

B.C.-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA)

Project Proposal – Project A4-2009
Role of Faith Based Organizations in the Social Economy
(Revised 18 February 2009)

Lead researcher, organization and contact information

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This is a revision of the proposal first submitted in 2007. The project goals and other basic information remain unchanged. I have modified the timeline due to changes in my employment and time available for this project. Basically I have pushed the timeline back approximately fifteen months with a new start date of October 2008.

A. Project Title: Role of Faith Based Organizations in the Social Economy

B. Brief description of project and project objectives, outputs and proposed outcomes

The goal of this project is to document the role faith-based organizations play in the social economy in Alberta and B.C., and to investigate ways in which this role can be strengthened and expanded in the future. This will be done through identifying and analyzing innovative approaches and best practices presently being used in Alberta/B.C., other jurisdictions in Canada and beyond.

Phases:

I. Year One (2008-2009)

1. Nov. 2008 – Jan. 2009
 - Conduct initial literature review and on-line searches on FBOs and the social economy.
 - Identify case examples of potential interest through communications within academic, social economy and faith-based networks.
 - Research value convergence between selected faith traditions and SE approaches
2. Feb 2009- Apr. 2009
 - Prepare case summaries of selected examples based on information surfaced in Phase 1.
 - Identify distinct models of FBO involvement
 - Prepare project descriptions and case studies of initiatives that are examples of these models
3. May 2009-June 2009
 - Document key learnings of research
 - Present research to annual academic meetings (religion, theology, and social economy) and other constituencies
 - Distribute summary of research findings within BALTA and national networks requesting feedback

Phase I (2008-2009) – BALTA Financial Support Requested

Student support for year – see details below	\$8,508
Research support and documentation expenses (long distance phone, fax, copying, etc)	500
Student travel – local and within BALTA region	500
Total BALTA Funds Requested:	\$ 9,508

NB: For the person employed January-May, the February-May period will be funded by Athabasca University.

Student Employment Details:

Two students work: Student I from Jan-Apr 2009, Student II from Jan-May 2009.
Assume Junior Researcher (Level 2) - \$20.00/hour

Student research payments

Employment		Months & Hours per month	Rate/Hr.	Total Salary	Benefits (10.5%)	Total
I. Junior Researcher Level 2	Jan 1, 2009 to Apr 30, 2009	4 months at 42.5 hours per month	\$20.00	3400	357	3757
II. Junior Researcher Level 2	Jan. 1, 2009 to May 31, 2009	5 months at 43 hours per month	\$20.00	4300	451.50	4751.50
Totals				7700	808.50	8508.50

II. Year Two (2009-2010)

Sept 2009-June 2010

- Review feedback from BALTA and other networks
- Follow up new leads for FBO initiatives identified in feedback
- Develop criteria for analysis and evaluation of “best practice” for FBO social economy initiatives
- Prepare project descriptions and case studies of initiatives that illustrate these “best practices”
- Document trends in FBO engagement over time
- Identify possibilities for growth and expansion of FBO engagement in the social economy

- Name recommendations for FBOs and other SE actors for working together to advance the SE sector
- Present to academic meetings and SE network

III. Year Three (2010-2011)

- Sept. 2010-June 2011
- Review feedback from dissemination of results of previous work
 - Develop distinctive educational and animation resources for use in faith groups and non-faith SE constituencies
 - Identify and pursue financial, human and organizational resources potentially available for an animation strategy
 - Identify potential partners for educational/animation initiatives within faith communities and SE sector
 - Develop and launch an educational/animation initiative of whatever scope that resources permit
 - Evaluate – be opportunistic
 - Present to academic meetings and SE network

Project Outputs

- at the end of each phase – BALTA research publication, academic articles and conference presentations within different academic societies of the Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences (religion-CSSR, theology-CTS, practical ethics-CSSPE, social economy-ANSER);
- selected articles and conference presentations within the faith sectors (at a more popular level);
- selected articles and conference presentations within the SE sector (eg AB CEDnet)
- possible animation/action projects with Phase III
- contribute within BALTA to SE mapping and production of case studies

Project Outcomes

- greater knowledge and awareness of the role faith communities have played and continue to play within the SE sector
- increased willingness of SE players to widen the community base of their practice by more intentionally involving faith-based organizations in their work;
- increased willingness and capacity of faith-based organizations to be significant players in SE initiatives in their milieu;
- animation/action strategy developed to strengthen the SE sector in B.C./Alberta through greater FBO engagement

C. Purpose and significance of the study, including congruence of the proposed research with the overall strategic research objectives identified for the SERC and BALTA

In my CED practice over the last thirty years, many of the successful social economy initiatives in the Edmonton region have had significant FBO involvement. This involvement has happened in different ways and is not widely recognized. The history of the SE movement in Canada shows significant faith community engagement (e.g. Antigonish movement, caisse populaire). This continues to the present day (e.g. the United Church Moderator's Consultation on Faith and the Economy, the national ecumenical justice coalitions' Moral Economy Project). Faith-based funding groups such as the Canadian Alternative Investment Cooperative (CAIC) and the KAIROS Interchurch Social Justice Fund (PLURA) have been significant SE players. The Mennonite faith community has supported innovative SE initiatives across Canada. This is a changing environment with risks and opportunities for the SE sector in Canada (e.g. the decline of RC religious orders and the growth of non-Christian faith communities). Relevant research and information dissemination can contribute to the future growth of the Canadian SE sector.

I am asked to make presentations on the social economy to religious constituencies and to make presentations on faith community engagement to SE constituencies. I have seen real interest on both sides of these conversations. International examples, especially in the U.S., show new and innovative models for this type of engagement.

This is being presented as a BALTA (BC/Alberta) project. However, it quite likely may find resonance with BALTA sister organizations (other Social Economy Suite nodes) in the different regions of Canada. There is a distinct possibility of multi-regional collaboration at certain points in this project. If these research goals are achieved, there is also a realistic possibility of raising additional funds and recruiting new collaborators beyond the BALTA constituency.

D. Will this project be led and managed by a SERC member or members or will it require a request for proposals?

The project will be led and managed by a SERC 1 member.

E. Lead researcher, organization name and contact information

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F. Names of other researchers and organizations involved

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Other participants will likely be added as the project proceeds
Other members of SERC1 and the wider BALTA membership are also expected to provide advice and assistance at different points of this study.

G. Will the project involve hiring one or more student researchers? Will they need to be recruited or have they already been identified?

Two students have been recruited for 2008-2009. Decisions on additional student involvement in 2009-2010 and 2010 will be based on project results from 2008-2009.

H. Brief description of project roles and responsibilities for project participants (lead researcher, other researchers, student researchers, partner organizations)

The project lead researcher will be the lead researcher with student support during Phase I. He will commit time to each year of the project.

Other researchers, SERC members, FBO and community partners will have input to the project at relevant points.