



Public Policy and the Social Economy in Atlantic Canada (Phase II): Prince Edward Island - briefing paper by Dr. Jan Myers

Introduction

As part of the activities of the Atlantic Node of the pan-Canadian Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network, the public policy working group initiated a project to map and provide an inventory of provincial legislation, policies, programs and initiatives that are directly relevant to community economic and social development, the social economy, and building the capacity and opportunities for engagement in policy formulation and implementation in the Atlantic region. This initial phase consisted of desk based research to identify information publically available through government and other agency websites as well as more traditional academic routes for literature reviews and searches (bibliographic, journal and research databases), up to 2008 and before the 2008 federal elections.

A review of some of the available literature and policy scan reports to-date indicates a concentration on substantive or administrative policy and relations. This includes program focused, funding relationships and accountabilities, and/or issue based concerns (e.g. employment, social exclusion and services for specified groups) often, but not always, in relation to resourcing and service delivery¹. Many of these reports identify issues common across sub-sectors of non-profit organizations (e.g. changes in funding regimes, changing jurisdictions and downloading of public programs) and identify good practice approaches in relation to, for example, single issue concerns (e.g. child care, elder care, learning disabilities, housing, drugs and alcohol services); communities of interest (Native communities, migrant and immigrant workers); and in relation to transaction relationships (often bi-lateral and concerned with service delivery, contracts, funding, accountability). Part of the analysis of a policy environment is to look for opportunities to build on these kinds of relationships and good practice examples.

What we want to explore in the second part of the research are the conditions, contexts and relationships that contribute to and facilitate non-profit and social economy organizational involvement in public policy dialogue and development² and purposeful relationships between and across sectors. These “purposeful relationships” or active alliances are often multi-stakeholder: public, private, non-profit sectors and social economy organizations; different levels of government; and shaped by broader civil society concerns, mixed economy of care, regeneration and stakeholder involvement and a growing emphasis on social economy and social enterprise. This second phase of the research involves discussion with

¹ Caledon Institute (2007) Community Stories: Leading to enable: government engagement in vibrant communities Saint John, Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy

² Voluntary Sector Initiative (2003) Participating in Federal Public Policy, Ottawa: Voluntary Sector Task Force

key respondents to identify good practice examples, gaps and opportunities for collaboration and inclusive approaches to engagement and involvement linked to improved policy planning and decision-making. Some of the questions that will shape this discussion include:

- How key respondents explain what the ‘social economy’ means in the context of their work and what are the key constituent parts of the social economy in their area (e.g. visibility an predominance of non-profit and voluntary organizations, or co-operatives, or social enterprises for example)
- How key respondents’ understandings and definitions of the social economy are reflected in existing government policies?
- What are the consequences of these differing understandings in terms of governance and policy frameworks?
- What types of relationships exists around policy development and implementation?
- What policy needs are not being met and what changes are required in the regulatory environment to meet these gaps and enhance collaboration between SE sector organizations and governments?
- What conditions, contexts and relationships exist/need to exist which promote and facilitate non-profit sector involvement, for example, in policy deliberation, production and implementation.

In order to try to provide an overview as well as a comparison to earlier data³, the policy review reports produced for each of the four Atlantic Provinces focus on specific aspects of government support for social economy (SE) organizations and activities, for example:

- Identification of department or departments with a mandate to support SE organizations and activities;
- Legislation that commits the federal, provincial and/or municipal governments to support social economy organizations and activities;
- Policies that outline broader government support for the social economy, SE and third sector organizations and activities;
- Specific programs and initiatives that support the social economy through: start up or seed funding for social economy organizations (e.g. co-operatives, non-profit enterprises, etc.) and/or ongoing funding and support (e.g. via infrastructure organizations such as cooperative development agencies or direct to social economy organizations);
- Evidence of support for community and sector engagement in policy formulation;
- Policies geared towards involvement of communities of interest (Aboriginal and First Nations), geographical communities (rural development) and specific sectors (health, housing) in policy development;

³ In 2002, the Canadian Community Economic Development Network carried out a survey of provincial governments’ commitment to and support for community economic development initiatives in their region. This was published in 2003 as *An Inventory of Provincial and Territorial Support to Community Economic Development in Canada* (Infanti) and was used as a baseline framework for the current review.

- Policies/initiatives at a local level linked to social economy organizations and sector development; and
- Other support and infrastructure organizations geared to supporting social economy organizations (SEOs) or promoting joint working between SEOs and government (and private sector).

This briefing provides a summary of the report⁴ produced with regard to Nova Scotia, a full copy of which is available on request.

Supporting the social economy in Prince Edward Island

There are over 200 people employed in 11 credit unions on the island and in several communities a credit union is the only access to a financial institution.⁵ In 2007, the Prince Edward Island Co-operative Council was formed and there are an estimated 120 co-operatives on the island. One of the island communities, Tignish, is home to seven co-operatives including one of the first fishing co-operatives set up in the 1920s/30s. The town – which has a land area of approximately 6.7 square kilometres - has a co-operative supermarket, health centre, building supplies store, credit union, a saw mill and a service station.⁶

In 2007, the Canadian Co-operative Association spotlight on PEI, reported the rich history of co-operatives on the island with one of the first co-ops being formed in 1863 (Farmers' Bank of Rustic/Banque des fermiers de Rustico)⁷. CCA also highlight how co-ops have worked together in the province, for example the Evangeline co-op network 'which includes a mall with a supermarket, funeral co-operative, fishing co-operative, senior citizen's home, youth cooperative and seniors' housing'. The CCA report suggests that an important factors in creating this successful network have been the existence of supportive infrastructure organizations (Caisse populaire Évangéline, and le Conseil de développement coopératif de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard) and the presence of co-operative education opportunities in the community. A new initiative developed in 2004 and part of an Atlantic-wide program is MYDAS (see earlier and below).

⁴ The report – *Public Policy and the Social Economy in Atlantic Canada: Nova Scotia – An inventory of jurisdictional policies, programs and activities that support social economy organizations at municipal, provincial and federal levels* – is available in pdf format.

⁵ Why Credit Unions Matter/Fast Facts available at <http://www.peicreditunions.com/facts.php>

⁶ MacAusland (n.d.) 'Early Co-operation on PEI' available at <http://www.peicc.coop/history.html> ; Tignish municipality : <http://www.tignish.com/>

⁷ CCA (2007) Co-ops on Prince Edward Island, available at http://www.coopscanada.coop/assets/firefly/files/files/pdfs/ProvAndSectoralProfiles/PEIco-ops_jun08.pdf

In the Canada-wide survey of voluntary and not-for-profit organisations in 2003⁸ there were an estimated 943 organizations operating in the province of which 59% were registered charities. There were just over 6000 people employed in voluntary and community organizations at this time, and over 64,000 volunteers. From 2004 to 2007, there was a substantial increase in the rate of volunteering in the province (from 47% in 2004 to 56% in 2007) and it is estimated that the average hours volunteer over the year by volunteers is 147, which represents a decrease on the 2004 figures.⁹ However, this equates to 1.1 million volunteer hours, and an economic value of around \$82, 500,000.¹⁰ Currently, there are 1211 registered active nonprofits in the province¹¹.

In considering policies that link government and social economy organizations, it is possible to list all departments and a number of programs that relate to supporting aspects of the social economy – for example funding initiatives for single issue concerns involving bi-lateral relationships between one government department and one or more organizations, such as funding for organizations providing services for drug or alcohol dependency. These bi-lateral relationships, policies and programs are important as they affect policy on a special interest and coalition level and may link to new policy development and government interdepartmental collaboration. However, our concern is also to look for broader integrations and supports across the social economy.

Part of the problem with trying to develop an overall picture of policy connections in PEI is the fragmented nature of the province. Reporting in 2008, the Department of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour commented on the Island's 'patchwork of systems in more ways than one' with seventy five municipalities ranging in population from 77 to over 32,000 people¹². Echoing this and commenting on financial limitations and the need to adapt, the Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities (FPEIM) – in an early report to the

⁸ Summary of the Atlantic Provinces published by Rowe (2006) *The Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Atlantic Canada: regional highlights from the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations*. Toronto, Imagine Canada.

⁹ Hall, M., Lasby, D., Ayer, S. And Gibbons, W.D. (2009) *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, available at

http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/files/giving/en/csgvp_highlights_2007.pdf

¹⁰ Calculated using the 2007 minimum wage of \$7.50 <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/prince-edward-island/story/2008/10/01/pe-minimum-wage.html> and <http://www.peifl.ca/pages/sub/MiniWageSub08.pdf>

¹¹ Department of Justice and Public Safety, Corporate/Business Names Registry available at <http://www.gov.pe.ca/corporations/index.php>

¹² Department of Communities, Cultural Affairs & Labour (2008) *Land and Local Governance: a White Paper on governance and land use in Prince Edward island, Charlottetown, PEI: Executive Council* http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/cca_white_dec08.pdf:

Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural development (2009) compared the governmental structures to neighbouring Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

This gives a plethora of services as well as ‘complex layers of community development areas, incorporated community development groups, economic development districts, school boards, health districts, and watersheds, along with all other components of governance from the Provincial level, including a network of ‘regional communities of interest’ under the Community Development Bureau system’ (Department of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour, 2008). This has resulted in short-falls in community planning, assessments and development (FPEIM, 2009). However, as pointed out by Novaczek *et al.*, (2009, p 3¹³) because of its size, scale and strong social networks ‘has the best prospects for modelling new and more effective forms of collaborative governance’.

While it is important that there are levels of government, departments and officers within departments facilitating engagement with a range of stakeholders it is also important to have an organised non-governmental sector to put forward ideas and local solutions. This requires both organized social economy infrastructure and the mechanisms supported by government for increased meaningful and purposeful exchange. We have examples of this on a sectoral basis (for example certain sections of the voluntary and community sector linking with government to discuss funding issues, evaluation mechanisms and changes in service provision), which are indicative of bi-lateral or transactional relationships between sector / sector organizations and government / government departments (such as HIV/AIDS; learning disabilities; newcomers’ association). It can be seen that in terms of service delivery that organizations have more sustained and influential relationships with government officers and policy makers although this tends not to link to development of policy (Wynne *et al.*, 2008, p 34).

In 2008, Wynne *et al.*¹⁴ produced an excellent report of their attempts to map the level of federal and provincial government funding and policy supports for social economy organisations on Prince Edward Island and presented their findings around several general

¹³ Novaczek, I., Shott, A., Driscoll, F., Howatt, A., van den Heuvel, M., Baldacchino, G., (2009). The Importance of Positive Government-Governance Relations for Land Use Planning and Management on Prince Edward Island: a submission to the Commission on Land Use and Local Government from the Institute of Island Land Studies, UPEI. Charlottetown, PEI UPEI, Institute of Island Studies

¹⁴ Wynne, B. G., Novaczek, I., & Pettit, J. (2008). *Bridging Public Investment and Social Value: an examination of the supports for the social economy on Prince Edward Island*. Charlottetown, PEI: The Atlantic Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network, Sub-Node 2, Institute of Island Studies UPEI.

themes. There were a number of practical problems, which they outlined in the range, processes and recent trends in funding for organizations. In relation to policy influence, access and collaboration, the small size of the province and the closeness of the provincial political community did have positive repercussions. For example, often community organizations were included on advisory committees – particularly those sole representatives of a particular issue – or were issues crossed departmental boundaries and therefore there was impetus for cross-sector partnerships and collaboration (for example, the Premier’s Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention¹⁵; action of healthy aging; poverty reduction strategies and action planning). Active community partners that have been able to raise dialogue with government on a number of issues have been the Women’s Network PEI¹⁶ and the Quality of Island Life Co-operative (QoIL)¹⁷. The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women – a quango – has also been an important point of contact and arena for policy discussion¹⁸.

The next section details some of the departments, mandates, strategies and policies that:

- mandate or encourage avenues for dialogue with third sector and social economy organizations;
- do / or have the potential for inter-sectoral collaboration and co-operation; and /or provide financial and technical support for specific activities;
- acknowledge interdependence in a mixed economy of care in delivery of a range of services and community development activities; and
- provide a springboard or platform for co-construction, co-production, implementation and evaluation of social and economic policies.

¹⁵ <http://www.stopfamilyviolence.pe.ca/index.php3?number=1017042&lang=E>

¹⁶ <http://www.wnpei.org>

¹⁷ <http://qoil.ca/about>

¹⁸ <http://www.gov.pe.ca/acsw/index.php3>

Policies and frameworks that support the development of the social economy

This section is organised around a series of question to categorise some of the policy scan data collected, summarised in the table below and then explained in more detail. The information provided is indicative rather than definitive of the relationships, policies, programs and organisations/departments that exist currently (i.e. as of 2008). Part of the rationale for the second phase of the policy scan is to engage with people ‘on the ground’ to explore the ‘reality’ of the situation to date.

1. Is there a department with a mandate to support social economy organizations and activities?	N
2. Is there legislation that commits federal, provincial and / or municipal governments to support social economy organizations and activities?	Y, but
3. Are there policies that define broader government support for social economy and social economy and third sector organizations and activities?	Y
4. Are there programs and/or initiatives that support the social economy through: start up or seed funding for social economy organizations and/or ongoing funding and support?	Y
5. Is there support for community and sector engagement in policy formulation?	Y but
6. Are there specific policies geared towards involvement of communities of interest, geographical communities and specific sectors (health, housing) in policy development?	Y
7. Are there policies/initiatives at a local level linked to social economy organizations and sector development?	Y, but
8. Are there other support and infrastructure organizations geared to supporting social economy organizations (SEOs) or promoting joint working between SEOs and government (and private sector)?	Y

Apart from the registration of charities, and co-operatives, there is no specific departmental mandate at provincial or municipal levels to support social economy organisations. There are no specific departmental remits for voluntary and community organisations or co-operatives. Remits of the government departments identified in 2008 were about to undergo re-organisations and departments were also to be re-structured under the in-coming government.

4.2.1. *Q. Is there a department with a mandate to support social economy organizations and activities?*

A: No

- Department of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour – Community Cultural Partnership Program is designed to assist and enhance the development of cultural and heritage-based activities within the community. This program is directed at not-for-

profit, community-based cultural and heritage organizations (now moved to Department of Tourism and Culture)

- Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development – announced in throne speech 2008, will place a greater emphasis on advancing community development in rural Prince Edward Island
- Department of Health (now Health and Wellness) – Volunteer service program offers opportunity for volunteers to assist staff, patients/ residents and families at Prince County Hospital, Summerset / Wedgewood Manors, Stewart Memorial Hospital and other health services in East Prince.
- Office of Public Engagement – announced in throne speech, 2008 – aims to provide ongoing assistance and co-ordination to the policy consultations of departments and aims to use the Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts system to build a ‘common foundation of knowledge and information from which both Government and communities can assess and discuss public policy issues’ and aims to ‘ensure that public engagement and dialogue is not just crisis driven but an ongoing and constructive process’
- Seniors Secretariat - brings together seniors’ advocates, municipal and provincial planners, and academics for a discussion about creating age-friendly communities that support Island seniors in leading healthy, active lifestyles.

4.2.2 *Q: Is there legislation that commits federal, provincial and/or municipal governments to support social economy organizations and activities?*

A: Yes – but mainly regulatory

- Charities Act - The Consumer Affairs section of the Consumer, Corporate and Insurance Division of the Attorney general's office has oversight for the Charities Act.
- Co-operative Associations Act - Co-operatives are governed by the general principles which are outlined in the Co-operative Associations Act, or, on the federal level, by the provisions of the Canada Co-operatives Association Act. The procedure set forth in the provincial act requires that the completed documents be submitted to the Inspector of Co-operatives in the Consumer, Corporate & Insurance Services Division of the Office of the Attorney General.
- Co-operative Housing Associations regulations
- Credit Unions Act

4.2.3. *Q. Are there policies that define broader government support for social economy and social economy and third sector organizations and activities?*

A. Yes

- One Island Community: One Island Future – Throne Speech 2008 – outlines the establishment of new departments but also decentralisation process by placing government departments in different locations e.g. Dept of Fisheries Aquaculture and Rural Development in Montague; Dept of Innovation and Advanced Learning in Charlottetown and the Department of Education and Early Childhood development in Summerside. The speech also announces the setting up of an Office of Public Engagement to provide ongoing assistance and co-ordination to the policy consultations of departments. Its mandate will also be to build a common foundation of knowledge and information from which both Government and communities can assess and discuss public policy issues. This will be achieved through using the Community Accounts system developed by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and with the assistance of groups such as the PEI Quality of Life Coalition
- Participate in PEI – advert on government website inviting expressions interest from islanders to get involved in the 75 agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs) when vacancies occur.
- Rural Economic Development Strategy – announced in throne speech, 2008 - Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development aims to bring a rural, small-community focus to overall Government policy development

4.2.4 *Q. Are there programs and/or initiatives that support the social economy through: start up or seed funding for social economy organizations (e.g. co-operatives, non-profit enterprises, etc.) and/or ongoing funding and support (e.g. via infrastructure organizations such as cooperative development agencies or direct to social economy organizations)?*

A. Yes

- The Business Development Program (Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning) - this is part of the ACOA program and offers small businesses access to capital in the form of interest-free, unsecured, repayable contributions. Non-profit organizations providing support to the business community may also qualify.

- Community Foundation of PEI – non-governmental charitable organization, which pools the charitable gifts of donors into endowment funds and makes grants to local community organizations.
- Entrepreneur Loan Program (Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning) - The annual plans provided by the department include an environmental scan of the labour market and labour market challenges - it does not say whether this includes third sector and social economy organizations, but is aimed at individuals and identified groups. Priorities include: youth, immigrants, visible minorities, and older workers, persons with disabilities, employed workers/working poor, Aborigines, social assistance recipients and women. Partners identified include community organizations dealing with priority sectors. Key sectors are those highlighted in the Focus for Change strategy
- The Island Community Fund - set up in 2008 under the remit of the new department and part of the Rural Development Initiative. The objects are to ‘enable non-governmental organizations and municipal governments to access funds for capital projects which will improve their capacity as vibrant and healthy communities’.
- Live Smart, Save More - The Office of Energy Efficiency has been established to assist Islanders in reducing their energy consumption through advice and programs that will promote sustainable energy use. There are a number of programs and funding streams to support residents and businesses.
- PEI Business Women’s Association – members include non-profits e.g. Active Communities Inc a non-profit focused on community and business development; Alzheimer Society of PEI; Canadian Cancer Society –PEI division; Child Find PEI; and the Voluntary resource Council’

4.2.5. *Q. Is there support for community and sector engagement in policy formulation?*

A: Yes, but mainly at a consultation level rather than participatory

- A Call to Action: A Plan for Change - commissioned by the Department of Health and the review was carried out by Corpus Sanchez consultants who had done a previous review in 2006. In this latest review over 200 meetings and focus groups with over 1000 people took place.

- Development of the Rural Action Plan - a number of consultations that led to what is regarded as the first rural development strategy to be prepared by PEI governments and the first policy document to be produced with a rural focus since 1990. This process has led to the publication of the Rural Action.
- Throne Speech, 2008- strategic priorities include involving Islanders in ‘building a sustainable, integrated health care system, that shifts emphasis and culture toward wellness and primary care, placing patients, the community as a whole and sustainability above all considerations... A new Health Promotion Strategy will be developed with full public engagement’. Work with seniors and strategy for an aging population will include ‘building ongoing partnerships and carrying out inclusive consultations with Islanders’.

4.2.6. *Q. Are there specific policies geared towards involvement of communities of interest (Aboriginal and First Nations), geographical communities (rural development) and specific sectors (health, housing) in policy development?*

A. Yes

- Healthy Child Development Strategy (Department of Social Services and Seniors) – states that the development of the strategy is guided by guiding principles that support a partnership approach, evidence based decision making, and recognize the importance of building on existing programs, services, and community supports.
- An Integrated Health care System review in PEI: a call to action: a plan for change (2008) - create provincial frameworks, standards and structures for seniors’ health, community-based primary health care, pre-hospital care, emergency services, critical care, maternal newborn, and peri-operative care
- Aboriginal Affairs – Canada/Mi’kmaq Partnership Agreement – new functions within Department of Communities, Cultural Affairs and labour: support for Aboriginal Sport Circle, Aboriginal Social Housing.
- Greening Spaces Program (Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry) – tree planting projects, funding for communities, schools and volunteer interest groups
- PEI and Climate Change – a strategy for reducing the impact of global warming (Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry, 2008) – announced the set up of the office of Energy Efficiency in Jan 2008. The Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee includes non-governmental stakeholders (utility sectors). Looks at community-based energy renewable projects
- Rural Action Plan – as above

4.2.7 *Q. Are there policies/initiatives at a local level linked to social economy organizations and sector development?*

A. Yes, but still at written strategy level

- Federation of PEI Municipalities – brings together the municipal authorities and acts as a voice in provincial and federal matters (includes comments on citizen engagement and policy development)
- The PEI Island Rural Team – brings together representatives from federal, provincial, municipal levels as government as well as non-government organizations. Its aim is to assist departments and agencies in developing partnerships for facilitating rural community building.
- Pre-budget discussions (e.g. Stratford) – representations from residents and community organizations/volunteer groups re: spending priorities.
- Stratford in Action – partnership between federal government and ECO PEI and has financial support from Eco Action Program: 50 households involved in reducing carbons footprint.
- Turning the Tide on Family Violence – Charlottetown Municipality – the program facilitated intergovernmental, inter-jurisdictional and voluntary sector partnerships, strengthened the municipality's regulatory and human resources framework and engaged citizen support and feedback through community outreach presentations, the internet and the media

4.2.8. *Q. Are there other support and infrastructure organizations geared to supporting social economy organizations (SEOs) or promoting joint working between SEOs and government (and private sector)?*

A: Yes

- Agency for Co-operative Housing – set up under the Canada Co-operatives Act, this non-profit, non-government organization administers the federal government co-operative housing programs in PEI as well as Ontario, Alberta and BC. There are 12 PEI housing co-ops part of this organization.
- Conseil de développement coopératif de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard – supporting community economic, co-operative and entrepreneurial development of Acadian and Francophone communities in PEI.

- Environmental Coalition of PEI (ECO PEI) – community-based action group set up in the late 1980s and in 2007 published a energy prosperity strategy for PEI¹⁹
- Prince Edward Island Co-operative Council – set up in 2007 and appointed its first executive director in 2008. As part of the national Canadian Co-operative Association, PEICC aims to develop and promote co-operatives and co-operative activities as well as be a representative voice for co-operatives in regard to legislation and policies.
- Prince Edward Island Food Security Network – education and campaign network to raise awareness and change public policy around food security issues
- Prince Edward Island Health Coalition – part of a national coalition, this non-profit is a campaigning organisation for public health services and issues
- Prince Edward Island Senior Citizens' Federation – federation of eight senior citizen' clubs across the island and acts as a liaison point with government. Also acts as a resource to other non-profit organisations.
- Quality of Island Life Co-op – aims to develop public engagement on quality of life issues to raise discussion and to inform research and development of a range of quality of life indicators.
- Women's Network, PEI – founded in 1981, the Women's Network PEI has been instrumental in raising issues that affect all women's lives on PEI, including maternal and parental benefits; self awareness and self esteem for young women and girls; social assistance and children on welfare and liveable incomes; training for women in non-traditional trades and technology industries.
- Volunteer Resource Council, Charlottetown – recruits and supports volunteers and provides volunteer placements with youth projects.

As Infanti found in 2003²⁰, the provinces that were mandated to carry out community economic activities – Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia – scored highly on support for human and social capital as well as focused development support. Prince Edward Island ranked the lowest of the Atlantic Provinces. Unlike its neighbouring provinces, PEI does not have a document like the Bradshaw report, 'Blueprint for Action'²¹, that under the auspices of

¹⁹ http://www.ecopei.ca/energyproject/final_options_document.pdf

²⁰ Infanti, J. (2003). *An Inventory of Provincial and Territorial Government Support to Community Economic development in Canada*, Victoria, BC: CCEDNET

²¹ Bradshaw, C., S. Rickards, *et al.* (2007). *Blueprint for Action: building a foundation for self-sufficiency*. New Brunswick, Department of Family and Community Services, Government of New Brunswick.

the premier's Task Force on Community Non-Profit sector in the province led to the development of a Secretariat and ministerial brief for Community Non-Profit Organisations. Nor does it have Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan²² or the presence of a well-developed infrastructure organisation like the Community Service Council Newfoundland and Labrador or even the nascent Nova Scotia Volunteer Advisory Council and Volunteer Forum organised under the auspices of the Department of Health Promotion and Protection (Minister for Volunteerism). However, PEI does have strong community-based networks and proximity of working with provincial government officers as well as a developed co-operative and volunteer sector.

Issues arising from the first phase of the policy scan

We can begin to look at different ways to analyse and describe policy development and engagement with stakeholders – this can be looked at in terms of structural relationships: transaction (single issue and finding relationships which tend to be bi-lateral) and evolution and transformation (multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnership opportunities); place-based and geographical (level of government; geographical – rural /urban); and in terms of levels of participation and engagement of key stakeholders (co-construction and co-production of policies and services).

In PEI, There are no specific government departments with a remit to support volunteer, voluntary and community organizations, co-operatives and social enterprise, although there are opportunities for support in some of the new departmental changes and new and established programs. Similarly, although there is legislation relevant to social economy organisations this is in the main registration and regulatory requirements. There has been significant change taking place as this report was being written and as the first phase of the research was completed. The change in government and the language and activities surrounding the planned departmental and governance changes show an intention for greater public (and sector) engagement in public policy debate, in strategy development and delivery of services. Most policy discussion has mainly been of a consultative rather than a participatory nature, but changes in policy – the development of rural initiatives as well as infrastructure support in the sector (for co-operatives if not non-profit voluntary and community organizations) is promising.

²² For more information and comment on the Strategic Social Plan see for example, Close (2007), Close *et al* (2007), Locke *et al* (2006), Power *et al* (2006a, 2006b)

According to Mayne (2008)²³, a new governance approach for the Island will increase citizen engagement and opportunities for dialogue through the introduction of new, more structured and systematised governance mechanisms. The recently developed Rural Strategy echoes this with the expressed aim of addressing the ‘need for on-going communication between levels of government and community groups’.

Some of the issues and observations arising from the first phase of the policy review include:

- There appears to be no clear understanding, acceptance or usage of the term ‘social economy’ to describe activities that involve social enterprises, non-profit organizations, co-operatives and mutuals in PEI. This is not unusual and in many ways reflects how both government and social economy organizations or sub-sectors are organised: theme and issues based activities (e.g. health, education, business); the services provided to particular sections of the communities (e.g. youth, seniors, people with physical disabilities, mental health issues and other specific needs); categorised by organisational legal and governance structures (e.g. charity, volunteer organisation, self-help group, co-operative, credit union).
- The term ‘social and economic development’, as Infanti discovered in 2003, is often used to promote economic development (growth, attraction and retention of work age individuals including immigrants, new business) which may have social benefits (revitalisation of urban or rural communities).
- Co-operatives and social enterprise tend to be grouped with economic development and ‘business’ and government policies and support tend to be more focused on registration and compliance, technical support and start-up finance.
- Engagement in policy determination and design seems to be of a consultative nature than full participation. There are some cross-cutting issues – such as anti-poverty initiatives – that involve multi-sector organisations and actors although often with an emphasis on public-private sector partnership. Often involvement of ‘community’ partners is geared to elected members (municipal representatives) and / or individual citizens.
- Activity at a provincial level is most visible although there are hubs of activity at municipal level. There are also opportunities for cross-departmental and cross-cutting

²³ Mayne, M (2008) *Island Prosperity: a focus for change*, Strategy prepared by the Office of Biosciences and Economic Innovation, Charlottetown: Office of the Premier available from http://islandprosperity.com/Island_Prosperty.pdf

issues to involve non-governmental stakeholders in areas of provision of human service organisations and services.

- It is still early days to evaluate the impact of the changes in the ministerial remits and departmental restructuring started since 2008.

We also need to a need to examine consistencies between espoused actions through policy statements and documents and actual developments and practice. This can help to identify points of fracture between policy and practice with regard to supporting social economy organisations and enterprises and opportunities to identify good practice on the ground and to develop relationships and dialogue between sectors. There are key actors from government departments and social economy organisations who can support the development of this information and help to give voice and shape to what's happening on the ground with regard to policy in action. Their experiences and interpretations are important. The policy scan and review gives a useful platform and foundation which can support further research in each province to further develop dialogue with key stakeholders - policy movers, shakers and consumers - around the scope and contribution of social economy organizations and policies and frameworks that can support the support social economy organizations at municipal, provincial and federal levels.

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