

Reviewing & Evaluating Policy Production, Implementation & Impact Across the Atlantic Provinces

Policies that support bridging, bonding and building
between government & the social economy in Atlantic
Canada

Project 1.6

Dr. Jan Myers, Assistant Professor, Dalhousie University

Chase McGrath, Research Assistant, Dalhousie University

Sub-Node 1 Working Group: Leslie Brown, Peter Hough, Kathy Moggridge,
Penelope Rowe, Luc Thériault

September 2008

Funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités



Introduction: Project Aims

- Trends in government policy indicate an enhanced future role for the social economy
- The research uses and builds on some of the concepts of social capital
- The project aims to focus on all different levels of government to provide an overarching analysis and commentary on existing policy, policy scans and research outputs across the Atlantic region
- To produce an inventory of data & resources

Different regions “can hold different levels of social capital which affects the levels of democracy and economic growth.”

“Social capital at this level refers to the social structure that enhances the effectiveness of local governments through transitions of civic engagement and the structure of civic networks.”

Beugelsdijk & Smilders 2003, p4



Background and Rationale:

Purpose & Significance of Study

Key research questions

- How are differing understandings of the social economy (SE) reflected in existing government policies?
- What are the consequences of these differing understandings in terms of governance, policy & program frameworks?
- What types of relationships exist around policy development & implementation?
- What policy needs are not being met? What gaps exist?
- What changes may be needed to enhance opportunities for greater collaboration between SE organizations and governments?

Relationship to Network's research goals

- Policy inventory & analysis
- Conceptualizing & describing the SE in Atlantic Canada
- Contributing to the theory & practice of SE in the Atlantic region
- Encouraging the use of the “social economy” as a framing concept in the region
- To support linking Atlantic partners with other parts of Canada (and the world)



Community/University Collaboration (partnership)

- The project is part of Sub-Node 1, which consists of community, government, and university partners from all provinces in Atlantic Canada
- Phase 1 of the research project employs a graduate student as research assistant
- Anticipated outputs and outcomes will benefit community and academic partners and support the SES/ÉSD Network's stated principles of transparency, accountability, inclusivity, mutual respect, relationship building and collaborative and consultative processes



Project Methodology & Research Methods

- The research is informed by a qualitative approach to enquiry.
- Research activities will include web-based research, collation and interpretation of policy documentation (for example reports, statutes, department guidelines and policies, cross-sector meeting reports, service reviews and evaluations, political addresses and manifestos)
- Time line (Phase 1) May to October 2008.



Main Outputs To Date

- Preliminary scan of policies & programs at provincial levels and by province
- Development of a classification and categorization system for analyzing data collected
 - Development of searchable spreadsheet facility
 - Use of bibliographic software for storage & retrieval purposes
- Reports in progress
 - Discussion papers on working definitions
 - Annotated bibliographies



Deliverables (planned)

- Database and archive system (on-going)
- Position & discussion papers (due Sept/Oct)
- Data reports on policy scan and inventory by province (Sept)
- Annotated bibliography (Sept/Oct – ongoing)
- Literature Review (Sept/Oct)
- Final report (Phase 1, October)
- Evaluative report linking to Phase 2 of research project (Oct)



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités

How Students Benefited from the Project

- One graduate student – Chase McGrath - is involved as research assistant for the project
- Skills gained by students: data collection, collation and analysis; data and software manipulation; research reports and papers



Conclusions and Next Steps

- This stage of information and collection will include both a meta-analysis of policy scans and initiatives within the SE network and the broader policy environment (local, regional, provincial, national and international).
- This is in line with the aims of the Node in terms of “social economy actors and policy makers [benefiting] from the analysis of the policy/regulatory environment and suggestions for change, and from the experience of researching, theorizing, and modeling policies and practices of inclusion and empowerment” (Brown, 2005, summary).
- The ground work achieved by this Phase of the research will link into a broader focus on the development of policy initiatives and networks across the Atlantic and will inform further fieldwork and research across provinces.

