



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 — summer 2007

Research Activities Heat Up

Research activities are proceeding in numbers and at a pace that few of us could have anticipated when we first undertook this large project. Students, academics, and community partners across the region are involved in almost thirty projects. Summer internships have been filled throughout the node, most of them by students. To assist them in the research process, the Centre organized a day-long workshop titled “Building Respectful Relationships: Conducting Community-Based Research,” jointly facilitated by academics and representatives of community-based organizations.

Immediately following that, the Centre hosted a historic joint conference of three major co-operative organizations. Titled “Co-operative Innovation: Influencing the Social Economy,” it was held in conjunction with Congress 2007, a huge event hosted by the University of Saskatchewan that featured a Social Economy Theme Day. Nearly half of the eighty presentations at our conference were directly related to this subject and involved research partners from the five regional nodes across the country. The focus on the social economy at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences emphasized the importance of this work as part of the national research agenda.

Major Events to Date

January 06 — Seventy-five researchers and community partners meet in Saskatoon for the Introductory Social Economy Symposium hosted by the Centre

April 06 — Algoma University College’s Community Economic and Social Development Unit welcomes more than thirty community and academic partners to Sault Ste. Marie for Northern Ontario’s first strategic planning session

Spring-Summer 06 — Ethics approval, subtransfer agreements, funds transferred to provincial bodies

October 06 — Project members host two SSHRC officials on a site visit at the Centre and the

**Entreprises sociales,
économies intelligentes,
et communautés durables**

Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR), who share project direction, to discuss research progress and reporting requirements; launch of project website; unveiling of promotional banner

November 06 — A week of combined meetings at the Université du Québec à Montréal hosted by le Chantier de l’économie sociale, involving Francophone social economy partners, regional nodes, and the National Hub

December 06 — First annual Saskatchewan Region Social Economy Workshop, sponsored by CUISR and the Centre in Saskatoon; presented findings from summer internships; reviewed project goals and defined directions for future research

February 07 — Winnipeg Social Economy Symposium, hosted by the Winnipeg Inner-City Research Alliance; concurrent with first annual Manitoba Workshop and second annual Northern Ontario Workshop; identified common research themes; strengthened collaborative engagement between community and academic partners

March 07 — Preparation and submission of the Milestone Report to SSHRC outlining the final research plan and methods for evaluating progress

May 07 — “Building Respectful Relationships: Conducting Community-Based Research” — workshop for graduate students studying the social economy

May 07 — “Co-operative Innovation: Influencing the Social Economy,” a five-day conference hosted by the Centre in Saskatoon with many presentations from project researchers and community partners



Linking Learning Leveraging

project update summer 2007

Fifty-seven researchers, students, summer interns, and their partners from more than eighty community-based organizations across the region are engaged in nearly thirty innovative projects. Their work examines topics as diverse as the viability of wilderness passenger trains, a reinterpretation of “The Song of Hiawatha,” the contribution of Francophones to the social economy outside Quebec, policy issues around the Ontario Disability Support Program, and training programs for incarcerated individuals in Saskatchewan.

Projects range from the international to the very local; some are specific to a province, while others cover the study region of Northern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. Included here are brief notes on a few examples.

At the international level, ASOPRICOR, a communitarian association in South America, in partnership with Algoma University College, is examining issues related to holistic development in a specific area of rural Colombia.

Nationally, researchers have developed two innovative surveys, one that will help social enterprises understand and analyze their democratic practices, and another that is gathering data on the level and types of support credit unions and other co-operatives provide to new and developing social enterprises. A third national project is investigating the impact of co-operatives on community growth and vitality across Canada.

Projects focussing more particularly on the study region include one that will identify effective tax policy models and strategies of policy advancement for the co-op sector, and another called Eat Where You Live, which will assess the possibilities for expanding the social economy of local food as an alternative to the dominant global food system.

There are nine projects underway in Ontario, several of which involve First Nations communities. Batchewana and Garden River First Nations are re-interpreting Longfellow’s “The Song of Hiawatha” from a contemporary Anishinaabe perspective, while

another group is examining models for developing and retaining human capital in First Nations through education and training. The Algoma Co-operative Beef Marketing study will assist local farmers in developing a strategy for marketing their products, and another project will investigate the role of the arts in increasing community resilience in Sault St. Marie by providing opportunities for engagement, pride, and deepening social relations.

In Manitoba, the Policy Framework Project will inventory existing policy and programs supportive to community economic development and the social economy and identify priorities for enhanced support. And the Harvest Moon Society Marketing Co-operative Project will identify how new generation co-operatives can increase social cohesion among diverse stakeholders in the food system.

Exploring the Social Economy in Saskatchewan looks at social enterprises in Saskatoon’s core neighbourhoods, the northern community of La Ronge, and a number of rural areas. Other Saskatchewan projects include one that is studying collaborative governance models, another that is developing a comprehensive communications strategy for co-ops, and a third that is exploring skills-training programs for incarcerated individuals as well as transitional jobs for ex-offenders re-entering the community.

Researchers and their community partners gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided for these projects by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



Cluster leaders (from left) Gayle Broad, April Bourgeois, Wanda Wuttunee, Martin Chicilo, Brett Fairbairn

Community Partners

Arctic Co-operatives Ltd.
ASOPRICOR, Colombia
Assiniboine Credit Union
British Columbia Co-operative Association
Caisse Provencher Ltée.
Canada Rural Economy Research Lab, U of S
Canadian CED Network / Réseau canadien de DÉC (Ontario)
Canadian CED Network / Réseau canadien de DÉC (Prairies and Northern Territories)
Canadian Community Investment Network Co-operative
Canadian Co-operative Association
Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation
Child Hunger and Education Program
Common Works Development Institute Inc.
Community Action Co-op Regina Ltd.
Community Development Society of Saskatchewan
Community Economic and Social Development Unit, Algoma University College
Community Futures Partners of Saskatchewan
Community Health Services (Saskatoon) Association Ltd.
Community-University Institute for Social Research
Cooperation Works, USA
Co-operatives Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Co-op Ventures Worker Co-operative
Credit Union Central of Manitoba
Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan
First Nations Agricultural Council of Saskatchewan, Inc.
FirstSask Credit Union
CICOPA, Belgium
Kin Canada
Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives
Manitoba Cooperative Association Inc.
Ontario Co-operative Association
Ontario Native Women's Association
PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise
QUINT Development Corporation
Saskatchewan Abilities Council
Saskatchewan Association for Community Living
Saskatchewan Co-operative Association
Saskatchewan Council for Community Development
Saskatchewan Economic Development Association
Saskatchewan First Nations Wholesale Co-operative
Saskatchewan Industry and Resources

Saskatchewan Regional Economic and Co-op Development
Saskatoon Tribal Council
Saskatoon Urban Aboriginal Strategy
Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
Spence Neighbourhood Association Inc.
Spruce River Research
SEED Winnipeg Inc.
TRIBE Inc.
United Way of Saskatoon
University of Winnipeg
University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives
Vancity Community Foundation
Winnipeg Inner-City Research Alliance

Academic Partners

Rachid Bagaoui, Laurentian University
Will Bartlett, University of Bristol, UK
Lynne Bell, University of Saskatchewan
Marie Bouchard, Université du Québec à Montréal
Gayle Broad, Algoma University College
Leslie Brown, Mount Saint Vincent University
Thomas S. Carter, University of Winnipeg
Chris Clamp, Southern New Hampshire University
Louise Clarke, University of Saskatchewan
Cristine de Clercy, University of Western Ontario
Brett Fairbairn, University of Saskatchewan
Peter Ferguson, University of Western Ontario
Isobel Findlay, University of Saskatchewan
Murray Fulton, University of Saskatchewan
Michael Gertler, University of Saskatchewan
Ellen Goddard, University of Alberta
Lou Hammond Ketilson, University of Saskatchewan
Ian MacPherson, University of Victoria
Greg Marchildon, University of Regina
Jessica Gordon Nembhard, University of Maryland College Park, US
Brian Oleson, University of Manitoba
Rose Olfert, University of Saskatchewan
Mark Partridge, Ohio State University, US
Evelyn Peters, University of Saskatchewan
Jack Quarter, University of Toronto
Robert Stirling, University of Regina
Wanda Wuttunee, University of Manitoba

www.usaskstudies.coop/socialeconomy

Principal Investigator: Lou Hammond Ketilson

306-966-5844

hammondk@commerce.usask.ca



Quintin Fox, Lou Hammond Ketilson, Monique Beaudoin, Cristine de Clercy, and Brendan Reimer.

Graduate Students Engaged in Research on the Social Economy

Michael Chartier joined the Centre in September 06 as an MEd student supported by one of the Social Economy scholarships. His thesis will be based on the radical communitarian



pedagogy of Watson Thomson, a controversial and relatively unknown figure in Saskatchewan educational and co-operative history. This summer, he is involved in a CUISR internship working on a project titled “Advancing the Co-operative Sector,” a collaborative effort with the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association and the Co-operative Ventures Worker Co-op. The project

will examine a number of underrepresented sectors in the co-op movement, seeking information from stakeholders about where they go for assistance and support, and determining where partnerships might be appropriate or possible.

Kama Soles came to the Centre in the fall of 2006 on a Social Economy scholarship as well, and is the most recent addition to our Interdisciplinary Concentration in Co-op Studies program. Her master’s thesis, “Empowerment through Co-operation: Disability Solidarity in the Social Economy,” was inspired by her role in the creation of a housing co-operative for people with disabilities. Recognizing the potential that the co-operative model has for empowering people with disabilities, Kama will research the strengths and challenges faced by different kinds of service organizations in the disability community (housing, employment, health care) and will identify barriers to inclusion in the social economy and the formation of co-ops. Kama recently gave a presentation at the Canadian Disability Studies Association conference titled “The Fragmentation of Citizenship and Community: Disability Rights, Economic (In)Security, and Social Policy.”



Dwayne Pattison has just concluded the second year of work on his MA, which he began with the assistance of a Social Co-



hesion project scholarship. Like other graduate students at the Centre, Dwayne has become immersed in the Centre’s work. He spent much of May working on preparations for the recent CASC/ACE/ICA conference hosted by the Centre, which focussed on co-ops and the social economy. He and another student, Juanita Bacsu, organized the urban and rural co-op tours for conference participants. With two other students, Jason Heit

and Zhao Jun, Dwayne was likewise responsible for AV equipment during the conference. He also presented a paper titled

“Delegates and Branches as a Co-operative Response to Rural Restructuring in Northern Saskatchewan.” Dwayne will be spending the summer working on his MA thesis, which is examining the regionalization of a retail co-op in northcentral Saskatchewan. He also has a CUISR internship through the Social Economy project researching collaborative governance models and focussed on the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association, which recently converted into a co-operative.

Mitch Diamantopoulos has just finished the course work for his PhD in the Co-op Studies Concentration. His dissertation will focus on the promise and potential of worker co-operatives in Canada, examining what he is calling the “worker enterprise development gap.” In other activities, Mitch has written a chapter titled “Re-inventing ‘Home’ in a Placeless World: Globalization, Social Exclusion, and Co-operative Housing Innovations in Canada” for the forthcoming Centre book *Imagination and Cohesion*. He is finalizing a case study titled



“Growing Pains: Social Enterprise in Saskatoon’s Core Neighbourhoods” based on research from his CUISR internship for the Social Economy project. He was recently appointed to the new Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission to represent the social economy sector, which may be the first time the social economy has been officially recognized at the provincial level as a distinct sector. And after a number of years in the field of journalism, Mitch has accepted an appointment as head of the University of Regina’s School of Journalism and Communications, effective 1 July. He plans to continue his studies on a long-distance basis.

Rob Dobrohoczki is working on a PhD in the Co-op Studies Concentration and is currently studying for his comprehensives. Research for his dissertation will focus on co-operatives as public policy instruments for democratic renewal. Rob is



co-author of a chapter titled “‘I felt I had lost myself’: Credit Unions, Economies, and the Construction of Locality” for the Centre’s forthcoming book *Imagination and Cohesion*. He has an occasional paper in progress — *Social Cohesion through Market Democratization: Alleviating Legitimation Deficits through Co-operation* — and presented two papers at the Centre’s CASC/

ACE/ICA conference. This summer, he is working on a CUISR internship examining collaborative governance models and their implications for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy and the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living.