



# Social Enterprises Knowledgeable Economies and Sustainable Communities

The Northern Ontario, Manitoba  
and Saskatchewan Regional Node  
of the Social Economy Suite

*project update from the centre for the study of co-operatives — spring 2010*

## A New Regional Partner

We have a new partner for the Manitoba region, the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg, directed by Jino Distasio. Centre for the Study of Co-operatives PhD candidate Monica Juarez Adeler has become the new community liaison. Monica has been involved with the project in Winnipeg for the past two years, so the transition was a smooth one.

## Saskatchewan Region Workshop

The annual Saskatchewan Regional Workshop took place in Prince Albert, 1 May 09, with about thirty people in attendance from Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario. Guest speakers Gayle Broad and Sheila Gruner from Algoma University College presented “Building Alliances and Knowing Traditional Territory: An Intergenerational Dialogue.” Poster sessions and discussions followed on the Aboriginal social economy, governance issues, disability services, and sustainable food systems,

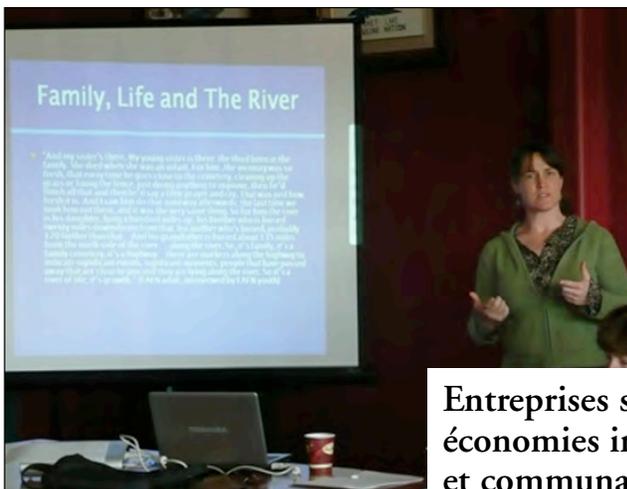
among other topics. Partners, students, and academics shared learning experiences in a facilitated group setting, followed by an interactive plenary session that defined future directions. The next regional conference will take place in Sault Ste. Marie, 28 April 2010.



Above and below left: participants and a presenter at the annual Saskatchewan Region Workshop 2009 in Prince Albert.

## New Projects

There are new projects in all three areas under study. In Manitoba, researchers are working with Winnipeg’s Central Market for Global Families to document how the market has changed the lives of individuals and groups in this inner-city neighbourhood. The project aims to provide a roadmap for other communities faced with similar socio-cultural and economic challenges.



Entreprises sociales,  
économies intelligentes,  
et communautés durables



*project funded by the social sciences and humanities research council of canada*

# Linking Learning Leveraging

project update spring 2010

The Northern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan node of the Social Economy Suite is now responsible for close to seventy projects. Twenty final reports are posted to the website at [http://usaskstudies.coop/social\\_economy/?page\\_id=183](http://usaskstudies.coop/social_economy/?page_id=183) and another five have been submitted and are in various stages of production. The quality of the work is a wonderful reflection of the community-university partnerships that have developed over the course of this huge undertaking and we observe with pride the growing collection of research reports in our library and on the project website.

University of Winnipeg faculty and the Manitoba Cooperative Association are working together to develop a course outline, syllabus, and reading package for a Management of Co-operatives class that will be offered in the Faculty of Business and Economics in the fall of 2010, the first of its kind in Manitoba at the postsecondary level.

In Northern Ontario, researchers and their community partners are exploring the nature and extent of the labour movement's involvement in the social economy of Sault Ste. Marie as a way of celebrating and making more visible the major contribution that labour has made to the city.

In Algoma County, farmers with Penokean Hills Farms are working with researchers and community partners to develop a plan to collectively market their beef. Their goal: "To produce the highest standard of tasty, nutritious beef while enhancing the environment and supporting the local community."

In Sioux Lookout, the Anti-Racism Committee has had a major impact on the community through conflict resolution programs, a multicultural youth centre, and cultivating and maintaining longstanding relationships between First Nations and non-native citizens. Researchers and their partners are examining the work of the committee in order to better understand the process of building respectful relations in the social economy.

One of the most exciting activities to arise from the LLL project is the exhibition of research results

being prepared by staff at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives in partnership with the Diefenbaker Canada Centre. Titled "Building Community: Creating Social and Economic Well-Being," the exhibition features four interrelated modules: Building Sustainable Communities, Building Enterprising Communities, Building Engaged Communities, and Building Inclusive Communities. Subthemes within the modules include topics such as democratic participation, civic engagement, community economic development, innovation, social justice, sustainable food production, youth engagement, and cultural stewardship. Research projects in the three regions under study will be grouped to illustrate the subthemes and supplemented by photographs of researchers and community partners in action.

The exhibit will be launched at the Diefenbaker Canada Centre at the University of Saskatchewan in May 2010 and run for six months. It will be the centrepiece of twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations for the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives. Below are examples of featured research projects.

The PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise is an innovative organization in Northern Ontario that has helped hundreds of women to build the skills and confidence, and acquire the funds, to become successful entrepreneurs. The organization offers training in important skills such as how to write business plans, apply for loans, and manage customer service. PARO also sets up peer networks that provide



personal support and access to funding through non-traditional lending models. Helping women finance their micro-enterprises increases the entire community's capacity for economic self-reliance. PARO's goal is to give women the confidence to be self-sufficient in both their business and personal lives.

The Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association was formed to guide trapping development and advocate for northern trappers. Recently incorporated as a co-operative, the organization is using its voice to secure support for trapping, preserve Aboriginal culture, protect the land, increase economic opportunities, practise sustainable food production, and reconnect the generations for hope, healing, and health. The co-operative model has allowed members to collaborate and build a vision of the organization as a means of renewing traditional trapper values and governance and offering sustainable livelihoods for everyone. The image below shows members participating in the annual River Gathering Festival.



The Harvest Moon Society's Local Food Initiative is a Manitoba-based marketing collective that helps farmers market their products — beef, poultry,

pork, fresh vegetables, and grains — directly to consumers in the area. But the organization (members shown below) is about more than marketing. Education and celebration are important elements of the business. They advocate for sustainable food systems through education about production methods and land use. They create linkages between rural and urban citizens through exchanges, retreats, and workshops. But the best part might be the pot-lucks, the annual Harvest Moon Festival, and other grassroots initiatives that unite and empower communities.



The Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company grinds fresh flour in-store to create cinnamon buns, breads, cookies, and other treats. It's a symbol of the company's commitment to food security, organics, fair wages for staff, and fair payments to farmers. In the early 1980s, a group of friends began talking about sharing resources. They formed a bread co-op and baked for each other. Discussion soon turned to ethical foods and good stewardship of the land. In 1990 they opened a bakery, planning to purchase organic grains directly from farmers at fair prices, to pay employees decent wages, and to bake healthy breads. The business succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.



Regional academic and community co-leads (from left): Gayle Broad and Monique Beaudoin (CESD), Jino Distasio and Monica Juarez Adeler (IUS), Isobel Findlay and Maria Basualdo (CUISR).



Alon Weinberg

Alon Weinberg's project is titled "Anishinabek Communities of the Boreal and the Impact of Roads: Paving the Way Towards a Social Economy?" His research will explore long-term changes to land use in Aborigin-

iginal communities in northern Manitoba and north-west Ontario, particularly as it pertains to access by year-round roads. He will use oral history and archival sources to discover the social, ecological, and economic impacts of roads on communities, examining the role of the Anishinabek communities, government departments, and industrial corporations. The research will also look at the anticipated impacts of roads on communities currently not connected to the main-line transportation grid. Further, in light of the gap between government and community indicators of quality of life and community health, Alon will examine the resiliency of these communities to past negative impacts and question whether their social and cultural needs are being addressed by current economic plans for the region.

Cara Nichols is an MA student in urban planning at the University of Manitoba. Her thesis explores the hypothesis that the development of a community garden can be an effective method of offering empowerment, hope, and change within an urban landscape.



Cara Nichols and a small lion

Community gardens began as a result of the need for affordable food, but they have evolved to focus more closely on the activities within the garden and how they encourage neighbourhood involvement and participation. Cara's particular interest is how participation in a community garden affects individuals and their neighbourhoods. The focus of her study is

Spirit Park Community Garden in Winnipeg's West Broadway Neighbourhood. Working closely with the gardeners, Cara documents the development of the site from inner-city lots once occupied by derelict houses to its present state as a place of beauty, serenity, and community engagement. Her research concludes, among other things, that the garden fosters social networks, transgresses social barriers, cultivates reciprocity and trust, and promotes the sharing of information.



Chipso Kangayi

Chipso Kangayi and Maria Basualdo recently undertook a feasibility study for the Cypress Hills Ability Centres Inc. (CHACI), a nonprofit organization in Shaunavon, SK, to investigate the possibility of expanding the services it offers to persons with developmental disabilities in the southwest region of the province. Using a participatory action research approach, they identified the characteristics of the current client base, used focus groups to determine awareness of and experiences with current services, and explored options for expanding services and funding. Findings included a clear need for disability services in rural areas; a need for collaboration to provide services and avoid duplication; a need to explore individualised program options; gaps in services; human resources issues; and funding limitations. Recommendations to CHACI included suggestions to develop programs that are responsive to client needs; create strong communication linkages; create more awareness of CHACI's services and programs; and create an information/support centre. Overall, the study suggests there is excellent potential for CHACI to expand its services if it realigns its programs, enhances its human resources assets and infrastructure, and creates alliances with community partners.



Maria Basualdo

<http://www.usaskstudies.coop>

Principal Investigator: Lou Hammond Ketilson

306-966-8509

hammondk@edwards.usask.ca