

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

Project Proposal – Project A2-2007

A. Project Title

Co-operative Models of Social Care

B. Brief description of project and project objectives, outputs and proposed outcomes

The project will examine the specific role played by co-operatives in the design and delivery of social care.

In recent years, there has been a major shift both in public policy and in public expectations concerning the roles and responsibilities of governments and the private sector with respect to the provision of social services. Canada is not different in this respect than many other western countries.

One result of this shift has been increasing pressure on organizations within the social economy to redefine their own roles with regard to social care. The emergence of co-operative models for the delivery of social care has in large measure been a response to this change in government roles and public policy. In everything from health care to services for people with disabilities, co-ops have been created to respond to what many see as a failure of the public sector on the one hand, and a concern around the privatization of social care on the other.

This project will examine the emergence of social care co-ops, in a wide variety of forms, as a response to these issues.

The results of this research will form a portion of a proposed book by the Lead Researcher and constitute a continuation of research that has been ongoing for the past year. The project will help fund additional pieces to complement and expand the research begun with other funds, including attention to legislative and policy issues that would support the incorporation of co-operatives as a model for social care in BC.

Timeframe:

Portions of this research have already begun during 2006-07. The research will continue through 2007-08 (April 2007 – March 2008).

Project Objectives:

- To examine the use of the co-op model in the design and delivery of social care both internationally and in Canada;
- To determine the variety of co-operative models providing social care and the key sectors in which this care is being delivered;
- To determine the number of co-ops providing social care in BC and Alberta;

- To document the use of co-ops in the delivery of elder care as a key focus for the research;
- To identify success factors in the use of co-ops for the delivery of social care, particularly with respect to public policy, tax policy, legislation, and the role of government;
- To identify the particular strengths and weaknesses that the co-op form brings to the task of addressing social care issues;
- To identify the specific challenges facing co-operatives models for the design and delivery of social care in BC and Alberta.

Project Outputs

- A research report outlining the findings will be produced and disseminated through the BALTA web site and related networks;
- A research paper will be published by the BC Institute for Co-operative Studies;
- The research in this project will be included as part of a proposed book to be written by the Lead Researcher.

Outcomes

- A clearer understanding of the relative impact and importance of the co-op model as a potential strategy for the delivery of social care in Canada, with specific relevance to BC and Alberta;
- Increased understanding and awareness among practitioners and academics of the potential for the social economy to play a more prominent role in the delivery of social care;
- Increased understanding of the theoretical, economic and public policy factors that pertain to non-governmental and non-commercial models for the design and delivery of social care.

C. Purpose and significance of the study, including congruence of the proposed research with the over-all strategic research objectives identified for the SERC and BALTA.

This project is squarely within the mandate of SERC 1 with respect to the role of the social economy in the provision of human services. The project also responds to the major strategic questions and analytical domains framing the work of BALTA. The research on the role of co-ops in the provision of social care addresses elements of all three strategic questions:

- 1) Outlining the scope and characteristics of an important emerging sector within the social economy,
- 2) Identifying social economy innovations that are achieving demonstrable results – specifically in the area of social care, and
- 3) Examining the key issues that present either opportunities or constraints for adapting co-op models in social care delivery in BC and Alberta.

The research proposed for this project addresses in particular two of the four analytical domains:

- 1) Contributions of the social economy in reinserting the principles of reciprocity, solidarity, and sustainability into economic life, and
- 2) Adapting successful social economy innovations within the context of BC and Alberta.

D. Will this project be lead and managed by a SERC member or members or will it require a request for proposals?

John Restakis, Co Chair of SERC 1 and member of the BALTA Steering Committee will be the lead researcher and co-ordinator for this project.

E. Lead researcher, organization name and contact information (when known)

John Restakis
Executive Director, BC Co-operative Association
Tel: 604-663-3906
restakis@bccca.coop

F. Names of other researchers and organizations involved (when known).

To date, Jean-Pierre Girard of HEC at the University of Montreal, Carlo Borzaga from the University of Trentino, and Stefano Zamagni from the University of Bologna have aided in the research. Additional researchers will be identified as the project proceeds in 2007-2008.

G. Will the project involve hiring one or more student researchers? Will they need to be recruited or have they already been identified?

It is anticipated that the research will require the recruitment of 1-2 students for portions of the research during the period September-November. They would assist in survey implementation and documentation. Ideally, students would be in their final year of BA studies or graduate students.

H. Brief description of project roles and responsibilities for project participants (lead researcher, other researchers, student researchers, partner organizations).

The Lead Researcher will be responsible for defining the parameters and focal points of the research, for designing the research and survey content, for identifying potential case studies, and for consulting with other academics and practitioners on both research methodology and content.

The Lead Researcher will provide an analysis of the key policy, organizational, and financial factors leading to the emergence of social care co-ops. This data will be related to the overall effect on the social economy as a consequence of government policy and the changing role of the private sector in social care delivery.

The Lead Researcher will be responsible for recruiting and supervising the work of students. Students will conduct the surveys using survey instruments (telephone and written surveys) developed by the Lead Researcher and will assist in the documentation of results.

In addition, the Lead Researcher will be the key link between this project and other organizations and stakeholders with respect to research feedback and dissemination of the final report.

SERC 1 members will be asked to review preliminary survey results and offer recommendations/comments on the data collected and on drafts of the final report. The research paper will be written primarily by the Lead Researcher but will entail the participation and feedback of students and other researchers who collaborate on the project.

I. Indicative Budget (Information can be both dollar figures and anecdotal)

BALTA is providing \$10,000 in release time to BCCA in 2006-2007 to allow the Lead Researcher to undertake this project. This funding has already been allocated for the 2006-2007 fiscal year ending March 31. A further \$10,000 in release time for 2007-2008 has been budgeted for 2007-2008 and is included in this proposal.

Category	Requested of BALTA	Other Contributions
Student salaries & benefits	\$7,500	BCCA - \$2,500
Researcher Release Time	\$10,000	
Research Support Costs		CDI – \$5,000
Knowledge Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BALTA to assist in dissemination of research reports, both within BALTA and potentially to wider audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCICS to publish research paper; Task Force on Co-op Elder Care and CCA to disseminate portions of research relating to co-op elder care; BCCA to disseminate survey results through BCCA web site, newsletter, networks and contacts;
Travel		Elder Care Task Force - \$6,500
TOTALS	\$17,500	\$ 14,000