B.C.-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance

Summary of Preliminary Results: BALTA Social Economy Survey Spring 2008

by Julia Affolderbach and Mike Gismondi
BALTA Mapping Team
July 2008

with Anna Bubel, Oksana Delgado, Jenny Kain,
Sandy Lockhart, Heather Lynch,
Cyrille Médard de Chardon, Diana Shields,
Lena Soots and Bart Szopiak

For further information, contact the B.C.-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance, PO Box 1161, Port Alberni, B.C. V9Y 7M1 (tel) 250-723-2296 (fax) 250-723-3730.
Website: www.socialeconomy-bcalberta.ca
E-mail: balta@xplornet.com

Author information

Julia Affolderbach is a doctoral student in Geography at Simon Fraser University and serves as Senior Mapping Researcher with the B.C.-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance. She has worked as research assistant for several years in the field of economic geography. She holds a diploma (MA equivalent) in Geography, Geology and Botany from the University of Cologne, Germany.

Mike Gismondi is a Professor and Director of the Centre for Integrated Studies at Athabasca University, a member of the BALTA Steering Committee, the Lead Researcher on the Mapping and Portraiture Project, and currently working with SERC 2 with a series of students and colleagues to research social economy and sustainability; social economy and land tenure (social and ecological); and the relationship between heritage buildings and sheltering social economy organizations.

This *paper/report* has been produced as part of the research program of the B.C-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA). Financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is gratefully acknowledged.

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

Preamble

The B.C. and Alberta Research Alliance on the Social Economy (BALTA) is a regional collaboration of universities, colleges and stakeholder organizations engaged in research initiatives to strengthen the foundations of the social economy in western Canada. Undertaken by the BALTA mapping team, the social economy survey is aimed at identifying the scope and characteristics of the social economy in BC and Alberta. The online survey is ongoing. This summary provides a brief overview of the first responses collected from January to April 2008. For those of you who have filled in the BALTA survey, the analysis of first responses should prove helpful. For those of you considering completing our mapping survey, we hope this taste of first findings will encourage you to complete the BALTA Survey by adding your profiles to the database.

Future analysis will be conducted using SPSS, a statistical analysis software, and will include survey responses since April 2008. More detailed reports, particularly a sub-report that focuses on those respondents who meet BALTA-defined social economy market trading criteria, will be released to the public in the near future.

For more information on the mapping project and BALTA social economy survey, contact:

Dr. Mike Gismondi
Co-Investigator
Athabasca University
E: mikeg@athabascau.ca

Julia Affolderbach
Senior Mapping Researcher
Simon Fraser University
E: juliaa@sfu.ca

1. Introduction

In January 2008 the BC and Alberta Research Alliance on the Social Economy (BALTA)[1] launched its Social Economy Survey, as part of its Portraiture and Mapping project. The survey consists of an online questionnaire and is housed at Athabasca University. It is designed to compile an inventory of social economy actors and organizations in BC and Alberta in order to provide general data on the scope and scale of the sector including evidence of its economic, social and environmental significance.[2] The survey is an ongoing endeavour. It will stay active for the duration of the mapping project until 2011. The survey is open to any organizations and actors that are part of the social economy. With the help of BALTA members who work in the social economy sector, the Mapping team identified organizations and actors as prospective survey participants. Since January 2008, invitations to participate in the BALTA Social Economy survey were sent by email to approximately 1500 of these organizations followed by reminder emails.

This paper provides a short summary of the data collected in the first three months since the launch of the survey. It should be understood as an overview and will be followed by more in-depth, analytical and thematic reports that will share in detail the information gathered from practitioners, researchers, policy makers, and the public. While the term 'social economy' is somewhat vague, as many definitions exist and views on who is 'in' and who is 'out' can differ to a certain degree, this paper does not elaborate the debate. Rather, we include all responses received to date based on the assumption that participating organizations and actors identify with or see themselves as part of the social economy.

---

[1] BALTA is a regional collaboration of practitioners and academics with an interest in the 'social economy' of the two provinces. It is a five-year research project (2006-2011) funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). For further information please visit http://www.socialeconomy-bcalberta.ca/index.html.
[2] The survey is available at https://secure.athabascau.ca/phpsurveyor/index.php?sid=50 or can be viewed as read-only version at: http://auspace.athabascau.ca:8080/dspace/bitstream/2149/1523/3/BALTA+Social+Economy+Survey.pdf.

2. Findings

Between mid-January and mid-April 2008, 164 individuals filled out our social economy questionnaire (corresponding to a 10 percent response rate to invitations) of which 163 are include in this summary.[3] The number is lower than we had hoped but provides a start and a basis for preliminary data summary. A simple snapshot of the social economy, the data is neither representative nor comprehensive of the sector.[4] We hope these early findings about the profile of the sector in the two provinces will encourage more organizations to complete the survey. An increase in responses over the next months and years will help us to complement the picture and accentuate its characteristics, scope, and scale.

The responses from organizations[5] received so far are summarized below according to spatial, organizational, sectoral, employment, and financial characteristics.

Spatial distribution and characteristics

The survey seeks to capture social economy organizations both within and outside the two provinces, if their objectives and activities contribute to the social economy in BC and Alberta. The 164 responses received include one organization located in the Northwest Territories that primarily serves the territory and for geographic reasons is not included in this summary. Figure 1 maps the geographic location of organizations and actors (n=162) showing four clusters around the urban centres of Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, and Calgary and a sparse but somewhat even distribution over the rural areas. One organization that operates on a national scale is located in Ontario and is not included in the map. The majority of respondents (n=140, 86 percent) operate one establishment, while 17 (10 percent) indicated that their organizations had more than one branch or office (Tab.

---

[3] Another 27 started answering questions, saved parts of their responses but didn't complete and submit the questionnaire. During the first week of the survey, the abundance rate was 75 percent.

[4] For a discussion on the challenges and limitations of sampling see the BALTA Mapping Working Paper #2 available from the BALTA website.

[5] In the following, the term 'organizations' is used to refer to all respondents regardless of the legal status and size of the entity they represent.

1). The number of organizations with branch establishments for which distinct financial statements are held ranges from two to three (n=8) to 500 (n=1) locations.

Figure 1: Geographical location of social economy organizations (by primary sector they work, n=162)

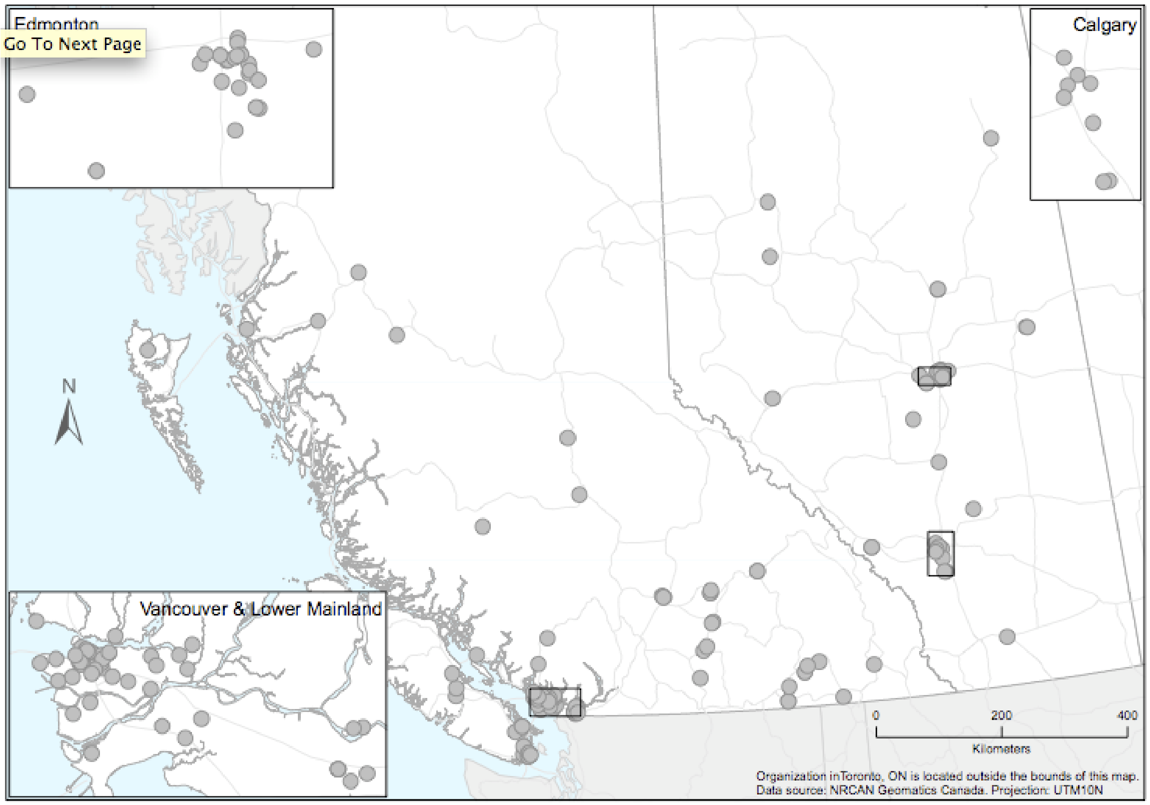


Table 1: Organizations with more than one establishment

More than one establishment	Number of responses (n=163)	Number of responses (in %)
Yes	17	10.4
No	140	85.9
N/a	6	3.7

To understand the spatial scale and range of the social economy, participants were asked to indicate the geographic area they serve and/or work with. We distinguish between neighbourhood/local community, city/town, region (county/regional district), province, national, and international level. Multiple answers are possible and respondents are given the option to specify or comment on that section. As Table 2 shows, more organizations operate on a regional and sub-regional scale (48 percent on a regional scale alone and 27 percent of organizations indicating that they serve the provincial level), while only 16 and 12 percent respectively are engaged on a national or international level. Of those serving a sub-regional and regional area, 13 respondents (8 percent, n=163) state that they solely serve their direct neighbourhood, 36 (22 percent, n=163) their neighbourhood and/or town, and 91 (56 percent, n=163) that they don't operate on a higher spatial level than their region. However, 15 (9 percent, n=163) organizations focus exclusively on the national and/or international level and eight (5 percent, n=163) work solely internationally.

Table 2: Spatial scale and range of operation

Spatial scale	Multiple responses (n=163)	Spatial range of operation	Number of organizations (n=163)
Neighbourhood/local community	53	Local community only	13
City/town	67	Local community and/or city/town	36
Region (county/regional district)	78	Local community, city/town, and/or region	91
Province	44		
National	26	National and international	15
International	20	International only	8

Organizational structure

To get a better idea of the organizational structure, we asked a number of general questions regarding the year of constitution, the organization's legal form, its membership base and size, and the composition of its board of directors.

Social economy organizations and actors in BC and Alberta have been around for a while – the oldest organization in our sample was founded in 1894 – but most institutions were founded in the last 20 years (see Fig. 2) with the late 1980s, late 1990s, and mid 2000s in particular showing increased growth.

With respect to the legal form of organizations, respondents could choose from a pre-given list including 'association', 'co-operative', 'for-profit' 'organization/corporation', 'foundation', 'not-for-profit corporation', 'not-for-profit organization', 'society', and 'other', as applied to their establishment. Table 3 shows the number of responses for each category with the largest number being not-for-profit organizations (n=77), societies (n=54), and not-for-profit corporations (n=27). Several respondents provided additional information of which, among others, six identified themselves as charity/charitable status, two university related, two as not-for-profit co-operative society/federation, two as coalition/network, one as administered by the local school district, one as not-for-profit cooperative society, and one described it's organization as a for-profit but managed as a trust which feeds into the not-for-profit beneficiary.

Figure 2: Year of Incorporation/Constitution, 1950-2008

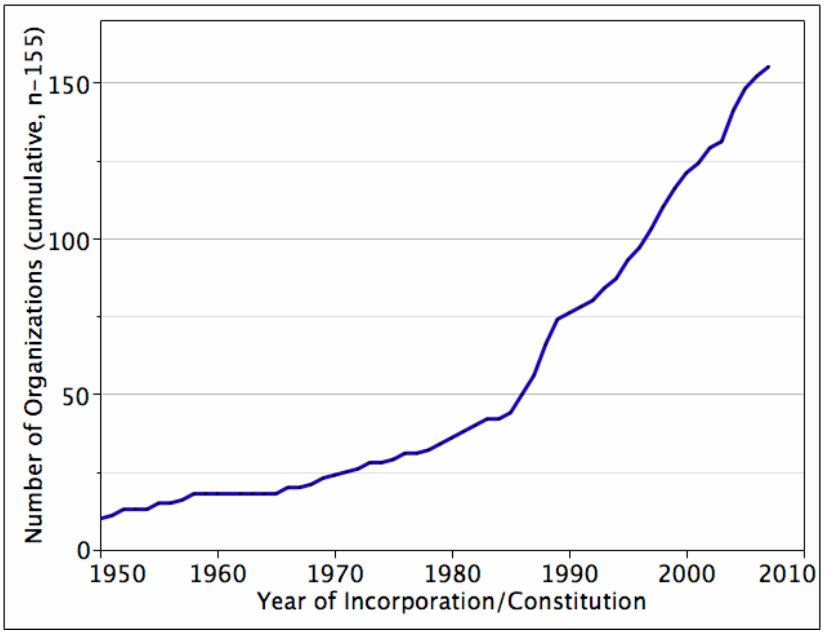


Table 3: Legal form of organizations (ordered by number of counts)

Legal form	Multiple responses (n=163)
Not-for-profit organization	77
Society	54
Not-for-profit corporation	27
Co-operative	14
Other	12
For-profit-organization/corporation	9
Foundation	7
Association	3

Regarding membership, 50 respondents indicated that they had no membership base. One hundred and four out of 163 respondents stated that their organizations have a membership base (Tab. 4). The membership base of these organizations totals 135,618 members. The size of membership, however, varies considerably. It ranges from 4 to 66,000 with a median of

124 members. The median is the middle value in a ranked distribution. As Table 5 shows, most organizations have less than 500 members, and about half have less than 100 members.

Table 4: Number of organizations with membership base

Membership base	Number of responses (n=163)	Number of responses in %
Yes	104	63.8
No	50	30.7
N/A	9	5.5

Table 5: Organizations with membership base by size categories (n=101)

Size category	Number of members
0-26	21
26-50	15
51-100	14
101-250	21
251-500	13
501-1,000	7
1,001-5,000	6
5,001-100,000	4

All but four participants (n=159) answered the question 'How many persons are on your organization's board of directors?'. The number of board members ranges from one to 87. However, that high value is an exception.[6] Only four respondents stated that their board of directors has more than 25 members. We also asked about gender and respondents indicated that almost half of all board directors in our sample are women (45 percent, n=158) and 93 percent of the organizations have at least one female board director (n=147). Four percent of organizations (n=7) have boards that consist solely of women. According to a census of women board directors of Canada's 500 largest companies conducted in 2007 only 13 percent of board seats of the companies are held by women (a one percent increase from 2005, Catalyst 2006) and 56.8 percent of companies had at least one women board director (Jenner et al. 2008). While the 2007 figures are not available for the provincial level, the 2005 report showed that both Alberta (n=78) and British Columbia (n=57) lay below the national average of 12 percent with 11.7 and 11.5 percent of board seats held by women (Catalyst 2006). Even

[6] As the 25 percent quartile of six, median of nine (mean = 9.7), and 75 percent quartile of 12 indicate.

compared to the three sectors with highest percentages of women directors in the census, insurance services (30.8 percent), real estate, and credit unions (both 25 percent), our sample of the social economy shows a considerably higher representation.

Work sectors and mission

Social economy organizations work in a wide range of different fields. We asked respondents to identify **all sector(s)** they work in offering 22 sector categories including 'other' (see Tab. 6) and allowing for multiple responses. Over 30 percent of participating organizations checked each of the following four sectors: 'social sciences', 'teaching and education', 'arts and culture', and 'training'. 'Other' was chosen by 45 respondents who provided additional information on the topic (see below). More than 20 percent of organizations work in 'recreation/tourism', 'professional services',

Table 6: Responses regarding the sector(s) organizations work in (ordered by number of counts), multiple answers possible (n=163)

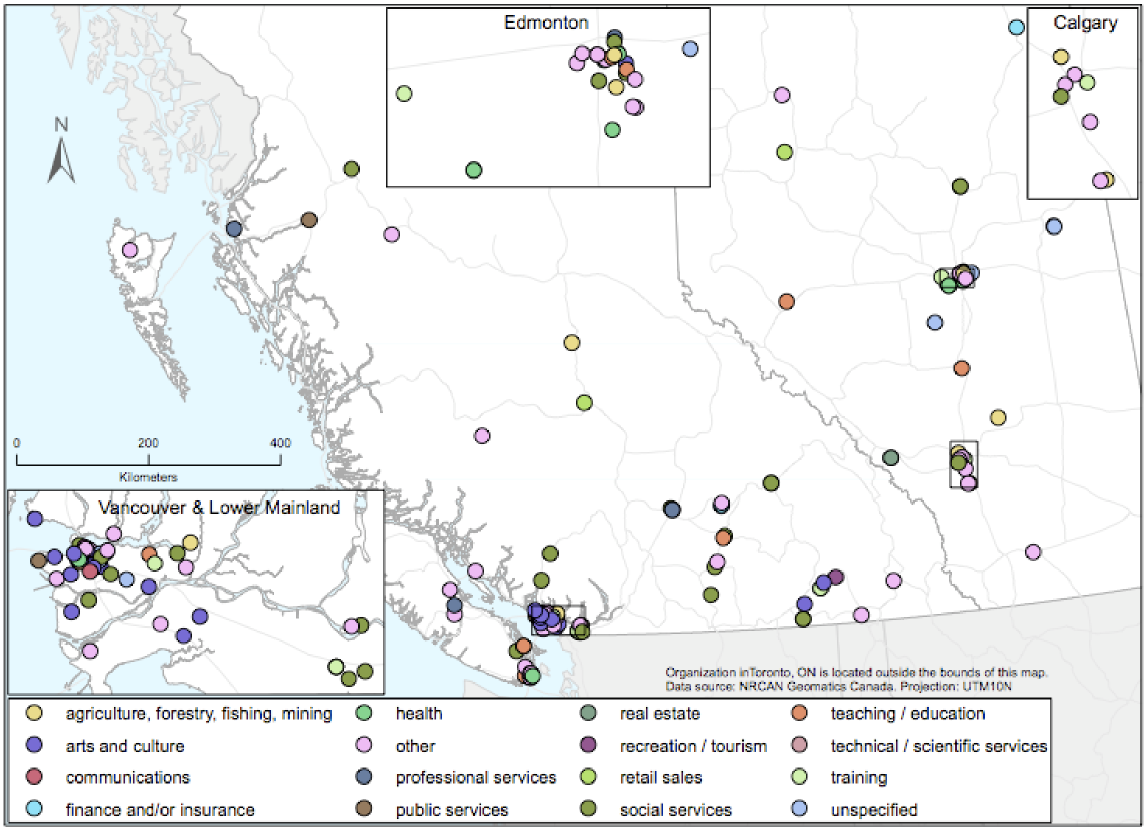
Sectors	Multiple responses (n=163)	Multiple responses in %
Social services	58	35.6
Teaching/education	53	32.5
Arts and culture	49	30.1
Training	49	30.1
Other	45	27.6
Recreation/tourism	37	22.7
Professional services	36	22.1
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining	34	20.9
Retail sales	27	16.6
Health	26	16.0
Public services	24	14.7
Finance and/or insurance	19	11.7
Communications	17	10.4
Technical/scientific services	12	7.4
Administrative services	12	7.4
Wholesale sales	9	5.5
Real estate	9	5.5
Manufacturing	8	4.9
Construction	7	4.3
Transportation/storage	7	4.3
Catering/hosting	4	2.5
Waste management	4	2.5

and 'agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining. ' For the moment 'wholesale sales', 'real estate', 'manufacturing', 'construction', 'transportation/storage', 'catering/hosting', and 'waste management' are the least represented sectors, with less than ten organizations (6 percent). Of the 45 'other' responses, many individuals used the space to elaborate on their focus, 14 named environment and conservation, nine indicated working with many different sectors, and six listed community economic development (CED). The relatively high number of organizations working in the environmental field is not surprising as the survey team invited environmental non-governmental organizations to respond. Some respondents were surprised that the environment was not offered as a work sector on our category list.[7]

Figure 3 maps the geographical distribution of organizations by primary work sector. Of the 155 participants who responded, 47 (30 percent) chose 'other' and 39 (25 percent) used the provided space to give additional information. Of the latter, 11 responses can be grouped as 'environment', five as 'youth/family', five as 'business support (financial, educational, employment etc.)' and four as 'housing'. Of the given categories , 'arts and culture' and 'social services' had the highest representation, with 25 organizations each (16 percent) followed by 'agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining' (6 percent, n=10). Seven of the given categories were not represented by the respondents at all. And, four categories (see Tab. 2.5) were only named by one to two respondents. The overall low representation of organizations in some sector categories together with the high level of respondents that do not identify with any of the given categories suggests that so far our sector categories are not sufficient to cover the spectrum of operations (or respondents do not recognize our categories as capturing their organizational functions.) However, the low sample size doesn't allow any generalized statements.

[7] Our survey followed the categories developed by Dr. Marie Bouchard, Canadian Research Chair in Social Economy, and used by her team in their Quebec studies. We are in debate with our colleagues to include environmental/ecological work in future classifications.

Figure 3: Geographical distribution of organizations by primary sector



That the categories offered don't represent the complete sector becomes more evident when taking a look at the next graphic, Table 7.

Table 7: Responses regarding the primary sector organizations work in (n=155)

Primary sector*	Number of responses	Responses in %
Other	47	30.3
Arts and culture	25	16.1
Social services	25	16.1
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining	10	6.5
Teaching/education	9	5.8
Health	8	5.2
Professional services	8	5.2
Training	6	3.9
Retail sales	4	2.6
Finance and/or insurance	3	1.9
Public services	3	1.9
Communications	2	1.3
Real estate	2	1.3
Recreation/tourism	2	1.3
Technical/scientific services	1	0.6

* Administrative services, Wholesale sales, Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation/storage, Catering/hosting, and Waste management are not represented.

In a separate question, respondents were asked about their organization's stated social and/or environmental purpose and to identify categories that would best describe their mission or sector of activity. While 85 percent (n=139) of surveyed institutions stated they had a social purpose, 29 percent (n=47) indicated that they had an environmental mission, and 27 percent (n=44) indicated that they do both (Tab. 8). Environmental missions are almost always combined with a social objective (93 percent) – only three organizations reported to have an environmental but no social purpose. Only 32 percent of organizations with a stated social mission reported to also follow environmental objectives.

Table 8: Does your organization have a stated social or environmental purpose/mission, or both? (n=163)

	Social	Environmental	Social and Environmental
Yes	139 (85.3%)	47 (28.8%)	44 (27.0%)
No	19 (11.6%)	109 (66.9%)	111 (68.1%)
N/A	5 (3.1%)	7 (4.3%)	8 (5.0%)

Clearly the environment is an important mission sector for the social economy and will be the focus of future research by BALTA.

The next topic asked respondents to identify **all categories** of their social objectives. Organizations chose from a list of 21 categories including 'other'. Table 9 summarizes the responses. 'General community' and 'education' ranked highest, followed by 'children/youth', 'persons with disabilities', 'lower income individuals', and 'unemployed persons'.

Table 9: Categories that apply best to social mission or scope of activities by number of responses. For multiple answers see left columns, for best response right columns.

Categories that apply best to social mission or scope of activities	Multiple responses (n=139)	Primary category that best describes social mission or scope of activities	Number of responses (n=128)
General community	66	Other	38
Education	63	General community	21
Children/Youth	44	Education	12
Persons with disabilities	42	Persons with disabilities	9
Lower income individuals	40	Children/Youth	7
Unemployed persons	37	Unemployed persons	6
Other	37	Basic needs provision	5
Health	34	Housing	5
Human rights	31	Lower income individuals	4
Basic needs provision	29	Family services	4
Women	28	Persons with mental illness	3
Persons with mental illness	27	Legal/financial services	3
Indigenous People	27	Indigenous people	2
Housing	26	Health	2
Homeless persons	25	Elderly persons	2
Family services	24	Ethnic communities	1
Ethnic communities	19	Homeless persons	1
Elderly persons	17	Human rights	1
Legal/financial services	14	Women	1
Fair trade	12	Fair trade	1
Refugees	11	Refugees	0

Even though 37 respondents checked 'other', 60 offered additional information in the space provided regarding their organization's objectives. Of the 37 responses, 12 can be grouped as 'environment/sustainability', eight as 'business support/intermediary', seven as 'arts and culture', three as 'local community', with the remaining seven focusing on very specific target groups or detailed objectives.

Of the 138 organizations with a social mission, 128 identified a **primary category** that best described their scope of activities (Tab. 9, right columns). The categories 'general community' and 'education' still rank highest but only with 16 percent (n=21) and 9 percent (n=12) respectively. Rather than choosing one of the given categories, 38 respondents chose 'other' and provided alternative categories that, not surprisingly, overlap with the previous answers. While most responses were either quite specific or broad, most can be roughly grouped under 'environment/sustainability' (n=9), 'arts and culture' (n=8), 'business support/intermediary' (n=3), 'finance' (n=2), and 'health' (n=2).

With respect to environmental purpose or mission, respondents offered 15 categories (including 'other') to identify **all** activities that apply. As Table 10 (left columns) show more than 40 percent of organizations (n=47) indicated 'conservation and protection' (n=28), 'resource management' (n=23), 'climate change' (n=21), and/or 'alternative/sustainable business practices' (n=21), while 'legal/financial services' (n=4), 'research/ independent science' (n=6) and ecolabeling/auditing/monitoring' (n=6) scored lowest. Only 39 of the 47 organizations named a **primary category** (Tab. 10, right columns) that describes their objectives. Of these, 'conservation and protection' (n=11) and 'alternative/sustainable business practices' (n=6) were repeatedly named. Most other categories had low response distributions. Five respondents selected 'other' and six provided further information including e.g. 'land reform', 'education', and 'philanthropy'.

Table 10: Categories that best describe organization's/establishment's environmental mission or scope of activities. For multiple answers see left columns, for best response see right columns.

Categories that describe best environmental mission or scope of activities	Multiple responses (n=47)	Primary category that best describes environmental mission or scope of activities	Number of responses (n=39)
Conservation and protection	28	Conservation and protection	11
Resource management	23	Alternative/Sustainable business practices	6
Climate change	21	Other	5
Alternative/Sustainable business practices	21	Agriculture and food	4
Pollution prevention	18	Climate change	2
Agriculture and food	18	Green building/architecture	2
Waste management/Recycling	17	Health	2
Alternative energy	17	Pollution prevention	2
Health	14	Resource management	2
Transportation	13	Waste management/Recycling	2
Other	13	Ecolabeling/Auditing/ Monitoring	1
Green building/architecture	11		
Ecolabeling/Auditing/ Monitoring	6		
Research/independent science	6		
Legal/financial services	4		

Employment and social contribution

To get a better idea of labour force characteristics of the sector, we asked organizations the number of full time, part time, seasonal, freelance and contract workers they employ, as well as volunteers. Table 11 lists the total number of employees by form of employment, including volunteers. The numbers show that responding organizations employ a total of 5222 people including full time (2346), part time (1599), seasonal workers (418) and freelancers (859). While the numbers might seem high for the small number of responses with a mean or average of 32 employees per organization, the median reveals that half of all organizations have nine or less paid employees, and no more than three full time employees (see Tab. 11, right column). Half of the respondents have no seasonal workers (median=0).

The social economy sector is characterized by high numbers of volunteers. Respondents reported a total of 12268 volunteers – more than twice the number of employees – with a median of seven. In other words, 50 percent of respondents rely on the work of seven or more volunteers and many of the organizations depend to a considerable extent on volunteers.

The high number of small organizations becomes even clearer when grouping organizations by employment size and labour force characteristics categories (Tab. 12). Looking at the total number of paid workers in each organization (n=142), the vast majority (n=135) employ less than 200 individuals and would be categorized by Statistics Canada as small, six fall in the medium-sized business category with 200 to 499 employees, and only one can be considered as large. Compared to other business sectors, respondents indicated considerably lower numbers of full-time staff in relation to part-time, seasonal, and contract workers. Further, the number of volunteers deserves attention. Sixty-seven percent (n=109) of all organizations indicated they rely on volunteers, and 14 organizations reported to work with 100 or more volunteers (including event volunteers) (Tab. 12, right column).

Table 11: Total number and median of employees and volunteers

Labour force characteristics	Total	Median
Full time	2346	3
Part time	1599	1
Seasonal	418	0
Freelancer	859	1
*All paid employees**	*5222*	*9*
Volunteers	12268	7

* This category includes full time, part time and seasonal employees as well as freelancers.

Table 12: Organizations by employment size categories and labour force characteristics

Employment size categories (by number of workers)*	Number of responses (organizations)					
	All paid workers (n=142)	Full time employees (n=110)	Part time employees (n=94)	Seasonal employees (n=40)	Freelancers/ contract workers (n=90)	Volunteers (n=109)
1-4	*38*	49	63	21	64	18
5-19	*63*	37	13	13	20	37
20-49	*21*	11	8	4	4	23
50-99	*6*	6	4	2	0	17
100-199	*7*	6	5	0	1	6
200-499	*6*	1	1	0	1	3
≥500	*1*	0	0	0	0	5

* Statistics Canada categorizes business enterprises with less than 100 paid employees as small, with 200-499 as medium-sized, and those with 500 and more employees as large.

Information on the employment of **target groups** or intended beneficiaries helps us to get a sense of the scale of marginal groups employed by the social economy sector. Depending on the focus and objectives of organizations, target groups include persons with disabilities, homeless people, women, or persons with mental illness, among other criteria. About one quarter of organizations stated that they employ specific target groups (n=37), while 65 percent do not (n=107). Eleven percent (n=19) preferred not to answer the question. Of the 37 institutions that hired target groups, 34 provided information on number and gender. There were 440 target employees of which 78 percent (n=341) are women.[8] The number of target employees per organization varied considerably between one and 130, with a median of five. The representation of women in the target workforce, however, needs to be treated with caution. Numbers given

[8] The number drops down to 70 percent (n=310) after cleaning out what seemed to be data entry errors.

appear to contain data entry errors or refer to the total number of women in the workforce rather than the target group. Still, the remaining numbers suggest that women are privileged target employees: 73 percent (n=25) of organizations hired more women than men. Ten contracted all women. Only 23 percent (n=9) hired fewer women than men.

But social economy organizations do not only provide social contributions through employment to otherwise disadvantaged persons. The majority (n=123) provide support to other organizations (Tab. 13). Asked about the form of support they offer, more than half specified they provide 'networking', 'capacity building', and/or 'training' (Tab. 14). And, one out of three respondents specified 'advocacy and promotion' and 'technical' services, as well as 'organizational development' and 'research and development' support activities, whereas 'financial' help and 'enterprise development' are less common. The existence of cooperation and support networks is also reflected in membership in networks, association, and/or umbrella groups identified by 140 (86 percent) of the surveyed organizations. To make a statement about the coherence and connectedness within the social economy sector, we would need to take a closer look at the networks and associations identified.

Table 13: Number of organizations providing support to other organizations

Support to other organizations	Number of responses (n=163)	Number of responses (in %)
Yes	123	75.46
No	33	20.24
N/a	7	4.29

Table 14: Support activities provided by organizations, multiple responses possible

Form of support	Multiple responses (n=123)	Responses in %
Networking	81	65.85
Capacity building	74	60.12
Training	66	53.66
Advocacy and promotion	57	46.34
Technical	52	42.27
Organizational development	50	40.65
Research and education	47	38.12
Financial	38	30.89
Enterprise development	31	25.20
Other	12	9.75

With respect to monetary contributions and benefits, we are interested in how organizations distribute most of their profits. Respondents were offered a list of five categories to choose from and asked to check all answers that apply (see Tab. 15). Indeed, only six (3.7 percent) organizations indicated that their surpluses are primarily distributed to individual members, while 26 and 16 respectively hold reserves/trusts or donate to other community organizations. The majority, however, invest most of their profits back into the organization. Seventeen respondents provided alternative explanations: four clarified that they do not have any profits (yet), while all others indicated that they fund projects, give money to others or invest in funds.

Table 15: Distribution of financial surplus or profit earned, multiple responses possible

Distribution of profits	Multiple responses (n=163)	Response in % of n
Invested back into the organization	117	71.77
Held in reserve for community benefit/community trust	26	15.95
Donated to other community organizations	16	9.82
Other	11	6.75
Distribution of profit to individual members	6	3.68

Financial Information

Even though not representative for the sector, the data collected, based on the total operating budget and sources of revenue, gives an idea of the economic characteristics and significance of the sample. The total actual **operating budget** of our entire sample accounted for $200.87 million (n=139) with a median or typical budget of $326,507. The total actual

capital budget equalled $886.13 million (n=68) with a median of $62,225. Table 16 gives an overview of organizations by budget size categories.

Table 16: Organizations' actual operating and capital budget by budget size

Budget size in Canadian dollars	Actual operating budget (n=139)	Actual capital budget (n=68)
<5,000	3	8
>5,000-20,000	13	14
>20,000-100,000	26	20
>100,000-500,000	41	17
>500,000-1million	18	1
>1-10million	33	7
>10million	5	1

The revenues of all respondents totalled $252,458,720 (see Tab. 17). In respect to sources of revenues, a few points are worth noting. More than half of our sample engages in market-based activities (n=104, 63.8 percent). The 'sale of goods and services' and 'service contracts' amount for $25.7 million (n=81) and $24.8 million (n=54) respectively of total revenues of all organizations (see Tab. 17). Far higher revenues are derived from 'donations', $62.4 million (n=78), and 'government grants', $54.2 million (n=80), while 'foundation grants', 'corporate sponsorship', membership contributions, 'investments', 'endowments', and 'loans' contribute to a smaller degree. Additionally, 49 respondents claimed a total of $67.8 million from other sources. Distribution of revenues within the different categories will be included in future, in-depth reports.

Table 17: Total revenues of all organizations by source of revenues (n varies from source to source)

Source of revenues	Amount in Canadian Dollars
Other (n=49)	67,790,483
Donations (n=78)	62,384,883
Government grants (n=80)	54,228,000
Sale of goods and services (n=81)	25,751,604
Service contracts (n=54)	24,857,084
Foundation grants (n-48)	5,284,492
Corporate sponsorship (n=36)	3,807,116
Membership/Subscriptions (n=58)	3,420,775
Investments (n=38)	3,396,289
Endowments (n=10)	721,966
Loans (n=7)	652,000
Anomalies (n=6)	113,028
Utilities/Crown (n=2)	51,000
Total of all revenues	*252,458,720*

3. Outlook

The basic statistics and trends outlined above provide a first step to understanding the scale and scope of the social economy in British Columbia and Alberta. One of our research objectives has been to categorize social economy organizations in order to understand the structure and function of the sector and its actors. With the help of the survey, we seek to identify trends, patterns, and gaps that will help BALTA members and researchers identify future research projects and case studies. Together with other research underway, the findings from the survey will be used in a series of BALTA policy papers. We also expect to integrate and compare our findings with research from other provinces and national level studies.

BALTA findings are made publicly available and we would like to encourage social economy actors to use the data to advance their own interests and lobbying activities. We will also do our best to respond to individual requests, and provide data in aggregated form and/or maps.[9] But we also hope to go beyond a mere informative role, as we seek to provide tools to practitioners and actors in the social economy sector that will allow them to build up support and information networks.

Clearly, much work still needs to be done. **Most importantly we need your help to increase the BALTA survey response rate.**

Next steps will include an in-depth and critical analysis of the data at hand, that takes into account different definitions of the social economy in order to develop a typology of organizations and to identify case studies. In addition to the online survey and planned case studies, we will conduct in-depth probing into specific organizational dimensions and sub-sectors. Many respondents have indicated their interest to collaborate in future projects and research endeavours. Please feel free to write us and suggest topics for future research.

The majority (n=135, 83 percent) said they would like to receive a copy of the results (8 percent no, 8 percent N/A) and 70 percent are

[9] We are restricted by limited human resources and might not be able to respond to every request immediately.

interested in participating in future projects/follow ups. Further, 58 percent[10] are interested in the creation of a directory to facilitate collaboration and information exchange within the sector (we are working on it – stay tuned!).

Bibliography

BALTA (BC AND ALBERTA RESEARCH ALLIANCE ON THE SOCIAL ECONOMY): http://www.socialeconomy-bcalberta.ca/index.html

BALTA MAPPING: http://www.socialeconomy-bcalberta.ca/mapping.html

BALTA SOCIAL ECONOMY SURVEY: https://secure.athabascau.CA/phpsurveyor/index.php?sid=50

CATALYST (2006) *2005 Catalyst Census of Women Board Directors of the FP500,* Catalyst research report (Catalyst Publications: Toronto)

JENNER, L., CYER, M. and WHITHAM, L. (2008) *2007 Catalyst Census of Women Board Directors of the FP500: Voices from the Boardroom*, Catalyst research report (Catalyst Publications: Toronto)

MANHEIM, J.B., RICH, R.C., WILLNAT, L., and BRIANS, C.L. (2008) *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*, 7th edition (Pearson: New York)

[10] The 30 respondents (18 percent) who preferred not to answer the question include 19 (12 percent) who filled out the questionnaire before the question was added.