



## BALTA to Receive Funding for New Research Initiative

**B**ALTA has just learned that our *Social Economy, Community Resilience and the Transition to Sustainability* project will receive funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

The \$200,000 in funding would support a two year Partnership Development Project to further develop the BALTA partnership and to develop plans for a new research program on the transition to sustainability focus. (See page 3 for a brief description of the new project). We would then be able to submit the proposed new longer term research program to SSHRC and other funders in 2014.

As reported in our previous newsletter, our Partnership Development Project proposal to SSHRC was evaluated highly, but initially not funded because there were too many projects recommended for the amount of funds in SSHRC's budget. SSHRC has since received some additional funds to support research projects that involve 'industry-academic partnerships' for research. ... *cont'd on p. 2*

## Mike's Musings

by Mike Lewis

**A**bout 7 years ago we started to contemplate how a research consortium in BC and Alberta might contribute to strengthening the social economy. Few in the academy were aware of the term social economy. The same was also true for practitioners, though some



had been introduced to this strange new language through the Federal social economy initiative of Paul Martin and even fewer because they were aware of the rapidly growing

movement in Quebec led by the Chantier de l'économie sociale.

This can no longer be said. The language, concepts, practice and policy supports for the social economy have been advanced, if only modestly. BALTA has helped. In the domains of social enterprise mapping, procurement, financing and network development, BALTA has made a modest contribution to the efforts of our partners and collaborators. Indeed, the mapping work of BALTA has become the template for mapping social enterprise across the country.

In relation to housing affordability some social economy solutions have been advanced. For example, the work of BALTA has led to community land trusts being on the

City of Vancouver's affordable housing agenda and interest is emerging in the Victoria/South Island region (see article on page 5).

*BALTA's most unexpected evolution was the research that elevated the importance of the social economy to the whole field of sustainability. Indeed, this work has shaped what we can now call the BALTA 2 agenda.*

Our research on wind energy regulation in Alberta has led to the formation of a retail renewable energy co-operative in Alberta.

... *cont'd on p. 6*

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*Unless otherwise indicated, all articles are by Stuart Wulff.*

# BALTA to Receive Funding

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BALTA's project was accepted for this funding program because of the involvement of social economy businesses (co-operatives and social enterprises) in our project and the focus on developing community based participatory action research projects that would engage local business partners in transition pilot projects.



While **Mike Lewis** of the Canadian Centre for Community Renewal (CCCR) will remain as the lead investigator on this new project, as



he was for the previous BALTA program, he will be joined by three other co-leads: **Mike Gismondi** of Athabasca University, **Noel Keough** of Sustainable Calgary (and the University of Calgary) and **Ana Maria Peredo** of the University of Victoria.



The hosting of the secretariat for BALTA will shift from CCCR to Athabasca University. During this two

year development project, there is funding for only a half time

coordinator position and much of that position will be focused on development of the new research partnership and program. However, with support from Athabasca University and other partners, there will also be some ability to keep the BALTA research network functioning and most significantly to continue dissemination and mobilization of existing BALTA research, especially that related to the new project's themes.

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We thank all the BALTA partners who have contributed to this successful new initiative. There are still some hoops to jump through before SSHRC will give its final approval to the project, but we anticipate meeting those conditions and beginning development of the new project later this summer. Project activities will begin in the autumn. 🌍

## New Book Profiles BALTA and other Research Partnerships

The University of Victoria has published *Community-university research partnerships: Reflections on the Canadian social economy experience*. The book examines experiences within the research networks known as the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP). BALTA was the BC-Alberta node of CSERP.



The book is co-edited by BALTA member, **Dr. Peter Hall** of Simon Fraser University, and **Ian MacPherson**, a co-director of the CSERP National Hub.

Several chapters in the book were authored by BALTA members, including a chapter on BALTA by **Karen Heisler**, **Mary Beckie** and **Sean Markey**, and a chapter on coordinating community-university partnerships by the CSERP coordinators. BALTA's **Stuart Wulff** and **Annie McKittrick** of the National Hub were the lead authors of that chapter. In addition to being the co-editor, Peter Hall co-authored a chapter in the book.

Access the e-book at:  
<https://dspace.library.uvic.ca:8443/handle/1828/3878> 🌐

# New BALTA Research Program on Social Economy, Community Resilience and the Transition to Sustainability

**B**ALTA will be initiating a new research initiative on *Social Economy, Community Resilience and the Transition to Sustainability* with financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

The initial funding is for a two year Partnership Development Project that would support development of the research partnership and planning for a future multi-year research program. Towards the end of the two year development process, an application would be submitted to SSHRC and potentially other funders to support a 5-6 year major new research program.

*The goal of the new research partnership would be to study the scaling up/out of innovations that strengthen the resilience and sustainability of communities and regions.*

While many of the current BALTA partners would participate in this new program and it will build on significant aspects of BALTA's research and other activities in recent years, this is a new program with a distinct new focus and significant new partners.

The goal of the new research partnership would be to study the scaling up/out of innovations that strengthen the resilience and sustainability of communities and regions. While the primary focus of the partnership would be in Alberta and BC, there are national and international partners, particularly in the UK.

Key findings from BALTA's earlier research reveal the strategic importance of the social economy in advancing sustainability and meeting basic needs on a more local-regional basis. With sixty per cent of the planet's ecosystems at risk and continued reliance on fossil fuels making inevitable a future of severe and irreversible



climate change, populations are rendered more vulnerable and the communities and regions they live in more subject to environmental, economic and social dislocation. BALTA's earlier research studied examples of current best practice in addressing sustainability objectives. This new research partnership would build upon that to study how to adapt and scale up successful innovations to a wider range of contexts.

There are three major components to the project:

1. Mobilizing more widely the results of earlier research by BALTA and other partners relevant to the aims of this project.
2. Analyzing the intersections between contexts, innovations and enabling factors at micro (local), mezzo (enabling systems) and macro levels of transition, identifying lessons to be learned and knowledge gaps that would benefit from further research in the future research program.
3. Engaging a selection of communities/regions in community based participatory action research projects that would explore scaling up/out specific innovations and transition strategies. These action research projects would form the main part of the future research program. 🌱

Photos: Community-based participatory action research at Sunnyhill Housing Co-operative, Calgary. Credit: Phil Cox.





# The Resilience Imperative – Now Available

Three years in the making and a culminating point in the careers of both its authors, ***The Resilience Imperative: Co-operative Transitions to a Steady-State Economy*** has now been released to booksellers. The book is the result of several years of research and reflection supported by BALTA.



***The Resilience Imperative*** has already won the admiration of an array of luminaries, including David Suzuki, Hazel Henderson, Richard Heinberg, Bill McKibben, Robin Murray and John Restakis.


**Mike Lewis** (at right) launched the book in a series of speaking engagements in Calgary and BC in May, then took it to the Canadian CED Network's AGM in Toronto in



June. CCEDNet included a copy of the book in the conference materials for all participants. Mike has also talked up the book and its themes in recent international events – the Thriving Communities Tele-Summit in April (part of the Spring of Sustainability 2012) and in June the Strategies for a New Economy conference in New York State.

Co-author **Pat Conaty** is promoting the book and its themes at events surrounding June's Festival of Transition in the U.K.

To date, some of the best response has come from business and co-operative audiences, who appreciate how the book comes to grips with the economic realities of transition and offers them evidence-based direction.

The Resilience Imperative, New Society Publishers, 400 pp. \$26.95. [Click here for further information and to purchase your copy on-line](#) 


## 2nd BALTA Book Explores Sustainability Themes

Several years of research and related work within BALTA is culminating in 2012 in two books that explore themes related to sustainability and transition. While ***The Resilience Imperative*** has already been published (see above), work continues on a second book, ***Seeds of Transition: The Convergence of the***

***social economy and sustainable community development.***

***Seeds of Transition*** is co-edited by several BALTA researchers: **Mary Beckie, Sean Connelly, Mike Gismond, Sean Markey and Mark Roseland**. Building on several areas of BALTA and other research, it examines the growing convergence between those interested in the

social economy and those interested in sustainability. It argues that each field has much to contribute in enriching the effectiveness of the other.

The book will be submitted to the publisher later in 2012, with 2013 targeted for publication. (Photo: The Windshare turbine at Exhibition Park, Toronto. Credit: Joshua Sherurcij.) 

# Preserving Housing Affordability with Community Land Trusts

By Michelle Colussi

Recent BALTA research and knowledge mobilization has focused on community land trusts (CLTs) and affordable housing. A research report – *Affordability Locked In: Community Land Trusts and Housing*, by Mike Lewis and Nick Montgomery – will be available soon. Mike Lewis, through his participation on the Vancouver Mayor’s Task Force on Housing Affordability and other outreach, has been introducing the CLT model to a variety of audiences.

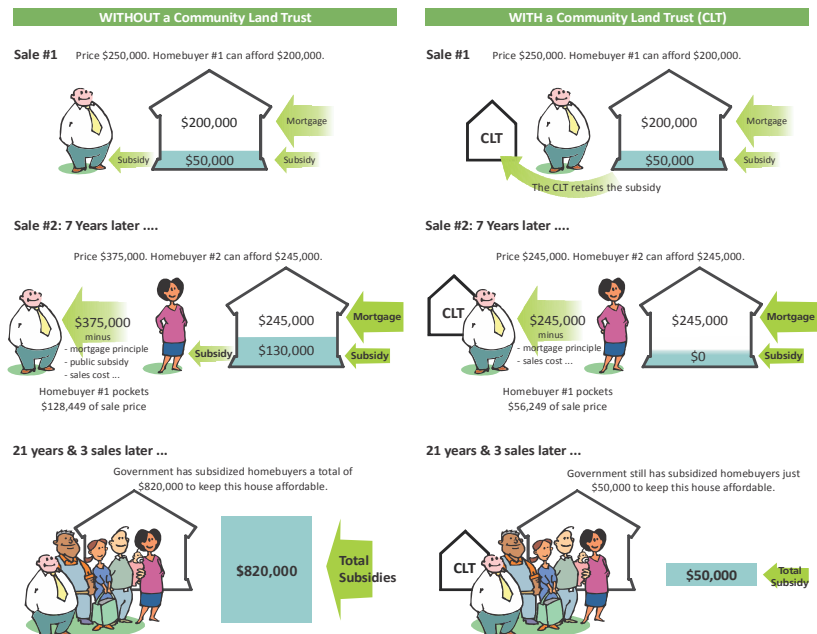
BALTA and the Canadian Centre for Community Renewal hosted a CLT and affordable housing workshop in Victoria, BC, on May 4. Participants included housing policy makers, providers, governments, a major credit union, a funder and others. The workshop focused on sharing research about the CLT and Mutual Home Ownership models as proven means for creating and preserving affordable housing in the US and UK.

One participant indicated that he was a cynic about the model until he read an *i4* article about a Vermont CLT and their 2000 properties. All participants expressed a growing concern for housing affordability as an issue for young families and professionals. For this group, supply was not the issue as much as equity and accessibility.

The looming expiration of CMHC housing mortgage and rental subsidy agreements beginning in 2016 was a driver for participants. They were concerned that tenants in subsidized housing would no longer be able to afford their rents. BC Non-Profit Housing Association members have

three years to figure out a response to this situation. In the co-op and First Nations housing sectors, maintenance costs are rising and exceeding rental income. Raising rents for the lower and middle income segments of the tenant spectrum is not an option.

In some places municipal governments are leading the way with the CLT model. In other places the municipality participates as a partner. Local governments bring land and planning acumen; they can create supportive policy and regulations; and they can facilitate



US research indicates that CLTs embed a 1-time state subsidy locally. Conventional programs require the state to invest more and more to keep a house affordable.

Participants expressed concerns about how to build acceptance for left of center solutions in a fairly right of center industry and environment. They identified a need for education to shift the culture of individual entitlement regarding home ownership choices. Living in higher density housing in the downtown core is not yet a norm, unlike most large cities. They wanted to see a re-think of our ideas of personal space, energy use and the reality of less land and financing being available.

collaborations. There is a role perhaps for local governments to create “spaces that allow us to explore the changing needs we have as a society and thus the changing models for how we live”. (Kimberly Stratford, City of Victoria)

Participants left the meeting in agreement that a community land trust pilot would be an excellent step in exploring innovative responses to the growing affordable housing crisis in the region. 🌱

# Mike's Musings

(cont'd from page 1)

We played a key role in establishing a Master in Community Development program and other social economy instructional materials are being finalized for use by several universities.

Our research on co-op survival and economic contribution is now being cited across the country in various forums.

*In June SSHRC decided to award \$200,000 for the project. With the in-kind and cash support from BALTA's partners, this new two year project is valued at \$622,978 and could eventually lead to a new multi-year research program with significant new funding.*

In relation to housing affordability some social economy solutions have been advanced. For example, the work of BALTA has led to community land trusts being on the City of Vancouver's affordable housing agenda and interest is emerging in the Victoria/South Island region (see article on page 5).

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Our research on co-op survival and economic contribution is now being cited across the country in various forums.

BALTA also evolved in ways not fully expected, a sure sign of another accomplishment; we did build an academic-practitioner/sector platform which participants felt they owned. The most unexpected evolution was the research that elevated the importance of the social economy to the whole field of sustainability. Indeed, this work has shaped what we can now call the BALTA 2 agenda, with the launching of a new research initiative on *Social Economy, Community Resilience and the Transition to Sustainability*.

After being turned down with high marks from SSHRC for a Partnership Development Grant, to take the results from this aspect of our research and build a strong partnership around a new research agenda, we unexpectedly got word at the beginning of June that they had decided to award \$200,000 for the project. With the in-kind and cash support from BALTA's partners, this new two year project is valued at \$622,978 and could eventually lead to a new multi-year research program with significant new funding. See page 3 for a brief overview of the new project.

So we continue. But in closing this phase of BALTA's existence it is important to say a few things. First, I extend my appreciation and thanks to all who have given leadership in this work. Second, thanks is due to Royal Roads University, who have been so cooperative and efficient as an administrative partner. I'd also like to thank Athabasca University for its hosting of our website and other online resources as well as their significant financial support. Third, Stuart Wulff, our stalwart coordinator, deserves major kudos for his thoroughness, attention to detail and his intellectual contributions to the overall project.

*Our challenge is to shape an action driven research partnership that can contribute in some modest way to the radical reduction of carbon emissions and the reweaving of our economies on a much more local basis.*

Now.... on to the next phase of our journey. Framed by the urgency of climate change, peak oil and financial volatility, our challenge is to shape an action driven research partnership that can contribute in some modest way to the radical reduction of carbon emissions and the reweaving of our economies on a much more local basis.

BALTA 1 has contributed to our understanding of the possibilities. BALTA 2 must contribute to learning how to accelerate and scale the basic needs innovations that can help us strengthen resilience and move us onto the path to a non-growth, steady state and sustainable economy.🌱

# Highlights from BALTA's Final Report to SSHRC

**B**ALTA will soon submit its final report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) on the SSHRC-funded research program that ran March 2006 through June 2012, slightly over six years. We wanted to share a few highlights from that report with readers of this newsletter.

- 45 research projects were completed plus BALTA's mapping program.
- BALTA created an innovative and effective platform for academic-practitioner research collaboration with significant knowledge, policy and practice impacts.
- BALTA's research has increased knowledge in a range of fields including co-operative and social enterprise development, affordable housing, social finance, procurement, green energy, farmers' markets, land trusts, social entrepreneurship, and the role of governments in supporting the social economy.
- Notable research and writing has been done on exploring how a convergence of ecological and social economy perspectives can contribute to enhancing sustainability.
- There are almost 650 outputs and outcomes from BALTA's work that are detailed in the report – from research reports to conference and public presentations to journal and magazine articles to books. The report also covers online resources and media coverage.
- The report covers a range of impacts on policies and programs,

helping to strengthen the social economy and its supportive infrastructure.

- Two books already published have resulted from BALTA research and a third is in preparation. A fourth book incorporates BALTA research. An e-book was also produced and 23 book chapters have either been published or are in process.
- 13 papers have been published or accepted for academic journals and several others are in process. Two special issues of academic journals on the social economy are being produced by BALTA members.
- A new Masters in Community Development program was developed with major BALTA involvement and other courses and course materials have been developed or are in development.
- 50 student research assistants were employed on BALTA research projects with SSHRC funding. A couple of dozen additional students were employed by project partners on BALTA research using their own funds or volunteered on BALTA research. One post-doctoral researcher position was supported by BALTA.
- Several new scholars have been involved in BALTA and have been able to advance their work and careers through their BALTA involvement.
- And just to give some idea of the work involved in preparing the report, it is almost 350 pages in length and includes contributions from dozens of people. 🧑🏻

## AU Interviews Restakis

**M**ike Gismondi has published an extensive interview with John

Restakis concerning his book, [\*Humanizing the Economy: Cooperatives in an Age of Capital\*](#) (NSP, 2011). It appears in the 2012 issue of Athabasca University's online journal, Aurora.

The interview carries us through major issues raised in the book: "The Grand Illusion" perpetrated by free market acolytes of the way economies must function; the historical context which is essential to a full understanding of co-operative movements; the factors which explain the scale achieved by co-operative networks like Emilia-Romagna, and in fact reinforce (rather than detract from) reciprocity; the extent to which co-ops, unlike other forms of enterprise, cultivate community, sometimes where there formerly was none at all, as among Calcutta's sex trade workers; and how the Fair Trade movement must be careful to keep the building of Third World communities front and center in its agenda.

The interview concludes with John's reflection on the life and work of Elinor Ostrom, and that the solution to climate change will escape us unless our actions are guided by democratically-controlled systems.

Check it out at <http://aurora.icaap.org/index.php/aurora/article/view/89/110>. 🧑🏻



# BALTA Collaborator Awarded Inaugural Prix Pierre-Dansereau

Concordia University economist, **Dr. Marguerite (Margie) Mendell** (right), has been awarded the Prix Pierre-Dansereau in its inaugural year. The prize is awarded by the Association francophone pour le savoir (Acfas) and is sponsored by Radio-Canada. The award was presented during the May 8 Congress of Acfas.

"It's a very great honour and recognizes socially engaged research that I and others do," said Mendell.

Margie has been an important contributor to BALTA. She provided advice on effective community-university research collaboration in BALTA's early days. She later co-lead two BALTA research projects to examine financing and public policy in Quebec in support of the social economy.



In commenting on the award, Nancy Neamtan of the Chantier de l'économie sociale said that Mendell "is a model for what researchers, and particularly economists, should be if we want to build a better world." 🌍

# BALTA

The BC-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance



## BALTA Steering Committee Members

- Mike Lewis, Lead Investigator, Canadian Centre for Community Renewal
- Dr. Mary Beckie, Co-Investigator, University of Alberta
- Dr. Martin Garber-Conrad, Co-Investigator, Edmonton Community Foundation
- Dr. Michael Gismondi, Co-Investigator, Athabasca University
- George Penfold, Co-investigator, Rural Innovation Chair, Selkirk College
- Dr. Mark Roseland, Co-Investigator, Simon Fraser University
- Stuart Wulff, Staff, Canadian Centre for Community Renewal

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