



**Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network**  
**Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité**  
Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités

**Working Paper no 2011-04**

## **Report: Forum on Community Food Security and the Social Economy**

By :

Hosted by Sub Node Three (SN3): Community Mobilization around Food Security  
and Community Economic Development

**Greenwich, Nova Scotia**

**Nov 7 2007**



Social Sciences and Humanities  
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Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada



### **About the Authors**

Sub Node Three aims to facilitate participatory action research on mobilization projects around food security and community economic development. Persons involved with this project: D. Reimer, P. Williams, L. Brown, A McKittrick, L. Carlsson & N. Millar.

### **About the Network**

The Social Economy and Sustainability Research (SES/ESD) Network is the Atlantic Node of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP) – one of six regional research centres across Canada, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), 2005-2010. The Network has a wide variety of academic, community and government partners representing Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. [www.msvu.ca/socialeconomyatlantic/](http://www.msvu.ca/socialeconomyatlantic/) For more information, contact us: Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network, c/o Research House, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 2J6

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### **About the Working Paper Series**

The SES/ESD Network will periodically publish research papers about our research in Atlantic Canada. The papers will be written by both academics and social economy practitioners. The SES/ESD Network hopes these papers will contribute to the theory and practice of social economy within the Atlantic Region. Noreen Millar is the Network Coordinator and Managing Editor of the Working Paper Series. Papers in this series are not formally peer reviewed, but are products of Network-approved and managed research projects.

### **About CSERP**

The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP) is a collaborative effort of six regional research centres (nodes) across Canada, their community partners, and the national facilitating research hub. CSERP reaches out to practitioners, to researchers and to civil society, through the regional research centres and their community partners. It undertakes research as needed in order to understand and promote the social economy tradition within Canada and as a subject of academic enquiry within universities. [www.socialeconomyhub.ca](http://www.socialeconomyhub.ca)

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## Background

The Forum on community food security (CFS) and the social economy was hosted by Sub Node Three (SN3): Community Mobilization around Food Security and Community Economic Development, on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007. SN3 is one of six research clusters (sub nodes) that are part of the federally-funded *Atlantic Social Economy and Sustainability (SES) Research Network*, which is working to broaden knowledge about the social economy of the Atlantic region. It is focusing on building partnerships and knowledge across the region and working with community partners to impact policy at the provincial and municipal levels. The project is complex and participatory, with the research organized out of six regional sub nodes. For further information on the SES, visit: <http://www.msvu.ca/socialeconomyatlantic/English/home%20en.asp>.

Sub Node Three aims to facilitate participatory action research on mobilization projects around food security and community economic development that:

- are driven, guided and approved by our community partners
- involve an element of university - community collaboration
- contribute to building food security at multiple levels and with diverse groups
- benefit the social economy in Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties
- relevance to/impacts on the wider social economy

Funding support and in-kind donations for the Forum is gratefully acknowledged from the Social Economy and Sustainability Network, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Kids Action Program, Annapolis Valley Health, Healthy Eating Nova Scotia, the Community Business Development Corporation, and FEED Nova Scotia. The forum's sponsors were aiming to help create community action through participatory action research on food security and the social economy.

## Forum Agenda

The forum brought together local politicians, farmers, representatives from local organizations, researchers, students, public health staff and community members already involved or with an interest in becoming involved in community food security and food systems in the Annapolis, Kings and Hants Counties.

The objectives of the forum mirrored our process, and were:

- To clarify the relationship between community food security (CFS) and the social economy
- To gain an in depth understanding of CFS and how different groups are involved in our local area
- To obtain a shared understanding of the barriers to creating a food secure community
- To identify the resources and facilitate dialogue around opportunities to building CFS
- To discuss and create action to help support a food security in our local community
- To explore how the Social Economy and Sustainability Network can support community mobilization on food security and the social economy in Kings, Hants, & Annapolis Counties.

Participants in the Forum began with three introduction presentations to set the scene:

- What is Food Security? The Social Economy?
- Food Security and the Social Economy in Nova Scotia
- Introduction to 'A Continuum of Food Security Strategies'

These were followed by a series of 10 minute, powerful presentations that provided examples of capacity building strategies being used in the target area. These were:

- Debra Reimer – Kids Action Program
- Jessica Penner and Lesley Frank – Food Box Research
- Liesel Carlsson – School and Youth Gardening
- Kevin Randall – A Day in the Life of FEED NOVA SCOTIA (Video)
- Steve Law – SunRoot Farm, Community Shared Agriculture
- Andrew Fry – Wolfville as a Fair Trade Town
- Jamey Coughlin and Rita MacAulay – Nova Scotia Food Security Network
- Marla MacLeod – Food Miles

After lunching on local foods, prepared by Terroir Catering, participants joined one of four facilitated groups to discuss what opportunities they saw, and barriers they could foresee to addressing food security in Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties. Groups were asked by the Forum Moderator, Karen Pyra, to highlight two main opportunities and barriers. These were reviewed and grouped into four main themes for further action planning.

The four Action Planning Groups topics were:

- Education: Children; Public Awareness
- Food Box Program: Expansion
- Schools Groups: Building Partnerships
- Agricultural Community and Non-Profit Organizations: Increasing Opportunities for Dialogue

A second round of discussions convened after a break. Participants were asked to join one discussion tables, divided into the four main themes identified in the first round of discussions. Each Action Planning Group were charged with coming up with concrete action plans:

1. What actions need to happen to move this opportunity forward
2. Who will make sure that each action happens?
3. Who should participate in the action?
4. What is the first next step that needs to happen after today and who will take responsibility for making it happen?

Actions plans were shared with the whole group, and follow-up was to be managed by the Sub Node Three. Participants left feeling energized about mobilizing around food security and the social economy, which is reflected in the participant feedback and evaluations (see summary document attached).

## **Summary Notes from Action Planning Groups**

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### **Group 1: Education: Children; Public Awareness**

Facilitator: Liesel Carlsson

Others: Debbie Reimer, Kim Burns (KAP), Brad Osmond, Bud Boudreau (food bank)

#### **1) Childhood Education: Container Gardening program at Apple Tree Landing**

With the potential to have a satellite project (Youth/Community Garden) in Hants County, eventually.

Key components:

- Including parents in the process: planting, caring, harvesting
- Connecting with local seniors and community members (especially farmers) for mentoring
- Grow-a-row for either the food bank or the food box program.
- Involve the media from the start
- Train Apple Tree Landing staff in the philosophy, skills, etc needed so that the garden becomes something which they incorporate into their activities

Project Lead: Debbie Reimer

Support: Liesel Carlsson

Interested in staying informed: Kim and Bud. (Brad if DHA is interested)

Timeline: Beginning immediately.

Step 1: find a reliable contractor. KAP already has some funding for playground revitalization; part of which can be used for the garden.

#### **2) Public Awareness: Education on Food Security Issues via Community Health Boards.**

Key components:

- Reaching out to the community, municipal and provincial levels
- Food Security issues identified in the CHB strategic plan
- Specific mention of educating clinical dietitians
- Raising awareness about the Kids Action Program
- Potentially use the Food Security Workbook to put on workshops

Project Co-lead: Brad Osmond and Debbie Reimer

Support: Liesel Carlsson

Timeline: Beginning immediately

Step 1: Draft a letter to the Community Health Board (Debbie) about the issue, and offering immediate action/solution.

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## **Group 2: Food Box Program: Expansion**

Facilitator: Lesley Frank

*Expansion of the Food Box Program as a case study of a social entrepreneurship project. (increase the number of food boxes and evaluate the social, environmental and social economy impacts) could include Social Economy Project, local farmers and ecology action centre.*

### **What actions need to happen to move this opportunity forward?**

There is food being ploughed under, limited resources to purchase food and others that would buy food boxes willing that do not have income related food security issues. Here in lies a social enterprise opportunity.

By marketing conscious consumption/corporate social responsibility, a food box program could be expanded to greater numbers of people. Some purchasing the box, and through this, subsidizing boxes to families with income related food security issues. This would be an opportunity to education consumers and and opportunity for local producers. This could involve local farms/and or farmers market.

A market research/business plan would need to be developed. Exploring the various way the food box program could be expanded through a micro-enterprise.

Possible funding: Agrifood Industry Development Fund (Province of NS); economic development to help organize and develop business plan; Acadia.

How to measure impact?

Apply case study methodology. Build food box into affordability scenarios

Explore the Okalahoma Food Coop for ideas of measurement. Maybe measure stress, healthy eating change

*First Step:*

*Get the right participants involved, identify producer that would like to participate (start with producer organizations). Develop plan with Kids Action Program concerning the case study of expansion of food box program.*

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### Group 3: Schools Group: Building Partnerships

Facilitator: Sarah Campbell

#### Partnering With Schools Group – Food Security Forum

Actions Identified	Who Should Do Them?	Who Else Should be Involved?
1) Knowing what we want to say and how to say it, being proactive	Should involve teachers, school board, potentially Patty Williams (food security part), Ismay Bligh, Liesel Carlsson	Same as previous box.
2) Incorporate education about food security into in service day for teachers so they will start thinking about it.	Liesel Carlsson – could present on school gardens and give teachers ideas on how to incorporate them into lesson plans	Lindsay Redden, Caroline Whitby

#### First Next Step:

Connect Liesel with Caroline via Lindsay. See if it is possible to get this into an in service and go from there.

#### Who will Do this Step:

Lindsay Redden - connect Liesel and Caroline  
Liesel – already has a presentation developed

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## Group 4: Agricultural Community and Non-Profit Organizations: Increasing Opportunities for Dialogue

Facilitator: Jada Patey

Action:

Connecting Farmers and Non-Profit Organizations

What's Already Happening

- Food forum next week to continue dialogue at a provincial level
- Marla is in the process of getting a communications group together within next few weeks as a part of the Nova Scotia Food Security Network
  - Currently working on dialogue
- Funding from Health promotion and protection to fund food costing and an annual gathering connecting people – farmers and non-profit organizations
- There is a NS Farmers website called Local Food Dot for people to post-communication.
  - will be discussed at Food Forum
  - website available for farmers to use.

What actions need to happen?

- Need to get farmers and organizations together
- Network, need people to join the network – people here today
- 
- Make people aware – relying on donations. Remind people. Have all sides of the table on board

What Can We Do?

- Forums like this one
- Website postings
- Make sure everyone understands the Network's goals.
- Tap into monthly newsletter goes to farmers re: local farmers markets ie. Wolfville market
- Having a story sharing session with farmers to get them engaged

Next Steps

- 1) Connect with Liesel to find out how people attending the forum can join the food security network (Jessica to make contact and send out information)
- 2) Get communication groups together within the Food Security Network in the next few weeks (Marla is already in charge of this)
- 3) Kevin to talk to Feed NS to see if rep is going to the food forum – will bring forward dialogue improvement. Dialogue on a provincial level

## Summary of Evaluation Feedback

### Forum Evaluation

What was the most useful part of the day?	I would like to know more about:	I would be interested in seeing the following at a half day follow-up session	What will you take away with you as a result of today's forum?	Any comments that you'd like to make?	On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this forum?
	Funding opportunities, have a list of participants and what organizations they are from	yes	good contacts, new ideas for projects	yummy food, would have been nice to have a scheduled afternoon break and more unstructured time to talk to other participants	
I learned to think about food security from a variety of perspectives	How governments of all levels look at and deal with food security (Changes they might enact?)	Forum with government and farmers to discuss food security and sustainability issues	A recognition of the need to keep pushing		8
				Important not to forget about existing projects as opposed to starting new ones. What local food security projects (like feed NS) could use a shot in the arm or energy, volunteers and talent	8.5
Presentations and small group discussions	Food Security Network	Lessons learned and case studies of successful practices	Network and contacts. Info on a new initiatives	Great job! Thanks.	9

What was the most useful past of the day?	I would like to know more about:	I would be interested in seeing the following at a half day follow-up session	What will you take away with you as a result of today's forum?	Any comments that you'd like to make?	On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this forum?
Challenges (opportunities and action planning)		Follow-up on action planning	There's lots of great ideas! Let's move to action!	Great, productive day!	9
The presentations		Ways for dialogue between farmer and consumer	An awareness of the passion of the young people to make a difference in the lives of those who face multiple barriers		9.5
Presentations on food security initiatives	how the issue of food security in NS compares with other atlantic provinces	connecting producers and consumers of food in NS	food connections with people concerned with food security, working in a diversity of sectors	Nice lunch and snacks!	7.5
Workshops. The small group discussions might have been better if we could have seen what others were discussion and have some of the benefit of these discussions when we talked!	producers, distribution and the economic opportunities and challenges relating to food	producer related issues forum!	learn more about the relationship between the producer and consumer	it would have been nice to hear what other small groups were discussing as we deliberated	7
That what I had to say was hear. That we all want things to start as soon as possible	How else I can help	If any of the Action Plan worked	That there's people that want to see what we can do in get other people and companies involved	Things were great	9
What was the most useful past of the day?	I would like to know more about:	I would be interested in seeing the following at a half day follow-up session	What will you take away with you as a result of today's forum?	Any comments that you'd like to make?	On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this forum?

Mini presentations in morning. Interesting to know what others are doing			Knowledge of the opportunities available for food insecure families/households in the valley- ie. Food boxes	great day	9
Action plan		yes	There are things we can do to address food insecurity locally	Would have been good to see a list of things that could be done locally as well so we could know/choose	8
Presentations (so much going on that I did not know about)	The concept of the "social economy", "social enterprise", "community enterprise", "guaranteed income for farmers"	Alternative ideas for our commodified food system. I.e. Farmers as public servants how could this happen (The caterer! AWESOME!!)	New ideas to follow up on, taking things back to discuss at a higher level, issues that need to be addressed from various levels	wonderful day, well organized, excellent food!	9
Dialogue with so many people	Farmer public communication		Knowledge of the whole food security issue. A real sense of movements in the area	Keep me in the loop	9
Loved the 10 min presentations. Quick and easy to follow and enjoyable		What has happened from this forum or others like it	More to do	Food was great	9
What was the most useful part of the day?	I would like to know more about:	I would be interested in seeing the following at a half day follow-up session	What will you take away with you as a result of today's forum?	Any comments that you'd like to make?	On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this forum?

Presentations were interesting and varied	Sunroot and how that model could be expanded/offered as a resource to the farm community	Involvement of the producers- farmers	some greater understanding of the level of need locally. Also some confusions - I feel like the solutions need to come fro a "bigger picture" view - an articulated food policy at government level - a combined effort between producers and families at risk - the 2nd afternoon workshop left me perplexed rather than inspired	Great food	7
Getting to meet and talk with staff and participants of Kids Action. Finding out more about their programming	Ag producers - are canadian farmers subsidized? What types of supports are available to them?	"A day in the life of a Nova Scotia farmer"	There are lots of people with a desire to see food security increase in NS - the importance of working together is very important	food was <i>amazing</i> . Thanks for buying local	9
				<i>Average</i>	8.5

## Working Paper Feedback

A. Please let us know what you found helpful in this Working Paper.

Include Paper # \_\_\_\_\_

B. How could the Working Paper Series be improved?

C. Is there anything that needs to be changed in this Working Paper?

D. Your name and contact info (optional)

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### SES/ESD Network Research Goals

- . Contributing to the theory and practice of social economy in the Atlantic region
- . Internal bridging, bonding, mentoring & capacity building
- . Encouraging use of the “social economy” as a framing concept in the region
- . Linking Atlantic partners with other parts of Canada and the world

### SES/ESD Network Research Themes and Questions

#### *Conceptualizing & describing the social economy in Atlantic Canada*

- . What does the social economy look like? What needs does it address?
- . How can we best capture this sector conceptually?
- . What, if anything, makes it distinctive or innovative? How interconnected are its facets,  
& to what effect?
- . What are the characteristics of social economy organizations?
- . What are the implications for government policy?

#### *Policy inventory and analysis*

- . How are different understandings of “social economy” reflected in government policy?
- . What needs are not being met, & what changes are needed in regulatory environment?
- . What indicators can we develop to aid in policy development?

#### *Community mobilization around issues of common concern (natural resources; food security;*

#### *inclusion and empowerment)*

- . Do social economy organizations contribute to social inclusion, the democratization of the economy, & empowerment?
- . What inputs are needed to overcome obstacles & build capacity?
- . What can we learn from research on mobilization around food security, empowerment  
& inclusion, community management of natural resources & energy?

#### *Measuring and Financing the Social Economy*

- . What can social accounting, co-operative accounting, social auditing, & other techniques contribute towards a better understanding of the work and contributions of social economy organizations?
- . Where do social economy organizations obtain the financing that they need?
- . What do social economy organizations contribute toward financing the social economy?

#### *Modeling & researching innovative, traditional, & IT-based communication and dissemination processes*

- . How can social economy actors best communicate?
- . What can our Network team members contribute by developing & modeling processes and techniques?
- . What can be gained from exploring technology as an equalizer vs. technology as a barrier?



**Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network**  
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