

# Using the Term Social Economy – Value to Organizational Forms (nonprofits, cooperatives & practices such as Community Economic Development)



## First Annual ANSER – ARES Conference

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# Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada - SERNNNoCa



- One of the six regional research nodes studying the social economy
- Built around the three Northern Territorial Colleges and their respective research institutions and links researchers working in the North with Northern students, community organizations, and academic institutions.
- Also have representatives from Labrador & Nunavik

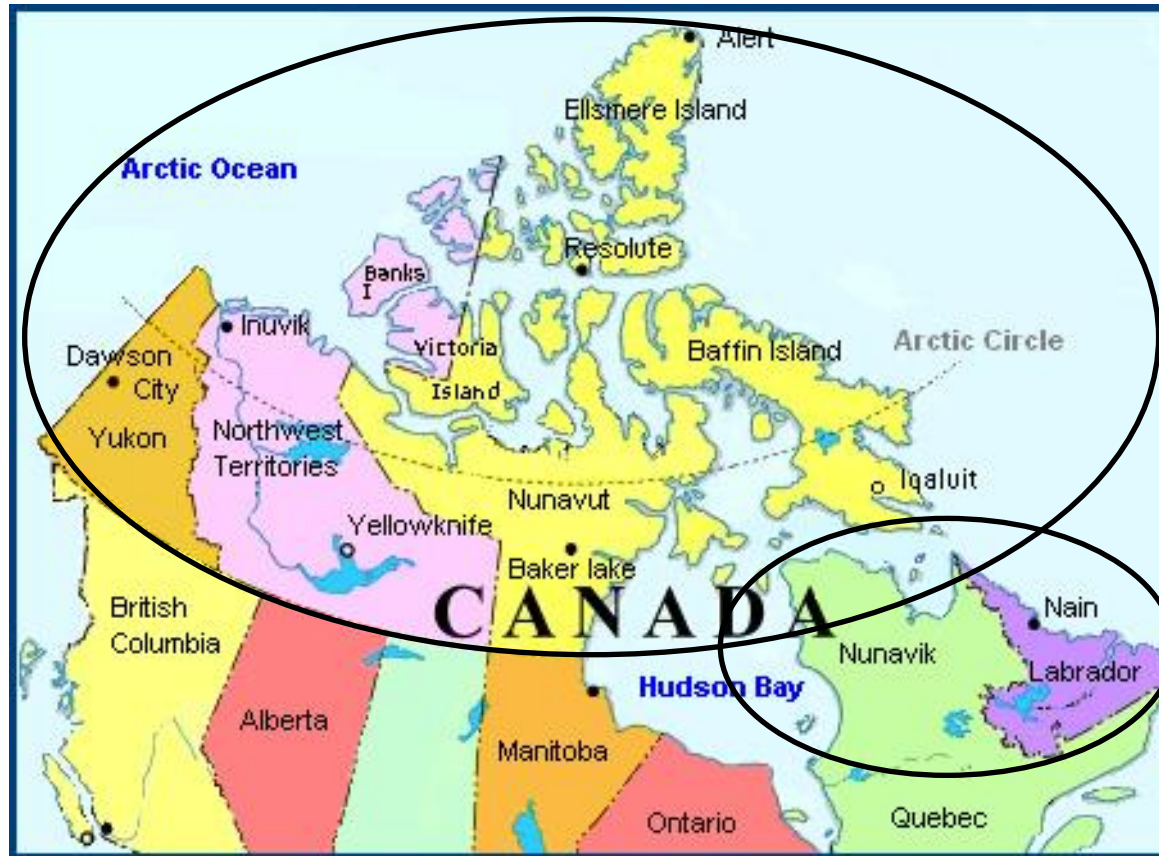


- Key University partners coordinating 4 research themes
  - Portraiture: Chris Southcott, Lakehead Univ.
  - Resource Regimes: Brenda Parlee, Univ. of Alberta
  - The State: Frances Abele, Carleton Univ.
  - Indigenous people: David Natcher, Univ of Saskatchewan

# Research area includes Yukon, NWT, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Labrador



Source: <http://www.threecordministries.org/ArcticMaps.htm>



# Social Economy in the North



- Few in the Canadian North talk about the social economy
- Some refer to Cooperatives and Community Economic Development
- Other terms are the land based economy and informal economy
- One objective of our research node in the North is to provide better understanding of how the social economy functions in a variety of social conditions and provide individuals and groups with information on this.

# Value of term SE in North



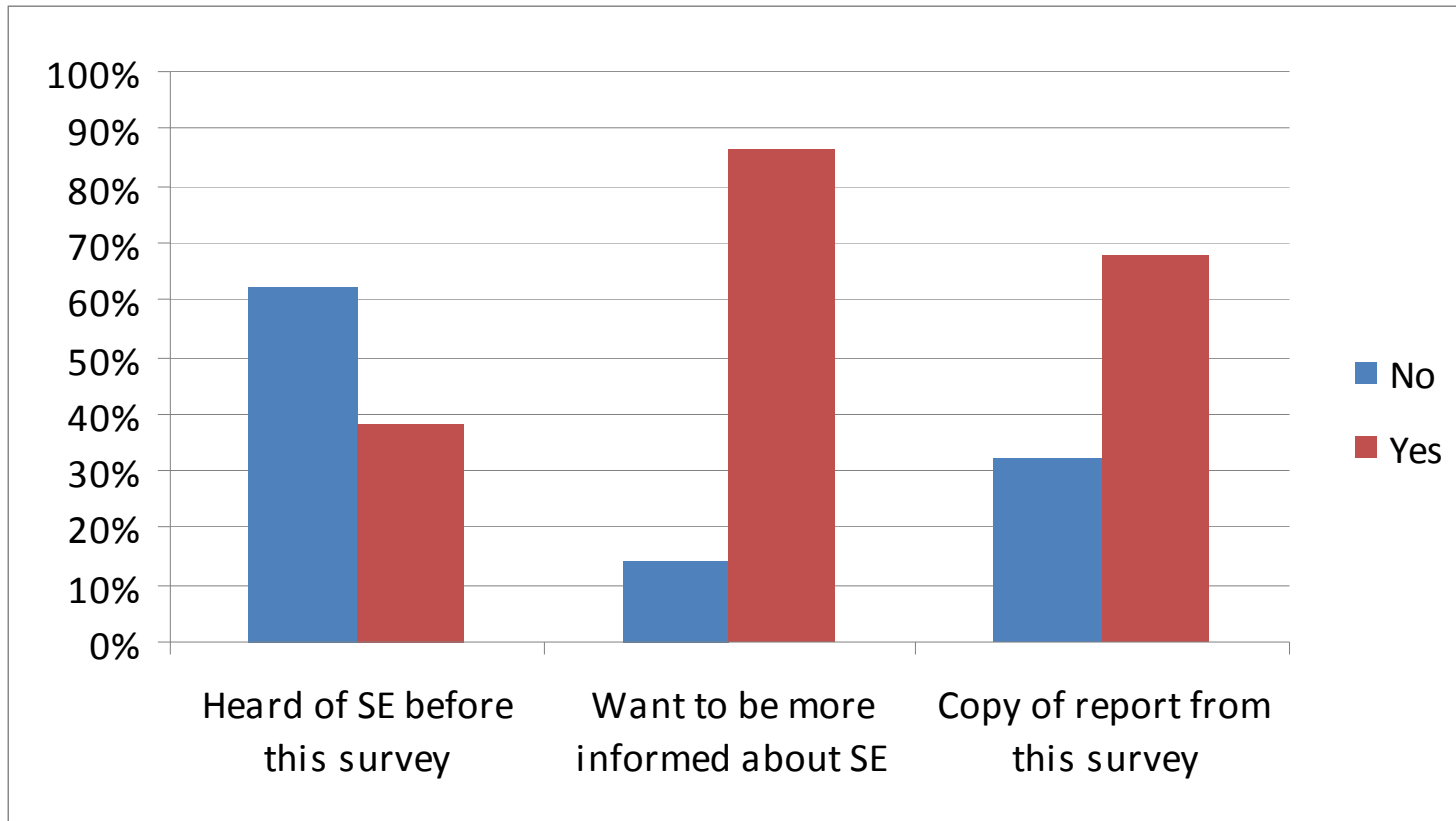
- Still poorly understood area in Northern communities.
- Recent survey conducted to determine what exists in terms of SE groups in the North
  - Questionnaire designed to ask organizations about
    - Objectives/activities
    - Structure
    - Board
    - Areas that might be concerns

# Preliminary results of survey



- What might provide some indication of value in term SE in the North?
  - Have they heard of the SE?
  - How well do they understand the SE
  - Would they like to know more about the SE?
- Have 124 responses for Yukon/NWT

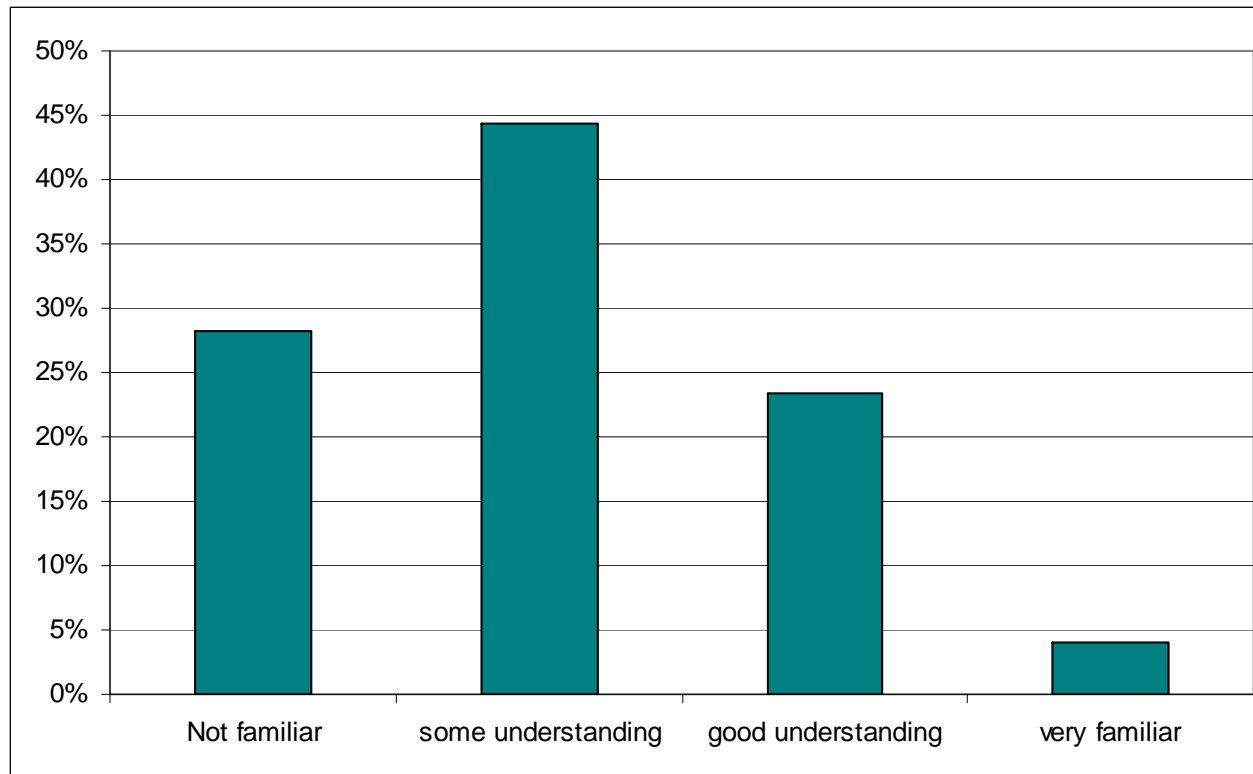
# SERNNoCa Survey Results



# SERNNoCa Survey Results



## Understanding of the SE



# Example of value in term SE



- Seminar “Community revitalization: Co-ops and other social enterprises” November 2006
- Social enterprise operating in the Yukon
  - Make money like a business but spent money like a non-profit but didn't seem to fit either mold.
  - Have a social and environmental purpose
  - Good to have a label to describe their type of operation
- Trondek Hwech'in a self governing First Nation – operations - social enterprise – meet social and environmental goals of membership and community as whole.
- Questions about Indigenous populations and governance



# SE & the relevancy for Indigenous communities



- Principles challenged as don't reflect
  - holistic nature of indigenous worldviews,
  - the heterogeneity of indigenous economies, and
  - realities of contemporary indigenous governance systems.
- Also need to question imposition of colonial economic models in indigenous communities

# SE & the relevancy for Indigenous communities



- May still be useful conceptual device
- SE framework can be used to link production and reciprocity to multiple forms of economic activity that occurs in Indigenous communities
- Multiplicity of institutions
  - Commercial (wages)
  - Non-commercial (subsistence) activities
  - Monetary (public transfers)
  - Non-monetary transactions (sharing subsistence resources with others) to achieve goals

# SE & the Indigenous community context



- An exploration of the SE of northern indigenous communities would consider the relationship between subsistence production, wage and mixed economies, sharing and reciprocity, the role of the state in regulating and/or promoting economic production and the emergence of new institutions
- Complex nature of northern economic production together with social systems that are linked, concept of SE is quite relevant and closely aligned with the realities of Canada's northern indigenous communities

# SE - the Northern definition



- In the North - consider SE to include part of the social productive system that lies outside the direct realm of government programs and large business enterprises, including smaller scale businesses, not-for-profits, cooperatives, family-based productivity, voluntary activity etc.
- Includes the mixed economy characteristics of Aboriginal communities and we recognize the balance of all these activities varies from place to place

# SE awareness & understanding



- As more research and communication is done in this area we will increase awareness and understanding of SE (workshops, meetings & discussions with community groups)
- Many areas that may not fit clearly in the existing definitions
  - Indigenous communities

# Conclusion



- Not able to clearly state the value of the SE in the North as it is not well understood.
- At the end of our 5 years we may find that we need to rewrite our definition of the SE for the North as we develop a more concise picture of the SE and particularly in the context of Indigenous communities in the North

SERNNOCA Website <http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/sernnoca>



# Thank you

