



# **Faith-Based Organizations Engaged in the Social Economy in Western Canada**

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# Social Economy in Canada

Social Economy (SE) important in history of Canada in all regions:

- Atlantic Canada
- Quebec
- Ontario
- West
- North



# FBO Historical Developments

Faith-inspired individuals and groups were significant players in SE, in Canada, for generations:

- Antigonish Movement
- Caisse populaire
- Social Gospel

Until recently in Canada, primarily Christian FBOs

Today, other religious faiths, including aboriginal spirituality



# Canadian Christian Communities

- Canadian Christian churches - voices for economic justice
- Last 30 years growing ecumenical consensus
- SE engagement - way to incorporate ethical faith values into the economy and society
- SE engagement – towards a more just society



# Project Objectives

- Identify FBOs engaged in SE in Western Canada today
- Explore ways that FBOs are participating in SE
- Describe the different types of FBO engaged in the SE
- Examine how faith influences FBO engagement in the SE

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# Research Steps

- Print and electronic bibliographic review
- Assemble “long” list of potential FBOs
- Move to a workable “short list” for interviews
- First round of interviews (using modified BALTA mapping survey)
- Second round of interviews of selected FBOs
- Analysis
- Documentation



## FBO Numbers

- 60 FBOs identified (“long” list)
- 37 completed first round survey
- 1 declined
- 4 failed to respond
- 13 second round interview (from the 37)





## Geographic Distribution of FBOs

Edmonton (12), Calgary (8), Vancouver (5),  
Saskatoon (3), Winnipeg (2), Toronto (2),  
Nelson (1), Ponoka (1), Port Alberni (1),  
Victoria (1) and Viking (1) = Total (37)



# Identifying The FBO

## 1<sup>st</sup> Question:

1. Faith-based organization (FBO)
2. Secular organization supported or in partnership with a FBO

We asked this question because faith organizations often do not participate in the social economy in their own name as a FBO but as partners or supporters of a secular social economy organization.



# What do FBOs Do in the SE

1. Funders
2. Lenders
3. Housing Providers
4. Retail Sales (“Fair Trade”) / Services
5. Employment / Job Training

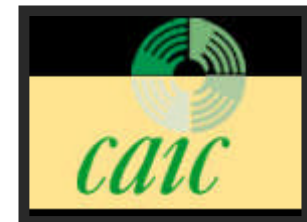
# #1 Funders No Room In The Inn

- Ecumenical collaboration (13 Christian denominations)
- Inspired by the story of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter in Bethlehem, and finding “No Room In The Inn”
- No Room In The Inn seeks to alleviate the housing crisis by providing funding for housing projects (annually)



# #2 Lenders Canadian Alternate Investment Cooperative

- CAIC has been in operation for over twenty five years
- Has raised several million dollars in loan capital
- It is a national fund, and has supported several social economy projects in British Columbia and Alberta.
- i.e.: Bread of Life Centre in Port Alberni, BC; Inn-Roads Housing Co-Op and PAAFE, in Edmonton, AB.



## **#3 Retail Sales (“Fair Trade”) Ten Thousand Villages**

- TTV is a business model based on “fair trade” practices
- Organized through the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
- TTV works with artisans throughout the world
- There are about 50 TTV stores in many major cities across Western Canada (and over 100 in the US)



# #4 Housing Providers More Than A Roof

- Organized through the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
- Founded in 1984, it has grown from an initial 26 unit complex to over 1050 units
- Currently working on a 82 unit complex



# #5 Employment Training **Kids in the Hall Bistro**

- Kids in the Hall, is an Edmonton social economy project sponsored by E4C (an ecumenical FBO)
- It is an innovative job training program for “at risk” youth
- The training program includes:
  - life skills training
  - practical job skills training
  - and on-the-job work training







# Relationship to Formal Faith Institution

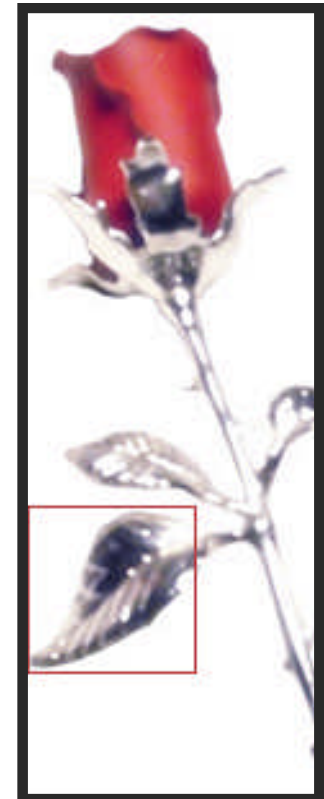
1. Local Congregation (i.e.: Mustard Seed Calgary - Baptist)
2. Non-Congregational (i.e.: CAIC – Religious Orders & Ten Thousand Villages - MCC)
3. Ecumenical or Interfaith Coalitions (i.e.: No Room In The Inn - Edmonton and District Council of Churches, the Social Justice Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese, and the Quality of Life Commission)
4. Faith Individuals (i.e.: Servants Anonymous)

# Faith Individuals Servants Anonymous

- 23 years ago, two women and one man from different Christian faith backgrounds met weekly for Bible study
- One day, as one of the women was on her way to their weekly meeting, she encountered a prostitute on the street, and invited her into her home



**SERVANTS ANONYMOUS SOCIETY** OF CALGARY





# Faith in Faith-Based Organizations

1. The history of the organization
2. The inspiration/mission/value base of the organization
3. Financial support from faith sources
4. Faith expectations for board members
5. Faith expectations for staff
6. Faith expectations for the clientele
7. Faith influence in the service delivery and program delivery



# Changes In Identity In FBOs Over Time

- We observed 3 trends:
  1. Some FBOs, founded with partners from within one denominational tradition, over time invite new partners from other denominational traditions
  2. Some FBOs with a Christian ecumenical faith identity was that of expansion of their scope to include other faith traditions and become multi-faith instead of Christian ecumenical
  3. Some FBOs become more secular over time



# Faith Identity Helping and Hindering the Work of FBOs

- Faith identity helps
- Faith identity does NOT help
- Faith identity helps and does not help

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## Possible Directions for Further Research

- Study FBOs associated with specific faith communities in greater depth (e.g.: Roman Catholic Religious Orders, Mennonites)
- Greater focus on FBOs associated with other religious faith traditions (in addition to Christianity) including aboriginal spirituality
- Greater emphasis on FBOs in rural communities
- In-depth case studies of some of the key FBOs



# Some Conclusions

- FBOs making significant contributions to SE in Western Canada
- Faith as empowering force for SE engagement
- No typical FBO ... incredible diversity of FBOs (different SE roles, different types of organizations)
- Long-lived FBOs continuing contributions
- New FBO players in a dynamic sector



**Thank You**