

SERC II/Mapping Research Project Proposal: May 2008

A. Title of project:

Project E3 – Mapping the Social Economy from the Ground Up: Urban Neighbourhood/Rural Community Case Study

B. SERC 2 and Mapping – This project originated in SERC 2 and is being led by two SERC 2 members, but is linked to and funded out of the Mapping Program.

C. Lead researcher, organization name and contact information:

Mike Gismondi, Athabasca University. Co-lead: Noel Keough, University of Calgary.

D. Names of other researchers and organizations involved

Celia Lee (student researcher)

E. Description of project, including objectives, outputs and intended outcomes:

The social economy has begun to attract a lot of interest in Alberta. This research proposal is to map, through a sustainability lens, the social economy at a neighbourhood level in one Calgary community. The objectives of the research would be:

1. To identify the social economy actors in the community based on a broad characterization of social economy. The precedent for the broad characterization is work currently being done by the United Way of Calgary and Area. The spectrum of potential enterprises would be from not-for-profit, non-income generating NGOs to private businesses that philosophically and functionally exhibit characteristics of a social enterprise. The full BALTA Case Study Framework would be used to profile the individual social enterprises. We anticipate four or five full case studies as one output of this research
2. Map the inter-relationships of these enterprises to understand how tightly woven is the social economy network. Indicators of inter-relationship would be established (for example common memberships and common board membership, size of financial transactions between enterprises)
3. Map the extensions of the network into the conventional economy to understand the dependencies/synergies between the social economy and the conventional economy.
4. Map the external linkages of the local social economy. 1. Understand the relationship of the urban social economy to the rural social economy of the Calgary Region. 2.) Understand how far, and how densely does the social economy extend into the greater city, the region and even globally (e.g. fair trade networks and solidarity and advocacy networks).

This project would twin with a mapping project in Athabasca being undertaken by Mike Gismondi, using this same methodology. The twin projects, one in Calgary and one in

Athabasca, will provide comparative research into the rural-urban linkages of the social economy. Neither urban nor rural exist in isolation of each other. The Calgary urban economy will be the starting point for mapping the urban–rural connection. The Athabasca rural economy will be the starting point for mapping the rural-urban connection. Athabasca is a town of approximately 2500 people in a rural region of about 10,000 people. The Athabasca portion of the research will be funded independent from BALTA.

5. Recommendations on how to strengthen the social economy in Calgary including strengthening the social economy network and the linkages between rural and urban network members.

6. Use a sustainability lens to critically examine and characterize the Hillhurst -Sunnyside neighbourhood social economy. The sustainability lens will be derived from the Sustainable Calgary Society, State of Our City, Community Sustainability Indicators. The 36 indicators and State of Our City Reports can be found at sustainablecalgary.ca

F. Purpose and Significance of the Research

This research responds directly to SERC II objectives a and d. It will contribute to a critical assessment of the implications of the sustainability debate for social economy theory and practice. It will explore sustainability as it relates to performance indicators of the SE, and the measurement of SE community impacts. The research responds directly to two specific expected SERC II Outputs. First, the research will directly address the theoretical and practical implications of the sustainability question for SE practitioners. Second, the research will contribute to the question of how to integrate sustainability inspired occupations and activities into SE taxonomies and indicators. This research supports the SERC II Outcome of widening the debate within the CED network about the implications of sustainability for SE theory and practices. Ultimately this research will make and present for debate recommendations for strengthening the social economy in the Calgary region.

G. Student Involvement

This project will involve one masters-level graduate student from the University of Calgary, Faculty of Environmental Design. This student has already been identified. Noel Keough has been this student’s advisor for two years and has just taken on the role of research supervisor. She has just completed a directed study on social economy in the winter 2008 semester. The students’ work was of a high quality. She will be a member of the research design and implementation team. She will conduct the majority of the interviews and take primary responsibility for writing the case studies. We intend for the student to participate in formulation of the research as we build a more detailed workplan. The skills and experience acquired will be qualitative and interview research skills, analysis and synthesis of qualitative data, case study documentation, and knowledge and understanding of the social economy.

H. Research activities, plan of work and timetable:

Key informant Interviews – Social Economy Sector in Calgary: October 2008

Case Study Protocol completion: December 2008

Design of a mapping matrix: January 2009

Key contact interviews for each enterprise: February 2009

Map Hillhurst Sunnyside Social Economy: February/March 2009

Research Report Completion, Review and Publication: May 2009

Research Dissemination – Conference Presentation: May/June 2009

Research Dissemination – Local Workshop/Presentation: May/June 2009

Article Submission: September 2009

I. Academic Communication Plan

Within the academic community the results of this research will be communicated via conferences and journal publications. The lead researchers and the student intend to submit a paper proposal to the Conference of the Canadian Institute of Planners in 2009. It is anticipated that an article will be submitted to the Journal of the Canadian Association of Geographers.

J. Outside Communication Plan

Outside of the academic community the researchers intend to present the research results to a forum of social economy organizations in Calgary and perhaps southern Alberta. Potential collaborators in the communication of the results would be The United Way of Calgary and Area, and Momentum.

K. Monitoring and Evaluation

A monitoring system will be set up that will include reporting on research completion; number of articles generated out of the research; number of presentations of the research in public forums including type of forum and number of people in attendance; external funding attracted to the project; and generation of new research from the project.

L. Research Tools

The project will involve interviews with key informants in the social economy sector to generate a list of eligible organizations in the selected neighbourhood. Following identification of the organizations interviews will be conducted with key contacts in each organization. The BALTA case study protocol will be used to create a profile of each organization. A questionnaire will be designed to ensure that relevant information is captured in the interviews. Prior to interviews a web search will be conducted for each organization for purposes of completing as much of the questionnaires and case study protocol as possible prior to interviews so that interviews can focus on critical missing information.

M. Budget and Contributions

Category	2008 Request of BALTA	2008 Other Contributions	2009 Request of BALTA	2009 Other Contributions
Student salaries	\$5000.00		\$1000.00	
Student benefits/overhead	\$525.00		\$105.00	
Researcher Release Time				
Research Support Costs (e.g. supplies, communication costs)		\$200.00	\$150.00	\$50.00
Knowledge Dissemination				\$500.00
Travel			\$1000.00	\$1000.00
TOTALS	\$5,525.00	\$200.00	\$2,255.00	\$1550.00

Budget explanation

Student salaries & benefits: 260.9 hours of student time at \$23.00/hour

Travel: Travel for two individuals to a Canada-based conference. The BALTA funding will support the student travel. Dr. Keough will cover his own travel expenses.

The 'other contributions' will be provided by co-lead researcher Noel Keough

Supplies & other: in-kind supplies including paper, photocopying.

Knowledge dissemination: report reproduction (50 copies)