

# **The Role of Inuit Land Claims Organizations in the Northern Social Economy: Preliminary Results**

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# The Project

- \* This project is part of theme 2 : Resource regimes and the social economy in the North
- \* Focuses on the role of two Inuit Land Claim Organizations (Makivik and NTI) in the development of the Northern social economy
- \* Partners: Makivik Corporation, QIA, NTI

# Methodology

- \* Interviews with people working in the social economy sector in Nunavik (Puvirnituq and Kuujjuaq) and Nunavut (Iqaluit and Pangnirtung)
- \* Interviews with economic development agent
- \* Interviews with Makivik, NTI and QIA, officials
- \* Collect and analyze financial reports and official documents from these organizations and compare their strategies

# Defining Northern Social Economy

- \* Concept of mixed economy: land (Inuit) based and State based
- \* **Social economy in the State realm:** Volunteer organizations, community groups, non-governmental organizations, non-profit groups, and charities;
- \* **Land based social economy:** Based on Inuit tradition and values, hunting and gathering economy;
- \* In smaller communities all economic activities pertain to the social economy (either State or land based)
- \* What about the **Northern Co-ops?**

# Interviews: perception of the social economy

- ✳ Difference between
  - ✳ Northern Centres where the State is prevalent (Iqaluit and to a lesser extent Kuujjuaq)
  - ✳ Peripheral communities (Puvirnituq and Pangnirtung) where the land based economy is prevalent

# The Coops in Nunavik and Nunavut

## NUNAVIK

- \* The coop movement has been central to the social, economic and political development of Nunavik
- \* The signature of the JBNQA (1975) has slowed the growth of the coop movement
- \* The relation has been marked by political dissension and economic competition
- \* The coop movement is strong in all communities at the exception of Kuujjuaq

- \* Tense relations between Makivik and FCNQ, although both organizations are involved in the social economy

## NUNAVUT

- \* The coop movement has been more focused on economic development
- \* Land Claim Organizations have not been involved as long in economic venture as Makivik

# Interviews: The role of the coops (Piuví)

- \* In Puvirnituq, birthplace of the coops, interviewees spontaneously relate the coops to the social economy
- \* The value they attach to the coops has remained significantly high; admiration and unanimity about its beneficial aspects
- \* Coops are equated with the idea of « making an effort » - which is for the interviewees the key feature of economic success

# Interviews: The role of the coops (Pang)

- \* The coops are seen as part of the State economy and they are not seen as contributing to the land based economy
- \* «*The co-operative movement that we have here is more purely business. It doesn't encompass the hunters or the harvesters very much. From time to time, the coop does purchase seal meat and sell it there, but it's not on a regular basis.*»

# Inuit Values and Social Economy

- \* In Pang, since the social economy is seen as land based, it embodies Inuit values and traditions
- \* In Piuvi, the social economy is seen as related to Inuit values, not necessarily traditions. The notion of sharing embodies what interviewees see as the ideal coop
- \* In both cases, the food caught and shared remains outside the realm of the State

# Inuit Land Claims Organizations

- \* The complex role of the Inuit Land Claims Organizations (IIBA, compensation, mix of profit and social venture, delivery of social programs)
- \* Issue of IIBA
- \* Issue of profit distribution
- \* Difficult to distinguish between profit-only-ventures and social economy ventures especially in the case of Makivik

# Perception of the Role of Land Claims Organizations

- \* In Pang: NTI and QIA are seen as part of the State realm, trying to reframe domestic activities in the State sphere
- \* In Piuvi: Makivik is seen as part of the Inuit realm but for some interviewees Makivik is mostly related to cash flow and has a negative impact on the coops (but not the Inuit social economy)

# Policy and Social Economy (Pang)

*«That's because we're supporting it here at the hamlet level, but it's not supported at any other level. They talk about traditional economy and social economy that they try to provide for, but always require some sort of business setting, with liability insurance for students involved.*

*Let's say we were to take students out to train them, then we have to basically set it up as a business with liability insurance and the whole works that come along with the business. But here in the Arctic, you can't set it up that way, because it just doesn't make sense. You can't have all these hunters and women that provide traditional economy, and set them up as a business. You're duplicating a hundred times all the things that you need to set up.»*

# Policy and Social Economy (Piuvi)

- \* Makivik is the main economic force
- \* For some Makivik, because of it's economic powers, has inhibited the growth of the coops
- \* For others, Makivik as an Inuit organization is clearly part of the Nunavik social economy

# Some Preliminary Conclusions

- \* Northern Social Economy has two distinct components (State realm vs Inuit realm) but in smaller communities all of the economy has a social component
- \* Nunavik Coops seem to bridge this dichotomy
- \* It is very difficult to distinguish between a profit-only and socially-minded ventures
- \* The Inuit land claims organizations don't have a clear role in the development of the Northern social economy