

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

PROJECT PROPOSAL – Project A10-2009

15 May 2009

**A. Title of project: Role of Faith Based Organizations in the Social Economy: Phase II
The Role of Catholic Religious Orders and the Mennonite Community**

B. With which BALTA SERC Is this project associated? SERC 1

This is being presented as a BALTA SERC 1 project. However, it quite likely may find resonance with the other regional nodes in the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP). There is a possibility of multi-regional cooperation at certain points of this project

C. Lead researcher, organization name and contact information:

Dr. Bob McKeon

St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta (academic)

Social Justice Office, Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton (practitioner)

Tel: 780-469-1010 sjjustice@edmontoncatholic-church.com

D. Names of other researchers and organizations involved:

Martin Garber-Conrad, CEO, Edmonton Community Foundation

Advisors from key contacts within the Catholic religious orders and the Mennonite Community

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

The research in Project A4 showed that some of the most consistently successful faith based approaches to the social economy were those of the Catholic religious orders and the Mennonites. While these represent quite distinct religious traditions, they are similar in that they are represented consistently in different geographic regions and they work within several different social economy models.

One goal of this research is get an idea of the full extent of their presence within and their contribution within the social economy. A second goal is to try to understand why these two approaches are so consistently successful. What do the individuals and organizations bring to their social economy work (eg. personnel, finances, networks, unique skill sets, etc). What are the theological foundations of their work? How does their religious faith sustain and support their social economy work?

One specific concern with the SE work of the Catholic religious orders is related to the rapid decline of their members, presence and resource base within Canada at this time. Are there new ways the Catholic community can organize itself to continue the SE done in recent decades by the Catholic religious orders? Can the remaining personnel in the Catholic religious orders find new partnerships and approaches so their contribution to the SE can continue into the future?

Project Outputs

- BALTA research report, academic articles and conference presentations within different academic societies (ANSER (social economy), Canadian Catholic

Historical Association (Catholic history), other societies addressing religion and society (regional AAR?)

- Selected articles and conference presentations within the faith sectors (at a more popular level);
- Selected articles and conference presentations within the SE sector
- Possible animation/action projects after the completion of this project
- Final report to BALTA

Project Outcomes

- Greater knowledge and awareness of the roles specific 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
- Animate conversation within Catholic religious orders about how to continue their social economy legacy into the future
- Possible conversation and cross-fertilization between the Catholic religious communities and the Mennonites

F. Purpose and significance of the research, including congruence with the strategic research objectives identified for the SERC and BALTA. Why should this project be approved, given BALTA's limited resources? [Refer to the project criteria in the BALTA Workplans and Project Proposals Policy.]

This proposed project is a follow up to the present BALTA Project A4-2009 "Role of Faith Based Organizations in the Social Economy. Project A4 is now in its final stages.

Two approaches to faith-based engagement in the social economy appeared consistently in many of the projects mapped and surveyed in A4. These are the engagement of the Catholic religious orders (especially the women) and the Mennonite community in the social economy.

The Catholic religious orders have engaged the social economy in several ways. They have pooled capital into loan funds, established granting agencies, moved into low income communities and organized social economy ventures from within, trained local leadership, created innovative partnerships and networks, provided public credibility and legal frameworks and many other things. They have done this from a religious and spiritual foundation that is often distinct from hierarchical church structures and ways of functioning. This unique contribution is important to study at this time, because most of these religious orders are shrinking in membership and resources and will no longer be present in most of our communities in a decade or two. There is an urgent challenge for church communities and the whole SE sector to better understand and document the unique contributions of these religious orders to the social economy over the past forty years and to begin to explore new ways to continue this type of faith-based engagement into the future through new types of initiatives, organizations and partnerships.

The Mennonites in Canada (and beyond), working from a Protestant theological and spiritual foundation, have created a far reaching family of faith-based organizations. These initiatives have included a wide variety of projects, including housing, job training, micro businesses, recycling) and constituencies (eg immigrants and refugees).

Both these approaches have stood the test of time and have been replicated in many different settings, both in Canada and internationally. While these initiatives come from within specific

ecclesial traditions, these organizations have often been open to include people of other religious traditions and people professing no religious identity, while keeping their distinctiveness.

FBO Project and BALTA Objectives -

- Builds upon previous BALTA research
- Sustainability - possibility of project continuing into future after BALTA funding ends
- Study of exemplary practice by leading FBO SE actors
- Both subject groups are consistently innovative in their SE engagement over the long haul
- Both subject groups creative in partnerships
- Possibility of replicating their success through a better understanding of their approaches and models

G. Will the project involve student researchers in a paid or unpaid capacity? If yes, will they need to be recruited or have they already been identified? Briefly describe the roles and responsibilities of students involved in the research project, the skills/experience they will acquire, and how this will complement their academic training. Explain as well how adequate supervision and support of the student will be ensured.

I am seeking two researchers: 1) a student researcher eligible for BALTA funding (Masters level)-not identified at this time; 2) a researcher who is not a student during this time who would be paid from supplemental (non-BALTA) funds, My hope is that this second researcher will be Catherine Madsen who was part of the A4 project in 2008-2009.

H. Research activities, plan of work and timetable:

Project Workplan

Sept 2009 – Nov. 2009	-Review the Project A4 research -Conduct literature review and on-line searches on the engagement of Catholic Religious Orders (CROs) and Mennonites in the social economy; -Identify case examples and key contacts of potential interest through communications within academic, social economy and faith based networks;
Dec. 2009-Feb. 2010	-Prepare question framework for interviews; ethical review -Conduct interviews with key contacts
Mar. 2010-Apr. 2010	-Analyze data and conduct follow up interviews where necessary
May 2010	-Document key learnings of research -Prepare research reports for academic and public presentations and publications -Distribute summary of research findings within BALTA and other social economy and faith networks

I. Describe plans for communicating research results within the academic community. Indicate audience and specific output(s) i.e., refereed journal articles, conference presentations or other appropriate channels.

- BALTA research report, academic articles and conference presentations within different academic societies (ANSER (social economy), Canadian Catholic Historical Association (Catholic history))
- Selected articles and conference presentations within the faith sectors (at a more popular level);
- Selected articles and conference presentations within the SE sector
- Possible animation/action projects after the completion of this project

J. Describe plans for communicating research results outside the academic community to practitioners, policy makers, and other people for whom the research results could be significant. Indicate audience and specific output(s).

- Selected articles and conference presentations within the faith sectors (at a more popular level);
- Selected articles and conference presentations within the SE sector
- Possible animation/action projects after the completion of this project

K. Describe your plans for monitoring and evaluating your research project. Feel free to consult with BALTA’s Coordinator on designing possible approaches. (Note that monitoring and evaluation are extremely important both for ensuring the success of the project as well as satisfying reporting to SSHRC.)

- Weekly meetings with students
- Meetings with advisory teams from RC religious orders and Mennonites
- Final report to BALTA

L. What are the research tools you propose to use in your project?

NOTE: If your research involves human subjects, you **MUST** provide copies of your proposed research tools (as well as your research plan) prior to commencing research. Please see the document *“BALTA Ethical Review Process – Simplified”* for information about ethical review requirements.

Print and electronic literature review

Survey and interview with key contacts (with ethical review)

M. Budget and Contributions

Category	Requested of BALTA	Other Contributions
Student salaries 30 hrs/mo X 9 mos X \$20/hr	\$5,400	
Non-student researcher 30 hrs/mo X 9 mos X \$20/hr		\$5,400
Student benefits/overhead costs (if the student will be a CCCR hire, add 10.5% of the student salaries amount)	\$567	

Non-student researcher 10.5% of salary		\$567
Researcher Release Time	0	In-kind – lead researcher’s time – 25 days at \$300 per day = \$7,500
Research Support Costs (e.g. supplies, communication costs)	\$400	\$400
Knowledge Dissemination		
Travel	\$400	\$400
TOTALS	\$ 6,767	\$14,267

Budget explanation

Student salaries & benefits 30 hrs/mo X 9 mos X \$20/hr
Benefits - 10.5% of salary

Researcher release time \$0 - contributed

Travel : travel in Western Canada

Supplies & other – long distance phone, photocopy, fax

Knowledge dissemination - Lead Researcher presentation at Congress 2009
(Financial support outside BALTA funding)