Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships Centre canadien de recherche partenariale en économie sociale

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION PAPER SERIES MAY 2010

Governance and Movement-building for the Social Economy in Canada

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This paper is one of a series funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council for the Canadian Social Economy Hub to mobilize knowledge arising from research on the Social Economy. The authors acknowledge with thanks the input of Michael Toye, Executive Director of the Canadian CED Network, Nancy Neamtan, President and CEO of le Chantier de l'economie sociale, and Brendan Reimer, Prairies Coordinator of the Canadian CED Network. Thanks also to the many participants who provided input at presentations on the draft findings of the paper at events organized by the Canadian CED Network with colleagues from the BC Alberta (BALTA), Prairies and Northern Ontario, Southern Ontario, Québec, and Atlantic nodes of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP).

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 $Design\ and\ Layout\ by\ Lindsay\ Kearns,\ James\ Kingsley\ and\ Ashley\ Hamilton-MacQuarrie$

Printed in Victoria, Canada







ABOUT THE OCCASIONAL PAPERS

The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP) will periodically publish research papers on the Social Economy. These papers will be by both scholars within the academy and by practitioners. CSERP hopes these publications will increase understanding of, and discussion about the Social Economy – past, present and future.

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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines findings of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships from 2006 to 2010 on emerging models of development and governance of the Social Economy (SE). It examines international, national and regional findings on the state and importance of building effective governance structures that unify the SE and enhance its capacity and outcomes. It reviews the comparative state of governance of the SE in Canada and the elements and functions of those structures that appear to have the most significant impacts. Finally, the paper proposes measures to strengthen the SE's governance to build on existing efforts and advance the SE as a movement for and contributor to Canada's socio-economic development and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: social/solidarity economy, community-economic development, civil society, non-profit sector, cooperative development, mutual associations, public policy, socio-economic development, management and governance, movement-building.

FOREWORD

The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships is a research program funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council to strengthen knowledge, policy and action for a vibrant social economy in Canada. Six regional community university research partnerships across Canada, together with a national HUB co-led by the University of Victoria and the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, have been managing the research since 2006, involving over 300 community and university based researchers, including faculty, students, and practitioners.

This paper is one of five commissioned by the Canadian Social Economy Hub through a competitive proposal call to mobilize knowledge arising out of the research across all of its partners in key thematic areas: governance and movement building; social enterprise and social innovation; procurement; financing, and; new business models for sustainable development. These papers were funded by a Knowledge Mobilization Grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council to engage stakeholders and citizens in learning from ground breaking and informative research across the program. Each paper has involved significant public events to share findings and incorporate feedback. At a time when society, governments, citizens and stakeholders of all kinds are seeking new and innovative ways of addressing inter-related social, economic and environmental challenges we hope that these papers contribute to informed debate on how we can strengthen the social economy as a means to a more sustainable approach to our futures.

On behalf of the Board of the Canadian Social Economy Hub we thank our authors, contributors, participants in engagement events across the country, and representatives of the university and practitioner organizations who helped with the development and implementation of this knowledge mobilization initiative.

Rupert Downing, Co-director, Canadian Social Economy Hub

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1.0 INTRODUCTION:

The Importance of Governance for the Social Economy in Canada

Comparative international research by the Canadian Social Economy Hub in 2009/10 indicates a high level of emerging development across many jurisdictions around the world of unifying structures for the development and governance of the Social Economy (SE) by its own stakeholders. These models are cited as being important factors in strengthening the capacity of the SE to produce outcomes of relevance to socio-economic development objectives, and responding to challenges to the social, economic and environmental conditions of people, communities, nations and the world. Research by organizations in the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships also indicate the importance of coherent development and governance structures across actors in the SE to influencing and "co-constructing" public policies with governments to create an enabling environment for the SE to grow and strengthen its outcomes. Comparative analysis of the state of governance of the SE within Canada supports the contention that unifying and coherent models of cooperation and development are important to both the strength of component actors or sub sectors of the SE (e.g. co-operatives, non profit organizations, social enterprises) and to the SE as a unified movement with shared values of socio-economic change and development. This paper provides a brief overview of some of this discourse and research evidence, examines some of the most researched models within Canada, and suggests a continuum in the state of management and governance of the SE across regions and at the national level. It goes on to suggest key governance issues facing actors in the SE, and some suggested responses that would strengthen the SE as a more unified movement at all levels (local/regional, provincial/territorial and national).

2.0 Policy Findings of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships

Across the six regional research nodes and the national hub of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships several significant research projects have been completed on the state of the SE in Canada. While development and governance structures and models have not been an explicit focus of most of this research, discourse by actors in the SE in the course of events associated with the research, and aspects of research papers, have dealt with this subject,

particularly in the context of organizing to strengthen the SE as a more unified movement with shared values. The following summarizes some key points identified out of these activities.

2.1 International models

Comparative international research by the Canadian Social Economy Hub has documented trends in public policy discourse and development. This research pointed to the positive relationship between policy development to enable the SE and organizing by SE stakeholders to unite within common national (and supranational) structures to pursue mutual objectives based on their shared values of contributing to more equitable socio-economic development and environmental sustainability. As Tremblay (2009) notes, "this organizing has taken the form of local, regional, national and international networks that link together diverse economic justice initiatives" (10).

Adeler (2009), in a comparative study of cooperative development in several countries done for the Prairies/Northern Ontario CSERP node concluded that "the level of development that the sector achieves is directly correlated to the nature of the supportive environment, the strength of the sector infrastructure, and government commitment toward enabling the development of this environment and infrastructure..." (35). In Downing (2010), three major points are made arising from the research:

- The comparative strength of [SE] outcomes when they involve structures, activities and initiatives unite sub components of the Social Economy.
- The movement of alternative development models integrates social, economic, human and environmental objectives. This movement is helped through SE organizations and brought into the mainstream of public policy discourse and development, where united structures and mechanisms have been developed.
- The importance of intra-sectoral mechanisms for collaboration on growing the SE and providing democratically governed inputs such as financing and technical assistance to its actors.

Several countries and regions exemplify these developments. In Brazil, the Brazilian Solidarity Economy Forum brings together twelve national networks and associations, twenty-one regional Solidarity Forums, and thousand of cooperative enterprises to build mutual supports systems, exchange knowledge, create mutual strategies, and influence public policy (Tremblay, 2009, 10). Functions of the Forum, which is democratically governed by its members,

include:

- Centres and incubators of public policy at the national, state and municipal government levels.
- Support for the community banking system to provide finances to social enterprises.
- Solidarity funds that leverage long term financing for SE organizations.
- Popular education with civil society movements on the needs for and advantages of an alternative economic development model.
- University-based incubators for education, research and training in partnership with SE organizations.
- A national system to support commercialization, regulation, market development and promotion of fair trade organizations and consumption.
- Technical assistance to SE organizations to strength commercial value chains and expand market access.
- Solidarity economy fairs for the sale of SE products

(Chantier and Forum Brésilien d'économie solidaire, 2008)

Other Latin American countries have similar networks being developed. For example, in Bolivia the Movimiento de Economía Solidaria brings together several hundred organizations of fair trade producers, farmers, micro-enterprise, Indigenous and other community organizations and their associations to strengthen the SE in that country. In Peru the Grupo Red de Economia Solidaria del Peru (GRESP) is a democratic association of civil society associations, NGOs, faith-based social justice organizations, fair trade producers and micro-enterprises working to similar objectives.

In the European Union, the European Standing Conference on Co-operatives, Mutual Societies, Associations and Foundations renamed itself Social Economy Europe in 2008 and brings together a large array of organizations, enterprises and financial institutions committed to Social Economy Europe's Charter of Principles (Tremblay, 2009, 34). At the national level in Europe similar structures have been developed to unite co-operative, mutual, community finance, and non-profit organizations. For example, the Spanish Business Confederation of the Social Economy (CEPES) represents the interests of more than 51,000 enterprises including co-operatives, mutuals, labour companies,

training and "insertion" enterprises (Social Economy Europe, 2010).

On other continents similar initiatives have emerged. The Asian Alliance for the Solidarity Economy has brought together interests across that continent in a common effort to increase investment (an Asia-Pacific Solidarity Investment Program), learning (an International Institute of the Solidarity Economy), policy development (Asian Forum for the Solidarity Economy), mutual development (a Practitioners Forum), and communication tools (a Web Portal) (Tremblay, 2009, 41). In November 2009, a Social Enterprise Summit was held in Hong Kong to bring together social enterprise, academic, government and investor interests from across China (Social Enterprise Summit, 2009). In Africa, national networks have been formed in a number of countries to develop and promote the social and solidarity economy. For example, RENAPESS (Réseau national d'appui a la promotion de l'économie sociale et solidaire) was incorporated in 2003 to promote development strategies for Mali using the Social Economy. In the United States a US Solidarity Economy Network has been formed that held its first national conference in Massachusetts in 2009.

At the supranational level networks of SE organizations and practitioners have also been formed to promote a global vision and agenda that build on continental and national networks including the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) and the Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and Solidarity Economy (ALOE).

Tremblay (2009) summed up these international developments as adding up to "a growing global movement to advance concepts and frameworks of the SE as a way to address increasing inequality of social, health, economic and ecological conditions, to provide alternative solutions to the perceived failure of neo-liberal dominated globalisation, and to address the weakening social capital of communities" (10).

Perhaps the most important common element in these developments has been the self conceptualization and organization of previously disparate and fragmented sectors around a common vision and organizing structure to promote common values. In all of the examples studied, there has been a common element of seeking to unify organizations founded on values of social and economic justice, and sharing ways of working that promote equity in the production of goods and services and contribute to social and economic development to place people and community over profit.

2.2 Developments in Canada

Canada has also seen a similar development in advancing the SE as a common framework for united governance and action amongst a previously fragmented set of actors. The Canadian Community Economic Development Network and its partner network in Québec (le Chantier de l'économie sociale) convened discussions in 2004 amongst organizations of the co-operative and non-profit sectors to press the federal government for a national SE initiative (including the Canadian Cooperative Association, le Conseil Canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité, and Imagine Canada). Concern about increasing poverty, rural and urban decline, the impacts of globalization and government cuts to social programs on socio-economic conditions spurred interest in a more united front amongst organizations with common social justice values. This was particularly rooted in the work done by the Canadian CED Network to improve public policy at local, provincial and national levels to enable alternatives to an economic agenda that ignored community, social, ecological and human interests.

Members of the coalition proposed five major action items that consultation suggested were critical: Capital funds to grow co-operatives and social enterprises; program dollars to support community economic development organizations and initiatives; improved access for social enterprises to programs for small and medium sized businesses; a national structure for the coconstruction of public policy, and; research to strengthen the Social Economy as a united movement (CCEDNet, 2005). The then Liberal government of Prime Minister Paul Martin agreed to meet with members of the coalition, and announced C\$132m for a federal "Social Economy Initiative" in its 2004 budget addressing all of the proposed action items (ACOA and Social Development Canada, n.d., 2). Martin himself was a Member of Parliament from Montréal and was impressed with the advances made in Québec through its community economic development movement, and the growing coalition around "l'économie sociale" as a solution to inequality and unemployment A "Social Economy Roundtable" was through social entrepreneurship. supported by the Federal Government, bringing together associations of actors in the SE with federal agencies, chaired by the Minister of Social Development, supported by a Secretary of State to co-construct public policy and dialogue on ways to strengthen the SE and its outcomes. However, the 2006 election saw the defeat of the Liberal government, and a minority Conservative government came to power that cut many components of the Social Economy Initiative.

Despite the change in political environment, members of the coalition continued to collaborate to support one another and advance a common agenda, including the holding of a national summit on building a more people-centred economy in May 2010. However, at the national level in Canada there is no single organizing structure for the SE as a purposeful means of promoting and building its unified role in social and economic development. Governance and development structures are well developed in the cooperative and credit union sectors (francophone and anglophone). The Canadian Community Economic Development Network brings together a range of co-operative, credit union, social enterprise and non profit actors sharing common values and goals. Some charitable and philanthropic interests are represented in Imagine Canada. Some foundations are brought together in Community Foundations Canada. A Social Enterprise Council now brings together some people with interest in promoting social enterprises. Mutuals have some inter-relationships across their provincial mandates. Civil society associations and other movements (such as labour) have little engagement with others in the Social Economy or around broad objectives to integrate social, economic, environmental, and human considerations. The broad SE is therefore largely fragmented compared with other jurisdictions, particularly in uniting around common purposes and activities to strengthen their role, capacity, voice and participation in policy development for social and economic development outcomes in Canada. Related to this comparative status of the SE itself, is the comparative lack of public policy frameworks in Canada, compared to other jurisdictions with which it is competitive in global markets, to utilize the SE as a means to address social and economic development, and tackle inequalities that affect overall social and economic conditions.

With the retention of research funding, the Canadian Social Economic Research Partnerships became one focus for addressing this issue, using research as a way of generating understanding of the SE as a unifying framework and its value in socio-economic development. Some of this research is now important to understanding emerging models of governance at the regional and provincial/territorial level within Canada.

2.3 Québec

In Québec, a formal democratic structure has been developed to advance the SE as a framework for socio-economic development.

The Chantier de l'économie sociale (Chantier) came out of the 1996 Summit

on the Economy and Employment, in which a wide variety of stakeholders including the private sector and civil society groups were brought together in search of solutions to address issues of unemployment and a large government deficit (Vaillancourt, 2008, 10; Neamtam 2002, 8; Mendell 2003, 7; Neamtam, personal communication, April, 2010). A task force on the Social Economy was formed in which women's groups, community and cultural organizations, trade unions, Desjardins, Hydro Québec, forestry co-operatives, the Québec Council for Cooperation (CCQ), and others participated (Ninacs, 1998, 2). The Task force undertook a needs assessment and established working groups made up of representatives of Social Economy networks (co-operatives and nonprofits), and the community economic development and social movements to propose possible projects in priority fields of activity (Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000, 3; Ninacs 1998, 2; Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). Among other requests, it called for the establishment of financing mechanisms, training specifically for the Social Economy, the consolidation of support organizations, and new sectoral policies including the upgrading of certain legislation affecting the Social Economy (Levesque, 2007, 44; Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). The task force was also prolonged for two-years in order to oversee the implementation of the plan, and later became the Chantier de l'économie sociale (Mendell, 2003, 7; Levesque, 2007, 44; Huot and Bussiere, 2005, 113; Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). The purposes of the varied groups involved were to advance the Social Economy as a framework and united movement for social and economic development, that addressed employment (human capital) development needs to address rising unemployment, promote greater social inclusion, contribute to community economic development, create a more pluralistic economy for Québec that reduced economic inequalities, and strengthen civic democratic engagement.

From this time, the Chantier became for government, "the clearly defined representative of the sector at the policy level" (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 43). It became an 'intermediate organization' through which the government engaged the wide variety of stakeholders which make up the sector (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 64). As such, it became well entrenched in the policymaking process. From 1996, for the two-years following the Summit, the Chantier was granted almost direct access to Lucien Bouchard himself (Levesque, 2007, 54). Between 1996 and 2001, the sector was overseen by the Premier (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 53) and after 2001, it came under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance, where a special Social Economy desk was created for it in 2002 (Levesque, 2007, 54; Mendel, 2003, 8).

Throughout its evolution, the Chantier continued to seek the inclusion of a

wide variety of stakeholders. The definition which the Chantier selected for the Social Economy was a "broad and inclusive" one (Mendell 2005, 33, footnote no. 39). This was done purposefully in order that a variety of interests could recognize themselves within it (Neamtam, 2005, 7). The definition included such actors as co-operatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, and even some profit-making firms (Mendell, 2003, 4). Moreover, it was able to unite stakeholders from both the 'old' and the 'new' Social Economy under a rubric of common values rather than common legal status (Levesque and Mendell, 1999, 17; Mendell 2003, 7; Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010).

According to Mendell (2005), the particular governance structure of the Chantier is of special note for being highly deliberative and participatory (34). Upon its incorporation in 1999, in order to ensure that the "diverse realities of the Social Economy" were adequately represented, the Chantier created a Board of Directors whose 28 members would be elected through various 'electoral colleges' (Neamtam, 2002, 9). Accordingly, a fixed number of seats is reserved for each of the following types of representatives: sub-sectors of the Social Economy including networks of training enterprises, housing cooperatives, child and homecare organizations, other co-operatives and nonprofits (7); representatives from each of the geographical regions which the Chantier serves (5); organizations that support the Social Economy through activities such as financing and technical support (5); representatives from social movements such as the women's movement, the environmental, labor and community movements (6); representatives from the various instruments which the movement created such as RISQ, the Trust, the CSMO-ESAC and ARUC (4); and 1 representative from the academic world (Levesque, 2007, 53; Neamtam 2002, 9; Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). In addition, in 2008 and 2009, seats were added for a First Nation's representative in response to a request from the network of Native friendship Centres, and for a representative of the Chantier's youth committee (Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). Such a structure guarantees that the governance of the Chantier is organized both horizontally, "across sectors and activities" and vertically, through regional nodes which allow the various regions to "debate priorities that become the basis for coordinated policy development that reflects the regional diversity of Québec" (Mendell, 2005, 34).

Key Functions

In Québec, many of the support services which the Social Economy has received have been channeled through the Chantier. Levesque (2007) concludes that the Chantier has played a key role in putting in place a Social Economy infrastructure complete with financing, training, business support and research and development delivered through a structure which ensures interaction between the diverse facets of the Social Economy (54). These functions have been co-developed by actors in the SE and are democratically controlled by them through the Chantier.

Policy Co-construction

Once the government recognized the Chantier as an interlocutor representing the Social Economy, the way was open for the development of policy to support the sector (Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000, 12-13; Huot and Bussiere, 2005, 114). Indeed this represented a co-construction of policy by the government and the sector as the former enacted many of the recommendations made by the Chantier in its 1996 report (Neamtam, 2005, 72).

Local Development Centers (CLD), which had been created to support local job creation and growth, were mandated to support local Social Economy enterprises and a portion of their budget was set aside for this purpose (D'Amours, 2000, 22; Levesque and Mendell, 1999, 18). 105 new CLDs were created in 1998, jointly funded by provincial and municipal governments (Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000, 14; D'Amours, 2000, 24). Between this time and 2004, these centers implemented 3765 projects which supported their local Social Economy sectors (Levesque, 2007, 52).

Certain new policies gave preference or exclusivity to the Social Economy in the delivery of certain social services (Vaillancourt, 2008, 11). In the area of childcare, government chose to rely on the Centres de petite enfance for the creation of 150,000 new places in 10-years for children under six-years old (ibid.). These non-profit daycare centers offer their services for a flat rate of \$5 per day, and two-thirds of the seats on their Boards must be occupied by the Centres' users, who thereby retain decision-making power as to their management (Huot and Bussiere, 2005, 119). There are presently over 900 of these centers active in the province (ibid.)

Government preference and support for the Social Economy in the area of homecare permitted the creation of 101 new Homecare Social Enterprises between 1997 and 2000 (Vaillancourt, 2008, 12). This was largely the result of the creation, in 1996, of a program in which government subsidized the costs of Homecare Enterprises so that these could keep the prices charged to users below the cost of service delivery (Huot and Bussiere, 2005, 118). These non-profit ad cooperative ventures deliver services to over 76,000 users and employ 6,000 people, many of them previously unskilled welfare recipients. (Neamtam, 2005, 74).

Structure / Characteristics:

The co-operative sector was positively affected by the participation of the Social Economy in the policy-making process primarily through changes which were brought about in the regulations which govern them. According to D'Amours (2000), legislation from 1997 gave the co-operative sector some of the competitive advantages of private businesses, making it easier for them to capitalize by permitting them to keep a reserve, and to sell shares to nonmember investors (28). Under the new legislation, co-operatives in Québec were now also permitted to hire non-member administrators (ibid.). For D'Amours (2000), these reforms constitute a 'hybridization' between the cooperative and the private sector firm (ibid.). In addition, a new legal category of co-operatives was created: the solidarity co-operative. Based on a model used in Italy, co-operatives could now count amongst their stakeholders the community members that utilize their services (Levesque and Mendell, 1999, 19; Mendell, 2003, 8)

Finance and Development Capacity

The provision of specialized financial instruments for the Social Economy responded directly to recommendations put forward by the Social Economy task force in its 1996 report (Ninacs, 1998, 3). In the first place, some entities responsible for funding conventional economic and business development were given funds earmarked for Social Economy ventures. The Social Economy Fund (FES) was created for the use of CLDs in funding local social enterprise (Mendell, Lévesque and Rouzier, 2000, 19). Investissement Québec, the state entity which traditionally supported conventional small and medium enterprises was mandated to support non-profits and co-operatives as well (Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000, 14; Mendell, 2003, 8). And the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire et autonomne began to provide \$20 Million per year to support community and voluntary action (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 17).

In 1997, the Chantier created the Réseau d'investissment social du Québec (RISQ) by convincing some major financial institutions and private enterprises to donate \$5 Million and by persuading the Québec government to match these funds (Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). A funding and training body directed exclusively to social enterprise, RISQ is a non-profit, \$10.3 Million venture capital fund which services 'partnership businesses' (Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000, 14; Elson, Gouldsborough and Jones, 2009, 29; Chantier, 2010), providing these with non-collateralized loans and loan and margin of credit guarantees of up to \$50,000 (Mendell, Lévesque and Rouzier, 2000, 21; Ninacs, 1998, 3; Chantier, 2010). Much, or all, of this amount can be used to finance the start-up costs of new social enterprises and is only repayable if the venture succeeds (Mendell, Lévesque and Rouzier, 2000, 21). Between 2000 and 2007, RISQ loaned \$7.4 Million through 180 programs and invested in 372 social enterprises (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 11; Chantier, 2010). The fund also co-founded a \$6 Million dollar capitalization fund to provide between \$100,000 and \$200,000 to co-operatives, nonprofits and collective enterprises (Elson, Gouldsborough and Jones, 2009, 30). The RISQ is governed by a Board of Directors named by the Chantier's own Board and which includes a number of representatives from a wide variety of Social Economy sub-sectors (Neamtam, 2005, 74; Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010).

The Chantier de l'économie sociale Trust is the other powerful financing tool which the Chantier created in 2006 (Elson, Gouldsborough and Jones, 2009, 10). After winning a Call for Proposals by the Federal government, the Chantier then used the \$30 Million thereby granted to leverage additional investment from private-sector partners (Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). The total of \$52.8 Million of which the Trust disposes is used to provides between \$50,000 and \$1.5 Million of patient capital exclusively to non-profits and co-operatives with under 200 staff and \$100,000 in assets for operational costs and acquisition of capital goods and real estate (Chantier 2007, 12-15; Elson, Gouldsborough and Jones, 30). The loans come with a 15-year moratorium on repayment of capital, and while some of the loans are guaranteed through mortgages, many are non-collateralized. The rate of the loans is fixed for the duration of the loan period, and while businesses can decide to wait the full 15 years before making any payments on the capital, they can also choose to pay it down little by little throughout the loan period without penalty (Chantier, 2010). Since its inception, the Chantier Trust has invested over \$11.4 Million in 39 Social Economy enterprises (ibid.). The Trust is governed by a Board of Directors on which the Chantier and the other investors sit (Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010) and the RISQ is responsible for screening all applications to be submitted to the Trust's

investment committee (Chantier, 2010).

Technical Assistance

A number of entities help the sector to acquire the technical capacity which it needs to function effectively. Some of the Social Economy funds include components geared to providing technical support to the sector's managers. RISQ, for example, can deliver up to \$5,000 for the development of a business plan or market study (Chantier, 2009, 18). This work is then contracted out to local development consultants (Chantier, 2010). These technical assistance loans are interest-free and are repayable only if the initiative succeeds (Elson, Gouldsborough and Jones, 29). Between 2000 and 2007, the RISQ loaned out \$0.9 Million for these purposes (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 11). In addition, in 2010, the RISQ received \$5 Million from the Québec government in order to offer a new financial product, up to \$100,000 for the pre-start-up phase in the development of new Social Economy projects (Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010).

According to Levesque (2007), the Comité sectoriel de la main d'oeuvre en économie sociale et en action communautaire (CSMO-ESAC) was established to help social enterprise meet the complex managerial and organizations challenges which their managers face (53). Co-managed by the Chantier and other stakeholders of the Social Economy and community sectors in partnership with public employment institutions, the CSMO seeks to develop the managerial capacity of the sector by providing technical support to social enterprises in the form of needs analyses and specialized trainings (Neamtam, 2002, 10; Mendell, 2003, 8; Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). But the CSMO's work goes beyond the provision of technical assistance. Its overriding concern seems to be with assuring the supply of qualified labor which the Social Economy sector needs to properly function. In order to accomplish this, the work of the CSMO must pass through the "range of issues affecting labor force development and labor market needs.... [of] Social Economy sector employers" (Micheal Toye, personal communication, April 6, 2010). The CSMO's 2009-2012 strategic plan mentions such items as labor needs assessments of the sector in general; the development of training programs, taking into account the needs of multiple barrier individuals; attraction and retention of personnel to the sector; and succession planning (CSMO-ESAC, 2009, 5, 6).

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement was from the start the primary function of the Chantier. From its beginnings as the Taskforce on the Social Economy, it evinced a capacity to unite the sector. According to Mendell (2003), the Taskforce represented the first time which such a wide array of civil society actors had sought agreement on a common economic platform (7). Indeed, this precursor to the Chantier succeeded in integrating many of the social movements, for whom it became a channel for the articulation of their demands in a more practicable policy discourse (Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000, 10-11). For many of them, this was the first time which they had applied such an economic development framework to their work, something which nonetheless tapped into the incipient 'economic militantism' which some had already begun to manifest (Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000, 7, 10-11).

The research indicates that it was precisely as a result of the multitude of stakeholders which it managed to engage and unify under a single policy agenda that the Chantier had such success in advancing a pro-Social Economy policy in Québec. According to commentators, such a unification gave a previously variegated Social Economy movement new visibility and political weight as a result of which it was able to address itself to government (as cited in Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 45; Huot and Bussiere, 2005, 114). The existence of a unified voice for the sector also then made it easier for the government to engage the wide variety of stakeholders in a productive policy dialogue (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 64).

The public engagement impacts of the Chantier mostly concern the way in which it was able to generate recognition for the Social Economy on the part of Québec society. Vaillancourt (2008) refers to the period 1990-2008 in Québec as one of recognition of the Social Economy, both by the government and by civil society (9). Not only did the Chantier contribute to the former, it also went a long way towards legitimizing and ensuring the visibility of the Social Economy with the general public (Levesque, 2007, 53). And the methods which it employed were similar in both cases. In the first place, according to some, the consensus which the task force was able to generate amongst the sector for the production of a common definition and policy agenda imbued the new institutional structure with an aura of representativeness and credibility which facilitated its recognition amongst the media and the public (Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000, 3; Huot and Bussieres, 2005, 114). Secondly, the report which the task force presented to the 1996 Summit stressed the historic contribution of the Social Economy to the province's development trajectory, thereby leading

to the "recognition of Social Economy actors as agents of socio-economic development and transformation" (Neamtam, 2005, 72; Mendell, 2003, 8). Such a widespread recognition of the role of the Social Economy is unique with Québec (Mendell, 2003, 10). And it is just this "visibility and legitimacy [of the sector] in Québec society," that helped to protect the gains made by the Social Economy from a new Liberal Provincial government that was 'not interested' in the approach (Mendell, 2005, 35).

Learning, Education and Research

The Chantier has provided important learning opportunities for the sector as a number of major research initiatives have been channelled through the organization.

Since 2000, the Chantier has been involved in the co-management, with UQAM, of two major SSHRC-funded research initiatives on the Social Economy: Alliance de recherche universités-communautés en économie sociale (ARUC-ÉS) and the Réseau québécois de recherche partenariale en économie sociale (RQRP-ES) (ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(a), 2, 4). Begun in 2000, ARUC involves researchers from four universities and 11 Social Economy organizations. It is composed of five working groups representing different sectors of Social Economy intervention: community housing, community tourism and leisure, financing, local and regional development and 'services to people.' (ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(a), 1; ARUC and RQRP, 2010). As of 2006, it had over 50 research projects underway (ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(a), 3).

RQRP is the Québec node of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnership (Levesque, 2007, 53-54). It was begun in 2005 in partnership with academics from eight universities (ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(a), 1; Levesque, 2007, 53-54). While ARUC's research is organized by sub-sector, that of RQRP is divided up regionally into eight working groups which correspond to eight of the Province's 17 geographic regions. The research projects themselves are defined according to the needs of the region in question (ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(a), 3; Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). As of 2006, RQRP had 20 research projects underway (ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(a), 3).

Both initiatives represent research partnerships between academics and practitioners that seek to generate useful knowledge which responds to the real needs of the sector and which contribute to the development of Social Economy organizations (ARUC and RQRP, 2010; ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(a) 1; ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(b), 1-2). A total of 160 researchers from universities, non-profits and social enterprises are participating in the two projects and practitioners are involved in every step of the research process including the definition of the project (ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(a), 1; ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(b), 1-2). The programs also involve knowledge mobilization activities such as publications, seminars and workshops which help facilitate the transfer of knowledge to Social Economy practitioner and government policy-making circles (ARUC and RQRP, n.d.(a), 1; ARUC and RQRP, 2010).

With representatives from the public and Social Economy sector as well as from all of Québec's universities, the Chantier also contributes to the work of CIRIEC Canada (Levesque, 2007, 54). Begun in 1967, the Canadian component of the International Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Collective Enterprises is concerned with the study of associative economic entities such as co-operatives, community-based and parastatal collective structures (CIRIEC Canada, 2010). Over the years, CIRIEC Canada has played an important role in generating knowledge and debate for the Social Economy sector. Levesque (2007) notes how prior to 1996, a number of research initiatives brought academics and Social Economy actors together to debate some pertinent conceptual questions (42). These, some of which appeared in Economies et solidarités, the magazine which the organization publishes and the first one devoted to the Social Economy in Québec, helped the various elements of the movement define a common Social Economy agenda (ibid.).

Other important contributions of the Chantier to the learning of the Social Economy in Québec have been facilitated by the role which the organization plays as the body through which the sector dialogues with the Social Economy of other countries. Until 2008, the Chantier took part in the Groupe d'economie solidaire du Québec (GESQ) (Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). Favreau (2005) describes how the Chantier participates in the International Network for the Promotion of the Social and Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) and the role which it has played in past international events such as the World Social Forum as well as in punctual partnerships and collaborations facilitated by Québec INGOs such as CECI (24). Mendell (2005) affirms that such exchanges have resulted in mutual learning which have strengthened the work of both interlocutors (34, footnote no. 42). She claims that Québec has often inspired itself from the policy measures of other countries and cites the adoption of legislation to create solidarity co-ops such as exist in Italy (ibid.).

Market development

The Chantier has played an important role in marketing the goods and services which the Social Economy has to offer. As part of its "valeurs ajoutées" ('values added') campaign, the Chantier has established a social purchasing portal which lists products and services of various Social Economy enterprises throughout the province (Economie sociale Québec, 2010; Neamtam, personal communication, April 2010). The portal, called Economie sociale Québec, provides descriptions of the products and of the organizations that provide them including how these contribute to meeting socio-economic objectives (ibid.). It also includes the possibility of refining searches to regions or to specific products and services and also lists events, training and learning opportunities associated with the Social Economy (ibid.). Acheter solidaire is a companion site which functions as a catalogue, showing pictures of the products available (Acheter solidaire, 2010). More generally, the "valeurs ajoutées" campaign and its logo have also served to promote the sector and its "brand" across Québec (Economie sociale Québec, 2010).

The Chantier has also successfully lobbied for better access for Social Economy organizations and enterprises to procurement opportunities offered by municipal and provincial governments. Released in 2009, the City of Montréal's Partnership for Community-Based Sustainable Development builds on a series of declarations and policy frameworks going back to 2002, which recognize the contributions of the Social Economy to the City's socio-economy development objectives (City of Montréal, 2009, 7-8, 9). Besides increasing and consolidating support to the local Social Economy sector, this current plan pledges to increase the volume of goods and services which the City sources from local Social Economy enterprises and to create more accessible conditions of tender for government contracts (City of Montréal, 2009, 4, 30). In what concerns sourcing at the Provincial level, the way in which, as a result of a policy co-production process championed by the Chantier, the government began contracting home- and childcare services to the Social Economy sector, has already been mentioned (Vaillancourt, 2008, 11, 12; Huot and Bussières, 2005, 118, 119).

2.4 Manitoba

In Manitoba, the analysis suggests that the Social Economy sector is more fragmented and lacks coherence compared with Québec (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 43, 44, 47-48). However, some commentators point to "an intricate web of structured and unstructured relationships between a wide range of stakeholders" (Loewen, 2004, 29). A more informal alliance of Social Economy

stakeholders has been created and/or facilitated by the Manitoba regional network of the Canadian CED Network with some similar attributes and objectives to that in Québec.

As an open and inclusive network of community-based organizations and civil society groups sharing a holistic and bottom-up vision of community development, and including members from a variety of geographic regions and sectors of activity, CCEDNet Manitoba already incorporates a large portion of the province's Social Economy sector. A broad cross section of organizations and their associations are included in the Network and its leadership under the framework of "community economic development", including: Co-operatives; Aboriginal organizations; francophone organizations; immigrant, refugee and ethno-cultural organizations; urban and rural community economic development organizations; community futures development corporations; credit unions; funders such as the Winnipeg Foundation and the United Way; community-based non-profit organizations, and; civil society associations concerned with socio-economic development issues such as affordable housing, food security and poverty reduction (Reimer, personal communication, April 2010). This cross-cutting composition of its members is similar to that of the Chantier in Québec, although more focused on community or place-based activities and objectives than broader sectoral alliances.

CCEDNet Manitoba has gone a long way towards bringing together and strengthening the relationships which exist between this multitude of CED organizations and practitioners in the province (Loewen, 2004, 29). One way it has done this is through the networking and learning events which it organizes such as the Annual Manitoba CED Gathering, and the Sustainability Planning and Strengthening Non-Profits Workshop Series. Such activities have consistently provided organizations and practitioners with important opportunities for networking and for developing partnerships with other actors in the sector (CCEDNet Manitoba, 2009, 1).

The Network has acted as a representative for the Social Economy sector at the policy level. In 2001, CCEDNet Manitoba made recommendations which were incorporated into the government's CED Framework (MacKinnon, 2006, 28) and more recently the Network was consulted on the use of the CED Tax credit in the province (CCEDNet Manitoba, 2008, 4). In 2007, CCEDNet Manitoba facilitated a series of consultations and interviews with Manitoba's CED sector in order to draft a CED policy agenda (Reimer et al., 2009, 13). The Network also regularly engages the government in dialogue

to advance a Social Economy policy agenda. It has met with Ministers, heads of departments and senior officials with the Province to discuss such ideas as integrating CED policy in the Sustainable Development Act, developing a workforce intermediary pilot project, and forming a CED Sector Advisory Council made up of CED leaders to identify priorities for programming and hold the departments accountable for the implementation of the CED Framework and Lens (CCEDNet Manitoba, 2008, 3-4).

Moreover, CCEDNet Manitoba has sought to create a concordance between its own policy initiatives and those of other movements and coalitions, to be the "glue that connects [them all]" (Reimer, personal communication, March, 2010). The minutes from its 2008 Annual Member Meeting make clear that the Network's own policy initiatives are often based on supporting multistakeholder campaigns. Some of the initiatives which Network members take part in include: the Right to Housing coalition, the Raise the Rates Campaign, Make Poverty History Manitoba, the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, the Co-op Visioning Strategy, the Manitoba Food Charter and the Alternative Municipal Budget (CCEDNet Manitoba, 2008, 2-3; Reimer, personal communication, April 2010). CCEDNet Manitoba also works closely with the major public policy advocacy organization in Manitoba, the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), with which its offices are co-located. As Reimer (2010) makes clear, "those campaigns ARE our policy initiatives" (personal communication, March 20, 2010).

Key Functions

As a consequence of the difference in the organizational structure of the CED movement, contrary to the Québec context, the delivery of services to strengthen the CED sector in Manitoba has not been channeled primarily through a single organization; rather, the sector has come together in a variety of partnerships and alliances to provide supports such as financing, technical assistance, research, learning and marketing services. Despite this difference in implementation, the CED sector in Manitoba has still evolved what Loxley (n.d.) considers to be "a very strong institutional base" (1).

Policy Co-construction

In what concerns policy development, we are also faced with a special case. The research indicates that while co-construction did occur between government and the CED sector, it was driven less from the "pressure from below" that a coherent and unified movement could exert, than from a progressive government that was always a little "ahead of the CED movement" (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 36, 41)

The advent of Doer's NDP government in 1999 provided a favorable climate for the co-construction of policy in partnership with the CED sector. Many individuals with CED backgrounds were appointed to influential positions and were able to advocate for CED within government (Loewen, 2004, 28; Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 35-36; Sheldrick, n.d., 10, 18). The CED sector was also permitted greater access to policy-makers and civil servants (Reimer et al, 2009, 31; Loewen, 2004, 28). Both factors contributed to the emergence of a "strong coincidence of beliefs between government and CED activists" (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 3).

The NDP government first expressed its commitment to CED by creating the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet (CEDC) for the purpose of coordinating government initiatives and developing policy relating to CED (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27; Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 35). The CEDC is an interdepartmental committee which, when first created, included the Ministries of Industry, Trade and Mines; Advanced Education and Training; Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Culture, Heritage and Tourism; Agriculture and Food; and Intergovernmental Affairs (Sheldrick, n.d., 9). The Committee was chaired by the Premier, while staff support to it was provided by the CEDC Secretariat (Sheldrick, n.d., 9-10).

The CEDC Secretariat, in turn, created an interdepartmental working group on CED whose purpose it is to contribute to each department's learning about CED and help these to identify opportunities where CED can be integrated into their programming (Sheldrick, n.d., 10; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). Departments are required to report annually to the working group as to advances in this respect (Kostyra, 2006, 24). As each department is asked to nominate a representative to take part in the working group, the group serves to create strong "champions" for CED throughout the government (Sheldrick, n.d., 11; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). It also acts as a "knowledge center for CED activities" (Kostyra, 2006, 24).

In 2001, the government adopted a policy framework for CED which focuses on building community capacity and skills, self-reliance and leadership and targets sustainable development through supporting the development of businesses that meet social, economic and environmental needs (Reimer et al, 2009, 7; Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 35-36). The CED Framework evolved as a result of consultations with community groups and the CED sector, and is based on the principles for Community Economic Development developed by Neechi Foods, an Aboriginal workers' co-operative in Winnipeg (Reimer et al, 2009, 8; Sheldrick, n.d., 7-8; Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27). Prioritizing local employment, ownership and decision-making, drawing on local knowledge and skills and reinvesting in the community constitute some of these principals (Reimer et al., 2009, 8; Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27).

The government also developed another policy tool to accompany the framework in the same year (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27). The CED Lens "helps the civil service to understand and implement the government's CED strategy" (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 28). It mandates departments to reevaluate their programming to make sure that it aligns with CED principles and to identify further opportunities to develop CED programming (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 36; Sheldrick, n.d., 11). To this end, departments are given latitude to redirect resources to CED initiatives and are permitted to apply for additional funding if these are required to carry out the modified programming (Fernandez, 2005, 152). The Lens also makes provisions for the sharing of information to ensure the coordination of programming across departments (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 37; Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27). Finally, the Lens contains a reflexive component which allows for the identification of best practices and of barriers to further government support to CED (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 37).

Finance and Development Capacity

According to MacKinnon (2006), the Manitoba government has accepted the "wisdom of the CED community" in the formulation of its policies (28). It has understood that development "must be owned and driven by the communities," "not foisted upon [them] from the outside" (Fernandez, 2005, 150, 151). Accordingly, it has chosen to deliver its funding and support programs for CED in partnership with the sector. By injecting money into a variety of CED programs, giving long-term, stable funding to CED organizations and instituting legislation to facilitate the raising of capital by communities, the provincial government has succeeded in coordinating the deployment of its resources with the communities' own initiatives (Fernandez, 2005, 150).

The Province has put over \$30 Million into more than 400 CED projects through the Neighborhoods Alive! program (Reimer et al, 2009, 9). The program targets specific urban neighborhoods in Winnipeg, Thompson, Brandon, Flin Flon, Dauphin, Selkirk, The Pas and Portage la Prairie (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 38; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). It promotes the revitalizations of these localities through providing support for the creation of democratically and locally administered Neighborhood Renewal Corporations (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 38; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010), and up to \$75,000 of core funding per year for their operations (Reimer et al, 2009, 8). There are now 12 NRCs, some of which service more than one neighborhood (Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). Neighborhoods Alive! has also supported a number of other initiatives which benefit the inner city as a whole (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 38). The program has put over \$10 Million into housing in the form of \$10,000 grants (Reimer et al, 2009, 9), and has provided training for local residents, culture and recreation programs for youth (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 38; Reimer et al, 2009, 8).

The Winnipeg Partnership Agreement (WPA) is perhaps the most substantial of the government's CED programs. Over five-years, beginning in 2004, some \$74 Million was committed through a variety of programs linked to community development (Reimer et al, 2009, 9). An Aboriginal development program included a focus on Aboriginal employment, training and health, while a sustainable neighborhoods component poured efforts into physical renewal and building community capacity, especially of Aboriginal residents and recent immigrants (Fernandez, 2005, 147). Finally, Downtown renewal concentrated on investments in health, tourism development, culture and the arts, safety and crime prevention (Fernandez, 147-148).

The government delivers core funding to some "key CED organs" (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 37). For example, in 2005-2006, the Department of Agriculture gave over \$500,000 in operating grants to seven Rural Development Corporations (Reimer et al, 2009, 9; Reimer, personal communication, April 2010). Commentators also mention a number of specific CED organizations that have received this type of support from the province. In 1999, the Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement provided \$200,000 to SEED Winnipeg, an organization which fosters the development of businesses by low income people and delivers technical assistance and capacity building for social enterprise (Fernandez, 205, 159; Kostyra, 2006, 23; Reimer et al, 2009, 9). The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs also gave \$250,000 to Community Ownership Solutions, an organization that supports the development of new

social enterprises (Fernandez, 2005, 160; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). Other CED organizations to have received direct financial support from the government include the Jubilee Fund, a non-profit that provides flexible financing to community development projects and enterprises (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 73) and the North End Housing project, a non-profit organizations that helps increase the supply of affordable housing in the North End of Winnipeg through renovation of existing properties and the construction of new units (Loewen, 2004, 28; Kostyra, 2006, 24; Reimer et al, 2009, 11; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010).

There also exists programs to provide loan financing to CED organizations. The Department of Agriculture, through its Community Works Loan Program, has created revolving loan pools for micro-lending to rural businesses, CED organizations and co-operatives, while the Rural Economic Development Initiatives provide loan guarantees to a similar set of beneficiaries (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 73; Reimer et al, 2009, 9). There is also the Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF). The CEDF is a Crown Corporation which provides loans mainly for mainstream businesses in Manitoba's North and for its fisheries through some of the over \$20 Million. The entity has benefitted CED organizations and social enterprises as well (Reimer et al., 2009, 9; Kostyra, 2006, 23; Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 73).

Instituted in 2004, the Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit is a mechanism which facilitates the raising of investment equity by community based enterprises (Reimer et al, 2009, 9). The measure provides investors in approved businesses with a non-refundable, 30% personal income tax credit to a maximum investment of \$30,000 (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 39). The credit can be carried forward seven-years and back three-years, but investors must hold investments a minimum of three-years or risk losing the credit (Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 39; Chernoff, 2008, 56). Although the measure is only intended for for-profit businesses, something which excludes many non-profit CED organizations, a range of local businesses, including co-operatives, may still access it (Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010; Loewen and Perry, 2009, 23). To be eligible, organizations must also have less than 200 staff and \$25 Million in gross assets and must apply for approval to the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (Chernoff, 2008, 55; Loewen and Perry, 2009, 23; Neamtam and Downing, 2005, 39). Those that qualify can receive a maximum of \$500 thousand through the Credit (Chernoff, 2008, 56). Since the CED Tax Credit program began, 12 community enterprises have received a total of \$1.9 Million in this way (Loewen and Perry, 2009, 23).

Technical Assistance

CCEDNet Manitoba has played an important role in the purveyance of technical assistance to the CED sector since the end of 2008, when the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance program (CEDTAS) moved from the offices of SEED Winnipeg, where it was previously housed, to become one of the Network's permanent programs (Reimer, n.d., 19; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). CEDTAS matches the technical assistance needs of community enterprises and initiatives with qualified volunteer specialists (Reimer et al, 2009, 11; Reimer, personal communication March 20, 2010). As originally conceived, the program was to play only the role of a broker in matching the specific needs of organizations with qualified professional volunteers. However, as many of the groups which appealed to CEDTAS were less established ones that needed more general help in realizing their visions, CEDTAS began to play an accompanying role and to provide more services itself. This is all while continuing to match up specific needs with volunteers in the private sector, government and other non-profits (Reimer, n.d., 15, 18). From 2004 to 2007, CEDTAS built a database of 245 volunteers and put 25% of these to work in over 60 projects (Reimer, n.d., 17). Since its move in 2008, it has coordinated the delivery of \$150,000 of pro bono technical assistance to 34 organizations (Reimer, n.d., 19).

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Through their advocacy campaigns, the various movements and coalitions serve to engage their members as well as government and the general public by educating them on specific issues related to CED. As mentioned, CCEDNet Manitoba has sought to engage its members in a variety of policy dialogues and advocacy campaigns in order to consolidate the CED sector in Manitoba. Additional activities which work towards this end are the Network's website and newsletters, which act as clearinghouses for information and opportunities related to CED, and the various conferences and learning events which it organizes including the Annual Manitoba CED Gathering, the Sustainability Planning Series and the Strengthening Non-Profits Workshop Series (CCEDNet Manitoba, 2009, 1). These facilitate networking and partnership development among the sector's actors and simultaneously serve public engagement ends as they raise the profile of the sector amongst government and civil society.

Learning, Education and Research

Partnership between government, the Red River Community College and the Community Education Development Association (CEDA) permitted the establishment of the Community Development/Community Economic Development Training Intermediary (Reimer et al, 2009, 11). This one-year accredited certification provided training on CED and capacity-building for the unemployed and CED practitioners alike (CEDA, 2006; Kostyra, 2006, 24). The program contained an academic component where topics such as proposal writing and strategic planning were broached as well as a practicum phase where students were placed with community organizations (CEDA, 2006.). Students were eligible to receive financial support to cover the costs of tuition and books (ibid.). The program hoped to train and upgrade the skills of 450 CED practitioners over its three-years (Loewen, 2004, 28; Reimer, personal communication, April 2010).

The public and stakeholder engagement functions of the various conferences which CCEDNet Manitoba organizes have already been highlighted. But the role of these as learning events cannot be neglected. By staging workshops on a variety of topics related to CED given by the province's academics and practitioners, these activities facilitate knowledge transfer and help build the capacity of the sector. As events in which international delegates often participate as well, they are instrumental in permitting concepts and models from the Social Economy in other countries to be absorbed by Manitoba's own CED sector.

The CED sector in Manitoba benefits from a vibrant research movement. As with other activities to support CED in the province, much of this research is carried out in partnership between academic bodies, community organizations and government (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 43). According to Loxley and Simpson (2007), Universities have used participatory approaches and have integrated practitioners in their work (43). Academics themselves are also often involved in CED at the community level, and the government has moved beyond the role of the passive funder to participation in the design and implementation of research projects (ibid.). Meanwhile, policy-makers have also been attentive to the outcomes of the research initiatives (ibid.).

The Manitoba Research Alliance on the CED and the New Economy (MRA) sought to examine the problems and possibilities for the sector in Manitoba and extract best practices and lessons learnt (CCPA, 2006, 2; Loxley, n.d., 3). Much of the research began from the premise that the New Economy does not always benefit communities. Hence the Alliance looked at the ways in which CED could be integrated with the New Economy and what the resources required for this were ("Manitoba Research Alliance," 2005, 2). The initiative involved researchers from the province's three Universities, as well as from community organizations such as SEED Winnipeg, the North End Community Renewal Corporation and the West Broadway development Corporation (Loxley, n.d., 3). The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives administered the three year, \$895,000 SSHRC grant (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 28), and CCEDNet Manitoba was also a partner in the project ("Manitoba Research Alliance," 2005, 5). The research ended in 2005 and produced 42 research papers and 10 toolkits summarizing the findings by topic ("Manitoba Research Alliance," 2005, 4; CCPA, 2006, 2).

The Manitoba Research Alliance was followed by what Reimer refers to as "a second MRA" (Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). The Manitoba Research Alliance for Transforming Inner-City and Aboriginal Communities (MRA-TIAC) is a five-year research program which builds on the outputs and partnership structures generated by the MRA (MRA-TIAC, 2010). Also funded by SSHRC, the program seeks to identify the factors which underlie poverty and social exclusion amongst the inner-city Aboriginal community in Manitoba, and to propose transformative solutions to address these (ibid.). Similar to the MRA, the MRA-TIA's research is action-oriented. It seeks to directly strengthen the work of community organizations and influence policy (ibid.). Also like the first MRA, the dynamic of MRA-TIA research is collaborative. It involves researchers who are government policymakers, academics at the University of Manitoba and community development practitioners. Not only do practitioners carry out their own research projects, they also contribute vital information, access to community stakeholders, and act as advisors for the studies conducted by academic researchers (ibid.). The Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives is responsible for administering this research initiative as well (ibid.).

Manitoba participates in the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP) as part of a regional node which also includes Northern Ontario and Saskatchewan. In Manitoba, the project relies on 24 academic and 40 community partners including Arctic Co-operatives Limited, Assiniboine Credit Union, CCEDNet Manitoba, the Credit Union Central of Manitoba, the Manitoba Co-operatives Association, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, SEED Winnipeg and the University of Winnipeg (Northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan Node, 2010). The Winnipeg Inner-City Research Alliance detains important management functions. The Manitoba, Northern Ontario and Saskatchewan region node also relies on an Advisory Council made up of community representatives who provide suggestions and feedback on the research (ibid.). Academic and community researchers from

Manitoba seek to identify the principal successes, challenges and lessons from the Province's CED sector and to explore options for policy development to strengthen the sector (ibid.). The research is divided amongst the areas of social enterprise development, financing, governance, measuring and mapping the Social Economy, the development of policy frameworks and international research (ibid.).

Market Development

An important commercialization and marketing function is fulfilled by the Social Purchasing Portal (SPP). Created by SEED Winnipeg, with additional funding from the federal and provincial governments and private sector and community organizations such as Assiniboine Credit Union, this internet site promotes sales opportunities for social enterprise by offering a database of organizations and their goods and services which socially-minded consumers may consult (Loxley, n.d., 2; Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 24; Reimer et al, 2009, 10). Categories of products offered include building maintenance and renovation, clothing and merchandise, computer services, couriers, food and beverage, hardware, healthcare and medical services, printing and specialty gifts (SEED, n.d.).

Though the SPP fulfils an important commercialization and marketing function, it has not done as much to increase the actual sales of local businesses and social enterprises as has the work of Local Investment Towards Employment (LITE) and its partners (Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). LITE began in 1993 when founders noticed that a decades old program to provide free Christmas food hampers to inner city families was actually depressing the sales of certain inner-city grocery stores (LITE, 2010; Reimer, personal communication, April 2010). Consequently, LITE sought to give "the gift that gives twice" by sourcing the contents of its hampers from local small businesses and especially from social and training enterprises (LITE, 2010). Now a registered non-profit organization, LITE continues to supports local CED organizations that provide sustainable employment and job training to the unemployed and individuals facing multiple barriers by purchasing their products and providing them with grants made possible by the numerous fundraising events which it organizes (ibid.).

2.5 Other Initiatives in Canada

In some other parts of Canada, other governance models have recently been developed that strengthen one or more components of the SE. In Ontario, a Social Economy Roundtable was established in 2009 that involves: The Ontario network of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network; the Ontario Coop Association (OnCoop); Economie Solidaire de l'Ontario; the Centre for Social Innovation; the United Way of Greater Toronto's Enterprise Fund; the Ontario Non Profit Network, and other partners (Ontario Social Economy Roundtable, 2010). The Roundtable has long term goals that include: An inclusive and welcoming roundtable; market transformation enabling local and regional capacity for growth; economic renewal for stronger more dynamic communities; awareness building for the Social Economy sector; recognition by governments of the Social Economy resource, and; advocacy and policy change. It has a particular focus on creating a supportive environment for social enterprise. The Ontario Non Profit Network is also a recent development that is a "network of networks that helps to build communication and coordination amongst non profit organizations working for the public benefit in Ontario" (Ontario Non-profit Network, 2010). It has particularly focussed on responses to the Provincial government's review of the Ontario Corporations Act governing the regulation of non profit societies. The Ontario co-operative sector is brought together by the Ontario Coop Association that acts as a "resource and common voice for Ontario credit unions and co-operatives in the areas of co-operative development, government relations, membership and communications, and lifelong co-operative learning" (Ontario Coop Association, 2010). Lacking in any of these initiatives as yet is a unifying structure for ongoing development and financing, paralleled by government structures, recognition, and investment for the Social Economy as a whole.

In Atlantic Canada a new cross-provincial structure came into being in 2010 – The Atlantic Council for Community and Social Enterprise (ACCSE). This group has a learning and organizing event held in Halifax, Nova Scotia in March (ACCSE, 2010). The association is particularly concerned with strengthening social enterprises across the Atlantic provinces and is in the formative stage, with representatives from both co-operative and non profit sector organizations. Co-operative councils also exist in each province of the Atlantic region, with the council in Nova Scotia leveraging equity and debt capital financing for the sector alongside technical assistance for cooperative development (Nova Scotia Cooperative Council, 2010). In Newfoundland and Labrador, in addition to the Federation of Co-operatives bringing together that sector, the Community Services Council is a long established resource to the "voluntary community-

based sector" that has developed a Community Enterprise Development Program targeted to providing technical assistance and training to non profits in the development of social enterprises (Newfoundland-Labrador Federation of Co-ops, 2010; Community Services Council, 2010).

In other provinces and territories, there have been recent government initiatives to engage stakeholders in the SE. A summit was held in Nunavut sponsored by the territorial government and the northern node of the Social Economy research program in November 2009 (Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada, 2010). The event discussed establishing an ongoing Social Economy initiative to build on existing work by stakeholders on community economic development components of the territorial Economic Development Strategy and the Nunavut Economic Forum (ibid.). In New Brunswick a "community government non profit partnership" initiative was begun in 2007 (Government of New Brunswick, 2007). Since that time, the non-profit sector has been engaged in development of a 5 year "Economic and Social Inclusion Plan" designed to reduce poverty (Government of New Brunswick, n.d, 1). Neither co-operatives nor social enterprise figure prominently in the Plan, which nonetheless makes provisions for the 'exploration' of the "concept of social enterprise and community investment funds" (Government of New Brunswick, n.d., 4). In British Columbia, there have been recent government dialogue initiatives with the non profit sector (Government of British Columbia, 2010) but without any corresponding structures developed by the sector itself or with other stakeholders in the SE such as the long-standing BC Cooperative Association. A short-lived "Social Economy Roundtable" did form around the federal SE initiative in BC but has since ceased to exist. In Alberta a government Non Profit/Voluntary Sector Initiative formed in 2004 resulted in a "Framework for Collaboration" for that sector's engagement with the provincial government (Government of Alberta, 2010).

There have therefore been some developments particularly targeted at strengthening social enterprises that create governance or at least collaboration structures across sub components of the SE in some provinces/territories outside of Québec and Manitoba. There have also been some developments in engaging the non profit sector in partnerships with provincial governments in initiatives specific to that sector and/or to public policy goals such as poverty reduction. There have also been developments within the cooperative sector itself to strengthen its growth, development and financing. However, the governance of the SE as a whole in structures that explicitly recognize its shared interests in socio-economic development are under-developed in Canada compared with other jurisdictions.

Detailed analysis of the state of unified governance of the SE at the local and regional level is beyond the scope of this paper. However, case studies by partners in the Social Economy research program clearly indicate that local organizations and coalitions play an important role in unifying stakeholders on either an ongoing basis for the development of local communities, or on an occasional basis to advance particular strategies (for food security or poverty reduction for example). Many organizations display similar functions in contributing to social and economic development at the local level as those profiled at the provincial level in Manitoba and Québec. They provide technical assistance, access to finance, learning, opportunities for collaborative decision-making and cooperation in shared activities, operate and/or help develop social enterprises and operate democratic decision making involving local participants. They also often provide a unifying structure to advocate for policy change as it affects their communities. Community economic development corporations, as with their counterparts in the USA, have long provided this kind of focus for local social and economic development efforts across cooperative, non profit, credit union and other civil society associations. In some cases these efforts have been reflected in local government partnerships with the SE to utilize the Social Economy, or at least social enterprises, in local development (in Edmonton and Montréal for example). However, in most cases the scaling up of these local efforts and structures has proven difficult without public policy support and mechanisms that explicitly recognize the importance of integrated approaches to socio-economic development that are involved.

3.0 Conclusion

From this brief scan of models and development within the SE in Canada four typologies are suggested as characterising a continuum of the state of unified governance and movement building.

Formal and Structured

Québec is the only jurisdiction within Canada where a formal, democratic and inclusive structure (the Chantier) has been created to unify the SE in a single structure promoting a framework for the role of the SE as a major contributor to socio-economic development. In this way it resembles structures and approaches in other parts of the world where the SE has become a significant player in public policy and in social and economic development activities.

Informal Coalition

Manitoba represents another point in the continuum where a more informal coalition has been created inclusive of stakeholders in the SE with similar objectives in terms of influencing policy and promoting an alternative model of social and economic development convened by an existing Network (CCEDNet Manitoba).

Emerging Coordinating Spaces

In Atlantic Canada and Ontario, roundtables and councils are emerging which seek to create a space and agendas for a unifying structure and agenda to promote the SE, although with a more singular focus on social enterprises.

Fragmented

In other regions of the country the SE is largely fragmented. Although it has sub sectors that are advancing their own member's interests, but without a unifying structure or common agenda for social and economic development.

At the National level, an informal coalition of some stakeholders in the SE has existed and is working on a common agenda associated with the Summit on a People Centred Economy in May 2010. Any next steps in promoting or creating a more inclusive and structured approach to the SE awaits discussion at that event.

Looking across features of both the national and international landscape of the SE where its stakeholders have united their organizing activities as a movement several key functions emerge as being common concerns.

- 1. There is a common concern for movement building to achieve socioeconomic change uniting stakeholders on common purposes and values for socio-economic justice outcomes, rather than purely legal forms of structures (e.g. non profit society or cooperative) or enhancing state regulation and treatment of these legally defined sub sectors. There is an emphasis on public interest outcomes rather than internal organizational self interest of a given sub sector.
- There is a common interest in public and stakeholder engagement to communicate to a larger cross section of society the alternative vision of

the economy, social development, environmental sustainability (and their inter-relatedness) involved in the SE, and to promote support of and engagement in it (commercially in terms of the purchasing of its goods and services, and in growing new forms and activities). Outreach to social movements and civil society associations associated with them have been significant.

- 3. There is a common function amongst unified SE governance models of actively seeking to co-construct public policy with governments to both create an enabling environment for the SE itself, and to influence wider social and economic policies that impact stakeholder objectives for social change.
- 4. There is an emphasis on developing learning, education and research capacity democratically controlled by SE governance structures to advance self-identify, movement building, evidence-based policy development, knowledge sharing and networking, and training/skills development to strengthen practices and develop future practitioners.
- 5. Specific functions have been developed, also democratically controlled by SE stakeholders, for the provision of capital and technical assistance to grow new Social Economy enterprises and/or scale up existing ones. The provision of capital financing (both debt and equity) is seen as a key necessity, both through new finance instruments created by SE stakeholders and by creating financing arrangements with existing state and private institutions that provide a level playing field in access to capital for social enterprises with other Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs). Linked to this function is the importance of technical assistance to SE organizations to make best use of capital financing and address their challenges associated with blending social, economic and environmental objectives and services.
- 6. Unified efforts and functions have been developed to grow market access for the goods and services of the SE, through arrangements with government procurement agencies, through promotion of ethical and fair trade products produced by the SE directed at consumers, by increasing the internal trade in goods and services amongst SE organizations, and by scaling up the potential value chains of SE organizations to take advantage of market opportunities.
- 7. Finally, there is a high degree of attention to democratic structures for decision making amongst unified governance models in the SE that operationalize the shared values of stakeholders for democratic participation and engagement.

4.0 Proposals to Strengthen the Social Economy Movement

Based on the analysis in this paper, some proposals can be made to strengthen more unified governance of the Social Economy movement in Canada.

4.1 Unifying Structures

It is suggested that democratically structured associations of stakeholders in the SE purposefully examine how a more formal unified structure, a Roundtable for example, can be created for the SE in Canada as a whole, not dependent on federal government support that may fluctuate with changes in political leadership. Support for such a structure may well involve proposals to the federal government, however the concern is that it not be dependent on such support. It is also suggested that a concerted effort be made to support unified governance models of the SE in provinces, territories and regions where they do not already exist in ways that respect regional differences and build on developments that are underway.

4.2 Communications and Engagement

It is suggested that actors in the SE co-develop a pan-Canadian engagement and communications strategy to: Build better alliances with civil society movements and coalitions that share common concerns for building a more people-centred economy inclusive of social and ecological justice objectives; promote SE goods and services to consumers in ways that enable local SE organizations to participate in marketing and branding within a national marketing strategy; create on-line and other media products/initiatives that mobilize knowledge of the SE to the public and other stakeholders, and enlist the support and engagement of the many organizations and individuals who are part of it, but lack a shared identity.

4.3 Co-construction of policy

It is suggested that unified efforts to enhance the enabling policy environment for the SE be focussed on: An ongoing multi-stakeholder table for discussion of the policy strategies and tools that the SE research program and other analysis suggests are working, could be leveraged and scaled up with representatives of federal, provincial and local governments; continued advocacy for a federal supportive role in advancing the SE for building a more people-centred economy; targeted interventions with federal provincial structures and parliamentary committees on public policy issues that are significant to the

SE (e.g. labour market development, poverty reduction, rural development), and; representation to all federal parties on a proposal to strike a parliamentary committee (or sub committee of an existing committee) on the SE.

4.4 Learning, Education and Research

It is suggested that organizations associated with the SE nationally, perhaps through the Roundtable suggested at 4.1, propose a new action research program led by practitioners with selected partners emphasizing movement building, participatory demonstration projects, and mapping of the outcomes of the SE in key areas of public policy. A dialogue with learning institutions and practitioner organizations be involved to explore how to enhance informal and formal learning and better laddered training to meet skill gaps, curriculum needs, and succession planning requirements.

4.5 Market Development

Building on research and analysis amongst practitioner and research partners, that a specific technical working group be established to advance procurement models with government and private sector representatives and internally amongst SE organizations to grow market access.

4.6 Finance and Development Capacity

Building on research and analysis amongst practitioner and research partners, that a specific initiative be established to promote the development and adaptation of sector-owned models for financing, technical assistance and development for the SE, inclusive of options for tax incentives, equity and debt capital available to both cooperative and non profit/charitable social enterprises.

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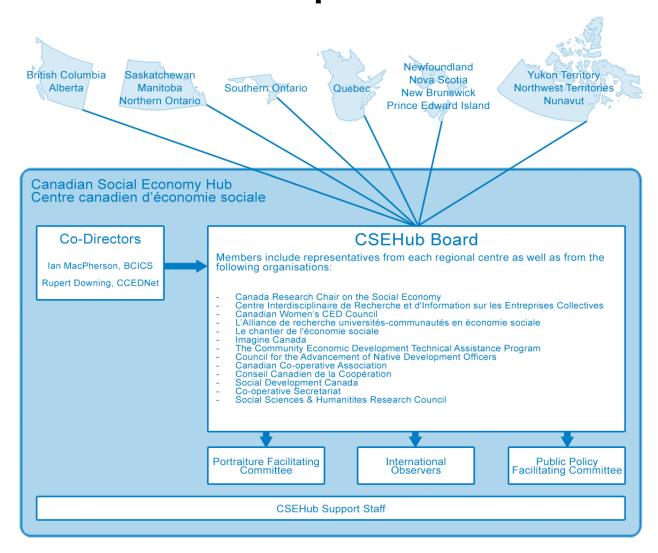
| How could the Occasional Paper Series be improved? | |
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