

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



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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

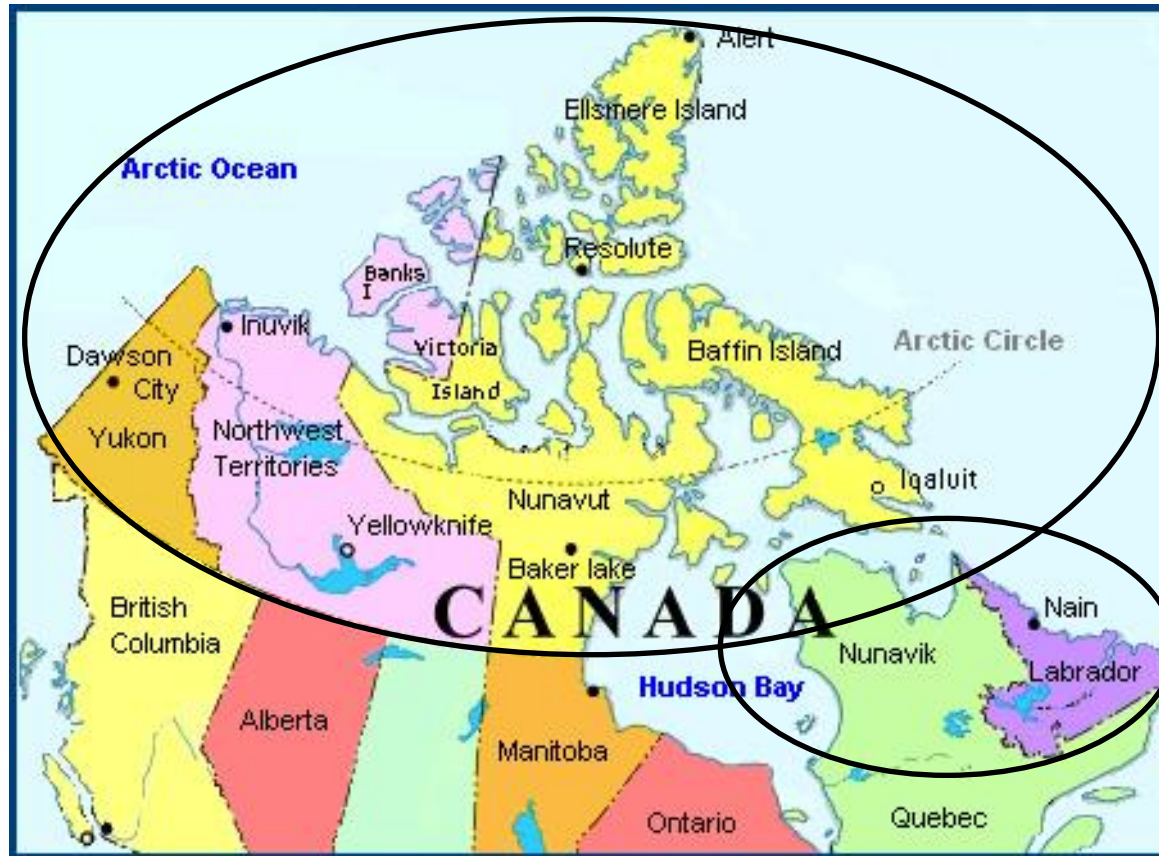


- Key University partners coordinating 4 research themes
 - Portraiture: Chris Southcott, Lakehead Univ.
 - Resource Regimes: Brenda Parlee, Univ. of Alberta
 - The State: Frances Abele, Carleton Univ.
 - Indigenous people: David Natcher, Univ of Saskatchewan

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



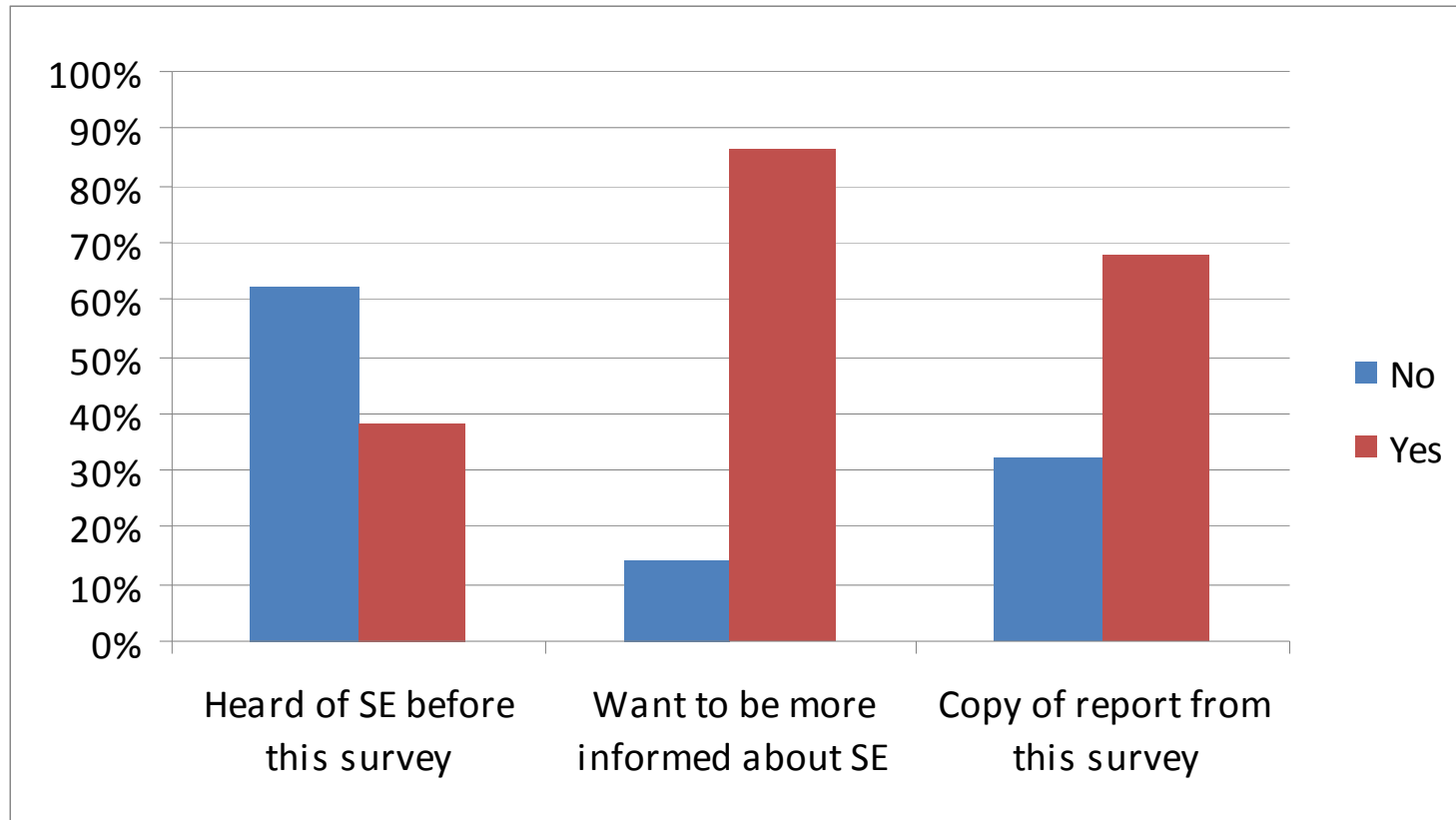
- Still poorly understood area in Northern communities.
- Recent survey conducted to determine what exists in terms of SE groups in the North
 - Questionnaire designed to ask organizations about
 - Objectives/activities
 - Structure
 - Board
 - Areas that might be concerns

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

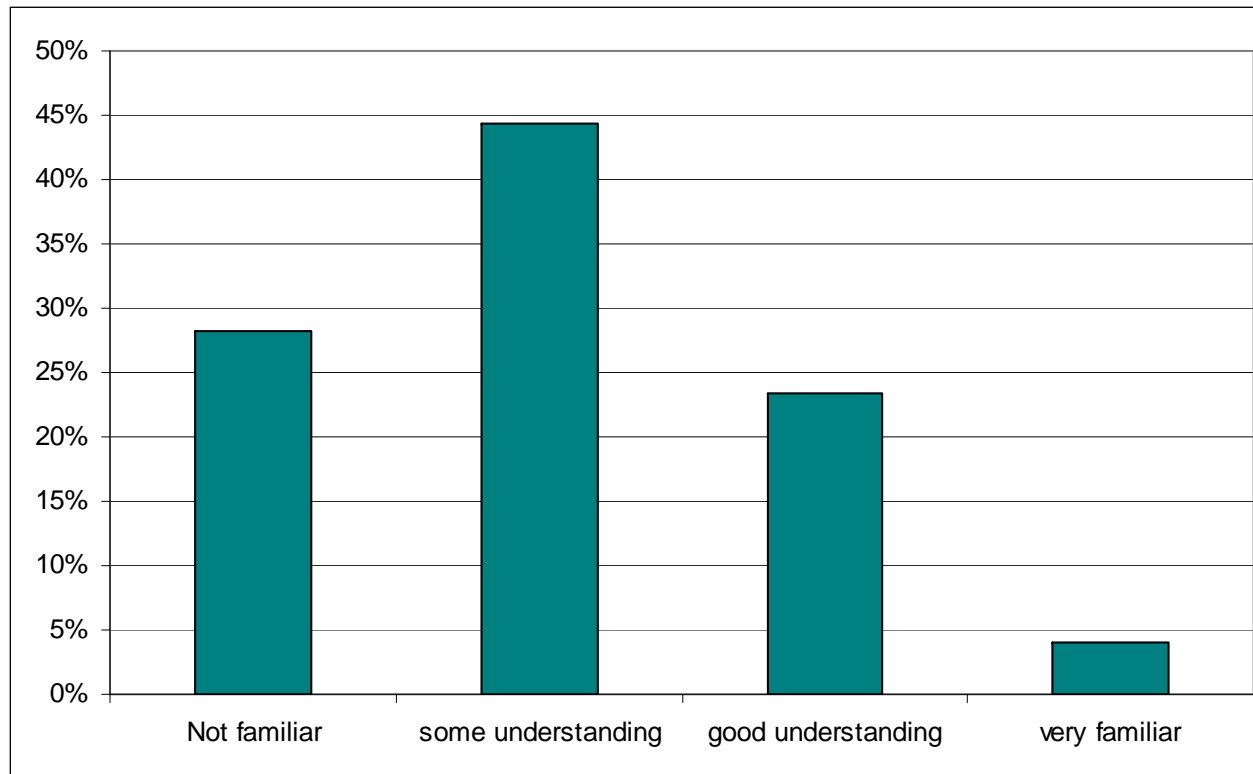
SERNNoCa Survey Results



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

