]." The organization has trained over 1600 volunteers, employed 175 young people, delivers 90 meals a day, 5 days a week, 52 weeks of the year, and has launched over 200 intergenerational activities and programs.

(Source: CCEDNet Profiles of Youth in CED, 2006)



"...not just a homecare model but a community care model..."

Cooperative Employee Partnership Program – Nova Scotia

Working with public and private sector partners, the Cooperative Employee Partnership Program (CEPP) moves community clients into an employment stream which establishes them as full members of a variety of co-operative ventures across Nova Scotia. After going through a screening process to determine their suitability for a co-operative business venture in a specified sector, clients make a \$20,000 equity investment, paid on their behalf by the Department of Community Services, instead of a traditional wage subsidy support. Clients are required to pay back the equity investment over time. Once the equity is repaid, it goes into a co-operative investment fund to be used to help further groups of social assistance clients enter the marketplace. A major regional initiative modeled after the CEPP involves a chain of pet shops, services, and accessory manufactures that will employ as employee-owners, more than 100 people, most of whom are social assistance recipients. Mental health patients classified as disabled will also have an opportunity to work in this venture. This program was established in 1997 as a solution to the welfare crisis in the region.

(Source: website of Centre for Community Enterprise)

“It is also in the best interest of the non-First Nations governments and business community to co-operate with us, so we can make sure our growing population becomes an important segment of Saskatchewan’s workforce.

Chief Harry Cook – Chief of the Lac La Ronge Band



Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership – La Ronge, Saskatchewan

The Kitsaki Development Corporation was formed in 1981, by the Lac La Ronge Band Council with the goal of developing business ventures to provide employment opportunities for First Nations people in the North. The Band Council was looking for ways to reduce reliance on federal government funding which they felt was eroding their social needs and their economy. Once set up as a commercial entity, the Corporation was able to borrow money against its collateral like any business venture off the reserve. By making systematic analyses of every sector of the northern economy, Kitsaki was able to target profitable business opportunities and joint venture partners to help realize them. Twenty five years later, Kitsaki has become one of the best examples of community-based economic development in Saskatchewan. The band of 8,000 First Nations people, living in six different communities, owns or jointly owns 30 companies and 12 businesses, including a hotel, a catering company that services the northern forest and mining industry, a trucking company and beef jerky and wild rice production ventures. Gross total sales for the year ending March 2006 exceeded \$70 million. Through Band-operated schools, Kitsaki is able to provide both training and employment opportunities to Band members who wish to remain in their communities. (Source: website of Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership)



Lutherwood Community Opportunity Development Association (CODA) – Waterloo, Ontario

Lutherwood CODA, in the Waterloo region, fields a diversified set of CED programs ranging from housing for seniors to reading programs for children; from several specialized loan funds to business career counseling, from an integrated array of employment services to new businesses that serve as a training context. A massive effort entitled Opportunities 2000 (OP 2000) recently earned them a United Nations award. The project was based on a previous public-private-non-profit initiative that had helped over 1,000 welfare recipients find jobs or start self-sustaining businesses and 1,000 more enter educational and training programs. In addition to success with moving people out of welfare and poverty, OP 2000 has created a continuing network of dozens of capable community organizations that are mobilized and working on all the varied problems of poverty in the Waterloo area. In the past 13 years, Lutherwood CODA has helped 6,000 people find new jobs, 1,100 entrepreneurs start their own businesses and 2,500 people pursue skills training and education upgrading. Lutherwood CODA has built a community to eradicate poverty. (Source: Caledon Institute of Social Policy)

Lutherwood CODA has built a community to eradicate poverty.

LifeCycles and Common Ground – Victoria, British Columbia

LifeCycles develops and runs community garden projects in Victoria where food is grown for local soup kitchens. These projects parallel those of its youth exchange partner organization in Santiago, Chile. LifeCycles is able to provide a logical and hopeful solution to health and wellness issues of persons who can not afford fresh produce and healthy diets. Although Victoria is commonly thought of as a prosperous region, it also has high levels of homelessness, urban poverty, and inner city at risk youth. The group sees community gardens as a way of uniting people and teaching them where their food comes from. 2005 was the first year of a new *Business is Growing* program aimed at broader support for young farmers and entrepreneurs and providing links to resources including capital, facilities, equipment, labour and shared promotion and marketing opportunities. LifeCycles is currently merging with Common Ground, an organization with a strong focus on mentoring youth and stimulating healthy and secure urban-rural food systems, youth empowerment, community entrepreneurship and green city development and networking in the Victoria region. With national and international links, their key programs are organized into: green community economic development, community mapping and planning, regional food security, and networking. (Source: CCEDNet Profiles of Youth in CED, 2006)



North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) represents the application of the best of what we have learned in the CED field in Canada over the last 25 years, and also what is best in the neighbours who commit themselves to the renewal of communities.”

Dr. Stewart E. Perry - Associate, Centre for Community Enterprise

Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships

North End Community Renewal Corporation – Winnipeg, Manitoba

The North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) emerged from the meeting of a group of associations and community leaders who formed a working group to address the growing incidence of poverty, arson, prostitution and crime in Winnipeg’s deteriorating north end. The mandate of the NECRC is to promote the economic, social, and cultural renewal of the north end of Winnipeg. With its establishment as a Corporation in 1998, NECRC identified four priorities: more locally-owned businesses, better housing, safe and clean surroundings, and opportunities for employment and recreation. NECRC has since brought north end employers and training organizations together to discuss opportunities to enhance prospects for north end residents; created a plan for major redevelopment of a number of abandoned properties; developed programs to make decent, affordable housing available to residents; created a number of community associations to enhance both safety issues and the cultural richness of the area; and partnered with a school on a literacy program. NECRC has benefited greatly from its sponsorship by existing agencies, from its diligent networking, and from the application of technical assistance provided by the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP) at Carlton University and from Mike Lewis of the Centre for Community Enterprise. (Source: website of North End Community Renewal Corporation)

Harrop-Procter Community Forest – Kootenay, British Columbia



Harrop-Procter Community Forest began as a five-year pilot project in response to the BC Ministry of Forests’ 1997 call for proposals for Community Forest Pilot Projects. Working with the Silva Forest Foundation, the project created an ecosystem-based plan that spanned the entire 11,000 hectares of all watersheds that flowed through the Harrop-Procter corridor. In 1999, Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative incorporated to introduce value-added strategies to expand local employment. The co-operative is divided into two subsidiary companies; one looks after cutting, milling and marketing eco-certified logs and the other harvests and markets organically grown herbs from the forests. With its success, the co-operative was awarded a 25-

year forest license by the BC government in August, 2006. This agreement gives local governments and community groups in the region an opportunity to more fully participate in the stewardship of local forest resources. Volunteers are a large part of the success of the project, contributing an estimated 200 hours monthly. (Source: website of Harrop-Procter Community Forest)

Quint Development Corporation – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Quint was developed in 1995 by five of Saskatoon’s poorest neighborhoods to address a need for decent low-income housing and to address the problem of under-maintained absentee-owned housing. The Neighborhood Home Ownership program (NHOP) enables low-income families to achieve affordable and stable homeownership within housing co-operatives in the five core neighbourhoods.

One of Quint’s current projects is to work with housing Co-operative members over the coming months to make affordable energy efficiency upgrades available. Pleasant Hill Place is a safe and healthy housing alternative for student mothers and their families. It operates as a co-operative housing program for five student parents, all with young children, who are completing high school. Quint also runs a Young Men’s Home or Youth Lodge which serves as a transitional residence for homeless male youth 16-22 years old and two affordable rental apartment buildings that include common spaces, opportunities to connect with community, common gardens, access to computers, and a daycare on site. (Source: website of Quint Development Corporation)

**Over the past six years
this program has assisted
over 100 low-income
families in their dreams
of being homeowners.**

“Cooperative Employee Partnership Program (CEPP) is an example of real results, of sustainable development, and of integrating social and economic goals. It is also an example of what can happen when people are drawn together by a common goal and vision, and backed by the foundational support of successful and integrated systems.



CCEDNet - Policy Framework to Scale up CED

Building and Strengthening Communities

7

Core Neighborhood Youth Co-op – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

CNYC was established in 1996 by a group of Riversdale community members to create a community-based organization to address self-sufficiency, co-operative principles, and environmentalism. The majority of members are 15-18 years of age, many of whom are First Nations participants. Youth between the ages of 5 and 18 can participate in CNYC programs and activities. The program aims to either link at-risk youth back into the school system or into employment by providing not only technical skills, but also the social skills necessary to prepare them to be successful employees. Youth from the core neighborhood are hired to participate in their own worker co-operative where they acquire valuable skills and experience, contribute to their community, and earn money for themselves. Programs deliver technical skills, teambuilding skills, community and inclusive-decision-making skills and community awareness. Teacher assistants are available to work one on one with students who want to finish high school, and a school credit recognition program has been initiated to give students doing work of a scholastic nature academic credit for their efforts. (Source: CCEDNet Profiles of Youth in CED, 2006)



Great Northern Peninsula Development Corporation – Plum Point, Newfoundland

Established as a community-owned business corporation in 1987, the Great Northern Peninsula Development Corporation (GNPDC) has provided technical support services to a range of community economic development and business development initiatives. Other activities undertaken by the Corporation have included research and development, pilot project testing and joint partnerships in business ventures with local entrepreneurs and other groups. Business sector operations have included fish processing, aquaculture, wood manufacturing and craft production. The GNPDC is located in a rural area and has worked primarily with community economic development organizations and small businesses involved in establishing community-based development opportunities in the crafts, culture,

GNPDC has brought jobs to women, youth, persons with disabilities, aboriginal minorities and new immigrant families...

entrepreneurship, forestry, and fisheries sectors. GNPDC has brought jobs to women, youth, persons with disabilities, aboriginal minorities and new immigrant families, as well as communities struggling with seasonal unemployment and lack of economic diversification. (Source: website of Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP))

HRDA Enterprises Ltd. – Halifax, Nova Scotia

Founded in 1978, HRDA is a subsidiary of the Human Resources Development Association of Halifax and is a not-for-profit association that has been providing employment for disadvantaged persons for over 25 years. HRDA Enterprises in Halifax, partnering with the HRDA, has worked to build profitable businesses and trained people from welfare rolls to take jobs in those businesses at higher wages than welfare would provide them. The company operates Stone Hearth Bakery, Cunard Centre (which provides academic upgrading) and an Options Work Activity. With help from the provincial government HRDA Enterprises has been awarded a five-year contract for collection of recyclables in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). The initiative will sustain jobs for 27 staff. (Source: website of Nova Scotia Economic Development)

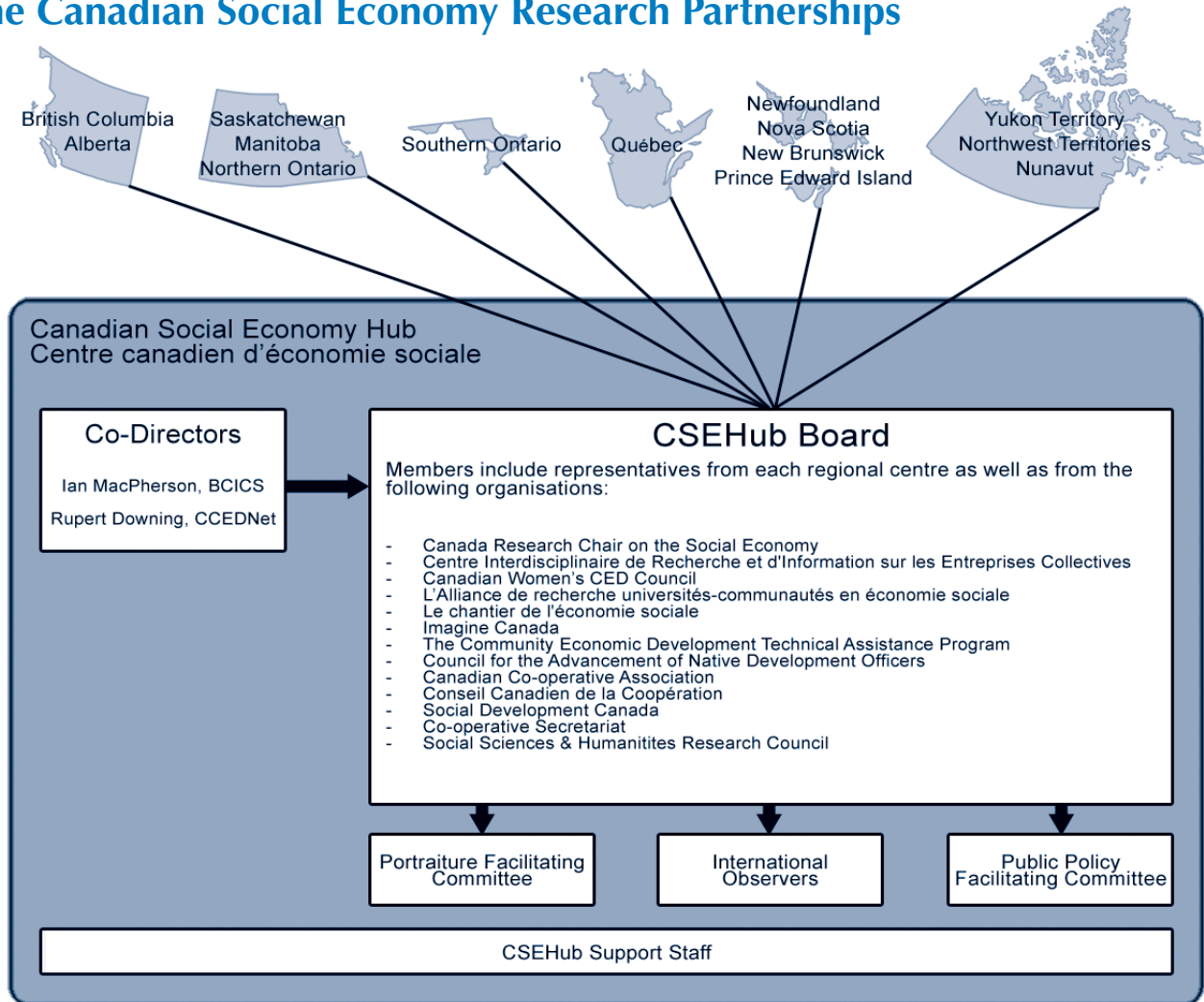


The concept of social innovation is associated increasingly with those of social enterprise and social economy. Social innovation is 'any new approach, practice or activity and/or any new product that has been developed to improve a situation or solve a social problem and which 'has gained support among institutions, organizations and communities.'

Professors Lévesque and Mendell quoting Marie Bouchard, Canada Research Chair on Social Economy



The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships



Questions? Please Contact Us

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