

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

SERC 3 Project Proposal – 2008-2009 Program Year

- A. Title of project: C-15 - Taking Social Embeddedness into Account in Community Robustness and in the Social Economy**
- B. With which BALTA SERC Is this project associated? Or is it a cross cutting project? SERC 3**

C. Lead researcher, organization name and contact information:

Dr. Paul Reed, Professor and Director, Carleton University Centre for Applied Social Research and Senior Social Scientist, Statistics Canada

D. Names of other researchers and organizations involved:

Mike Lewis, Canadian Centre for Community Renewal, Lead Investigator in BALTA

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

Objectives

1. To outline the concept of social embeddedness as a base for considering its implications for community resilience and the social economy
2. To identify possible implications for how we to might approach the work involved in monitoring the state of the social economy in communities.

Outputs

1. A discussion paper for BALTA and extended circulation in the field

Outcomes

1. A potential framework within which to examine current work to measure and monitor the state of the social economy
2. An examination of the findings in outcome 1 for their relevance to community resilience and also social return on investment

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.]

In a society that is committed to an ethos of individualism it is the premise of this research project that we have lost sight of the sociality of human beings and their need for social connection. This is, broadly speaking, a fundamental tenet of the social economy; that is, that social goals and relations be re-embedded into the heart of our economic life.

Karl Polanyi's perspective is that historically, economies rested on a foundation of social relations whereas in contemporary thinking, the major assumption is that the economics should take precedence over social relations.

Based on recent research utilizing data from four large national surveys (sample size up to 65000 cases), social embeddedness was an explanatory factor accounting for as much as 37% of total variance in the self described health of individuals. Other exploratory research that looked at social embeddedness in its connection to civic participation accounted for as much as 60% of variance, an extraordinarily link. It would thus appear that the concept may hold considerable explanatory potential.

BALTA has a fundamental interest in exploring how reciprocity and social connectedness can be elaborated in our economic life. The project outlined here can be expected to increase our capacity for deliberate and fruitful discourse by drawing on the research and intellectual capital of Dr. Reed who has been the key researcher in the aforementioned studies and applying them to this strategic interest of BALTA.

Secondly, we expect that conceptual clarification based on existing research is an important base from which to critically examine current research relevant to measuring and tracking progress relevant to policy and practice which aims to strengthen the social economy.

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.

Yes, modestly, in a paid capacity. One of the PHD students currently being supervised by Dr. Reed will assist in assembling and reviewing additional material to that already accumulated by Paul.

H. Research activities, plan of work and timetable:

Paul Reed and Mike Lewis will create the initial design of the paper in early June. The paper will be completed in draft form in September. The final paper will be completed by the end of October. It will be distributed in advance of the November BALTA symposium to SERC members.

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.

This is a think piece at this juncture. We will assess possible adaptation of the paper for academic audiences later. However it will be distributed proactively into the academic setting on a target basis. Opportunities for presenting at academic conferences will be sought

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).

It will be placed on the BALTA website and on the Centre for Applied Social Research at Carleton. It will also be sent directly to a series of practitioners in the CED, Community Development and Co-operative fields as well as key researchers involved in these fields and in the area of community resilience and SROI.

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.)

Depending on the response to the paper, we may consider an additional phase.

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.

This is primarily a think piece.

M. Budget and Contributions

Information can be both dollar figures and anecdotal, including in-kind contributions and requests for BALTA support (eg. staff support for dissemination).

Category	Requested of BALTA	Other Contributions
Student salaries		
Student benefits/overhead costs (if the student will be a CCCR hire, add 10.5% of the student salaries amount; if the student will be employed by another institution, add the relevant amount)	\$2000 including benefits (The project will proceed whether or not this is approved)	In kind contribution of Dr. Paul Reed 25 days @\$1250 per day (Stats Can charge rate for his time) \$31,250
Researcher Release Time	10 days of M Lewis release time	
Research Support Costs (e.g. supplies, communication costs)		
Knowledge Dissemination		Not yet determined
Travel	1 trip to Ottawa for working session \$1200	
TOTALS		

Budget explanation

Student salaries & benefits \$2000 total – PHD student of Paul Reed

Researcher release time Mike Lewis in current budget – design, review and analysis of implications for community resilience and

Travel One trip to Ottawa to work on analysis portion

Supplies & other

Knowledge dissemination Not yet determined beyond BALTA