MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

A BC Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance Project

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Local governments considerably impact and influence CED and SE initiatives.

As the level of government closest to people and communities, local governments can play a key role in the support of CED.

The role of local governments is changing.
Historically municipal government focused primarily on physical infrastructure, traditional economic development and core city operations (e.g. roads and sewers, waste disposal).

Scope of municipal government service has increased as a result of labour market and social changes.

Cities as economic hubs - "quality of place" important to attract and retain labour.
This project aimed to:

- Elevate and share knowledge

- Increase understanding of the role municipal government plays in supporting CED and the SE

- Increase awareness of how to further engage municipal government in supporting CED and the SE
Research Objectives

- To explore and analyze local government support for the Social Economy in a Canadian context
- To explore and analyze key areas of involvement in specific sectors (such as affordable housing, green/sustainable cities, social enterprise development, training and employment, financing, etc.)
- To identify innovative examples of municipal support
Research Objectives

- To explore the issue of scale by comparing role of local government in rural and urban contexts
- To make recommendations for advancing support of CED and the SE at a municipal level
- To explore coordinating and co-designing research across more than one node in the Canadian Social Economy Hub.
What do municipal government supports of CED and the SE sector look like in a Canadian context, with an emphasis on BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Northern Ontario?
Researchers included both practitioners and academics,

Value was placed on ensuring the research was useful and beneficial to community groups.
Research Methodology

- Interviews with municipal government staff
- Secondary research
- Data Analysis
Research Included:

- 22 municipalities with a population of 30,000 or less
- 8 municipalities with a population between 30,000 and 500,000
- 5 municipalities with a population over 500,000
Revealed six “frameworks” for understanding local government relationships with CED and SE actors

Revealed/affirmed 7 roles local governments play in supporting CED and the SE
Solitudes

SE Actors/Sectors

Other Actors/Sectors

Municipality
Coffee Shop
Linking and Leveraging

Higher Level Government/External Funder

Municipality
Strong and Integrated
How can we Help?
Roles Local Governments Play

- Expressions of intent
- Financial Support
- In-Kind Support
- Planning, Research, Advising
- Human and Social Capital Development
- Land Use
- Procurement
Some Key Findings

- All Large municipalities are engaged in a range of roles supporting the social economy

- Municipalities of all sizes make a significant investment in the social economy

- Close alignment between many key municipal priorities and social economy work
Research Results

- 18 of 35 municipalities have policies or bylaws supporting CED/SE
- 28 of 35 municipalities are involved in neighbourhood revitalization
- 28 of 35 municipalities are involved in affordable housing
- 17 of 35 municipalities are involved in alternative energy generation.
Selected Results of Interview Questions

Bylaws or policies Supporting CED or SE

- Small 23%
- Medium 100%
- Large 100%
Involvement in Neighbourhood Revitalization

- Small 68%
- Medium 100%
- Large 100%
Assistance to Social Enterprise and/or community business

- Small 50%
- Medium data forthcoming
- Large 100%
Social/Ethical/Green Purchasing Policy or Practice

- Small: 64%
- Large: 60%
- Medium data: forthcoming
Alternative Energy Generation

- Small: 45%
- Medium: 38%
- Large: 80%
Framework Case Examples

- Strong and Integrated: Mission B.C.
- Linking and Leveraging: Winnipeg Manitoba
- Coffee Shop: Nipigon, ON
Role Case Examples

- Policy: Edmonton AB. - non profit leasing guidelines

- In-kind Support: Medicine Hat AB. - directory of local food producers

- Research and Planning: Vancouver BC - Cultural planning
Role Case Examples

- Human and Social Capital Development: Port Alberni BC - make training available to community

- Procurement: Calgary AB. - Sustainable Environmental and Ethical procurement policy
Challenges

- Language barriers
- Limited municipal engagement
- Structural barriers
Further Research Opportunities

- SE and CED practitioner perspectives on Local Government supports
- First Nation community support of SE and CED
Opportunities – Moving Forward

- Alignment with other municipal organizations
- Urgency around Sustainability
- Emerging federal and provincial funding programs and priorities