

Mobilization around Food Security within the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships: A National Scan

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Introduction

Community food security (CFS) is both a social movement and a goal; a collection of individuals and organizations working towards CFS, which has been described as a situation that “*exists when all community residents obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone.*” (1). The CFS movement strives for health, sustainability, democracy and justice in our food system.

The social economy (SE), while it has no agreed upon definition, is a network of activities and organizations (SEOs) that have grown out of collective entrepreneurship, that are committed to community service, autonomous management, democratic decision making, primacy of people over profits (2). The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP) is a network of six regional research Nodes and respective Sub Nodes that span Canada, and a national Hub, involved in the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded research on the Social Economy. Community and Academic Partners are involved at each level (Sub Nodes, Nodes and Hub) in a collaborative action research partnership.

The social economy is an economy based on human values and the principles of participation and empowerment, solidarity and mutual self-help (2). In such a way, CFS and the SE have goals that are compatible and mutually reinforcing; SEOs such as cooperatives and networks are well positioned to play an important role in building food security in Canada.

Background

McCullum’s three stage continuum of CFS strategies (3) was used as a framework for organization and analysis of the food security research projects within CSERP. Stage one of this framework includes short term strategies that initiate food system changes through immediate and temporary initiatives. These may include educational campaigns or emergency food programs. In stage two, medium term strategies involve communities experiencing food insecurity in building partnerships, networks, and ultimately capacity to guide the transition of our food system toward sustainability and equity. Stage three, long term strategies require long term commitment from leaders of the entire food system to work toward redesigning the food system on a broad scale. These types of strategies include policies that decrease socio-economic disparities, and support sustainable agriculture.

Purpose and Objectives

The Atlantic Social Economy and Sustainability Network (SES Node), and Atlantic SES Sub Node Three: Mobilization around Food Security and Community Economic Development (SN3)¹, undertook the initial scan of food security research happening

¹ See Appendix A for a list of SN3 membership

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within the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP) to fuel discussions within the SES Network on further potential collaborations at the local or national level.

The objectives were to create a document that identified food security research projects and partners within CSERP, opportunities for regional or national collaboration, and gaps in the food security research fabric.

Methods

In August 2007, a Graduate Dietetic Intern (Liesel Carlsson) working with both Sub Node Three (SN3) and the SES Node conducted a scan of the CSERP Hub website as well as each of the six regional Node web sites for research projects related to food security. Links to research projects relating to food security were explored. The intern also listened to a Tele-Learning session on food security, hosted by the CSERP Hub in February 2007, for background on the current food security dialogue within CSERP.

All regional Node coordinators and specific food security project investigators were contacted via email for more information about the project including project goals, past accomplishments, present activities, and future directions. A copy of this email is found in Appendix A. The intern then followed up with coordinators, investigators with related research, and those who had responded to the e-mail request, by telephone for more information, where necessary.

At the National Hub, the Coordinator and a student turned the initial scan information into a table format, and undertook filling in more project information from National Partners not reached in the initial scan. The Hub also led the initiative to translate much of the information from Quebec, available only in French, into English. French translations of the Scan information have not been done.

Based on the data collected, food security related research projects were examined, described and categorized according to the main themes they represented. Each category was then discussed in relation to process research, outcomes research, and the development of deliverables such as models or resources.

Gaps were difficult to identify as many Node Coordinators and Principal Investigators were on vacation during the time of the initial scan (June through August, 2007). However, during the academic year (September 2007 through April 2008) the SES Node and CSERP Hub Coordinators, and the SN3 Graduate Research Assistant (formerly the Dietetic Intern) completed email and telephone follow up to fill in these gaps.

The ways in which CSERP has contributed to CFS and where gaps in the food security research fabric exist were analyzed using McCullum's three stage continuum of CFS strategies (3) as a framework.

Results

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Initial categorization according to the main alternative food system strategy each project represented (cooperatives, organic agriculture, community supported agriculture, fair trade, food networks, marketing strategies, policy development and urban/rural gardening), was done to help identify opportunities for collaboration and research. See Appendix B for a full table of projects categorized by strategy and region.

This section provides a brief summary of research projects within the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP) related to food security. The summary includes the university and community based partners, and a brief description of the research project. The project summaries are organized by regional Node, beginning with the Hub, followed by Northern Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan; Southern Ontario; BC and Alberta; Quebec; and Atlantic, in that order. A discussion of opportunities and gaps follows.

Canadian Social Economy Hub

The British Columbia Institute for Cooperative Studies (BCICS), the host organization and co-director for the CSERP Hub, has eight main research themes related to cooperative studies, one of which is the Social Economy. In collaboration with the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet), they are engaged in knowledge mobilization activities at the hub level, looking to understand how the approaches of the Social Economy can be applied to community organizations and individuals to meet their social and economic goals.

BCICS also has seven other research themes that overlap with food security in some cases, including: developing cooperatives, coops and peace, youth and cooperatives, cooperatives in British Columbia (BC), credit unions, cooperatives and technology, ethical purchasing, and cooperative community relations.

Cooperative Case Studies

BCICS has a wealth of information on food and other food security related cooperatives, available through case studies.² These case studies, completed over the last six years, were part of building up the basic foundational knowledge on cooperatives in BC. Ten of the case studies involve food cooperatives, directly relating to various parts of the food system; many others demonstrate community economic development initiatives, which also relate to community food security. These case studies, along with the wealth of resources at BCICS, provide useful educational tools for community groups looking at cooperatives as a tool for building community food security.

² Available from: <http://www.bcics.org/resources/casestudies>

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Case Study: Cooperating for Local Food Security: The Story of Saanich Organics

Academic Partner: Robin Tunnicliffe, BCICS

Community Partner: Saanich Organics

Growing population and inadequate public policy support are threatening the rich farming lands of Southern Vancouver Island. However, there is an enthusiastic mix of small and organic farmers in the region whose efforts to steward the land have been welcomed by local residents. The story of Saanich Organics provides a look at the cooperative efforts of three female farmers as they strive to establish a thriving, small-scale agricultural enterprise. An Mp3 of Robin's Speaker Series Presentation is available at <http://www.bcics.org/content/cooperating-local-food-security-story-saanich-organics>.

The Social Economy in the High School Curriculum

Researcher: Sarah Comode, BCICS.

This research examines where the social economy is taught, or should be taught, in the BC high school curriculum. The project is currently underway, but may identify educational opportunities for learning about food security, as part of the social economy.

Cooperatives and the Future of Food

Researcher: Elizabeth Morrison, Conference Canadian CED Network/Le Réseau canadien de DÉC.

This research explores how networks are an effective tool for breaking barriers in building thriving local food economies. The rooted nature of food growing means many work alone, unaware of effective initiatives in other regions of the country. This research will highlight how the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) members use information sharing, tele-learning, and compilation of best practices to overcome the geographical limitations that force locally based initiatives toward isolation. It will examine how national networks made up of co-operative food producers, distributors, and lobbyists - including the new CCEDNet food policy working group - create collaborative communities. In particular, it will provide positive examples of how collaborative networks can act as crucial support for research and policy analysis leading to supportive legislation.

Northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan

Algoma Food Network

Academic Partners: Gayle Broad (Algoma University College)

Community Partner: Lee Ann Chevrette, Coordinator, Algoma Food Network; Algoma Food Network partners

“The Algoma Food Network is a coalition dedicated to building and supporting an autonomous, sustainable, healthy, local food system accessible to all; through education, advocacy, action, and relationship building.”³

The Network acts as an umbrella organization to support the activities of all of the local agencies, grassroots organizations and individuals involved in community food security in the Algoma Region. The Network includes/supports the efforts of the local food movement, farmers' markets, local agricultural organizations, six community supported agriculture programs, emergency food programs (several food banks, soup kitchens, etc.), community gardens, Plant a Row-Grow a Row programs, Seeds of Diversity, Slow Food, and Community Kitchens.

Community gardens are expanding, and there is some interest in developing a social enterprise with excess produce but this is still in the 'visioning' stages. The Network is also linking with more and more groups in nearby districts.³

The network priorities are to: ^{3, 4}

1. Launch a website and improve communications (Temporary Blog Spot: <http://algomafoodnetwork.wordpress.com/>)
2. Hosting of one educational event for each season
3. Continue to work on youth involvement; establishment of 4-h club hub
4. Increase the profile of the Network and connect with more community partners involved in community food security
5. Develop an "Eat Local Algoma" awareness and education campaign

Beef Marketing Business Plan for Farmers (Phase I)

Academic Partners: Miranda Mayhew, Cecilia Fernandez, Gayle Broad, and David Thompson (NORDIK Institute)

Community Partner: Algoma Cooperative Livestock Sales

The purpose of this project was to assist local farmers in assessing the demand for local beef, and background research on the feasibility of a cooperative approach to marketing local beef. Research with the farmers included conducting a consumer survey to determine demand and selection criteria; identifying production issues and decision points; and creating a business plan to access funding for further development.

³ Algoma Food Network, (Working Document-January 2008).

⁴ Personal Communication, Lee Ann Chevrette, May 29th, 2008.

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This phase of the project was completed in September 2007 with the submission of a business plan to the Ontario Cattlemen's Association.

Timeline: 2006-2007

Penokean Hills Cooperative Beef Marketing Study (Phase II)

Academic Partners: Gayle Broad (Algoma University College); Co-investigator(s): Alicia Mills (lead, marketing intern, Algoma University College)
Community Partner: Algoma Cooperative Livestock Sales

The purpose of this project was to assist local farmers in determining a marketing strategy and organizational arrangements for the marketing of local beef, and possibly other food products. It follows a survey on whether consumers were interested in local beef. The specific objective was to identify the demand for local beef (marketing study). Following the first phase of the Business Plan Development, the specific objectives of this second phase are to create a marketing strategy, increase awareness of local beef, as well as networking and knowledge sharing. The project was in the implementation phase in summer 2007 and a marketing intern had been hired. A major launch of the initiative with public events, local radio etc., was scheduled for the beginning of May, 2008.

Timeline: 2007-2008

Co-operative Marketing Options for Organic Agriculture

Academic Partner: Michael Gertler (Univ. of Sask.); Jason Heit (Intern, Univ. of Sask.)
Community Partners: Walter Nisbet and Bill Rosher (Canadian Organic Certification Co-operative); Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-food Saskatchewan Program.

This project will review relevant literature and develop an inventory of the Saskatchewan experience in co-operative marketing of organic grains and other specific crops. The goal is to provide recommendations for co-operative enterprises through a paper, report and presentations.

Community Supported Agriculture

Academic Partners: Miranda Mayhew and Cecilia Fernandez (Algoma University College, NORDIC Institute).
Community Partner: Lee Ann Chevrette, Community Supported Agriculture groups.

Community Supported (Shared) Agriculture (CSA) is an alternative food supply system that gives local people the power to help protect the environment by connecting local growers to local consumers in cooperation. This model helps develop a healthy regional food supply which helps build a strong local economy.

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The first CSA was developed through the collaborative efforts of the community partners and Algoma University College. Starting with one group in 2004, involving two growers and 20 families, this year there are five distinct CSAs, with a total of six growers supporting/growing food for 170 local families.

The primary objective of the program was to support local farmers by creating markets for their products. Creating a producer-consumer food alliance was a means of ensuring stable markets for local products and increasing awareness of the local food movement.

The project developed a CSA manual, to assist communities in setting up their own CSAs.

The youngest producer in 2007 was a 17 year old woman farmer who produced 8 weeks of produce for 8 families; this became her summer job. ³ This year she is at least doubling the size of her program. Again, this will create summer employment for her.

Eat Where You Live: Building a Social Economy of Local Food in Western Canada

Academic Partners: Joel Novek (University of Winnipeg), Shirley Thompson (Univ. of Manitoba), Cara Nichols (student, Univ. of Man.); James Kornelson (Univ. of Man.)
Community Partners: Paul Chorney (Manitoba Food Charter), Kim Bailey (Mount Carmel Clinic).

With specific focus on Winnipeg and Saskatoon, this research aims to assess the possibilities for expanding the social economy of local food as an alternative to the dominant global food system, and to assess the possibilities for improving local food security through the social economy. It will also examine the obstacles faced by social enterprises in the food sector, and suggest means by which these obstacles may be overcome and food security for communities increased.

The subjects of this research project are those social enterprises engaged in the production and distribution of local food in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. This includes community farms, community gardens, farmer's markets, and cooperative food distribution networks.

Harvest Moon Society Marketing Co-operative: Building Social Capital Through an Alternative Food Economy

Academic Partners: Stephane McLachlan and Colin Anderson (Univ. of Manitoba),
Community Partners: Jo-Lene Gardiner (Harvest Moon Society).

The overall goal of this study was to better understand local food systems from multiple perspectives and evaluate the farm-level implications of participation in direct marketing.

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The purpose of this project is the development of a producer-driven collective marketing cooperative. The producer group that is the subject of this research self-identified as a social enterprise committed to increasing the profitability of production, building healthy communities and environment, and working toward a just and sustainable food system.

This community-based research project described how new generation cooperatives, specifically those focused on local food systems, increase social cohesion and social capital both within the immediate marketing group, the larger communities they are nested within, and among the diverse stakeholders represented in the food system. It also evaluated the role agricultural cooperatives play in managing risk and adapting to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and future stressors.

This advocacy research study employed participatory action research methods that gave voice to producers, benefited the community and contributed to the theoretical literature on the linkages between the social economy and risk and adaptation in rural communities.

Timeline: 2007-08

Southern Ontario

The State of Food Security in Ottawa & Eastern ON: Exploring the Synthesis between Urban Food Security and Rural Food Producers through the Social-Economy

Academic Partners: David Welch, , École de service social, Université d'Ottawa dwelch@uottawa.ca, and Claire Sales, MSW student, École de service social Université d'Ottawa, claire.sales@gmail.com

Community Partners: Lisa Jayne, Ottawa CED Network, Moe Garahan, Ottawa Food Security Council, and Union des cultivateurs franco-ontariens

This study looks at the synthesis between urban food security and rural food producers through such social economy projects as catering, community gardens, collective kitchens (City of Ottawa, 2001), projects that are part of 'buy local' strategies, eco-villages and cooperatives. This project builds upon earlier research (Lauriault & Welch, 2003; Leduc, Browne & Welch, 2001), and proposes policies for a sustainable, long-term solution for food security. The study focuses on the rural Franco-Ontarian community of Eastern Ontario but will develop policies with a more general intent.

The Social Economy in Organic Agriculture

Academic Partners: Jennifer Sumner, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, Univ. of Guelph; Ann Clark, Univ. of Guelph

Community Partners: Terry Ackerman, OntarBio, Debbie Field, Foodshare Toronto

The purpose of this research is to explore the social economy in the organic farming movement, and to investigate its contribution to the sustainability of rural communities. This study will analyze the potential of organic farming to revitalize rural communities impoverished by global forces, document the successes of social economy organizations in the organic farming movement, and help these organizations to improve their performance in such areas as fair trade, the role of women, and learning for progressive social change. This study will also mobilize knowledge to support organic Social Economy Organizations and rural community development. A research report describing the wide range of economic, social and environmental contributions made by organic farmers to their rural communities is available online at:

http://www.organiccentre.ca/DOCs/org_farmers_rural_dev.pdf.

Internationalizing the Social Economy Through Fair Trade: An Action Research Project

Academic Partners: Ananya Mukherjee, York University

Community Partners: Bill Barrett, Planet Bean Coffee Co-operative

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Using the efforts of the Planet Bean Co-operative, in Guelph, Ontario, as an example, this project investigates the challenges involved in social economy enterprises undertaking initiatives to develop new Fair Trade products and the conditions for success.

The specific objectives of this project are: 1) to investigate the entire range of activities involved in the development of two new Fair Trade product lines (a chai tea product and spices); 2) to analyze the nature (technical, financial, organizational, political-bureaucratic, social) of problems that arise in these endeavors, as well as the measures employed to address them; 3) to develop and employ social accounting measures that capture the full range of the value added in the process for both southern and northern partners (including, in addition to standard economic indicators, increased participation in decision-making, increased involvement in community affairs, empowerment of women, etc.), and; 4) to evaluate the effectiveness of Fair Trade certifying bodies in the certification and promotion of new products.

Fair and Ethical Trade, Public Policy and the Social Economy

Academic Partners: Darryl Reed, York University, Ananya Mukherjee, York University, John-Justin McMurtry, York University

Community Partners: Bill Barrett, Planet Bean Coffee Co-operative, St. Jacobs' Mennonite community, Wikwemikong First Nation, Foodshare Toronto
Partners in India (yet to be determined)

This project explores the role of procurement policies in promoting the Fair and Ethical Trade movements and their underlying goals of improving the living standards and working conditions of vulnerable and marginalized workers in the South. The project will look at three basic public realms where policies have been developed: school board, universities and municipalities. This project will: 1) develop a data base of purchasing policies in Canada; 2) analyze the origins of such policies (including the key factors that spurred/inhibited their introduction), and; 3) analyze the impact of the policies (on sales of fair and ethically traded products, on the functioning of the organizations adopting them, on public opinion, on contributing to the formation of legislation, etc.).

BC and Alberta (BALTA)

BALTA Social Economy Research Cluster (SERC) #2 (The Social Economy in Rural Revitalization and Development) and Canadian Centre for Community Renewal has identified *food* as one of their main priorities. They are currently working on case studies of farmer's markets.

Case Studies: Farmer's Markets

Academic Researcher: Paul Cabaj, Business Development Officer, Canadian Centre for Community Renewal, Chair of BALTA's Social Economy Cluster 2: Rural Revitalization, Coordinator for Local Food First, Co-Chair, CCEDNet Food Policy Council

This research will produce comparative case studies of farmer's markets in Alberta and BC to compare the breadth, role and range of activity of farmer's markets. Currently, most farmer's markets across Canada operate with virtually no security in policy, zoning or bylaws with most city policies prohibiting open air vending, meaning they can be moved or shut down at any time. This research will focus on the policy issues that need to be addressed for farmer's markets to flourish as an essential pillar of a re-localized food system.

Québec

Inventory, Impact and Contribution of Community Gardens

Academic Partners: Manon Bouliane, University of Laval

This project will identify and describe all community gardens in the City and Chaudière-Appalachiens regions, evaluate their local economic and social impacts by analyzing how the gardens are linked to other local or regional development initiatives.

Conditions for Successful Start-Up of Social Economy Enterprises in Rural and Urban Environments: Four Case Studies

Academic Partner: Jacaues Caillouette, Suzanne Garon, University of Sherbrooke;
Community Partner: Dominic Provost CLD (Local Development Centre) of the Haut-Saint-François; Joanne Beaudin, Services d'aide à domicile de Coaticook (Coaticook Home Care Services).

Starting up social economy enterprises is a major challenge; by studying how and under which principles these enterprises come into being in rural and urban environments, we will be able to shed light on their genesis. With a focus on a local farmer's market and localized agricultural systems, this research project contributes to mobilization and understanding of food security issues.

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Atlantic

Within the Atlantic Social Economy and Sustainability Network, Sub Node Three (SN3) is devoted to mobilization around food security and community economic development.

SN3 Goals:

- Research on mobilization around food security and community economic development.
- To support participatory action research projects that: 1) are driven, guided and approved by SES Project community partners; 2) involve an element of university - community collaboration; 3) contribute to building food security at multiple levels and with diverse groups; 4) benefit the social economy in Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties; 5) relevant to/impact on the wider social economy.

Food security is also a theme addressed by several other projects within the two other mobilization Sub Nodes in the Atlantic SES Network: Sub Node Two (SN2) (Mobilization for Inclusion and Empowerment in the Social Economy), and Sub Node Four (SN4) (Mobilization for Natural Resources and Livelihoods).

SN₃ - Food Box Program: Current and Potential Contributions to the Social Economy

Academic Partners: Patty Williams, Applied Human Nutrition, Mount Saint Vincent University

Community Partners: Debbie Reimer, Kids Action Program/Apple Tree Landing Family Education Centre

The purpose of this research is to examine, using participatory action research and qualitative methods, the role the Kids Action Program's Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program funded Great Beginnings Food Box Program currently plays and could potentially play in the social economy of Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties in NS.

Research questions include: 1) what is the value of the Food Box program to families, communities?; 2) how can the Food Box program be improved, if at all?; 3) to what extent would this program be beneficial for other families and individuals facing barriers?; and 4) how can the role of local producers and suppliers within the program be facilitated?

Timeline: 2007 – 2009

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Kids Garden Outreach Program – Pilot project

Academic Partners: Liesel Carlsson, Dietetic Intern, Mount Saint Vincent University; Patty Williams, Faculty Supervisor, Mount Saint Vincent University; Tristaca Caldwell, Acadia University (continuation research project only).

Community Partners: Debbie Reimer (Project Supervisor), Kids Action Program, Apple Tree Landing Family Education Centre

This rural outreach Kids' Garden, was started as a pilot project by the Kids Action Program with a group of children from socially and economically marginalized families. The goal of this pilot project was to explore the potential of using an outreach garden to increase the food security of the youth. The project catalyzed the development of a research project exploring the role of family oriented garden projects in building food security for marginalized families in Kings and Hants Counties. Entitled *Growing Community Support Networks for Food Security in Kings and Hants Counties*, this project has been funded by SN3 to expand to include a research component, a Children's Centre garden at Apple Tree Landing, and several pilot home gardens to serve marginalized families.

Cultivating Food Security in Nova Scotia Public Schools

Academic Partners: Liesel Carlsson, MScANH(c), Dept. of Applied Human Nutrition, Mount Saint Vincent University; Patty Williams, Dept. of Applied Human Nutrition, Mount Saint Vincent University.

Community Partners: Gaspereau Valley Elementary School.

Gaspereau Valley Elementary School has an ongoing school (food) garden project, which is the subject of Liesel Carlsson's Master's thesis project – a qualitative case study that aims to explore the value of school gardens in addressing community food insecurity. More specifically, this research will look at: 1) any health, social and ecological effects of school food gardens; and 2) what factors contribute to producing these effects. Using a combination of focus groups, interviews, participant observation and document review, data will be gathered during the primary gardening months at the school, May-October, 2008. Expected date of completion by spring/summer 2009.

SN4: Aide à la diffusion de la coopérative agricole la 'Récolte de chez-nous'/The Really Local Harvest Farmer's Cooperative.

Academic Partner : Omer Chouinard, Université de Moncton.

Community Partners: Léopold Bourgeois, Gilles Martin, and Benoit Michaud of Récolte de chez-nous (RCN) ; Danièle Courchesne, Centre de Conservation des Sols et de L'eau

The Really Local Harvest is a cooperative of relatively small scale farmers in south-eastern New Brunswick. Some members of the coop would like to make more use of compost as an important source of organic fertilizer that helps maintain soil health. With

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the help of researchers from the Université de Moncton, a study was undertaken to estimate compost needs and to evaluate the feasibility of a farmer owned and operated composting facility in the region. Interviews were conducted with farmers, compost producers and forestry and agrifood businesses in the region. The establishment of a composting facility was not recommended. The complexity of a medium to large scale composting facility involves important costs and expertise. Existing composting businesses in the region are already competing for organic matter. It is estimated that it would be difficult to produce compost at a lower cost than what is offered on the market. Also interviews conducted showed that the demand on the part of farmers is of yet limited although many express the desire to use more compost in the future. The main obstacles to compost use are the price of the product (associated to transportation in large part) and the belief that consumers will not necessarily be willing to pay more for their products even if they apply such environmentally friendly practices. Partnerships such as those created between farmers and compost businesses in the course of this project will be important to encourage farmers of the region to adopt more sustainable practices on their farms.

SN4: Sustainable Community Development through Water Quality

Academic Partners: Omer Chouinard, Université de Moncton ; Monique Brideau, Université de Moncton

Community Partners: Eleven Watershed groups (of 16) in NB

The watershed groups are volunteer led groups that do community education around water quality. SN4 surveyed the members of 11 watershed groups and the septic tank quality within three. The data were provided to the watershed groups to help advocate for continuing the government program which supported low income families to purchase new/quality septic tanks. Recipients of this government program often end up volunteering for their local watershed group. Some of the social impacts included: reciprocity and social cohesion within the community, empowerment, social justice, community development, and resilience. Some of the environmental impacts included: decreased water contamination, reduced odor, better quality of drinking water, reduced nitrate and phosphate accumulation, decreased algae proliferation, and reduced changes in water temperatures.

SN2; Citizen-Farmer Cooperative Development

Academic Partners: Pamela Courtney Hall, University of Prince Edward Island

Community Partners: Gary Clauseheid, Citizen Farmer Cooperative

This research project documents the process during the development phases of a unique citizen-farmer cooperative. It involves farmers and citizens in PEI, but also extends to farmers and citizens in regions outside of PEI that may hear about the PEI Organic Farmer-Citizen Cooperative and initiate a similar movement. The goal of the research is to learn how a farmer-citizen cooperative can be developed in ways that address the problems of: 1) small-scale (family) farm attrition; 2) the centralization of farming; 3) the

global corporatization of food supply; and 4) the consequent environmental degradation and energy waste.

A series of monthly meetings (break-out groups plus plenary discussion) were organized to build the coop, to which the public, including farmers, were invited. The benefits to the local social economy include learning about co-operative development and the integration of agriculture into the community. Benefits to the wider social economy include: developing a way to deal with the problems of small-scale (family) farm attrition at a local level, the centralization of farming, the global corporatization of food supply, and consequent environmental degradation and energy waste.

SN₂ - Indigenous Community Development

Canadian Partners, Academic: Dr. Irené Novaczek, Director, Institute of Island Studies (IIS); Dolores Levangie, Intern (IIS); Kim D' Ambrogio, Intern (IIS)
Canadian Partners, Community: Randy Angus, Director of Integrated Resource Management, Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI (MCPEI)
Chilean Partners, Academic: Manuel Muñoz Millalonco, Williche Grand Council of Chiefs (WCC) and Professor of Anthropology at ARIS University
Chilean Partners, Community: Santiago Elmúdesi Franco, Bosque Modelo Chiloé (BMCh)

The purpose of this project was to identify opportunities to enhance traditional practice and diversify the local economy by building on indigenous knowledge of edible and medicinal marine plants (seaweeds). Project outcomes include: 1) knowledge sharing between Atlantic Canada and Chile through dialogue and workshops; 2) documented uses of various seaweeds; and 3) established relationships between academic and community partners in both countries. The project "...opened a door to helping the Mi'kmaq and Williche realize their potential and build their capacity to enhance traditional medicine practice[s] and entrepreneurship if they choose to do so." ⁵

This project helped highlight important issues related to food security and the social economy. ⁶ Changing cultural beliefs in Native populations, often referred to as acculturation or assimilation, are affecting food security in both the Mi'kmaw and Williche nations. Many members of these communities were aware of traditional, medicinal knowledge, but were not practicing it because of changing cultural beliefs. Specific to seaweed, it became clear that water pollution issues are affecting whether and how these communities can use seaweeds. In addition, parallels in Aboriginal health inequalities in both Canada and Chile became quite apparent, and a need for holistic and culturally inclusive health care was highlighted in the project report.

⁵ Draft Report: *Aboriginal Wisdom: Medicinal Seaweeds of the Mi'kmaq and Williche A Comparative Study of two Oceanic Island Cultures*, by Dolores Le Vangie (2008).

⁶ Personal communication with Dolores LeVangie, March 27th, 2008.

Discussion

The research projects, briefly summarized in the above results, provide us with snapshots of the types of research happening within the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP). They are diverse, and as unique as the needs of the communities they work with.

Each community is distinctive in its needs to achieve community food security. For example, one community may have groups who face acute, limited access to nutritious, acceptable food due to economic challenges and therefore need to focus on immediate, charity food initiatives and long term poverty reduction strategies. At the same time, another community may be facing a situation where small scale, organic farmers are unable to compete with Californian organic producers, while in their surrounding community there is a rising demand for pesticide-free, fresh food. This second community may rally their efforts around building a local food network that supports the needs of the farmers and consumers. Both of these situations exist, and demand very different CFS responses.

Similarly, each community will vary in what social economy organizations exist or arise to meet a food security need. For example, in the first community described in the previous paragraph, a local church group may partner with public health to host and run a food bank and collective kitchen program. This group may also engage in income generating projects and advocacy work for poverty reduction. In the second community described, farmers might decide to transition to a community supported agriculture (CSA) model, offering weekly produce deliveries for up front purchases of shares in the program. CSA farms may join their customers and other food security activists to form a local food network which advocates for sustainable community food systems.

As Dietitians of Canada assert in their 2007 position paper (p.5) on CFS, “No one strategy will bring about the changes required to improve CFS. Only by working across a continuum of food security, through multiple approaches and with diverse stakeholders, can we hope to improve food security for all.”

To frame our discussion of how CSERP is contributing to CFS in Canada through identifying existing gaps and opportunities for collaboration, we use McCullum’s three stage continuum of community food security (CFS) strategies (3), described in the Methods.

Because responses to issues of community food insecurity are so diverse, McCullum’s three stage continuum helps to frame strategies into a chronological, but dynamic continuum. Strategies are organized according to short, medium and long term strategies, with the knowledge that strategies, as they evolve to meet the needs of the community may move along the continuum toward a sustainable food system.

It should be noted that the CSERP projects described here are ongoing, and while we made every attempt to ensure that we have up to date information, some of the

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opportunities or gaps discussed here may already be identified or addressed at a local level. Because of this, and the fact that there are potentially many other community organizations working across the country to build community food security that may or may not be partnered with CSERP projects, this discussion will focus broadly. We will look for gaps and opportunities not at a local level, but at a national level, and within CSERP to serve as a starting point for discussion.

Continuum of Strategies Addressing Community Food Security

Many of the projects span more than one stage of the continuum, for example, identifying and understanding the role and activities of a CFS strategy (Stage One) while also identifying the policy environment which either facilitates or prohibits their activities (Stage Three). With this in mind, the following sections briefly highlight the types of activities happening across CSERP at each stage of the continuum, using examples as illustrations. For a full illustration of all research projects categorized according to CFS strategies, see Appendix C.

Stage One: Short Term, Initial Food System Changes

Each regional Node, with the exception of the Northern Node, is contributing to short term, initial food system changes. They are doing so in several ways: by contributing to our understanding of food security related social economy organizations; by developing educational opportunities and tools to facilitate alternative, sustainable, equitable food systems; and in some cases by working with community organizations to begin making short term changes.

Each of the research projects documenting the development and activities of a particular CFS approach (cooperatives, farmer's markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), community gardens, direct marketing, etc.) contribute to our overall knowledge base of their role in building CFS. These can also be useful in later developing educational tools, and even developing supportive policies.

Case studies, available to the public, such as the cooperative case studies available through BCICS, are extremely useful as educational tools. Not only are they available as "how to" resources for community groups considering cooperative development, but they are also helpful for those studying how cooperatives play a role in community food security. Similarly, the community supported agriculture (CSA) manual developed by the Northern Ontario Node is another example of a good educational "how-to" tool.

Other groups, such as the Algoma Food Network, are directly engaged in public education, through websites and educational outreach activities. These types of activities reach out to members of the community who may not otherwise be thinking about CFS.

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Many of the research projects are action research projects, and are working with communities to meet immediate, emergency food needs, such as the Kids Action Program Food Box deliveries and the emergency food programs that are part of the Algoma food network. Many also *initiate* unique, longer term strategies such as cooperatives, CSA's and networks to meet the needs of their communities.

Initiatives such as the Penokean Hills Beef Marketing project are good examples of initial food systems changes. This study (phase one and two) began by identifying a demand for local beef (and in the process perhaps raising awareness of local beef), and then followed up by developing a business and marketing plan which would position local farmers to access a local market. This project initiated change that moves along the continuum towards medium term food systems in transition.

Stage Two: Mid Term, Food Systems in Transition

As implied in the discussion of initial food systems changes, many of the projects that were engaged in initiating food system changes are also engaged in transitional food systems strategies. They are primarily engaged in network and capacity building around sustainable food systems.

To best illustrate how CSERP projects are involved in food systems in transition, we will use a few examples from different regions of Canada.

The Algoma Food Network, mentioned above for their educational activities, is also fostering transition towards a sustainable food system through a local food network that connects consumers and producers. Members of Algoma Food Network include people involved with farmer's markets, CSA's, community gardens, and other local food movements. More importantly, the network connects emergency food access programs (short term strategies) to these sustainable food access programs, and actively reaches out to involve youth through the local 4H chapter.

Similarly, the Kids Action Program Food Box program is designed to aide prenatal and new mothers, with pre-existing socioeconomic challenges, in meeting their family's nutritional needs. As such, it is a short term strategy. However, the program at the same time is involving these mothers, who do experience food insecurity, in building their capacity to access and use fresh, local food. The mothers are involved in participatory research to evaluate the program's potential contributions to the SE, which identified opportunities for strengthening producer-consumer connections and thereby building stronger, more equitable, local food system options.

These two previous examples illustrate programs that straddle initial and transitional strategies. Several projects that work at this transitional stage are also engaged in long term food system redesign for sustainability, thus demonstrating how the stages along the continuum are continuous. Again, two examples illustrate this relationship.

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Cooperatives and the Future of Food, a research project of the Hub partners, the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet), is working on collaborative communication networks which serve otherwise (often) geographically isolated initiatives (cooperatives). This research project is studying how these networks can be crucial in not only knowledge sharing, but also for policy analysis, identifying policies that are supportive or obstructive, and the development of a more political climate supportive of sustainable food systems.

In New Brunswick, the Community Development through Water Quality project engaged many low income citizens (those eligible for government subsidized septic improvements) in local watershed management organizations. Though this was not the original aim of the project, in providing individuals with tools (information about the state of their water quality) the project was facilitating knowledge and community capacity building. These individuals joined networks to protect their right to clean water, and the networks were able to use the information to successfully advocate for the continuation of policies that support equitable access to clean water.

Stage Three: Long Term, Food Systems Redesign for Sustainability and Equity

Long term strategies are those that work on a broad level, engage a wide range of actors and often develop policies supportive of a sustainable, equitable food system. Southern Ontario emerges as a leader within CSERP for research supporting food systems redesign for sustainability, with several projects working on policy analysis and development. However, there are also several other good examples across CSERP, highlighted here.

Southern Ontario are engaged in policy research that addresses community food security on an international scale. The Fair and Ethical Trade, Public Policy and the Social Economy project is exploring public Fair Trade procurement policies in Canada, their origins and impacts. As policy analysis, this will facilitate the development of policy recommendations around sustainable and ethical procurement, an integral part of CFS. This research cluster is also engaged in broad CFS policy development based on the current CFS activities in the Ottawa and Eastern Ontario region.

The Eat Where You Live project, in Manitoba, is another example of a research project primarily focused on broad food system redesign. This project assesses the possibilities for expanding the local food (social) economy as an alternative to the dominant global food system, examines the obstacles, and will offer recommendations to overcome these obstacles. Recommendations will include policies that are directly supportive of social enterprises within the food system.

Gaps

This section, where possible, identifies gaps in the CSERP food security research fabric. It is important for the reader to consider that this is not a full scan of food security research and initiatives/action partnerships across Canada, so some gaps identified within CSERP may already be addressed through other channels. Just as the previous sections focused on how CSERP is building CFS in Canada, the gaps identified here will try to focus on where the partners of CSERP can transfer their skills and experience to reach Canadians currently not being reached.

The tele-learning session hosted by CSERP in February, 2007, identified income or poverty related, as well as food system related food security as key issues. However, the majority of the projects within CSERP focus on food system related food security, leaving the low number of projects working on income related food security issues as one obvious gap. These types of projects would be working on emergency food relief, capacity building and developing social policies to support families who cannot afford to eat a nutritious diet. While there are few CSERP deliberately addressing income-related food insecurity, clearly the issue of income-related food insecurity is embedded within issues of community food insecurity being addressed by these projects; moreover, there are many other projects working outside of CSERP and affiliated with CSERP researchers that are address these issues specifically. .

Though there may be social economy organizations working on food security in northern Canada, there is currently no research on food security identified within CSERP in the Northern Node.

Each region in Canada is faced with a unique set of challenges to achieving community food security. Based on the discussion from the tele-learning session, food security is a very important issue in northern Canada. In northern Canada, the food culture and traditions of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities are changing rapidly, and in the process leaving their delicate food system in danger. Climate change and chemical contaminants, which concentrate in the north, are affecting the food system dramatically. An influx of processed food from further south is avoiding the locally contaminated proteins, but is disastrous to the health and food culture of northern peoples. The capital economy is usurping a once social economy based food system, based on sharing and trading foods. This is exacerbated by high unemployment rates.

Finally, though there are several research projects engaged in policy analysis and development, there is little evidence that policies supportive of food security through the social economy have been actualized through CSERP work.

Opportunities

Collaboration

Each of the research projects discussed play an important role in achieving an equitable, sustainable food system in Canada, one which fosters community food security. While each strategy employed is important, projects spanning more than one stage of the continuum of CFS projects, and especially those working toward long term changes, are working to create systemic changes that will build a sustainable, equitable food system that will eventually reach all Canadians.

With reaching more Canadians and moving toward long term changes as a goal, there are two approaches for collaboration which seem appropriate. The first is to collaborate with similar projects working at the same stage of the continuum, and the second is to collaborate across stages.

Collaborations within the same stage of the continuum could, for example, see organizations doing research to understand the roles, activities, benefits and barriers of farmer's markets in a community working together with an organization doing educational work around supporting the local economy. These two hypothetical groups could also work with institutional food managers, policy analysts and political leaders to influence institutional and governmental policies that would support local procurement for collaborations across stages.

Based on the examples from within CSERP, both of these types of collaborations are already happening. Where they are not, we hope this scan will provide examples of successful collaborative partnerships and ideas for potential partners.

One of the most obvious ways to facilitate communication and collaboration, both within and across the continuum of strategies is the formation of regional food networks. There are several food networks within CSERP, and many more not formally associated with CSERP (e.g.: the Nova Scotia Food Security Network with which several of the authors of this scan -PW, DR and LC- are involved). The Algoma Food Network provides an example of how food networks can connect a diverse range of members to collectively initiate transition toward a sustainable food system. As highlighted by the project, Cooperatives and the Future of Food, collaborative networks can also act as crucial sources of information for sustainable food system policy development.

Food networks across Canada may operate independently serving their own community's needs, but have the opportunity to network through organizations such as Food Secure Canada (FSC), the Canadian Association of Food Studies (CAFS) or the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) to gain national perspective and a stronger, unified advocacy voice. As a cohesive force that involves researchers, policy analysts, and representatives from local organizations, such a collective of food networks would be in a position to help develop supportive policy at a national level.

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In order to facilitate further collaboration, it is important that there is opportunity for educational opportunities and information sharing. With internet and phone resources already set up to facilitate online and telephone learning sessions (*tele-learning*), and in partnership with the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet), a national partner of CSERP and host of the Food Policy Working Group, CSERP is in a good position to facilitate information sharing, networking, education and collaboration on building food security within the social economy.

Future Research

While knowledge of food security issues through social economy research is growing, there are clearly still opportunities for collaborative research within CSERP. There is a need to better understand the role and potential of emergent alternative food systems such as regional and national networks, cooperatives, community supported agriculture, urban agriculture, etc. In addition, the dominance of food system related food security research and general lack of income related food insecurity research begs the question *what is the relationship and how do we make connections between food system and income related food insecurity research projects within the social economy?* Over time, we also hope that those projects engaged with policy analysis and development will see policy changes actualized, and be able to track the implications of policy change on food security and the social economy.

A summary of this scan is being presented at the Canadian Association of Food Studies and the Canadian Association of Studies in Cooperation annual meetings in June, 2008. It is our hope that in addition to the research gaps and opportunities identified in this report, participants attending the sessions will be able to identify and contribute further opportunities for collaboration and research.

APPENDIX A

Letter to Regional Node Coordinators Requesting Project Information

Melody Drive Research House
Mount Saint Vincent University
166 Bedford Hwy
Halifax, NS

June 25, 2007

In regards to: Food Security Research within the Social Economy Research Partnerships

My name is Liesel Carlsson. I am a graduate student in the Department of Applied Human Nutrition at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, NS, and currently a summer intern with the Atlantic Node of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP). I am working with Dr. Leslie Brown, Director of the Atlantic Node, and Dr. Patty Williams, Coordinator for Sub Node Three: Mobilization around Food Security and Community Economic Development.

One of my internship duties is to complete a scan of, and report on, other food security research projects happening within CSERP. Ultimately, my goal is to provide the Atlantic Node and Sub Node Three with recommendations for potential for cooperation with other regional nodes in order to build a concerted research agenda related to food security in the social economy across Canada.

I am contacting you after a search of web-based material connected with CSERP, which drew attention to either 1) our common research goals related to mobilization around food security and community economic development, or 2) strong allusion to the possibility of common research goals, but not enough information to confirm that. To provide a more in depth picture of related CSERP projects, I will be contacting you within the next month for further information. I am looking for more detailed information including past accomplishments, present activities, and future directions. If you already have a summary document, such as an annual report or a summary booklet of research projects underway in your Nodes (such as our DRAFT version attached) which captures this information that you are able to share, this may suffice.

If you feel this letter is better directed to another individual, please feel free to respond with their name and contact information.

Thank you kindly. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Regards,
Liesel Carlsson
Dietetic Intern, SES Atlantic

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APPENDIX B: Opportunities for Collaboration -- Food Security Research Projects Categorized by Alternative Food System Strategy (red denotes potential collaborating projects not currently part of CSERP)

	Cooperatives	Organic Agriculture	Community Supported Agriculture	Fair Trade	Food Networks	Marketing Strategies	Policy Development	Urban/Rural Gardening
BALTA (BC and Alberta)							Farm market Case Studies (prohibitive policies)	
Prairies and N. Ontario	Harvest Moon Society 2) Beef Marketing Studies 3) Cooperative Marketing Options for Organic Ag.		Community Supported Agriculture “how-to” manual 2)		(CSA network development) 2) Algoma Food Network 3) Eat where you live (local food networks)	Penokean Beef Marketing 2) Coop Marketing Options for Organic Agriculture 3) Harvest Moon Society		Community Gardens (IP) 2) Eat where you live

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S. Ontario	SE of Organic Agriculture (rural revitalization)	Internationalizing the SE (issues in FT product development)	State of FS in Ottawa and E. Ontario 2) Fair and Ethical Trade, Public Policy and the SE
Quebec			Conditions for Successful Start-Up of Social Enterprises in Rural and Urban Environments (could include political conditions) Community Development through Water Quality
Atlantic	Really Local Harvest Farmer's Coop (compost) 2) Citizen Farmer Coop	Food Box: Community Forum on Food Security	Indigenous Community Development (Rural) Youth Gardening projects

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Hub

Case Studies

Cooperatives
and the Future
of Food
(network
communication)

High School
Curriculum (not
necessarily FS)

SE, Social Economy
FT, Fair Trade
FS, Food Security

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APPENDIX C: Contributions of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships to building Community Food Security (CFS) in Canada described according to McCullum’s Three Stage Continuum of Strategies for CFS (3)

	Stage One: Short Term <i>Initial Food System Changes</i>	Stage Two: Mid Term <i>Food Systems in Transition</i>	Stage Three: Long Term <i>Food Systems Redesign for Sustainability</i>
National Hub	Case Studies High School Curriculum (identifying CFS educational opportunities)	Cooperatives and the Future of Food: (network communication, creating collaborative communities) →	Cooperatives and the Future of Food: (positive examples of how collaborative networks can act as crucial support for research and policy analysis leading to supportive legislation)
BC and Alberta	Farm market Case Studies: (comparing breadth, role and range of activities)	(There are many, just not CSERP) →	Farm market Case Studies: (identifying prohibitive policies)
Southern Ontario	SE of Organic Agriculture (document successes of organic social economy organizations, report on social, environmental and economic contributions) Internationalizing the SE (issues in FT product development) →	Internationalizing the SE and Fair and Ethical Trade, Public Policy and the SE: (partnership building between Canadian and Indian Fair Trade SEOs)	SE of Organic Agriculture (rural revitalization potential, advocacy tool) State of FS in Ottawa and E. Ontario: (policy development for sustainable community food security) Fair and Ethical Trade, Public Policy and the SE: (policy analysis)
Quebec	Community Gardens: Inventory, impact and contribution Conditions for Successful Start-Up of Social Enterprises in Rural and Urban Environments (understanding local food system)	Conditions for Successful Start-Up of Social Enterprises... (mobilization around local food system)	

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	Stage One: Short Term <i>Initial Food System Changes</i>	Stage Two: Mid Term <i>Food Systems in Transition</i>	Stage Three: Long Term <i>Food Systems Redesign for Sustainability</i>
Atlantic	<p>Kids Action Program (KAP) Food Box Program: (meeting immediate food needs)</p> <p>School Gardens: (exploring their value in contributing to CFS, food system education) →</p> <p>Citizen Farmer Cooperative: (documentation of development) →</p> <p>Indigenous Community Development (Intercultural knowledge sharing,) →</p>	<p>Food Box: (capacity building, producer-consumer connections, networks, etc.)</p> <p>KAP family gardening projects: (capacity building)</p> <p>School Gardens: (engaging kids and school community in growing food, connecting school and local producers) →</p> <p>Really Local Harvest Farmer’s Coop: (exploration of cooperative compost facility, partnership building between farmers and composting businesses)</p> <p>Citizen Farmer Cooperative: (mobilization of farmers and citizens)</p> <p>Community Development though Water Quality: (community capacity building) →</p> <p>Community Forum on Food Security: (mobilization of diverse community members to develop research and practice networks)</p> <p>Indigenous Community Development (Intercultural network development)</p>	<p>School Gardens: (will explore existing and potential policies around the role of school gardens and CFS)</p> <p>Community Development though Water Quality: (advocacy for policies which support equitable access to clean water)</p>
Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario	<p>Community Supported Agriculture (“how-to” manual, network development) →</p> <p>Algoma Food Network: (educational activities, website, emergency food) →</p>	<p>Community Supported Agriculture: (building links among Northern Ontario communities, sharing knowledge)</p> <p>Algoma Food Network: (youth involvement through 4H, farmer’s markets, community supported)</p>	<p>Eat where you live (assessing opportunities for expanding an alternative food system, obstacles faced and solutions)</p>

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	Stage One: Short Term <i>Initial Food System Changes</i>	Stage Two: Mid Term <i>Food Systems in Transition</i>	Stage Three: Long Term <i>Food Systems Redesign for Sustainability</i>
	<p>access programs, charity food donation programs, etc.)</p> <p>Harvest Moon Society (farm level implications of direct marketing) →</p> <p>Penokean Hills Beef Marketing Study: (identifying a demand for local beef)</p> <p>Beef Marketing Studies: (development of a business plan, and marketing strategy) →</p> <p>Cooperative Marketing Options for Organic Agriculture</p>	<p>agriculture (CSA), community gardens, and local food movements)</p> <p>Harvest Moon Society (formation of a marketing cooperative)</p> <p>Community Gardens (in progress)</p> <p>Beef Marketing Studies: (Implementation of business and marketing strategies)</p>	
Northern	None identified	None identified	None identified

SEOs, Social economy organizations
 CSAs, Community supported agriculture
 CFS, Community food security
 KAP, Kids Action Program